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THE IMPLEMENTATION OF PROJECT-BASED LEARNING METHODOLOGY IN SOCIAL SCIENCE EDUCATION AT V. BRUSOV STATE UNIVERSITY

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Abstract: *For a couple of decades, higher education in Social Sciences has shifted away from the simple transmission of theories and abstract knowledge toward the development of professional, social, and real-life skills applicable after graduation. In this regard, Project-Based Learning (PBL) has proven to be one of the most effective methodologies for achieving these outcomes. Accordingly, the current paper examines how the PBL methodology is implemented and adopted when teaching English for Specific Purposes (ESP) to Armenian students at the Faculty of Public Communication and Service at Brusov State University. Specifically, the article illustrates how PBL was implemented and what outcomes were achieved with 83 students across the Public Relations (PR), Service, and Tourism departments. The methodology relies on a data-driven, evidence-based descriptive approach that retrospectively analyzes the project's results alongside relevant domain literature. The empirical findings are supported by instructor observations, a focus-group discussion with a representative sample of 20 students and language profiling to track language growth. The results indicate that implementing PBL significantly enhanced students' professional domain knowledge, social skills, digital literacy and language proficiency, while also fostering their emotional development.*

Keywords: *project-based learning methodology, interviews, social skills, language proficiency, professional knowledge, empathy, digital literacy*

Introduction

Over the last couple of decades, Project-Based Learning (PBL) has gained considerable momentum in higher education. This shift is hardly surprising. Universities are under increasing pressure to prepare graduates who can meet the

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rigorous demands of today's job market (Alanazi & Benlaria, 2023). Beyond theoretical knowledge, modern graduates must possess well-honed cognitive abilities, soft skills (Lungu, 2022; Yulhendri et al., 2021), digital literacy, and strong language skills. While traditional higher education has historically focused on imparting discipline-specific theory (Barnett, 2022) and evaluating academic progress, conventional curricula often fall short of delivering the practical, real-world competencies employers expect.

PBL helps bridge this gap. Grounded in a "learning-by-doing" approach, PBL engages students in identifying discipline-specific challenges and working collaboratively to develop research-driven solutions. As a multi-phased, research-oriented methodology, it can easily run alongside formal course syllabi. In doing so, universities can teach required academic content while cultivating the practical competencies sought by the workforce. Unsurprisingly, PBL is widely recognized for enabling the "simultaneous acquisition of language, content and skills" (Beckett & Slater, 2005, p. 108).

In practice, PBL guides students through identifying real-world problems, formulating research questions, selecting appropriate data collection tools, working in teams to execute solutions, and presenting their findings on digital platforms (Krajcik & Shin, 2014; Larmer & Mergendoller, 2015a; Parker et al., 2013). This approach actively fosters high-level cognitive, interpersonal, and intrapersonal social skills (Pellegrino & Hilton, 2012), language proficiency, and operational software literacy (van Deursen & van Dijk, 2014). Rather than passively reading and analyzing course materials, students evaluate information critically and produce meaningful real-world output.

Despite these benefits, PBL remains underutilized within Social Sciences in Armenia - specifically across Public Relations, Service, and Tourism programs - where research on its implementation is scarce. A major barrier is the limited awareness of PBL among English for Specific Purposes (ESP) instructors, which has hindered localized adaptations of the framework, hence there are few academic publications on the gains of this methodology in a higher education context. Addressing this gap, the present study reflects on the practical implementation of PBL across these three departments.

Drawing on retrospective and data-driven descriptive findings, a focus group discussion, language profiling and instructor observation, this paper demonstrates how EFL instructors, teaching ESP in the Social Sciences, can integrate PBL into their curricula with positive results. Specifically, the findings highlight gains in professional competencies - such as interviewing techniques (Katz, 1974) - as well as social skills such as interpersonal communication within the team and with the

participant (Hargie, 2019). Language proficiency (vocabulary, grammar, and syntax) which is about language knowledge and its development (Ellis, 2015) is also impacted by PBL. The methodology also develops learners' digital literacy through creating and communicating information with digital technologies and platforms (Hinostroza et al., 2025; Vuorikari et al., 2022). Moreover, it fosters emotional features such as empathy which is the capacity to understand, share, and vicariously experience the feelings, perspectives, and emotional states of another person (Decety & Jackson, 2004).

