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The effect of project work on students' language achievement

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Entitled

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be accepted in partial satisfaction for the requirements of the degree of

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Dedication

To my dear family
and my beloved husband

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There are a number of people to whom I want to express my deepest gratitude for their assistance in the completion of this thesis.

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Abstract

Project-based instruction has been heralded as a most promising activity that can engage students into academic language and literacy skills. A growing body of evidence indicates that project learning supports the development of critical skills students must have to meet the demands of the 21st century. However, there is scanty research on project-based instruction in general and on its effect on language achievement in particular.

This study reports on the findings of research carried out in an English for General Purposes (EGP) class in American University of Armenia. The aim of the study was to investigate the effect of project work on students' language achievement as well as to inquire into their attitudes towards project work. Based on the review of related literature a null hypothesis was proposed at the beginning of the study. The participants of the study were nineteen EGP students studying at American University of Armenia, ages ranging from 16 to 35. The study was designed within the traditions of both qualitative and quantitative research. Of five instruments used in this study a pre - test, three achievement tests and open-ended questionnaire helped to obtain quantitative data and teacher observations and semi-structured interview helped to obtain qualitative data. Quantitative data was analyzed through the SPSS software package, via Mann-Whitney U Test, Friedman test and Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Tests, and qualitative data was first transcribed and then analyzed.

Through the analysis of the data obtained from the tests it was revealed that both groups, regardless of being assigned project work or not, performed equally during the achievement tests they were given during the ten week course, i.e. there was no significant difference in terms of language improvement between the experimental and control groups at the end of instruction. However, in the analysis of the questionnaire administered in the experimental group at the end of the classes, as well as the analysis of their responses to the interview questions it was found out that the students of the experimental group highly appreciate their experience of doing project

work and working collaboratively with their peers. They found it beneficial for their studies and felt that it contributed greatly to their language achievement.

CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

As a teaching method, problem based instruction has gained immense popularity in education, including second/foreign language education (Backett, 2002). Knoll (1997) suggests that project work is the most suitable teaching method as far as constructivist concepts, inquiry-based learning, problem-solving, and design are concerned. Unlike traditional teaching, which is primarily based on lectures and tutorials and follows instruction-driven model, where students are passive learners, project-based learning (PBL) is based on the constructivist learning theory as a different learning paradigm where learning from the real world is primary (Benson, 2005). Based on the results of many studies on project work, it can be stated that project-based learning method both has a positive effect on students academic achievement levels and attitudes towards the lesson, and also fosters academic risk-taking, problem solving and creative thinking skills. Behman (2010) sums up the benefits and the overall characteristics of Project work stating that a project-based learning lesson provides students with the opportunity to learn in an authentic, challenging, environment, to learn how to design, carry out, and evaluate a project that requires nonstop effort over a considerable period of time, to learn to work with minimal external guidance, both individually and in groups, to gain in autonomy and personal responsibility. To gain insight into the effectiveness of project work and its benefits for general language achievement in foreign language education, this study seeks to explore this method of teaching, investigate its benefits, types and techniques, as well as to find out learners' attitudes towards it.

1.1 Significance of the Study

This study is significant for several reasons. First of all, the review of related literature has shown that there are some obvious gaps in the ESL/EFL education research. The existing research suffers from a dichotomy in its examination of students' perceptions of PBL as a pedagogical activity. There is also lack of research investigating the effect of project work on academic literacy (Behman, 2010). Behman (2010) states that lack of research on project work

may be explained by the fact that project-based learning is still in the developmental stage. He mentions that there is not ample research or empirical data to be able to state with confidence that project-based learning is a proven alternative to other forms of learning.

Taking these factors into account, it can be concluded that the significance of the present study lies in the fact that it seeks to find out:

- the effect of project work on students' language achievement
- the students' attitude towards project work

1.2 Research Questions

The questions that guide the current research are the following:

1. *To what extent does project work contribute to language achievement?*
2. *What are the learners' attitudes towards project work?*

1.3 The Structure of the Thesis

This paper consists of four chapters:

Chapter 2 covers the essential theoretical background to the study. In this chapter the theoretical basis of project work will be described, definitions will be given, its characteristics, types and stages will be discussed, and the pros and cons of project-based learning (PBL) in language learning will be described.

Chapter 3 describes the methodology used to conduct this research describing the participants of the study, research design, instrumentations and procedure of data collection,

Chapter 4 includes the analysis of the quantitative and qualitative data collected in attempt to arrive at an answer to the research questions,

Chapter 5 reviews the findings, specifies the answers of the research questions, mentions the limitations and implications of the study and gives suggestions for further research.

CHAPTER TWO

Literature review

2.1 Theoretical basis of project work

Project-based instruction is the product of constructivist theory. Constructivists view knowledge as being constructed by the learners rather than being taught to them. Basic foundations of constructivism are situated cognition, cognitive apprenticeship and multiple perspectives, all of which, according to proponents of constructivism, are in close connection to project-based learning. Constructivist approach to learning holds meaning making at its core (Benson, 2005).

One of the proponents of constructivism, Piaget believed that cognitive development was fundamentally a process of maturation, and that the mind developed keeping the balance between what is known and what is experienced at the moment. In other words, learning takes place based on experience by means of solving real-life problems. Dewey's problem method was based on this approach. Dewey (1938) believed that, in a democratic society, education should not only emphasize the knowledge of subject matter. Rather, it should stress the importance of the ability of the learner to engage in social interaction. This interaction, according to him, gives birth to problems the solution of which is essential to satisfy individuals' needs. The teacher's role in this interaction is to guide the learners' self-directed efforts rather than to direct them.

Vygotsky was another representative of constructivist theory who viewed effective learning as social interaction between two or more people. He was the one to generate the concept of Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) which he defines as: "...the distance between the actual development level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers" (Benson, 2005).

Thus, in a constructivist approach to language learning, learners are expected to express their personal understanding of the learning materials and construct their own reality (Ke, 2010). The above-mentioned concerns on the importance of problem solution and the stress on social interaction have contributed to the emergence of project-based learning (PBL). Definitions of PBL given by different authors are provided in the following section.

2.2 Defining project-based instruction

Project-based instruction has been defined differently by different authors. If Kilpatrick (1925) defined a project as the product of any purposeful activity initiated by a motivated learner, Dewey (1938) considered project a common activity, and believed that "a genuine purpose starts with an impulse but differs from an original impulse and desire through its transformation into a plan and method of action" (-p. 43). Kilpatrick (1925) also defined the project as a "hearty *purposeful* act". Moss & Van Duzer (1998) consider project work as "an instructional approach that contextualizes learning by presenting learners with problems to solve or products to develop" (p. 2).

Backett (2002) and SRI International (2009) define a project as an ongoing activity which includes such individual and cooperative tasks as research plan and questions, implementation of the plan, and reflection on or communication of the product either orally or in written form. Thus, students in project learning are supposed to solve complicated real-life problems rather than be taught facts from books (SRI International, 2009). The project is also considered to aim at socializing students into academic language and literacy skills and foster the development of linguistic knowledge (Ochs, 1990; Backett, 2002; Mohan, 1986). It is also believed that project-based instruction gives room to the development of multiple skills (Alan & Stoller, 2005, Foss et al., 2007). A clear-cut definition of a project given by Cherters (1997) is that it is "a problematic act carried to completion in a natural setting" (p.139). Thus, Backett (2002) points out that the primary goal of project-based instruction is comprehensible output taking place continuously during the project as well as in the form of the final product. Robinson

(1991) believes that project work has numerous potential pay-offs, because of its learner - centered nature, use of authentic language, and tasks, and a concentration on discourse rather than on the sentence level.

Thomas (2000) names six criteria to define PBL: (a) “Projects are central, not unimportant in the curriculum”; (b) “projects are focused on questions or problems that ‘drive’ students to encounter (and struggle with) the central concepts and principles of the discipline”; (c) “projects involve students in a constructive investigation”; (d) “projects are student-driven to some significant degree”; and (e) “projects are realistic, not school-like” (pp. 3-4). Thomas (2000) also mentions collaboration as a sixth criterion of PBL.

Based on the above mentioned definitions of project work given by different authors and the review of related literature, it can be assumed that project work is an indispensable part of task-based instruction. In fact, these two types of instruction – PBL and TBL are very closely related to one another. Thus, a closer look to task-based instruction will shed more light on and help to form a better understanding of aspects of project-based instruction. Some theoretical background on task-based instruction is provided and its goals and types are described in the next chapter.

2.3 Task-based instruction

Richards & Rodgers (2001) state that task-based instruction is the approach to language teaching which has tasks as the basis of instruction. According to the authors this approach is the logical continuation of Communicative Language Teaching, since some of its principles were part of the communicative language teaching movement in 1980s. Some of these principles are:

- Activities involving real communication are essential for language learning
- Activities having language used for carrying meaningful tasks promote learning
- Language meaningful to the learner supports the learning

Just as in Communicative Language Teaching, in task-based instruction as well, in order to activate learning processes, learners are engaged in task work, rather than in form-focused

activities, because the proponents of task-based instruction believe that it can foster the learning process. Thus, task-based instruction students are engaged in tasks that require negotiation of meaning and naturalistic and meaningful communication. Feez (1998) summarizes the most important assumptions of task-based instruction as:

- The focus is on process rather than on product
- Basic elements are tasks and activities than stress communication
- Tasks are sequenced according to their difficulty
- Tasks can be either those that learners may need to accomplish in real life, or those that bear pedagogical purpose

Task-based instruction is a crucially important innovation of the 20th century.

Immediately after its emergence researchers began to actively encourage its implementation in education (Ali, 2008). Being a product of cognitive approaches to language teaching and psycholinguistics, task-based instruction differentiates the following two perspectives on “task”:

1. Macroscopic perspective
2. Microscopic perspective

According to Ali (2008), these two perspectives are different in terms of the number of characteristics that they presuppose for tasks. Thus, the proponents of the *microscopic* view see tasks mostly as meaning-making activities. Moreover, according to this approach to tasks, there exists an evident connection to the real-world, some kind of competition takes place and, finally, the performance of the task is primarily assessed via the outcomes.

In contrast, the proponents of the *macroscopic* approach do not limit the characteristics of a task to those mentioned above. In addition, they mention the importance of out-of-class language use as an essential part of a task.

The above mentioned perspectives are called strong and weak forms of task-based approach by Skehan (1996). In addition to these general perspectives of task-based instruction,

there are three other aspects of task-based instruction that are important to mention – its general goals, phases, and types. These three aspects are discussed below.

Ali (2008) and Willis & Willis (2007) state that the primary goals of task-based instruction are included in the following three broad categories:

1. Accuracy
2. Complexity/reconstruction
3. Fluency

Accuracy, according to them, is a goal in interlanguage the realization of which is closely associated with the overuse of well-known patterns in the foreign language and with the avoidance of unknown ones by the learners. The more learners progress in the learning of the language the more the complexity level grows. At this stage the learners' interlanguage becomes more elaborate and structured. Thus, *complexity* becomes the second goal in L2 learning because it reflects the ongoing process of acquisition. The final goal of task-based instruction is *fluency*, which means that the speakers of the foreign language are able to produce and perceive language at a relatively normal rate. From all the above, it can be concluded that in task-based instruction there should be alternating stages of focus on form and focus on communication. Moreover, there should be a sustainable balance between these two stages. It should be noted, however, that with the general goals in mind, task-based instruction will not automatically drive interlanguage forward, rather, it will teach learners to do tasks better, to find strategic solutions to problems and to engage in lexicalized communication (Ali, 2008, Willis & Willis, 2007).

As far as the stages of tasks are concerned, El Fattah (2006) Willis & Willis (2007) differentiate between three of them. According to these authors, the three main phases of task-based instruction are pre-task, during-task, and post-task.

