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### FOSTERING VISUAL LITERACY IN THE CLIL-ORIENTED ENGLISH CLASSROOM

This article explores the integration of visual literacy strategies in Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) oriented English classrooms, focusing on the use of artwork and visual organizers. The research addresses the growing importance of visual literacy skills in today's increasingly visual world and their relevance in language teaching, particularly in CLIL contexts.

The study begins by outlining the problem statement and research relevance, emphasizing the need for developing visual literacy skills among pre-service English teachers preparing for CLIL-oriented classrooms. It provides an analysis of recent research and publications related to CLIL methodologies, highlighting a gap in investigations specifically related to fostering visual literacy in CLIL-oriented English classrooms.

The main objective of the research is to describe methods for cultivating visual literacy in CLIL-oriented English classrooms using artwork and visual organizers. The article presents practical strategies for pre-service English teachers to incorporate these elements into their lessons, examining the theoretical foundations of visual literacy and its significance in content and language-integrated learning. Key strategies discussed include: implementing museum-based learning activities; integrating virtual museum visits with art analysis; creating historical timelines; and applying graphic organizers to enhance both content understanding and language development. The article provides detailed examples of practical activities, such as the "Facts and Opinions" chart activity and the "Historical Timeline Creation" task. It also offers a comprehensive exploration of various graphic organizers (e.g., Venn diagrams, fishbone diagrams, concept maps) and their specific applications in CLIL-oriented English classrooms focused on art. The research emphasizes the multifaceted benefits of incorporating visual organizers, including their role in structuring information, supporting language production, and bridging the gap between content and language learning.

**Keywords:** visual literacy; CLIL; teaching English; EFL classroom.

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### РОЗВИТОК ВІЗУАЛЬНОЇ ГРАМОТНОСТІ НА УРОКАХ АНГЛІЙСЬКОЇ МОВИ З ОРІЄНТАЦІЄЮ НА CLIL

Стаття досліджує інтеграцію стратегій візуальної грамотності у викладанні англійської мови за методикою предметно-мовного інтегрованого навчання (CLIL). Основна увага надається використанню творів мистецтва та візуальних органайзерів. Дослідження висвітлює зростаючу важливість навичок візуальної грамотності в сучасному світі та їх значення у викладанні мови, особливо в контексті CLIL. Описано методи розвитку візуальної грамотності в CLIL-орієнтованих класах англійської мови. Представлено практичні стратегії для майбутніх

*вчителів англійської мови, включаючи навчальну діяльність на основі віртуальних екскурсій, створення історичних хронологій і застосування графічних органайзерів.*

*Ключові слова:* візуальна грамотність; CLIL; викладання англійської мови; урок англійської мови як іноземної.

**I**ntroduction. In today's increasingly visual world, developing students' visual literacy skills has become an essential component of effective language teaching. Visual literacy, the ability to interpret, negotiate, and create meaning from visual information, is a crucial competency for learners in the 21st century. This is particularly true in Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) contexts, where visual aids and organizers can facilitate the understanding of complex academic concepts while simultaneously enhancing language acquisition.

For pre-service English teachers preparing to work with school students in CLIL-oriented classrooms, incorporating visual literacy strategies can be a powerful tool. By leveraging the power of visuals, teachers can create engaging and memorable learning experiences that cater to diverse learning styles and promote deeper comprehension.

**Analysis of recent research and publications.** Many educators have investigated the peculiarities of using CLIL (Content and Language Integrated Learning) in the English language classroom and the impact it can have on the development of students. D. Coyle, P. Hood, D. Marsh (2010) and C. Dalton-Puffer, T. Nikula, U. Smit (2010) have contributed to the detailed theoretical background of CLIL. D. Coyle, P. Hood and D. Marsh (2010) have defined the simultaneous focus on language and content as a key characteristic of CLIL, while C. Dalton-Puffer, T. Nikula and U. Smit (2010) have explored the specific features that differentiate CLIL from other bilingual education approaches, particularly in the European context. Additionally, I. Piquer Vives and N. Lorenzo Galés (2015) further clarified the natural integration of content and language through the 4Cs framework, which is central to the CLIL approach. Ukrainian researchers M. Rakhno and R. Shramko (2021) described their experience using CLIL technologies in the course "Comparative Lexicology and Grammar of Ukrainian and English" to develop linguosocial and cultural competence in prospective translator students. Meanwhile, I. Salnyk (2018) examined issues in integrating professional and language learning for training English language teachers.