Literature Review

The emergence of PBL is rooted in its effectiveness compared to passive learning, which has long been the norm in many educational settings worldwide. Early on, Dewey (1916, 1938) challenged the reliance on memorization and the view of learners as passive receivers of information. Instead, he advocated for student-centered, experiential learning, arguing that education should not merely present static facts, but serve as a dynamic, social process where students learn through active inquiry and engagement with real-world problems. For Dewey, education mirrors social reality, positioning students as active problem solvers. The problem-solution is collaborative, due to what they develop their social skills. Grounded in meaningful, experiential practice, PBL addresses students' cognitive and emotional needs (Šmitienė et al., 2026) and drives higher academic achievement such as professional knowledge and language proficiency (Chen & Yang, 2019).

Building on this foundation, Kilpatrick (1918), another pioneer of project-based approaches, contended that when learning is purposeful and personally meaningful, student motivation rises, yielding deeper and more lasting outcomes. Interdisciplinary learning tied to personal relevance similarly fosters high motivation (Sirwesvary & Jamaludin, 2025). Essentially, PBL immerses students in social reality, guiding them to pinpoint domain-specific challenges and devise practical solutions. Through active participation in authentic projects (Blumenfeld et al., 1991), learners not only internalize theoretical content more effectively but also learn to apply it. These benefits were recently corroborated by a meta-analysis of 42 high-quality experimental studies involving 5,247 undergraduate biology students across 18 countries (Nurkanti et al., 2025), which confirmed PBL's efficacy in fostering critical thinking and domain-specific knowledge (Zhang & Ma, 2023). Šmitienė et al. (2026) observed similar positive outcomes in primary education settings.

Nevertheless, like any pedagogical framework, PBL presents notable challenges, including tight time constraints, insufficient methodological support,

and difficulties with technology integration. A lack of instructional guidance and familiarity can result in partial or flawed implementation, ultimately harming academic performance (Capraro et al., 2016). Consequently, despite strong empirical support for its long-term benefits, PBL remains underutilized in many contexts - particularly in developing and least-developed nations - primarily due to limited awareness of the methodology. This explains the scarcity of published research on PBL outcomes within Social Sciences in Armenia. To date, only a single online research article has investigated the application of PBL within the Armenian educational landscape - specifically examining its implementation in ninth-grade Social Studies classes at a public school (Poghosyan et al., 2026). Their findings demonstrated that PBL successfully fostered students' critical thinking, analytical skills, and civic consciousness within a secondary school environment. However, a systemic gap remains regarding how PBL is operationalized within higher education for the Social Sciences, as well as the specific outcomes achieved at the tertiary level. The present study directly addresses this gap by illustrating how PBL was adapted and implemented for Social Sciences university students in Armenia, providing a detailed account of the learning outcomes recorded. These outcomes confirm the acquisition of professional, social, and digital skills, alongside the development of emotional features and language proficiency - without which the project could not have been completed successfully. This retrospective, data-driven approach is characteristic of research on PBL methodology, as step-by-step progress relies directly on acquiring these skills, the practice of which ultimately drives final learning gains.

Methods

To implement Project-Based Learning (PBL) methodology, 83 students from the Public Relations, Service, and Tourism departments at V. Brusov State University engaged in a project focused on interviewing survivors of the 2020 Artsakh War. For this purpose, students first underwent a comprehensive training phase on interviewing as a professional data collection tool. Working in pairs or small groups, the students subsequently selected and interviewed a total of 25 participants. They recorded the interviews and transcribed them in Armenian, submitting the transcripts for instructor feedback through two review cycles. Following this, the students translated the interviews into English, underwent a peer-review process, and submitted the translated texts for two additional rounds of instructor feedback. From this repository, final interviews were selected based on the depth of the narratives and the availability of signed written consent. This effort culminated in the publication of a bilingual edited volume titled *"2020 Artsakh*

War through the Eyes of the Survivors: An Interview Anthology." The project spanned approximately one year, from October 2024 to November 2025, across several distinct phases detailed in Table 1.

All participating students provided informed consent and were notified of their right to withdraw from the project at any stage. To present the research findings of the PBL implementation, this paper adopts a data-driven, evidence-based descriptive approach that details the specific learning outcomes and competencies students attained across each project phase. This retrospective framework confirms the acquisition of the target skills outlined in the Literature Review and Discussion sections; indeed, completing the final project output - the anthology of the interviews - would not have been possible without applying these specific skills and features in practice. To ensure methodological rigor, the results were triangulated using a focus group discussion with 20 students alongside instructor observations. Instructor observation of both the syllabi and phase execution served as an integral component of the research methodology. Finally, language profiling was conducted to analyze which language was acquired beyond the B1 proficiency level.