The aim of the pre-task stage is to introduce new language, to promote restructuring in the underlying language system, to mobilize and recycle language, to ease the processing load, and to push learners to interpret tasks in more demanding ways. The pre-task stage can be

realized through three types of activities: teaching, consciousness raising, and planning. As far as the second stage of the tasks, i.e. during-task is concerned, it is important to mention the two aspects that need to be covered. These are manipulation of attention and the extended task procedure. There are four choices to control the availability of attention _ time pressure, support, control and stakes. The extended task procedure deals with more structured tasks (El Fattah, 2006, Willis & Willis, 2007).

The last stage of tasks, the post-task, gives the learners a chance to focus on language and they engage in various activities. The nature of the activities is not crucial at this stage. What is crucial, however, is that the language practice should, by all means, follow the task itself, not precede it (El Fattah, 2006, Willis & Willis, 2007). (Willis & Willis, 2007) state that it is at this stage that students should realize that fluency is not the only goal during the completion of the task. Restructuring and accuracy are also very important. The authors believe that at this stage students can be given such activities which require them to identify, classify, hypothesize, and search for patterns. In addition to grammar and vocabulary, pronunciation is also a factor to be put into consideration at the post - task stage (El Fattah, 2006).

From the review of related literature it can be assumed that the notion of “task” lies in the core of task-based instruction. Richards & Rodgers state that a task is an activity or goal which is carried out with the help of language use. Skehan (1996) believes that tasks are “activities which have meaning as their primary focus”. According to Nunan (1989) “the communicative task is a piece of classroom work which involves learners in comprehending, manipulating, producing or interacting in the target language while their attention is principally focused on meaning rather than form. The task should also have a sense of completeness, being able to stand alone as a communicative act in its own right”. The review of literature on task types reveals the following types which can be implemented during all three stages of tasks:

- Pair/ group tasks
- Closed/ open tasks

- Information gap tasks
- Opinion gap/ reasoning gap tasks
- Information processing tasks - listing and ordering tasks, comparing tasks, ranking (rating) tasks, problem solving tasks
- Social interactive - task -based role plays, interview tasks (El Fattah, 2006, Willis & Willis, 2007).

2.4 Previous research on project-based instruction

The review of literature shows that there is rare research on project work and on its influence on different language areas. Beckett (2002, p. 58) reports, “research on project-based instruction in L2 education is rare most of the available literature consisting of anecdotal reports of how language teachers organized project work for the purpose of second-language acquisition.” In years since her comment, her own work (Beckett and Slater, 2005) has been one of the few empirical contributions in this area. Beckett and Slater (2005) carried out a three-week project with 57 upper-level university English language learners. The participants of their study conducted project work to assess and evaluate their own learning experience. The results of the research revealed that teachers and students had different attitudes towards project work and evaluated it in different ways. Thus, students said that the activity prevented them from learning ESL the way they were used to learning it, i.e. learning vocabulary, grammar, conversational English, English composition, etc. separately. The fact is, however, that the participants did learn everything mentioned above with one difference: they learnt it not separately, but via a project. However, this method of learning and teaching was not appreciated by the learners and they expressed a desire to learn from the teacher and the textbook, rather than learning from the project. In contrast to the students, the course teachers were pleased because they believed that project work helped to develop and produce independent and autonomous learners. In regard to this discrepancy, Stoller (2005) emphasizes the following point: students may not recognize that project-based and content based language instruction result in real language development. Thus,

the author believes that informing the students of the progress they make with the help of project work should be an inseparable part of the learning process.

Another example of implication of project work in education is ThinkQuest (2009). ThinkQuest is an online environment that enables teachers to design and carry out learning projects within their classrooms or in collaboration with ThinkQuest's global community cooperating with teachers and students all over the world. In addition, teachers are free to modify and change projects to suit their needs and make them appropriate for particular classes.

A closed review of related literature reveals some more studies on project work. Thus, Tomei, Glick & Holst (1999) conducted project work in their EFL classroom at a university in Japan. In their projects students surveyed their peers on a topic about student life. Their study showed that project work promoted language learning. They found out that learning was fostered by increasing the amount of input, making the content appropriate to students, and encouraging learners to be creative and imaginative.

Two studies were conducted aiming at finding out about the effect of project work on students' writing abilities. First, an English writing project was conducted in Ethiopia by Tessema (2005) in which the researcher explored ways by which project work could help students become actively engaged in writing tasks. Second, Gu (2003) conducted a study during which students explored the resources and foreign trade services in Suzhou and presented written reports with suggestions for solutions. She analyzed the effectiveness of the project in involving students in active, authentic, and reflective learning

As a result of the review of related literature, several implementations of content-based project work were observed. For instance, Zhao (2004) conducted a project-based course for doctoral candidates at Harbin Institute of Technology. The researcher came to the conclusion that projects provided a context for students to learn how to use different language skills in order to meet various needs. Most importantly, the students learned how to work in groups collaboratively and cooperate with others. Shang (2007) was another researcher who conducted a

content-based project with 63 business administration majors the aim being to help them improve both their business performance and their English language. The author claimed that the key feature of project work was the broad and far-reaching use of materials directly from the culture being studied and language being used (Shang, 2007).

2.5 Components and characteristics of project work

This section provides an overview on characteristics of project work. Later the way how project work is implemented is described, some types of project work are presented, and sample projects are illustrated. Finally, stages of conducting project work are given.

2.5.1 Characteristics of project work

Buck Institute for Education (2011), Helle, Tynjala & Olkinuora (2006), Krajcik & Blumenfeld (2006), and Thomas (2000) state that project work

- is organized around an open-ended Driving Question or Challenge
- creates a need to know essential content and skills
- requires inquiry to learn and/or create something new
- requires critical thinking, problem solving, collaboration, and various forms of communication
- allows some degree of student voice and choice
- incorporates feedback and revision
- results in a publicly presented product or performance
- involves use of technology

Stoller (1997) and The Center of Excellence in Learning (2009) mention several characteristics of project work which best help to maximize the meaning and relevance of learning.

1. Project work focuses on content learning through language learning.
2. It is student-centered with the teacher playing a role in offering support and guidance throughout the process.

3. It is cooperative rather than competitive; students can work on their own, in small groups, or as a class to complete a project.
4. It leads to the authentic integration of skills and processing of information from varied sources, mirroring real-life tasks.
5. It culminates in an end product that can be shared with others.
6. It is potentially motivating, stimulating, empowering, and challenging; students can build up confidence, self-esteem, and autonomy as well as improve their language skills, content learning, and cognitive abilities.
7. It is *active* - interacting, manipulating, observing, interpreting and constructing,
8. It is *constructive* - integrating new experiences and prior knowledge,
9. It is *intentional* - articulating ideas, decisions, strategies and solutions,
10. It is *authentic* - situated in real-world tasks, and
11. It is *cooperative* - occurring in social groups (Jonassen, 2000).

2.5.2 The implementation of project work

The review of literature has revealed that the successful implementation of project-based instruction depends on some factors. These factors are the focus of this section.

Dooley (2010) believes that projects are good if they bring about changes in the environment, hence in society and in the world as well. She believes that one important principle of PBL is for the final product to be meaningful for the students and to serve the needs of a wide audience. Dooley (2010) states that it is important for the teacher to have no doubt that the project has close links to the real world, and the learners see these links and their application outside the classroom. In addition to the meaningful purpose of project work, it is also important for the students to be aware of the tools, techniques and processes that build the development of the project (Baoming, 2006). In This respect, a factor that Klein (2009) finds crucial for project-based instruction is providing students with grading rubrics. According to the author, students should clearly know the criteria with which the final product of their project and their

presentation will be evaluated. Grading rubrics may guide students towards achieving and exceeding the standards of performance and help them to self-assess and revise their work. Moreover, the students may be more motivated if they participate in the development of the rubric (Klein, 2009). As far as the process of conducting project work is concerned, Dooley (2010) states that it is important to negotiate the amount of the target language. Thus, according to her, PBL does not necessarily mean 100% of target language use. Last, but not least, she mentions the necessity of giving students the freedom of choosing the topic of the project. In this respect, the students can either be given the chance to choose from a list of topics provided by the teacher, or bring their own list of real-life problems they are eager to solve.

2.5.3 Types of project work

There are diverse types and configurations of project work. Projects vary greatly in the amount of guidance from the teacher, the number of students working on the task, data collection techniques, the way information is reported, and the nature and sequence of project-related activities. There are two ways a project development can take place in terms of the role of the teacher. In one case, the teacher is the instructor and the guide of the learning process, while in the second case the teacher plays the role of a facilitator, and the students are the ones responsible for the planning and realization of the project (Baoming, 2006). As far as students involved in the project are concerned, Kilpatrick (1918) mentions that there can be either a number of them working cooperatively, or one person doing the purposeful activity, i.e. projects can be worked on in groups or individually. Stoller (1997) mentions that as far as data collection techniques and sources of information are concerned, projects can be of the following five types:

1. Research projects, which necessitate the gathering of information through library research.
2. Text projects, which involve encounters with "texts" (e.g., literature, reports, news media, video and audio material, or computer-based information) rather than people.

3. Correspondence projects , which require communication with individuals (or businesses, governmental agencies, schools, or chambers of commerce) to get information by means of letters, faxes, phone calls, or electronic mail.
4. Survey projects, which entail creating a survey instrument and then collecting and analyzing data from "informants."
5. Encounter projects, which result in face-to-face contact with guest speakers or individuals outside the classroom.

In relation to the way information is reported, Stoller (1997) differentiates the following types of projects:

- *Production projects*, which involve the creation of bulletin board displays, videos, radio programs, poster sessions, written reports, photo essays, letters, handbooks, brochures, banquet menus, travel itineraries, etc.
- *Performance projects*, which can take shape as staged debates, oral presentations, theatrical performances, food fairs, or fashion shows.
- *Organizational projects*, which entail the planning and formation of a club, conversation table, or conversation partner program.

As far as the nature and sequence of project-related activities are concerned, Stroller (1997) identifies the following 3 types:

- *structured projects* - are determined, specified, and organized by the teacher in terms of topic, materials, methodology and presentation
- *unstructured projects* - are defined largely by students themselves
- *semi-structured projects* - are defined and organized in part by the teacher and in part by students

2.5.4 Examples of project work

Alan & Stroller (2010) believe that the constructing details of project work depend to a great extent on the context within which the project is done. Such factors are program objectives,

available resources and facilities, etc. The authors later bring examples of projects intended for students of particular specialties or for those from particular countries. They even differentiate the topic of the project depending on geographical and other factors. Thus, the authors state that in Turkey, for example, a nice idea would be for students at higher education levels to engage in project work on soil erosion, which is a global contemporary issue, and come up with suggestions to solve the problem.

Alan & Stroller (2010) describe another variant of project for academic-English preparation first year students - exploring a self-selected topic somehow related to their majors. In any kind of project the authors suggest concluding with a number of suggestions and recommendations. The authors have also observed that EFL students tend to focus on issues typical to their countries and religions. For example, EFL students in Tunisian high schools, as part of their project work, investigated such unrelated topics as mining and traditional marriage practices. Later they presented their findings in video presentations.

Foss et al. (2007) suggest the following 4 types of projects:

1. The Wikipedia Project
2. The Newspaper Project
3. The Small-Groups Video Project
4. The Whole-Group Video Project

The Wikipedia Project

Foss et al. (2007) believe that web-based projects display a large number of positive language learning features. For example, the authors believe that they foster authentic communication in the target language, they are flexible in terms of subject matter, and foster cooperative learning. Given these benefits, the authors find that projects involving the Internet-based encyclopedia Wikipedia an excellent choice. The students' duty is to create an attractive Wikipedia entry for the University and make a 15 minute power point presentation on the project. It is believed that the students are greatly interested in working on something real and

create an original Wikipedia entry on the topic of their choice and preference. Moreover, the creation of the Wikipedia entry and the final presentation helps the students to develop their English as well as technological skills and increase their motivation.