**Research objectives.** However, there appears to be a lack of investigation specifically related to fostering visual literacy in the CLIL-oriented English classroom. While researchers like Apisak Sukying have devoted their studies to EFL pre-service teachers' perceptions of CLIL, and M. Hunt (2010) has detailed the e-CLILT (e-based Content and Language Integrated Learning Training), the focus on visual literacy in CLIL-oriented English classrooms remains relatively unexplored. In this context, the main goal of our

work is to describe cultivating visual literacy in the CLIL-oriented English classroom with the help of artwork and visual organizers. Artwork, in its various forms, can serve as a rich source of cultural, historical, and conceptual understanding, while visual organizers, such as graphic organizers, mind maps, and concept maps, can help students structure and organize information more effectively.

In this article, we explore practical strategies for pre-service English teachers to incorporate artwork and visual organizers into their CLIL-oriented lessons. We examine the theoretical underpinnings of visual literacy, and its significance in content and language-integrated learning, and provide examples and techniques to enhance student engagement, comprehension, and language development.

**Presentation of the main research material.** Visual literacy can be defined as the ability to recognize and understand ideas conveyed through visible actions or images, as well as to be able to convey ideas or messages through imagery (J. Aanstoos 2003). One key strategy to develop visual literacy is the use of visual thinking routines when students analyze and interpret paintings, statues, photographs, etc. to build critical thinking and descriptive abilities in the target language. Museum-based learning activities that integrate artworks with literary texts or historical events are also exemplified as immersive, contextualized language experiences.

For this purpose, teachers can use an immersive way to integrate art and language learning. It's possible through an activity that combines virtual museum visits with art analysis and the development of critical thinking skills in distinguishing facts from opinions. This multi-modal approach exposes learners to authentic artworks and artistic vocabulary while promoting collaborative learning, negotiation of meaning, and language production.

To begin, the teacher guides students in accessing a reputable virtual museum platform and instructs them to explore the online collections. Students are offered two masterpieces. They are encouraged to examine them closely, taking notes on their observations, impressions, and any relevant background information provided by the museum. They can use online resources to research the artist's biography, artistic influences, and the historical context of the chosen works.

In the classroom setting, students are divided into pairs or small groups and provided with a "Facts and Opinions" chart. The teacher models the activity by displaying one of the selected artworks and demonstrating a fact and an opinion about it. For example, "This painting is an oil on canvas" could be stated as a fact, while "I find Mona Liza's smile and

steady gaze a bit creepy” as an opinion. Clarifying the difference between objective, provable facts, and subjective interpretations or judgments is crucial. Students take turns sharing their observations, facts, and opinions. As they analyze and compare the two works, they are encouraged to use the appropriate art-related vocabulary and descriptive language to articulate their thoughts effectively.

This collaborative process not only enhances learners’ visual literacy and art appreciation but also fosters critical thinking, argumentation skills, and language production in a contextualized manner. The integration of content from art history, artistic techniques, and language learning objectives is seamless, as students engage with authentic materials and engage in meaningful communication.

Another useful practical activity is “Historical Timeline Creation”. In this activity, students should create a visual timeline of a historical period or art movement, integrating language learning with historical and artistic content. The teacher should divide students into small groups and assign each group a specific historical period or art movement (e.g., Renaissance, Impressionism, Modernism). Students research key events, artists, and artworks of their assigned period. Using a digital tool or large paper, groups create a visual timeline incorporating images of artworks, brief descriptions, and key dates. Then groups present their timelines to the class, explaining the significance of each element in English.