The Newspaper Project

Different authors mention this project option as a rather effective way to learn a foreign language. Thus, for example, Foss et al. (2007) believe that this type of project facilitates the enhancement of writing and journalism skills, community involvement and teamwork, and fosters critical thinking. More advanced level students can enjoy the benefit of developing their reading and writing skills beyond typical exercises into real-world literary situations. Students' motivation also increases when they find out that they are able to interact with the outside world in their second language.

Newspaper projects are very flexible in terms of the variety of topics and the students' level of foreign language proficiency. During the process of working on the newspaper projects, students conduct research, interviews, write articles, and have them edited by their teachers. All these components contribute greatly to the enhancement of all four English language skills (Foss et.al 2007, Zehni 2011).

Two Video Projects: Small Groups vs. Whole Group

Foss et al. (2007) mention that video dramas produced by students have always been considered an excellent EFL language learning activity. The reason is that they require a high degree of learner participation in a variety of ways. The authors believe that the benefits of video drama are very effective for speaking and pronunciation skills, intercultural awareness, and identity formation. It is also believed that these projects foster collaborative work and increase student motivation. To make the task clear to students, teachers are advised to show students teacher-made samples of video dramas to serve as a frame of reference. Also, teachers should make sure that students are familiar with computer editing programs and organize trainings if necessary. It is up to the teacher to impose the rules and assign the length of the film,

the number of characters in it. After the rules are assigned, students write the script. Later they shoot the video according to the script, edit it, and finally author a DVD. Each group is given a certain number of hours to film their project and to edit. When they are not filming or editing, they are acting in another group's movie. This way, each student gets involved in every step of the film-making process. One challenge that may occur with small group projects is that the instructor may not be able to be on hand at all times for intonation and pronunciation guidance, which may lead to misunderstanding and poor quality film. In this case, Foss et al. (2007) advise using whole group video projects so as to involve the whole group in the film-making process and create a longer movie. Each of these two options of video projects has its challenges and advantages. However, one pattern they have in common is that each student in the group has his/her role in the project, hence, very high responsibility.

The best and the most important samples of projects have been presented. Other options of project work and their possible outcomes suggested by scholars are illustrated in the chart below:

1. Brochure	2. Scrapbook
3. Class newspaper or wall newspaper	4. Research paper
5. Bulletin board display	6. Poster
7. Debate	8. Pin and string display
9. Graphic	10. Oral presentation
11. Guide book	12. Multimedia presentation
13. Handbook	14. Maquette
15. Information packet	16. Letter
17. Theatrical performance	18. Simulation
19. Video or film	20. Survey report
21. Website	22. Written report

(Alan & Stroller 2010, Foss et al. 2007, Zehni 2011).

The details of projects designed for EFL settings have been illustrated above. However, they may need to be modified to suit specific classrooms, taking into account the goals and objectives of teachers and students, etc. Foss et al. (2007) proposes the following recommendations for EFL teachers and material writers to integrate project-based instruction into their curricula:

- Devise projects taking into account students' immediate and future language needs and content interests. However, be cautious about institutional expectations and available resources.
- Specify language, content, task, skill, and strategy learning objectives according to students' needs and institutional expectations
- Try to integrate students in all stages of the project even if their contribution is very small. Ensure the following: 1) skills are integrated to achieve real communicative purposes, 2) students are required to use various strategies for meaningful purposes, 3) critical thinking is needed for successful task completion, and 4) students are held responsible for content learning.
- Create and include tasks that require both independent and collaborative work. Students should be able to come to an agreement about different team member responsibilities and feel accountable as an important link in a chain.
- Plan an opening activity that would bear some interest in students, give them background knowledge, and introduce important vocabulary.
- Provide students with explicit instruction so that they not only improve their language abilities but also succeed in the information gathering, processing, and reporting stages of the project.
- Allocate special time and effort for feedback both at the conclusion of the project and at other critical stages.

2.5.5 Stages of conducting projects

Scholars give different sequence of actions in developing projects as well as give different names to them. Thus, for example, Dooly (2010) names the stages of project development *levels*, Fragoulis & Tsiplakides, (2009) use the term *stage* to describe these actions, Klein (2009) uses the term *planning-step*, and Stoller (1997) uses the word *step*. It should be noted here that these authors suggest different numbers of stages for project work. Some of them may come up with more global stages which include one or two steps representing an individual stage according to a different author. Thus, the elaborate description of the stages of project work based on the above mentioned authors is as follows:

Step 1. Deciding the theme for the project (includes the selection of the topic, which takes place via a discussion both with the members of the project group and the teacher. The demands of the curriculum may also provide some stimuli to the students).

Step 2: Determine the final product (students and instructor consider the nature of the project, its objectives, and the most appropriate means to culminate the project)

Step3: Structuring the project (includes the distribution of roles among the group members, decisions on the methodology, information sources, types of activities, the places to be visited, etc).

Step 4: Preparing students for the language demands of information gathering (If, for example, students are going to collect information by means of interviews, the instructor might plan exercises on question formation and allocate time for role-plays. If, on the other hand, students are going to use a library, the instructor might review steps for finding resources and practice skimming and note-taking with sample texts.

Step 5: Gathering information (requires little demand for critical thinking, and involves primarily compiling information)

Step 6: Preparing students for the language demands of compiling and analyzing data (setting up sessions in which students organize sets of materials, and then evaluate, analyze, and

interpret them determining which are most appropriate for the supporters and opponents of a given proposition).

Step 7: Compiling and analysis of information (students put the planned activities into practice. It is in this stage that they gather information, analyze and categorize it).

Step 8: Preparing students for the language demands of the culminating activity (practicing oral presentation skills and receiving feedback on voice projection, pronunciation, organization of ideas, and eye contact. It may involve editing and revising written reports, letters, or bulletin board display text).

Step 9: Presenting final product (the final product is presented to the public, and the school becomes connected to the public by means of the project).

Step 10: Evaluate the project (refers to the assessment of the activities, discussion of the achievements, identification of errors and appraisal, etc.).

2.6 Pros and cons of project-based instruction in language learning

The focus of this section is to describe what benefits project work can have in second/foreign language education as well as to state some challenges it may encounter.

The review of literature has shown that there is little research on project work in L2 education. Moreover, the existing research findings have revealed contradicting results. Thus, for example, some teachers have turned out to appreciate project learning, since they find it full of opportunities for comprehensible output and integrated teaching of content and skills. However, there have been cases when students felt frustrated because they found that project-based instruction prevented them from learning from the teacher and the textbook as well as from focusing on language skills because of the lack of explicit instruction, (Beckett, 2002, Moulton & Holmes, 2000).

As far as the benefits listed for project work are concerned, Fried-Booth (1986) mentions that one of the benefits of project work is its ability to fill the gap between the language the students are taught and the language they actually require. It is via project work that the students

gain the opportunity to understand concepts and standards at the heart of a project, community issues, explore careers, interact with adult mentors, use technology, and present their work to audiences beyond the classroom. PBL can motivate students who might otherwise find school boring or meaningless (Buck Institute for Education, 2011). Gardner (1995) and Coleman (1992) point out that project work is the best way to promote analytical and management skills. Backett (2002) mentions that for students to participate in social interactions, achieve academically in all content areas and use appropriate learning strategies to construct and apply academic knowledge project work should be implemented. Finally, many scholars and educators such as Barron & Darling-Hammond (2008), Hong Kong Curriculum Development Council (2001), Pearlman, (2006), and Sawyer (2006) believe in the capacity of project work to promote 21st century skills, which are as follows:

- *critical thinking*
- *teamwork*
- *creativity*
- *cross-cultural understanding*
- *technology*
- *self-direction*
- *communication*

As mentioned above, literature names also some challenges connected with conduction of project work. In this respect, The Center for Excellence in Learning (2009) considers PBL to be time consuming, the information flow is difficult to control for the teacher, there is lack of control over learners' behavior in the classroom, it is difficult to incorporate technology as a cognitive tool, etc. (Center of Excellence in Learning, 2009).

The above review of related literature on project work aimed at providing an insight into its characteristics, types and benefits, as well as its implications in second/foreign language education and its effect on language improvement. Based on the findings of the literature, the

current paper seeks to find the possible relationship between project work and foreign language achievement as well as the students' attitude towards project work. Thus, the research questions of this paper are the following:

1. *To what extent does project work contribute to language achievement?*
2. *What are the learners' attitudes towards project work?*

Because the literature review does not provide any definite and certain answer to these questions, the following null hypothesis is proposed:

There is no relationship between project work and learners' achievement.

CHAPTER THREE

Methodology

Introduction

This study, as indicated in the previous chapter, primarily aims at finding whether there is a relationship between project work and language learning achievement. The research questions that guide through the process of this exploration are:

- 1. To what extent does project work contribute to language learning achievement?*
- 2. What are learners' attitudes towards project work?*

To gain insights into the issue, this study is accordingly designed within the traditions of both qualitative and quantitative research. Following a detailed description of the participants of the current study and the data collection instruments will be given, and information on the data collection procedure will be provided.

3.1 Participants

Nineteen English for General Purposes (EGP) students studying at American University of Armenia participated in this study. EGP courses are 10 week language courses aiming at improving their language skills. The students have General English lessons twice a week, each lesson lasting 2 hours. The reason for choosing this particular class for the experiment was the following: project work is a rather challenging activity and may cause difficulties and even failure in case the students are not equipped with the knowledge and skills necessary to accomplish the project. Taking this factor into account, preference was given to samples having intermediate level of English proficiency. Thus, the participants of this study were students, ages ranging from 16 to 35. It is worth mentioning here, that the sample of the participants consisted

of both continuing students and those that had newly enrolled. The newly-enrolled students were placed at this level based on a placement test.

3.2 Instrumentation

Five instruments were used in this study in order to obtain data on the effect of project work on language achievement and students' attitudes towards project work – 1) pre-test, 2) three achievement tests 3) teacher observations, 4) open-ended questionnaire and 5) semi-structured interview.

1. Pre-test

The pre-test design was based on the textbook the participants had covered in previous courses. It lasted 40 minutes and contained the following sections:

- listening comprehension
- reading comprehension
- grammar

The listening comprehension section lasted 10 minutes and included two tasks:

- Listen to the tape and circle T for “true” and F for “false” statements.
- Listen to a conversation about two friends and answer the questions.

The reading comprehension section also included two tasks. The first task required the students to read the story and answer the 3 comprehension questions. In the second task the students were 1) *to match the headings with the appropriate paragraph* and 2) *circle T for “true” and F for “false” statements*.

Finally, *the grammar section* checked the students' knowledge of grammar via 8 multiple choice items.

Overall, the test included 30 items and totaled 30 points. It is also important to note that the pre-test was designed by the researcher and approved by the supervisor of the research (Appendix A). The aim of the pre-test was to identify the students' knowledge of English and to make sure that they had the same language proficiency level.

2. Observations

The observations aimed at gaining some insight into and obtaining some qualitative data on the process of working on the project. However, during the course of instruction, the observations turned into consultations between the students and the researcher. At the beginning of each lesson the researcher was given some 25-30 minutes to discuss the details connected with the project work, give instructions and answer the students' questions. As far as classroom work on the project is concerned, it should be mentioned that it didn't take place and the students did all the work at home and communicated with their group mates via e-mail.

3. Questionnaire

The questionnaire (see Appendix D) was close-ended, in that it contained 7 close-ended statements but provided space at the end for the participants to write additional comments. The inclusion of comments in the questionnaire served the purpose to give some insight and guide the researcher towards the interview questions. The participants were asked to indicate the degree of their agreement or disagreement with the statements. Response options were coded into 5 categories: (1) strongly disagree; (2) disagree; (3) neither agree nor disagree; (4) agree; (5) strongly agree. The questionnaire was distributed to the members of the experimental group of the study aiming at finding the participants' attitudes towards the project and their experience of working on it. The students were requested to respond to the statements by placing a check mark next to their choice of answers. The questionnaire was conducted in English.

4. Interviews

Semi-structured interview: After the experiment, a semi-structured *interview* was conducted in small groups with all the representatives of the experimental group who were present at the last lesson (7 students overall). The interview was held with one group of three and one group of four and lasted approximately 15 minutes each. The interviews were recorded for later analysis. Three main questions were addressed to the interviewees:

1. Did you like the project in general? Do you think project work is an effective way to learn English? Why?
2. Can you name some advantages and disadvantages of project work?
3. Do you think that project work helped you to develop your English? If yes, what skills do you think project work helped you to develop?

The interview questions were planned to be elicited from the open-ended part of the questionnaire. However, since only 2 students had additional comments in the questionnaire, the researcher designed the interview questions by combining some questions of the questionnaire into one interview question. The aim of the interview was to add qualitative information to the data obtained from the questionnaire and to go deeper into the students' opinions and have them share their thoughts. Thus, the participants were interviewed and asked to reflect on their overall experience of working on the project and give their opinion whether or not they thought project work contributed to their language learning. The interview was conducted in English and was transcribed for later analysis.

5. Achievement tests

Within the course of instruction the participants of both the control and the experimental took three achievement tests, and it was decided to use these achievement tests as a means to check the students' language level. The achievement tests were EGP tests designed by the Department of English Programs of the American University of Armenia. Each test was based on the materials covered during three units of the textbook. The tests followed the same format and measured the same language skills. Thus, each test had three sections:

Section one - *comprehension* which includes two listening and two reading comprehension activities with multiple choice and gap-filling items

Section two - *comprehension and production* which includes such items as picture description and sentence completion

Section three – *production* the task of which is to write a paragraph on the given topic.

It should be mentioned here, that the sections of were given different amount of scores in each test. The reason is that two of the tests were given 40 points and the other one was given 30 points. In order to avoid later inconsistency during the analysis of the data and to prevent unreliable results, the tests were given the same scale and rescored by two raters for the purposes of this study.

3.3 Data collection procedure

The steps of data collection procedure were as follows:

1. Two groups consisting of 9 (experimental) and 12 (control) EGP students, their level being 4A (intermediate), were chosen for this study. Both groups had intermediate level of English proficiency based on the placement and final test results (some of the students were continuing students who had passed final tests others were newly enrolled students who had been placed in these groups after the placement test). During the second lesson, a pre-test was administered to both groups to determine their language level and find out if there was any difference in their English language knowledge.

2. On the second day of instruction the researcher met both groups to give the pre-tests of the study. The aim of the pre-test was explained to the groups in order to avoid misunderstanding and misconception. The students' role in the experiment was explained to them, and the participants were informed that their role was crucial in the experiment. In addition, the researcher distributed guidelines (see Appendix C) which described the project, provided deadlines for the steps of its completion and some suggestions and advice for the students to consider when working on the project. These suggestions were further used as the criteria for the grading rubric. After distributing the guidelines, the researcher discussed them with the students. On this day, the groups were formed. There was one group of three, one group of two, and three remaining students who expressed a desire to work individually were given permission to do so. The reason why the students were allowed to choose the number of their group mates was that the purpose of the project work was not to measure the effect of group work on students'

achievement; rather, the researcher's aim was to see the effect of project work on their language achievement. To that end there was no restriction in terms of number of group members.

The project was making a *Class magazine*. The description of the steps of the project is as follows:

- Brainstorming types of magazines and the sections that can be found in them.
- Explaining to the groups that during the period of instruction (10 weeks) they were to pick a topic from their textbook (here the students were informed that the teacher would be an editor and a facilitator and they could turn to her every time they had a question and needed guidance). Choosing the type of magazine and the topics the groups would like to touch upon in the magazines they were to create.
- Writing articles, finding several from the Internet and other sources related to their topics and editing them (out of the classroom).
- Handing in the first draft of the project during week 7 for the teacher to correct.
- Work towards improving the work based on the corrections made by the teacher and towards the design of the magazine.
- Handing in both the final versions of the newspaper and making a group presentation on it (the deadline of the final version was the tenth week of instruction).

3. During the whole course of instruction the researcher observed every lesson and was given 20-25 minutes at the beginning of each lesson to discuss the work the students did, solve problems that were connected with the project, collect and hand in drafts, give directions, etc. Thus, with very little shift from the guidelines, each group sent to the researcher the piece of work they had done and received feedback within maximum two days.

4. On the last day of instruction the groups made a power point presentation on their projects in front of the whole class.

5. On the first day of week 10 attitudinal questionnaires were administered to the members of the experimental group (see Appendix D), They were allowed to take them home, fill them in

and return them during the next class. The purpose of the questionnaire was to answer the second research question, i.e. find out the experimental students' opinion on project work and evaluate its effectiveness. On the last day, the students of the experimental group were asked to come 30 minutes earlier to be interviewed. The purpose of the interview was to gain some qualitative data on their attitudes towards project work. The students were interviewed in one group of two and one group of four. The interview was built on 3 basic questions and lasted approximately 10 minutes.

2.4 Data analysis

The data for the present study was both quantitative, from the questionnaire and the tests, and qualitative from the interview and observations. For the quantitative data analysis the data obtained from the tests and the questionnaires were transferred into percentages (Table 1) and analyzed via SPSS package.

For the qualitative data analysis, the interview was first transcribed, then analyzed and discussed according to the common themes. The notes made during observations were also analyzed to enrich the findings of the research and add more qualitative data to them. This investigation, which included the learners' tests, questionnaires, observations and interviews, provided rich data to address the research questions.

CHAPTER FOUR

4. Results and discussion

This section reports on the findings of the research on the effect of project work on students' language learning achievement. The section provides details on the analysis of the data collection instruments, i.e. tests (one pre-test and three achievement tests), questionnaire, observations and the interview, and concludes with a summary of findings.

4.1 Analysis of the quantitative data

Quantitative data for this study have been obtained from the pre-test, the achievement tests and the questionnaire. The pre-test and the achievement tests were distributed to both the control and the experimental groups, while the questionnaires were distributed to the experimental group only. For the analysis of the pre-test and the achievement tests three statistical tests were applied - Mann-Whitney U Test, Friedman Test, and Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test. The choice of these tests was based on the fact that the sample size was less than thirty. The attitudinal questionnaires were analyzed through frequency analysis.

4.1.1 Pre-test and achievement test analysis

In order to make the data obtained from the tests reliable it was re-graded and re-scored. Two independent raters were involved in this process in order to achieve interrater reliability. As far as the reason for rescoring of the tests is concerned, it is important to mention that the tests were not consistent in terms of the scores given to each section of the test. Although the tests consisted of the same sections, different tests gave different points to different sections. Moreover, two of the tests scored 30 points total, and the other two scored 40 points total. However, what is most important to mention here is the fact that all the achievement tests tested the skills equally, i.e. no skill was given more attention and privilege in any test. Thus, to avoid unreliable results, the tests were rescored, i.e. the points of the tests were redistributed evenly

over the different tasks, only after this they were re-graded by two raters. The average score of the two raters was considered as the final score. The analysis of this data revealed whether there was any difference between the control and experimental groups both in the pre test and in the achievement tests. The analysis was made with the help of SPSS package. The alpha level for all three tests was 0.05. It means that if the p value was less than 0.05, there would be significant difference between the pairs in comparison.

For between group comparisons non-parametric Mann-Whitney U Test was applied. The choice of the test was based on the fact that the sample size was less than thirty. This comparison spread light on the difference between the control and the experimental groups in all 4 tests. As the analysis showed the groups were significantly different in terms of the pre test. Thus, the p value is 0.031, which is less than 0.05 (Table 6). This means that this difference is in favor of the control group and the control group performed better in the pre test than the experimental group.

Mann-Whitney U Test: Significance of test results

	pretest	test1	quiz1	test2
Mann-Whitney U	11,500	27,000	31,000	37,000
Wilcoxon W	39,500	93,000	59,000	65,000
Z	-2,139	-1,042	-,053	-,136
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	,032	,297	,958	,892
Exact Sig. [2*(1-tailed Sig.)]	,031 ^a	,328 ^a	1,000 ^a	,930 ^a

a. Not corrected for ties.

b. Grouping Variable: group

As far as the other three achievement tests are concerned, the Mann-Whitney U Test showed no significant difference between the two groups. For test 1 the p value is equal 0.328, for quiz 1, $p=1$, and for test 2, $p=0.930$. All of these values are bigger than 0.05 which indicates no significant difference. It means that the control and the experimental groups performed equally during the achievement tests.

In order to find out if the results of the tests are significant within each group, Friedman Test was used for both control and experimental groups.

Friedman Test: Significance of test results for the experimental group

N	5
Chi-Square	11,571
df	3
Asymp. Sig.	,009

a. group = experimental

b. Friedman Test

Friedman Test: Significance of test results for the control group

N	8
Chi-Square	11,038
df	3
Asymp. Sig.	,012

a. group = control

b. Friedman Test

As the table show, the exact significance of p is less 0.009 for the experimental group and 0.012 for the control group.

The Friedman test showed that the participants of the study in control and experimental groups demonstrated improved language skills. In order to see the difference between the students' performance for each test two by two within group comparison with Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test was applied. The description of the analysis is the following.

Comparison of pre- test and test1 in experimental and control groups

	test1 - pretest
Z	-2.201 ^a

Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.028
------------------------	------

- a. Based on negative ranks.
- b. group = experimental
- c. Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test

	test1 - pretest
Z	-2.073 ^a
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.038

- a. Based on negative ranks.
- b. group = control
- c. Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test

As shown in the tables above, both in the experimental and in the control groups there is significant improvement in students' performance in test 1. The *p* value for the experimental group is 0.028, and for the control group it is 0.038. Both of these values are less than the alpha level (0.05). It means that the students made significant progress from pre-test to test 1.

The next analysis is connected with the pre-test and quiz 1.

Comparison of pre- test and quiz1 in experimental and control groups

	quiz1 - pretest
Z	-2,201 ^a
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	,028

- a. Based on negative ranks.
- b. group = experimental
- c. Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test

	quiz1 - pretest
Z	-2,375 ^a

Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	,018
------------------------	------

- a. Based on negative ranks.
- b. group = control
- c. Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test

As the table shows, both groups have significant difference from pre-test to the second achievement test – quiz 1 ($p=0.028$ for the experimental group $p= 0.018$ for the control group, which are less than 0.05). The experimental and control group students’ language achievement is significantly higher in quiz 1 than in the pre-test.

Continuing the analysis, the pre-test results of the students of both control and experimental groups was compared with their last achievement test.

Comparison of pre- test and test2 in experimental and control groups

	test2 - pretest
Z	-2,201 ^a
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	,028

- a. Based on negative ranks.
- b. group = experimental
- c. Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test

	test2 - pretest
Z	-1,836 ^a
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	,066

- a. Based on negative ranks.
- b. group = control
- c. Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test

As shown in the tables above, the students of both the control and experimental groups had significant improvement. The exact significance for the experimental group is 0.028, and for the control group it is 0.066. These values are less than the alpha level of 0.05, which shows that the students improved during the period between pre-test and test 2.

A different picture is observed in the analysis of the comparison between quiz 1 and test

1. The significance is in favor of test one, i.e. the p value is more than 0.05 for both groups

(Table 15, 16).

**Comparison of test1 and quiz1
in experimental and control
groups**

	quiz1 - test1
Z	-,105 ^a
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	,917

- a. Based on positive ranks.
- b. group = experimental
- c. Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test

**Comparison of test1 and quiz1
in experimental and control
groups**

	quiz1 - test1
Z	-1,125 ^a
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	,260

- a. Based on negative ranks.
- b. group = control
- c. Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test

These results mean that the students performed better in test 1 than in quiz 1. It also means that they didn't have any improvement during this period.