While these practical activities provide engaging ways to integrate art and language learning, their effectiveness can be further enhanced through the strategic use of graphic organizers. These visual tools not only complement the activities but also serve as powerful aids in developing students’ visual literacy and language skills in the CLIL-oriented English classroom. As R. Marzano, D. Pickering, and J. Pollock (2001) note, graphic organizers are among the most effective instructional strategies for improving student achievement across all grade levels and subjects.

Graphic organizers provide a structured framework for analyzing, organizing, and presenting information, making them invaluable tools in CLIL-oriented English classrooms focused on art. They enhance activities such as virtual museum visits and historical timeline creation, while also supporting a wide range of other art-related learning experiences (e.g., the inner monologue of the person from the portrait, artwork analysis, artist biography studies, art movement comparisons, and ekphrastic poetry writing). By visually representing complex ideas and relationships, these organizers scaffold both content understanding and language development, aligning perfectly with CLIL principles. This dual functionality is supported by recent research, with S. Mercuri (2020) demonstrating that graphic organizers significantly enhance English learners’ academic language development and

content comprehension across various subjects, including the arts. A. Yastıbaş, and M. Takkaç (2022) emphasize the effectiveness of graphic organizers in improving EFL learners’ critical thinking skills and reading comprehension, skills crucial for analyzing and interpreting artworks in a CLIL context. Moreover, B. Kamalian et al. (2021) found that graphic organizers significantly improved EFL learners’ writing performance, particularly in terms of content and organization. Additionally, K. Shabani, and S. M. R. Adel (2015) found that the use of graphic organizers significantly improved EFL learners’ listening comprehension skills, helping them to better organize and recall information from audio inputs.

In the context of CLIL-oriented English classrooms, graphic organizers serve as powerful tools for developing visual literacy skills while simultaneously supporting language acquisition and content understanding. These visual aids play a crucial role in structuring information, supporting language production, and bridging the gap between content and language learning – key principles of the CLIL approach.

The purpose of incorporating graphic organizers into CLIL-based lessons is multifaceted. Firstly, they provide a framework for students to organize complex information about artworks, historical periods, or artistic movements in a visually coherent manner. This structuring of information not only aids comprehension but also facilitates more effective articulation of ideas in English, thereby supporting language production.

Moreover, the process of creating and interpreting graphic organizers inherently develops students’ visual literacy skills – a primary objective in our CLIL-oriented approach. By encouraging learners to categorize, compare, and connect information visually, these tools foster critical thinking and higher-order cognitive skills, aligning with the cognitive dimension of CLIL’s 4Cs framework (Content, Communication, Cognition, Culture).

Graphic organizers also cater to diverse learning styles, making them particularly valuable in heterogeneous classrooms. Visual representations of information support learners who may struggle with purely textual or auditory input, making lessons more inclusive and effective. Additionally, the visual nature of these organizers can enhance memory and recall, aiding the retention of both content knowledge and language elements.

In the context of our research on cultivating visual literacy in CLIL-oriented English classrooms, graphic organizers complement other strategies such as visual thinking routines and museum-based learning activities. They provide a structured approach to analyzing and interpreting visual information, which is essential when working with artwork and other visual materials.

Examples of visual organizers applicable at CLIL-oriented English classroom:

<b>Visual Organizer</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Purpose in CLIL-oriented English Classroom</b>
Venn Diagram	Two or more overlapping circles showing similarities and differences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Compare and contrast artworks</li> <li>– Distinguish between facts and opinions</li> <li>– Organize thoughts for discussions</li> </ul>
Fishbone Diagram	A diagram resembling a fish skeleton, with a central spine and branching “bones”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Visualize chronological progression of historical periods or art movements</li> <li>– Categorize different types of information (events, artists, artworks)</li> <li>– Plan for timeline creation and presentations</li> </ul>
Concept Map	A diagram showing relationships between concepts, typically with a central idea branching out	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Organize ideas around a central theme or concept in art or history</li> <li>– Visualize connections between different elements of a topic</li> <li>– Support speaking activities by providing a visual reference</li> </ul>
Timeline	A linear representation of events in chronological order	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Represent historical periods or art movements visually</li> <li>– Organize key events, artists, and artworks chronologically</li> <li>– Support oral presentations on historical topics</li> </ul>
T-Chart	A two-column chart for comparing and contrasting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Organize facts vs. opinions about artworks</li> <li>– Compare different artistic styles or movements</li> <li>– Support listening activities by providing a structure for note-taking</li> </ul>