**Comparison of test1 and test2
in experimental and control
groups**

	test2 - test1
Z	-1,992 ^a
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	,046

- a. Based on positive ranks.
- b. group = experimental
- c. Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test

	test2 - test1
Z	,000 ^a
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	1,000

- a. The sum of negative ranks equals the sum of positive ranks.
- b. group = control
- c. Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test

Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test used to compare the control and experimental group students' achievement in test 2 in comparison with test 1 shows slightly different results for these groups. For example, the experimental group recorded a significant difference. The *p* value is 0.046. However, this difference is in favor of test 1. This means that there the experimental group students' performance during test one is significantly higher than that in test 2, which came later during the instruction. As far as the control group student' performance is concerned, the *p* value in this case is 1.00, which is higher than 0.05. Thus, there is no significant difference in the control group's students' performances between test 1 and test 2.

The last Wilcoxon Signed Ranks analysis was used to compare the experimental and control group's students' performance between quiz 1 and the last achievement test – test 2.

Comparison of quiz1 and test2 in experimental group

	test2 - quiz1
Z	-1,572 ^a
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	,116

- a. Based on positive ranks.
- b. group = experimental
- c. Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test

	test2 - quiz1
Z	-,980 ^a
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	,327

a. Based on positive ranks.

b. group = control

c. *Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test*

As can be concluded from these tables, neither of the groups had any significant difference in the performance from quiz 1 to test 2. The p value for the experimental group is 0.126, and for the control group it is 0.327. Since both these values are not less than 0.05, no significant difference in their performance between quiz 1 and test 2 can be observed.

To sum up, the following conclusions can be made. The students of the control group performed significantly better in the pre test, than the experimental group. However, the analysis of their performance after the instruction shows no significant difference between the performance of the experimental and control groups. These groups achieved almost equal language level at the end of their 10 week study course. One important fact to notice here is that the students' achievement was recorded at the beginning of instruction (as shown by two by two within group comparison with Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test). Both control and experimental group students' language abilities improved from the first test, i.e. pre-test to the following two tests, i.e. test 1 and quiz 1 is. Later their language level remains the same. Reasons for such a stop in their progress may vary, such as decrease of students' motivation, change in their attitude toward the course, etc. Taking into account these results, it can be concluded that the null hypothesis proposed at the beginning of this study is supported, and the analysis proves that there is no relationship between students' language achievement and project work they did during the course.

4.1.2 Questionnaire analysis

The data collected by means of the questionnaire is presented in the following charts in percentages.

As illustrated in Appendix D and below, the student questionnaire contained a chart at the beginning with different adjectives both positive and negative, and the students had to choose three adjectives which best characterized the project they created. The chart of the questionnaire is illustrated below:

challenging	enjoyable	worthwhile	scary	useful	interesting	exciting
tedious	unrewarding	straightforward	frustrating	time-consuming	hard	difficult

The analysis of this part of the questionnaire revealed the following results:

Data analysis on students’ responses to the questionnaire in percentages

useful -55.5	hard – 22.2
exciting – 44.4	time-consuming – 11.1
interesting – 44,4	unrewarding – 11.1
enjoyable -33.3	difficult – 11.1

According to the table, more than half of the participants (55.5%) chose the word “useful” as one of the characteristics of project work. Two other adjectives were given equal preference by the participants (44.4%) -“exciting” and “interesting”. 33.3% of the participants found the project “enjoyable”. 22.2% of the participants chose the adjective “hard” as one of the best characteristics of the project they worked on during the term. Other three adjectives that

again had equal preferences on part of the participants (11.1%) were “time consuming”, “unrewarding”, and “difficult”. The other adjectives that were included in the chart of the questionnaire (challenging, tedious, worthwhile, straightforward, scary, and frustrating) were given no preference by the participants of the study. Thus, it can be inferred from these responses that the participants of the experimental group found project work to be a useful, exciting, interesting, and enjoyable experiment, although they also found it difficult, time consuming, hard, and unrewarding to some degree.

Following the results of the data obtained from the 7 statements of the questionnaire are provided.

Table 4. Data analysis on students’ responses to the questionnaire in percentages

Questions	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Q1	33.3	66.6	0	0	0
Q2	22.2	55.5	11.1	11.1	0
Q3	22.2	55.5	11.1	11.1	0
Q4	33.3	22.2	22.2	22.2	0
Q5	33.3	44.4	11.1	11.1	0
Q6	33.3	22.2	33.3	11.1	0
Q7	22.2	55.5	22.2	0	0

The first statement of the questionnaire referred to whether students found working on the project a useful and beneficial experience. According to Table 4, 66.6% of the participants agreed with this statement, 33.3% strongly agreed. There was no student among the participants that showed disagreement and strong disagreement, or expressed neutral position in this regard.

The second statement was the following: “The stages of the project helped me understand my learning progress in English”. More than half of the students, i.e. 55.5%, agreed with the statement, 22.2% strongly agreed, while 11.1% disagreed and another 11.1% neither agreed nor disagreed with the statement.

For statement 3 more than half of the participants, i.e. 55.5% agreed that they found the time and effort they spent on the project reasonable. Moreover, 22.2% strongly agreed with that statement. However, 11.1% disagreed and again, 11.1% neither agreed nor disagreed with it.

Statement 4 of the questionnaire stated the following: “The project helped me identify what type of problems I had in learning English”. There is almost an equal distribution of percentages representing 22.2% agreement and 22.2% disagreement, 22.2% neutrality and 33.3% strong agreement with the statement.

According to the table, 44.4% of the students agreed and 33.3% of the participants strongly agreed with statement 5 of the questionnaire, that project work helped them feel more responsible for their learning. 11.1% neither agreed nor disagreed, and 11.1% of the participants disagreed with the statement.

There is some controversy regarding the responses to statement 6 of the questionnaire (I like doing project work better than doing homework assignments every day). Thus, an equal number of participants, i.e. 33.3% strongly agreed and neither agreed nor disagreed with it. 22.2% agreed with this statement and 11.1% expressed disagreement with it.

Statement 7 of the questionnaire expresses the idea that project work helps to learn English more effectively. As can be seen from Table 4, more than half of the respondents (55.5%) said that they agree with that idea, 22.2% expressed strong agreement, and 22.2% neither agreed nor disagreed.

Above the data obtained from the close ended statements of the questionnaire was represented. However, the questionnaire contained free space at the end for the students to make additional comments. As far as this part of the questionnaire is concerned, it should be

mentioned that although not all the students used the space for additional comments to add any ideas about project work, those using it expressed only positive and encouraging opinions. Thus, one of the students mentioned that he/she would like to have projects like those further in his/her studies of English. Another student expressed the idea that “it was really interesting to do something creative during studies”.

To sum up the result obtained from the analysis of the questionnaire, it can be concluded that the experimental group’s students’ overall perception of project work was positive. They find it a useful, exciting and interesting activity. From their responses it can be concluded that they consider project work a beneficial activity for studying a foreign language. Moreover, the students find the efforts spent on the project reasonable and worthwhile, for it helped them realize their learning progress, feel responsible for it and learn the language in a more effective way.

4.2 Analysis of the qualitative data

4.2.1 Interview analysis

This section of the paper reports on the results of the analysis of the qualitative data obtained from student interviews, the aim of which was to answer the second research question and gain some qualitative data on the students’ attitudes towards project work. As mentioned in Chapter 3, the interview did not take place with individual students; rather, the students were randomly divided into two groups (one group of four and one group of 3) and interviewed. Despite the fact that the students were interviewed in groups, they were given equal chances by the interviewer to express their opinions and share ideas on each interview question. In this respect, the researcher tried to engage everybody in the discussion and elicit answers from the participants.

The following questions were addressed to the participants.

1. Did you like the project in general, and do you think project work is an effective way to learn English? Why?

2. Can you name some advantages and disadvantages of project work?
3. Do you think that project work helped you to develop your English? If yes, what skills do you think project work helped you to develop?

The description of the answers given to these questions by the participants is as follows:

1. The first interview question aimed at finding out students' overall impression about the project. The answers to this question were positive. All the students mentioned that they liked the project a lot and that it was an "effective" and "interesting" experience for them. One of the students mentioned that before starting the project, when still getting instructions, the project seemed "dull and scary". However, after some time, the work on the project became an enjoyable experience. Another student added that if "one wants to learn, project work is a good way to do so". Also, there was an opinion that project work is good only if the group works collaboratively and all the members are actively engaged in finding and writing articles as well as editing them.

2. The second interview question aimed to find out the advantages and disadvantages of project work, according to the participants. Some of the students answered that the project was a good tool for learning English and there was nothing that needs improvement in it. However, some disadvantages were mentioned by other participants of the interview. These are the following:

- lack of time: a student mentioned that if she had more time she could do a much better job.
- lack of speaking and communication: one of the students expressed an idea that overall the project was good, but it didn't help to develop her speaking. Another student said that it would be good to use class time to work on the projects and have more opportunity to speak and communicate.

- danger of not being understood by other readers: one student mentioned that few people will understand “what the magazine is about”, because there are many difficult words in it.

- restrictions connected with the choice of topic: one student mentioned that it would be “good to have an open topic” and not to be forced to choose a topic from the textbook.

3. Question three of the interview aimed to elicit information about the language skills that project work helps to develop, according to the participants. Some answers to the question were common for several students. Thus, the students mentioned that project work helped them to develop such language skills and sub-skills as writing, vocabulary, making presentations, doing translations, guessing the meaning of words from the context, etc. Writing was the skill that was mentioned by most of the participants. They mentioned that it was a great contribution to the development of their writing to regularly receive feedback on their original articles and compare and contrast them understanding the differences and improving writing in the end. As for vocabulary, the students mentioned that reading and editing so many articles helped them to learn new words. There were also opinions that there it was easier for them to guess what a word meant without knowing its exact translation or meaning. As far as translations are concerned, it should be mentioned that one of the students preferred to do translations from Russian into English rather than writing original articles. This student stated that at first it was challenging, because she understood the meaning of all the words but couldn't construct a grammatically correct sentence. However, over time she noticed that her translation skills were getting better and better and contained fewer corrections when given feedback. Finally, some of the students mentioned that project work helped them to develop presentation skills because they practiced their speeches before the presentations. In general, they liked the idea of making presentations in front of the public.

4.3 Discussion

The purpose of this study was to address two questions: first, to find out whether project work contributes to students' language achievement, and second, to inquire what students' attitudes toward project work were. Two research questions were proposed and a null hypothesis was formulated based on the review of the related literature. The data obtained from the study were quantitative from the 4 tests and the attitudinal questionnaires and qualitative from the interviews and observations. The qualitative data of the test scores was analyzed via SPSS software package using Mann-Whitney U Test, Friedmand Tests and Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test. The results of the questionnaire were analyzed by means of frequency analysis.

The results of the analysis revealed that there was no significant difference in terms of language improvement between the experimental and control groups at the end of instruction. Both groups, regardless of being assigned project work or not, performed equally during the achievement tests they were given during the ten week course. However, the analysis of the questionnaire administered in the experimental group at the end of the classes also provided with the following data. The students of the experimental group highly appreciated their experience of doing project work and working collaboratively with their peers. They found it beneficial for their studies and felt that it contributed greatly to their language achievement.

Similar opinions were expressed during the interviews. The qualitative data obtained from the observations and interviews showed that learners of the experimental group favored project work. According to their responses, they greatly benefited from project work as it helped them to develop their writing skills, their vocabulary, presentation, translation skills, the skill of guessing the meaning of words from the context, etc. and finally helped them to work collaboratively. They mentioned that it was a great contribution to the development of their writing to regularly receive feedback on their original articles.

From the findings of the current study, it can be concluded that despite the fact that project work may not provide with significantly higher language achievement in comparison

with traditional education, however, this technique is worth implementing during the teaching English as a second/foreign language, for a very important reason – the students favor it greatly and do it with great satisfaction and enjoyment. These findings indicate that the null hypothesis of the current study is supported and there is no relationship between project work and students' language achievement. Meanwhile, project work remains an advisable tool to use in the classroom taking into account students' responses and preferences.

CHAPTER FIVE

5. Conclusions

In this chapter of the thesis the summary of findings of this study will be provided, which will be followed by the description of the limitations of the research. Based on these limitations suggestions for further research will be given and the implications will be discussed. The aim of the study was to answer the following questions:

- *To what extent does project work contribute to language achievement?*
- *What are the learners' attitudes towards project work?*

5.1 Findings

The purpose of this paper was twofold: first, to find out if project work had any effect on the learners' language achievement or not, and second, to inquire into learners' attitudes towards note-taking during listening activities. Correspondingly, two research questions were formulated, one aiming at finding out if project work has any effect on students' language achievement, and another concerning students' attitudes towards project work. Based on the review of the related literature, the underlying assumption was that there was no relationship between project work and students' language achievement. In order to find out an answer to the first research question, a pre test was conducted both in control and experimental groups, which was followed by three achievement tests during the course of instruction. The results of these tests were analyzed via SPSS software package and showed there was no difference between the performance of these groups and the implementation of project work did not improve students' language abilities better than classic instruction.

As far as the second question of the study is concerned, a questionnaire and an interview were conducted to address it. On the last day of the classes learners of the experimental group were asked to fill in a questionnaires inquiring about their attitudes towards project. Later, a group interview took place with he students on the same issue. Results of both questionnaires

and interviews revealed that students enjoyed project work and found it beneficial for their studies.

To conclude, it may be claimed that project work was not significantly better than classic instruction in terms of students' language achievement. However, project work remains an advisable tool to use in the classroom taking into account students' responses and preferences.

5.2 Limitations

It is important to acknowledge a limitation of this study. Due to the small number of participants, and the fact that findings from just one study are presented, care should be taken in generalizing the research findings. Project-based instruction was implemented at only one level of L2 instruction and in only one context which may again prevent from gaining results that can be generalized. Another limitation that should be mentioned is its duration. A longitudinal study might reveal more reliable results.

One of the most important limitations of this study is that the sample was not chosen randomly. Rather, the researcher chose a sample which would have a higher level of English language proficiency and would be more capable to work on the project. The absence of randomization might have affected the results of the study.

5.3 Implications and applications

This study revealed the following results: project work did not seem to help students significantly improve their language skills. They gained the same language level as did the participants of the groups that was taught with regular instruction and was not assigned project work. However, the project work became very favorable for the learners as was elicited from their responses to the questionnaire and the questionnaire. The students mentioned that they enjoyed working on project work and it was a very useful and pleasurable experience for them. From these data, it can be implied, that the fact that project work doesn't always provide significantly higher level of language achievement than regular instruction should not prevent teachers and instructors use this technique in their classrooms. There is a strong ground –

students' attitudes. It is common knowledge that the creation of flexible and learner-centered atmosphere may be beneficial for the learning process. Any responsible teacher's aim is to have lessons that are interesting and enjoyable for learners. It is important to be sure that the students do their assignments with pleasure and realize their importance and usefulness. Taking these factors into account, and based on the results of current studies supporting the importance of considering students' preferences and likes and integrating them in the teaching process, I would strongly recommend implementing project work as a means to contributing the learning process. This would be worthwhile in terms of students' motivation and readiness to work and enjoy their foreign language learning process.

5.4 Suggestions for further research

In light of the current study results the following studies can be suggested:

1. Further research can be conducted to find out the effectiveness of assigning several smaller and less time consuming projects during one course and see to what extent they can contribute to students' language achievement.
2. Further research is needed which would have a bigger sample size so as to generalize the obtained data.
3. During the study, it was observed that the project used was quite demanding in terms of writing skills. Thus, the same magazine project can be used to find out its effectiveness on not general language abilities, but on writing abilities in particular.
4. Further research is needed to explore the effectiveness of other project-based instruction in the preparatory and university stages.
5. Other studies are needed to investigate the effectiveness of applying a similar project over a longer period of time on students' skills.
6. Research may also be conducted to examine administrators' and parents' evaluations of project-based instruction and explore the reasons for discrepancies in their evaluations if there are any.

7. An implication for further research is to examine the relation between short-term project work and students' communicative competence, and the effect of projects on the self-esteem of students with low performance

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Appendix A: Pre - test
American University of Armenian
Department of English Programs
EGP 4A

Name _____

Time:

40 minutes

A. Listening comprehension

A1. Listen to the tape and circle T for "true" and F for "false" sentences.

1. The only way to make friends is to be nice to people. T F
2. The woman believes that to be good friends people should be alike. T F
3. The woman believes that people with different characters and different age groups can be good friends. T F
4. The woman believes that young people like to have older friends because they are cleverer. T F
5. The woman believes friends can force their ideas on others. T F
6. The woman believes of all the animals only dogs can be good friends to humans. T F
7. The woman believes that animals will accept and love you if you don't complain to them about your problems. T F

A2. Listen to a conversation about two friends - Lauren and Catherine. They are planning to go to a cinema. Answer the questions.

Before starting to listen, you have 15 seconds to read the questions.

8. What time does the movie start? _____
9. What time does Catherine have to be home? _____
10. What movie are the friends going to watch? _____
11. Does Catherine want to pay with a credit card or cash?

B. Reading comprehension.

B1. Read the Story and answer the questions

The Wedding Proposal

I have always **resented** the way some people carry on loud cell phone conversations in a restaurant, but one night I witnessed the ultimate as I watched a young man proposing to his beautiful companion.

Picture this romantic Italian restaurant with candlelight, fresh flowers and a wonderful violinist moving from table to table setting the perfect mood in the perfect place for the perfect moment. The young man reached across the table, took his loved one's hand in his and began what seemed to be a heart felt proposal of marriage. She gazed back at his with her earnest, love-drenched blue eyes. It was all going so well, until . . . Yes, you have already guessed! Her phone rang. It was one of those very loud, special cell phone rings that runs up and down the scale idiotically and **captures** the notice of everyone in the restaurant. Without embarrassment or apology, she let go of his hand and reached for her cell, which lay right alongside her salad plate.

"Yeah, hi! Who is this? Oh, Suzy, it's been such a long time. You won't believe what is happening here. Frank is with me and we're at this great restaurant and he's proposing to me!"

The young man waited patiently across the table while his bride was chatting enthusiastically with her friend.

"The ring? I don't know yet. We haven't gotten that far."

Questions

12. The word **resented** in line 1 means:

- a) hated b) wondered c) admired

13. What does the word **captures** in line 10 refer to?

- a) phone b) rings c) the scale

14. What do you think the man will do next?

- a) kiss the girl's hand b) reproach the girl for talking on the phone
c) ask the girl to become his wife

Adopted from www.phoneybusiness.com/stories/peeve1.html

B2. Match the headings with the appropriate paragraph.

Fast food

____ Fast food is any food that is quick, convenient, and usually inexpensive. You can buy fast food just about anywhere that sells food and snacks. It is also known as junk food. It's so popular because for under \$5.00 you can usually get a filling meal. However, fast food is inexpensive because it is usually made with cheaper

ingredients such as high fat meat, refined grains, and added sugar and fats, instead of nutritious foods such as lean meats, fresh fruits, and vegetables.

_____ There is no such thing as a "bad" food. All foods can fit into a healthy meal plan. It's true that fast food is usually high in fat, calories, cholesterol and sodium, but eating fast food every once in a while is not going to cause you problems. If you eat too much fast food over a long period of time, though, it can lead to health problems such as high blood pressure, heart disease, and obesity.

_____ Most fast food and restaurant chains post their nutrition information online. Use a search engine to find the companies' web page. There is usually a link to the nutrition section on the home page where you will find nutrition facts, including fat, cholesterol, sodium, protein, calories, and more. Take a look at this information to help you make healthier choices when eating out.

15. Where can I find nutrition facts about fast

16. What is fast food and why is it so popular?

17. Is fast food always bad?

B2. Circle T for "true" and F for "false" sentences.

18. Fast food is convenient but it costs much.

T F

19. You can satisfy your hunger with fast food even if you have 5 dollars.

T F

20. Fast food harms your health no matter how often you eat it.

T F

21. You can find a lot of information about the ingredients of fast food

T F

in the web pages of fast food chains.

Adopted from http://www.youngwomenshealth.org/fast_food.html

C. Grammar: Choose the best option

22. The faulty alarm

- a. nearly sounded system five times yesterday
- b. system sounded nearly five times yesterday
- c. system nearly five times yesterday sounded

23. Please make sure to water my plants while I am gone. If they don't get enough water, they die.

- a. Must
 - b. Should
 - c. May
24. Paola: "I love chocolate desserts!"
Paulina: "_____."
- a. I do too
 - b. So am I
 - c. Me neither
25. Although I tried to the recipe when making the cake it tasted awful.
- a. carefully
 - b. careful
 - c. the most careful
26. Philipp 15 next Wednesday
- a. will be
 - b. can be
 - c. has been
27. This flower is than that one.
- a. beautiful
 - b. more beautiful
 - c. most beautiful
28. The question is easy
- a. answering
 - b. to answer
 - c. answer
29. The candidate many voters when she ran for governor last year.
- a. impress
 - b. impressed
 - c. will impress
30. Andrew drinks beer.
- a. many
 - b. too much
 - c. very few

/ 30 points

Appendix B: Achievement tests

Level 4A

Test 1
Time: 60 minutes

Section I. Comprehension (20 points)

Part A: Listening Comprehension (10 points)

A1) Look at the following passage for a minute. Then listen to the tape, and write the missing words on your answer sheet. (7 points)

I always enjoy visiting the home of my friend Frank Summeril. He has a very interesting family. Frank's grandparents (on his mother's side) (1).... with them about ten years ago, so there are three generations living in (2).... Although three generations are represented, it is a small family. There are (3).... , Frank, his parents, and grandparents.

I (4).... visiting with his grandfather. Although his is more than (5).... , his powers of sight and hearing are remarkable. I sometimes think he can see and hear almost as well as I can.

There is nothing wrong with his memory, either. He can entertain you for hours, telling you of exciting experiences he has had, and of life a long time ago.

A2) These people are asking questions at a car-rental agency. Listen and mark a or b as the best answer to each item on your answer sheet. (3 points)

- | | |
|-------------------------|---------------------|
| 1. a. 30 dollars a day | b. 13 dollars a day |
| 2. a. comes without gas | b. comes with gas |
| 3. a. at the airport | b. downtown |

Part B: Reading Comprehension (10 points)

B1) Read the following passage. Choose a, b, c, or d which best fits each blank and mark it on your answer sheet. (5 points)

Jenny Parker is over ninety years old. She lives in a village in the (1)... with her cats. Ten years ago, she (2)... live in an industrial area. She (3)... married, but she loves children. She can (4)... the time when she had a difficult (5).... She often thinks about her past. (6)... 1915, her father died in the war. (7)... mother became sick a year later. She (8)... to work as a housemaid with a rich (9)... . She worked there for nearly forty years and (10)... when she was 55.

- | | | | |
|------------|------------|----------|------------|
| 1. a. city | b. country | c. block | d. center |
| 2. a. had | b. was | c. did | d. used to |

- | | | | |
|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| 3. a. never | b. almost | c. just | d. still |
| 4. a. forget | b. remind | c. remember | d. tell |
| 5. a. period | b. life | c. day | d. world |
| 6. a. At | b. On | c. By | d. In |
| 7. a. His | b. Her | c. The | d. That |
| 8. a. starts | b. has started | c. started | d. had started |
| 9. a. parent | b. family | c. society | d. school |
| 10. a. retired | b. has retired | c. had retired | d. retires |

B2) Read the following passage. Choose a, b, c, or d which best completes each item and mark it on your answer sheet. (5 points)

Frank Hawkins is a friend of mine who sometimes talks about his experiences as a young man. He is now the head of a very large company, but as a boy he worked in a small shop. It was his job to repair bicycles, and at that time, he would work fourteen hours a day. He saved money for years and around 1938, he bought a small workshop of his own. During the war, Frank made parts for airplanes. At that time, he had two helpers. By the end of the war, the small workshop became a large factory which employed seven hundred and twenty eight people.