For example, KWL charts and Venn diagrams can be used as pre-reading, while reading/writing, and post-reading strategies in CLIL lessons focused on art within English language instruction.

1. Pre-reading:

Before introducing a new art movement or artist, teachers can use a KWL chart to activate prior knowledge and set learning goals.

**K (Know):** Students list what they already know about the topic (e.g., Impressionism or Vincent van Gogh).

**W (Want to know):** Students write questions or aspects they want to learn about.

**L (Learned):** This column is left blank for now.

Example:

Topic: Impressionism

Know	Want to know	Learned
Painted outdoors	Why was it called Impressionism?	
Used bright colors	Who were the main artists?	
Popular in France	How did it differ from earlier styles?	

2. While reading/writing:

As students read texts or view artworks, they can jot down notes in the “Learned” column. This helps them track their learning and provides material for later writing tasks.

3. Post-reading:

After completing the lesson, students revisit the chart to complete the “Learned” column. They can then use this information to write summaries, compare what they learned to their initial knowledge, or create presentations about the topic.

The implementation of Venn diagrams in a CLIL-oriented art classroom offers a dynamic approach to learning, effectively bridging language acquisition with content understanding. This visual tool can be used throughout various stages of the lesson, enhancing both linguistic and artistic comprehension.

In the pre-reading phase, Venn diagram serves as an excellent tool to activate students’ prior knowledge and stimulate critical thinking. For instance, when introducing a lesson on Impressionism and Post-Impressionism, students can be encouraged to make a Venn diagram with their existing knowledge or preconceptions about these art movements. This exercise not only helps to assess students’ baseline understanding but also provides an opportunity for them to practice art-related vocabulary in English.

As the lesson progresses into the reading and writing phases, the Venn diagram transforms into a dynamic, interactive tool. Students continually update and refine their diagrams as they encounter new information about the art movements. This ongoing process of revision and addition helps students to organize complex ideas visually, reinforcing both content knowledge and language skills.

In the post-reading stage, the completed Venn diagram becomes a valuable resource for higher-order thinking and more advanced language production tasks. Students can use their diagrams for writing compare and contrast essays, discussing the similarities and differences between Impressionism and Post-Impressionism. Alternatively, they might give oral presentations, using the Venn diagram as a visual aid to explain the distinctive features and overlapping characteristics of the two art movements.

This multi-stage application of Venn diagrams in CLIL art lessons exemplifies how visual organizers can enhance both content learning and language development. Educators can create a more engaging and effective learning environment by using these visual organizers throughout the learning process – from pre-reading to post-reading stages. They help students activate prior knowledge, organize new information, and synthesize complex art concepts while developing their English language proficiency. This dual focus aligns perfectly with the core principles of Content and Language Integrated Learning.

In conclusion, the strategic use of visual organizers in CLIL-oriented English classrooms offers numerous benefits. These tools support metacognitive awareness, foster cross-cultural understanding, and serve as effective formative assessment instruments. By integrating artwork analysis with structured visual aids, educators can significantly enhance both language acquisition and content comprehension.

This approach not only increases student motivation and engagement in art and English learning but also develops crucial visual literacy skills. As we continue to explore innovative CLIL methodologies, the use of visual organizers stands out as a particularly effective technique. It bridges the gap between language and content, preparing students for more advanced academic discourse in both areas. Ultimately, this strategy equips learners with essential skills for success in our increasingly visual world.

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