1. Frank during the war.

a. was a soldier	c. made airplane parts
b. repaired air planes	d. was the head of a company

2. According to the passage
 - a. Frank never worked 14 hours a day
 - b. He always worked 14 hours a day
 - c. He worked 14 hours a day during the war
 - d. He worked 14 hours a day when he was a boy

3. By the end of the war, he had

a. a large workshop	c. a lot of customers
b. a bicycle store	d. over 700 employees

4. When he was a small boy, he

a. worked in a shop	c. rode a bike
b. sold bicycles	d. had a lot of toy planes

5. We can understand from the passage that
 - a. Frank was a real businessman since he was a young boy
 - b. Frank's experiences helped him in his career
 - c. Frank tried many different jobs in his childhood.
 - d. Frank's workers loved him in both the shop and the factory

Section II. Comprehension and Production
(10 points)

Part A: Use the information in the following table and on your answer sheet, write five sentences to compare different transportation systems. (5 points)

Features Transp. Sys.	No. of people the vehicle carries	Maximum speed	Ticket price
Taxi	4	80 km/h	\$ 15
Bus	30	60 km/h	\$ 2
Subway	250	120 km/h	\$ 2

Part B: Use the following information about Jane. Write the answers to the questions on your answer sheet. (5 points)

Jane

1980	Born in England.
1989	Visited China and Philadelphia with her parents.
1991-3	Studied French and played the piano.
1995	Took swimming and computer classes.
2000	Won swimming championship.
2002	Married and moved to Canada.

1. What did Jane do in 1995?
2. Which countries has she visited?
3. What did Jane achieve in the year 2000?
4. How long has Jane practiced French?
5. When did Jane get married?

Section III. Production (10 points)
--

On the back of your answer sheet, write a paragraph of at least 100 words about the most exciting event you have ever taken part in in your life?

Level 4A

1/ Quiz 1

Time: 45 minutes

Section I. Comprehension

(15 points)

Part A: Listening
points)

Comprehension (10

A1) Listen to the following passage and write the missing words on your answer sheet. (4 points)

We all have different opinions. You have a right to yours and I have a right to mine. (1) what goes on the world, the (2)... .. you can work on is what is right for you. You have to (3) with your inner guidance because it is the (4) ... that knows the answer for you. It is not easy to listen to yourself when others are telling you what to do. Yet, all the answers to all the questions you are ever going to ask are within you now.

A2) These people are having conversations. What are they talking about? Listen and choose a or b and mark it on your answer sheet. (6 points)

- | | |
|-------------------|------------------|
| 1. a. his jacket | b. her hairstyle |
| 2. a. family | b. school |
| 3. a. a vacation | b. the weather |
| 4. a. her brother | b. a new friend |
| 5. a. school | b. work |
| 6. a. college | b. work |

Part B: Reading Comprehension (5 points)

B1) Read the following passage and choose the answer (a, b, c, or d) which best completes each item and mark it on your answer sheet. (2.5 points)

July 20th 1969 was an important day. Two Americans landed on the moon, so they were the first men on the moon. Their names were Armstrong and Aldrin. They went in a spaceship called Apollo 11 which left Cape Kennedy on July 16th and travelled 385,000 kilometers. The journey took three days.

On July 20th the spaceship landed on the Sea of Tranquility. Armstrong stepped onto the moon, and then the two men walked on the surface of the moon and picked up some rocks and put them in the spaceship. There was no air on the moon, so they jumped up and down. Then they put a flag in the ground. They were tired after their moon walk so they rested.

On July 21st Apollo 11 left the moon and returned to Earth. Three days later it came down in the Pacific Ocean and a ship took the men to America and to their families.

1. July the 20th was a great day because two men.....
 - a. entered a spaceship
 - b. went 385,000 kilometers
 - c. returned to the Earth
 - d. walked on the moon
2. The two men were tired because they
 - a. traveled for three days
 - b. had a walk on the moon
 - c. landed on the moon
 - d. picked up some rocks
3. They jumped up and down because.....
 - a. there was no atmosphere
 - c. they were very happy

- b. they left Cape Kennedy
 4. The Sea of Tranquility is
 a. in the United states
 b. in the Pacific Ocean
 5. The journey took.....altogether.
 a. three days
 b. six days
- d. there was time to put a flag
 c. on the moon
 d. on the Earth
 c. eight days
 d. seven days

B2) Read the following passage and choose the answer (a, b, c, or d) which best fits each blank and mark it on your answer sheet. (2.5 points)

Deep sleep is important for everyone . The actual (1)..... of sleep you need depends(2)..... your age. A young child (3)..... to sleep ten to twelve hours, and a teenager about nine hours. Adults differ a lot in their sleeping (4)..... . For most of them, seven to eight hours a night is(5)....., but some sleep longer and others manage with only four hours.

For a good night, having a comfortable (6)... .. to sleep is very important. Also, there should be (7)..... of fresh air in the room. A warm drink sometimes helps people to sleep, (8)..... it is not a good idea to drink coffee immediately before going to bed.

(9)..... you have to travel a very long distance, try to go to bed earlier than usual the day before the (10)..... This will help you to feel more rested when you arrive.

- | | | | |
|----------------|-----------|-------------|------------|
| 1. a. size | b. number | c. amount | d. sum |
| 2. a. on | b. to | c. in | d. of |
| 3. a. could | b. ought | c. must | d. should |
| 4. a. ways | b. habits | c. manners | d. actions |
| 5. a. few | b. well | c. less | d. enough |
| 6. a. point | b. place | c. position | d. part |
| 7. a. plenty | b. much | c. many | d. several |
| 8. a. because | b. as | c. although | d. even |
| 9. a. Since | b. Until | c. After | d. If |
| 10. a. journey | b. ride | c. call | d. visit |

Section II. Comprehension and production
(10 points)

PartA: Compare the following two pictures about Jane. Then on your answer sheet, write how she used to be and how she is now.(3 points)

Jane 2004 Jane 1995



PartB: Write a

solution for each of the following

problems on your answer sheet. (3 points)

1. There are not enough parks in this city.
.....
2. There is too much air pollution in this city.
.....
3. We don't have enough parking lots around here.
.....

Part C: Julia is new to the neighborhood. She doesn't know where anything is. She is asking a neighbor some questions. Complete the conversation between Julia and her neighbor. (4 points)



J : Excuse me! Can you (1).....?
N: Well, it's near the bus station.
J : And do you know (2).....?
N: You can take bus number 5.
J : Could you (3)?
N: It's across from the bank.
J : By the way, do you know (4)?
N: I'm not sure, but I guess at 8:30.

**Section III. Production
(5 points)**

On the back of your answer sheet, write a paragraph of at least 75 words about the traffic at rush hour.

Test 2
Time: 60 ms.

Section I. Comprehension (20 points)

Part A: Listening Comprehension (10 points)

A1) Listen to the following conversation, and write the missing words on your answer sheet. (7 points)

Sara: Howard, maybe it's none of my business, but—well, you haven't been yourself lately. I mean, you've been losing your temper over nothing.

Howard: I know. I shouldn't have blown like that. I don't know what happened.

And it's (1) I've been getting into arguments with Linda and yelling at the kids.

Sara: Have you been doing anything besides working?

Howard: Not really. I haven't been getting (2) either. But what can I do? I've got to get this work done.

Sara: Well, you'd better not push yourself too hard, or you'll get sick. Then you won't be able to (3)

Howard: I'm under so much pressure, Sara. Sometimes I just feel like quitting.

Sara: I know how that is, Howard. I've felt that myself. Listen, if(4) I'd take some time off and get away for a while. You can't go on at this pace.

Howard: You're right. Thanks for listening, Sara. And thanks for (5)

Sara: And I'd cut down on the coffee too. It makes you even more nervous.

Howard: OK, OK. That's enough advice!

A2) Listen to these passengers. What does each person want? Choose a or b as the best answer to each item and mark it on your answer sheet. (3 points)

- | | |
|---------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. a. cold medicine | b. a blanket |
| 2. a. a different headset | b. a different seat |
| 3. a. a newspaper | b. some writing paper |

Part B: Reading Comprehension (10 points)

B1) Read the following restaurant guides and choose the right passage for each description. Then mark a, b, c, or d on your answer sheet. (5 points)

(a) This excellent steakhouse has been well known for over fifty years. You may be sure that the service will be as perfect	(b) Located right on the waterfront, this busy seafood restaurant is a popular place. It is best to make reservations. You
---	--

as your meal. You can have a quiet dinner, a business lunch, or a party here.	can drive here or sail on the sea to arrive for a lovely dinner.
(c) If you're in a hurry and you have to get a quick meal, drop by here. Fast service and low prices are two of many advantages you'll get here.	(d) This attractive, new dining place is great for healthy eating. All meals are high in taste and low in fat. Fresh vegetables, green salads, and fruits are always prepared. You can get an outdoor table, too.

1. This place is good for you if you want to eat fast food. ()
2. You can go to this restaurant with a number of co-workers. ()
3. If you are concerned about your health, you can choose this place. ()
4. This place is the oldest restaurant in our town. ()
5. You have to reserve a table before you go to this restaurant. ()

B2) Read the following passage. Choose a, b, c, or d which best fits each blank and mark it on your answer sheet. (5 points)

Erna Hart is going to swim across the English Channel tomorrow. She is going to start (1)... the French Coast at five o'clock (2)... the morning. Erna is only fourteen (3)... old. She is a strong swimmer (4)... many people feel that she will be (5)... . Erna's father will move with her (6)... a small boat. Mr. Hart has (7)... his daughter for years. Erna wants (8)... take short rests every two hours. (9)... will have to drink but she (10)... not eat any solid food. Millions of people will watch her on TV.

1. a. about b. by c. in d. from
2. a. for b. on c. in d. at
3. a. age b. years c. feet d. meters
4. a. but b. or c. and d. if
5. a. grateful b. thankful c. successful d. careful
6. a. in b. at c. by d. for
7. a. training b. trained c. to train d. train
8. a. to b. by c. for d. at
9. a. It b. They c. She d. He
10. a. will b. does c. has d. ought

Section II. Comprehension and Production (10 points)

Part A: Complete the following sentences using relative clauses of time. (4 points)

1. Spring is
2. St. Valentine's Day is
3. March 7
4. Vartavar is

Part B: Look at the following pictures. On your answer sheet, write about the activities they are going to do next weekend. (4 points)

Ben

Tom

Kate

Jim



Part C: Complete the following sentences and write them on your answer sheet. (2 points)

1. We use keys
2. Robots are used
3. You can use a fax machine
4. A hair dryer is used

Section III. Production
(10 points)

On the back of your answer sheet, write a paragraph of at least 100 words about the following topic.

What do people do during the New Year, especially on December 31st, new Year's Eve?

Appendix C: Project guidelines

Class magazine

Project guidelines for students

For this task, you will create a magazine. In order to accomplish the task, you will

1. Form groups.
2. Look through the first eight units of your textbook
3. Choose a topic for your magazine from these units - the one that you like best
4. Choose a name for your magazine
5. Search the internet and other sources to find relevant information that is closely related to your topic
6. Write original articles (keep in mind that the more original articles you have, the higher your grade will be)
7. Include the articles you found and wrote in the magazine
8. Work on the design of your magazine.

It is important to say that you will have a chance to constantly receive feedback on the drafts of your project. The final project will include the written version and a group presentation. Use the following guidelines to prepare your project:

- carefully organize the information included in the magazine and make use of such articles that are closely related to the topic of the magazine
- use multiple sources of information in developing an accurate written project
- with each article mention the links of the web sites and other resources you use
- use appropriate language free of grammar, spelling, punctuation and sentence structure errors in your written project
- write at least half of the articles on your own
- effectively use graphic component, and make the magazine design attractive

Use this schedule to when working on the project to know what to do and when.

Date	Things to do
Week 2 day 2 19.04.2011	In class we will discuss the assignment (the project)
Week 3 day 1 21.04.2011	Introduce your group members and the topic of your magazine
Up to week 4 day 1 28.04.2011	Work hard on gathering information. You must all search for relevant articles and you must all participate in writing original articles
Week 4 day 1 28.04.2011	Hand in the first draft and go on working on the content of the magazine
Week 5 day 1 05.05.2011	Get feedback on the first draft. Continue working towards improvements, adding information and edition of the magazine
Week 7 day 1 19.05.2011	Hand in the second draft of your project
Week 7 day 2 24.05.2011	Receive feedback on the second draft. Finalize the project. Work extensively on the design of the magazine
Week 9 day 1 02.06.2011	Hand in the third draft of the project
Week 9 day 2 07.06.2011	Receive feedback. In class, practice oral presentation skills
Week 10 day 1 09.06.2011	Make a final presentation of the project and hand in the final written version
Week 10 day 2 14.06.2011	In class we will have a class discussion when you will evaluate the process of working on the project and the project itself (assessment of the activities, discussion of the achievements, identification of errors and appraisal)

Appendix D - Questionnaire

Student Questionnaire

This anonymous and confidential questionnaire is part of a thesis research study being conducted with the support of the Department of English Programs at the American University of Armenia. It seeks to find out the students' attitudes towards Project Work

Now that you've completed your project, please circle the three words below which best sum up your feelings about it:

challenging	enjoyable	worthwhile	scary	useful	interesting	exciting
tedious	unrewarding	straightforward	frustrating	time-consuming	hard	difficult

Are there any other words that come to mind? _____

Please, indicate the degree to which you agree with each of the following statements.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
1. Working on the project was a useful and beneficial learning experience for me.					
2. The stages of the project helped me understand my learning progress of English.					
3. I find the amount of time and effort I spent on the project reasonable.					
4. The project helped me identify what type of problems I had in learning English.					
5. Project work helped me feel more responsible for my learning					
6. I like doing project work better than doing homework assignments every day.					
7. Project work helped me learn English more effectively.					

If you have any other comments please use the space below

_____ Thank you very much for giving up your time to complete this questionnaire.

Table 1: Interview questions for students

	Questions
1.	Did you like the project in general? Do you think Project work is an effective way to learn English? Why?
2.	Can you name some advantages and disadvantages of Project Work?
3.	Do you think that Project Work helped you to develop your English? If yes, what skills do you think Project Work helped you to develop?

Table 2. Raw Data

ID	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5	Q6	Q7	Q8
1	2	4	5	4	4	2	2	4
2	1	4	5	4	3	1	2	4
3	3	5	4	4	4	3	1	5
4	2	5	3	4	5	1	3	5
5	2	5	4	4	3	2	1	5
6	3	4	4	4	4	2	3	4
7	2	2	4	5	3	2	2	4

Table 3. Questionnaire results

SA - strongly agree, A - agree, Neither A nor D - neither agree nor disagree, D - disagree, SD - strongly disagree

Question	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Q1	3	6	0	0	0
Q2	2	5	1	1	0
Q3	2	5	1	1	0
Q4	3	2	2	2	0
Q5	3	4	1	1	0
Q6	3	2	3	1	0
Q7	2	5	2	0	0

Table 4. Questionnaire item analysis in percentages

Questions	Strongly	Agree	Neither agree nor	Disagree	Strongly
-----------	----------	-------	-------------------	----------	----------

	agree		disagree		disagree
Q1	33,3	66,6	0	0	0
Q2	22,2	55,5	11,1	11,1	0
Q3	22,2	55,5	11,1	11,1	0
Q4	33,3	22,2	22,2	22,2	0
Q5	33,3	44,4	11,1	11,1	0
Q6	33,3	22,2	33,3	11,1	0
Q7	22,2	55,5	22,2	0	0

Table 5. Mann-Whitney U Test: test ranks

Ranks

	group	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks
pretest	experimental	7	5,64	39,50
	control	9	10,72	96,50
	Total	16		
test1	experimental	7	11,14	78,00
	control	11	8,45	93,00
	Total	18		
quiz1	experimental	7	8,43	59,00
	control	9	8,56	77,00
	Total	16		
test2	experimental	7	9,29	65,00
	control	11	9,64	106,00
	Total	18		

**Table 6. Mann-Whitney U Test: Significance of test results
Test Statistics^b**

	pretest	test1	quiz1	test2
Mann-Whitney U	11,500	27,000	31,000	37,000
Wilcoxon W	39,500	93,000	59,000	65,000
Z	-2,139	-1,042	-,053	-,136
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	,032	,297	,958	,892
Exact Sig. [2*(1-tailed Sig.)]	,031 ^a	,328 ^a	1,000 ^a	,930 ^a

a. Not corrected for ties.

b. Grouping Variable: group

Table 7. Friedman Test: Significance of test results for the experimental group

N	5
Chi-Square	11,571
df	3
Asymp. Sig.	,009

a. group = experimental

b. Friedman Test

Table 8. Friedman Test: Significance of test results for the control group

N	8
Chi-Square	11,038
df	3
Asymp. Sig.	,012

a. group = control

b. Friedman Test

Table 9. Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test: Comparison of pre- test and test1 in experimental group

Ranks^d

	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks
test1 - pretest Negative Ranks	0 ^a	.00	.00
Positive Ranks	6 ^b	3.50	21.00

Ties	0 ^c		
Total	6		

- a. test1 < pretest
- b. test1 > pretest
- c. test1 = pretest
- d. group = experimental

Test Statistics^{b,c}

	test1 - pretest
Z	-2.201 ^a
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.028

- a. Based on negative ranks.
- b. group = experimental
- c. Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test

Table 10. Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test: Comparison of pre- test and test1 in control group

Ranks^d

	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks
test1 - pretest Negative Ranks	2 ^a	2.50	5.00
Positive Ranks	7 ^b	5.71	40.00
Ties	0 ^c		
Total	9		

- a. test1 < pretest
- b. test1 > pretest
- c. test1 = pretest
- d. group = control

Test Statistics^{b,c}

	test1 - pretest
Z	-2.073 ^a
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.038

- a. Based on negative ranks.
- b. group = control

Test Statistics^{b,c}

	test1 - pretest
Z	-2.073 ^a
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.038

- a. Based on negative ranks.
- b. group = control
- c. Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test

Table 11. Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test: Comparison of pre- test and quiz1 in experimental group

Ranks^d

	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks
quiz1 - pretest Negative Ranks	0 ^a	,00	,00
Positive Ranks	6 ^b	3,50	21,00
Ties	0 ^c		
Total	6		

- a. quiz1 < pretest
- b. quiz1 > pretest
- c. quiz1 = pretest
- d. group = experimental

Test Statistics^{b,c}

	quiz1 - pretest
Z	-2,201 ^a
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	,028

- a. Based on negative ranks.
- b. group = experimental
- c. Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test

Table 12. Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test: Comparison of pre- test and quiz1 in control group

Ranks^d

	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks

quiz1 - pretest Negative Ranks	0 ^a	,00	,00
Positive Ranks	7 ^b	4,00	28,00
Ties	1 ^c		
Total	8		

- a. quiz1 < pretest
- b. quiz1 > pretest
- c. quiz1 = pretest
- d. group = control

Test Statistics^{b,c}

	quiz1 - pretest
Z	-2,375 ^a
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	,018

- a. Based on negative ranks.
- b. group = control
- c. Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test

Table 13. Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test: Comparison of pre- test and test2 in experimental group

Ranks^d

	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks
test2 - pretest Negative Ranks	0 ^a	,00	,00
Positive Ranks	6 ^b	3,50	21,00
Ties	0 ^c		
Total	6		

- a. test2 < pretest
- b. test2 > pretest
- c. test2 = pretest
- d. group = experimental

Test Statistics^{b,c}

	test2 - pretest
Z	-2,201 ^a

Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	,028
------------------------	------

- a. Based on negative ranks.
- b. group = experimental
- c. Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test

Table 14. Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test: Comparison of pre- test and test2 in control group

Ranks^d

	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks
test2 - pretest Negative Ranks	2 ^a	3,50	7,00
Positive Ranks	7 ^b	5,43	38,00
Ties	0 ^c		
Total	9		

- a. test2 < pretest
- b. test2 > pretest
- c. test2 = pretest
- d. group = control

Test Statistics^{b,c}

	test2 - pretest
Z	-1,836 ^a
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	,066

- a. Based on negative ranks.
- b. group = control
- c. Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test

Table 15. Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test: Comparison of test1 and quiz1 in experimental group

Ranks^d

	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks
quiz1 - test1 Negative Ranks	3 ^a	3,67	11,00
Positive Ranks	3 ^b	3,33	10,00
Ties	0 ^c		
Total	6		

- a. quiz1 < test1
- b. quiz1 > test1
- c. quiz1 = test1
- d. group = experimental

Test Statistics^{b,c}

	quiz1 - test1
Z	-,105 ^a
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	,917

- a. Based on positive ranks.
- b. group = experimental
- c. Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test

Table 16. Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test: Comparison of test1 and quiz1 in control group

Ranks^d

	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks
quiz1 - test1 Negative Ranks	2 ^a	6,50	13,00
Positive Ranks	7 ^b	4,57	32,00
Ties	0 ^c		
Total	9		

- a. quiz1 < test1
- b. quiz1 > test1
- c. quiz1 = test1
- d. group = control

Test Statistics^{b,c}

	quiz1 - test1
Z	-1,125 ^a
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	,260

- a. Based on negative ranks.
- b. group = control
- c. Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test

Table 17. Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test: Comparison of test1 and test2 in experimental group

Ranks^d

	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks
test2 - test1 Negative Ranks	5 ^a	4,00	20,00
Positive Ranks	1 ^b	1,00	1,00
Ties	1 ^c		
Total	7		

a. test2 < test1

b. test2 > test1

c. test2 = test1

d. group = experimental

Test Statistics^{b,c}

	test2 - test1
Z	-1,992 ^a
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	,046

a. Based on positive ranks.

b. group = experimental

c. Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test

Table 18. Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test: Comparison of test1 and test2 in control group

Ranks^d

	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks
test2 - test1 Negative Ranks	5 ^a	6,60	33,00
Positive Ranks	6 ^b	5,50	33,00
Ties	0 ^c		
Total	11		

a. test2 < test1

b. test2 > test1

c. test2 = test1

Ranks^d

	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks
test2 - test1 Negative Ranks	5 ^a	6,60	33,00
Positive Ranks	6 ^b	5,50	33,00
Ties	0 ^c		
Total	11		

- a. test2 < test1
- b. test2 > test1
- d. group = control

Test Statistics^{b,c}

	test2 - test1
Z	,000 ^a
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	1,000

- a. The sum of negative ranks equals the sum of positive ranks.
- b. group = control
- c. Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test

Table 19. Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test: Comparison of quiz1 and test2 in experimental group

Ranks^d

	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks
test2 - quiz1 Negative Ranks	5 ^a	3,60	18,00
Positive Ranks	1 ^b	3,00	3,00
Ties	0 ^c		
Total	6		

- a. test2 < quiz1
- b. test2 > quiz1
- c. test2 = quiz1
- d. group = experimental

Test Statistics^{b,c}

	test2 - quiz1
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Z	-1,572 ^a
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	,116

- a. Based on positive ranks.
- b. group = experimental
- c. Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test

Table 20. Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test: Comparison of quiz1 and test2 in control group

Ranks^d

	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks
test2 - quiz1 Negative Ranks	5 ^a	5,00	25,00
Positive Ranks	3 ^b	3,67	11,00
Ties	1 ^c		
Total	9		

- a. test2 < quiz1
- b. test2 > quiz1
- c. test2 = quiz1
- d. group = control

Test Statistics^{b,c}

	test2 - quiz1
Z	-,980 ^a
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	,327

- a. Based on positive ranks.
- b. group = control
- c. Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test