Table 1: The Timeline of The Project-Based Learning Methodology Implementation

Timeline	**Stages**
October	Problem identification
November	Reading professional literature, Question formulations
December	Interviews transcribed in Armenian
January	Break time
February	Submission based on feedback
March	Revision to submit
April	Translation in English, Peer feedback
May	Submission, Teacher Feedback
June	Final Submission, Teacher Feedback
July – November	Publication start and end

Results and Discussion

The implementation of Project-Based Learning (PBL) methodology within the English as a Foreign Language (EFL) context for students in the Public Relations, Service, and Tourism departments is framed around the core project phases outlined by Larmer, Mergendoller, and Boss (2015).

The first stage was the entry/launch phase. During this phase, students were asked to brainstorm a question that interested them and aligned closely with their future professions. Many students shared their deep concerns regarding the Artsakh

war, alongside the sad stories they had encountered in their personal surroundings. Recognizing the critical need to cultivate the social skills previously defined for students in PR, Service, and Tourism, the project was designed to train them in conducting interviews with war survivors. To achieve this, relevant literature on interviewing as a data collection tool was selected, supplemented by key readings on research ethics.

The project aimed to foster students' professional, social, linguistic, and digital competencies, while simultaneously documenting the lived experiences of war survivors. Furthermore, this pedagogical approach offered significant potential for nurturing emotional learning, particularly empathy. Following the formulation of these overarching goals, the specific project objectives were presented to the students: identifying the primary research problem, dividing into small groups, and distributing individual roles with a clear vision of the final output. Deadlines for each phase were then established. Throughout this process, the project remained instructor-guided.

The second stage involved acquiring knowledge and skills (Larmer et al., 2015). In this phase, students received comprehensive instruction on interviewing as a scientific data collection tool. They were assigned reading chapters detailing the mechanics of interviewing, its relative advantages and disadvantages, and its overall methodological strengths and weaknesses. Crucially, students were exposed to the ethical considerations of interviewing, particularly when working with vulnerable populations. To reinforce these concepts, they analyzed various video recordings of real-world interviews, evaluating practical examples to identify what the interviewers executed effectively or where errors occurred.

Each chapter was discussed collectively in class through instructor-led questioning and student-initiated inquiries. Discussion sessions concluded with post-chapter assessment questions whose answers were reviewed collaboratively. Once students demonstrated confidence in their understanding, the class collectively finalized nine structured questions to guide their interviews. A structured interview format was selected as the most effective approach given the students' lack of prior empirical data collection experience. The questions were the following:

1. Would you provide the details of your family members' names/surnames/father's names, birth dates, and occupations?
2. Would you identify the geographical location of where you lived (the name of the city, village, town, district, the address and how close it was to the capital)?
3. What did you do for a living?

4. How did you spend your daily lives?
5. What changed in your life when the war began?
6. Would you share your experience of the actual immigration (food, soldiers on the road, cold, children, lack of cars….)?
7. Where are you located now (country name, district, neighbourhood,… as many details as possible BUT NOT the current address)?
8. How is your current life different from your past life?
9. What do you miss most from your past in your current place of residence?

As can be observed from the questions, the interview questions were primarily factual, designed specifically to document the personal accounts of the forcibly displaced population. This approach ensured that the recorded narratives accurately reflected the authentic hardships endured by the people of Artsakh. The questions probed specific details regarding where the participants had lived, their livelihoods, and their firsthand experiences during the war, the blockade, and their eventual forced migration to the Republic of Armenia. The final three questions explored the emotional states and ongoing experiences of the Artsakh refugees in their current locations following displacement. These final prompts were open-ended, thereby facilitating the data elicitation process for the students. Unlike closed-ended questions, which elicit simple yes/no responses and would have forced inexperienced student interviewers to constantly improvise ways to sustain the dialogue, open-ended questions created ideal conditions for gathering rich, detailed narrative data.

The third phase was product creation and revision (Larmer et al., 2015). During this stage, the students transcribed the recorded interviews, which had been conducted in Armenian. A primary challenge in this process was preserving the linguistic authenticity of the interviewees' speech. Because the participants were predominantly from rural areas with vocational backgrounds, their language was largely informal, heavily accented with the Artsakh dialect, and interspersed with numerous Russian loanwords. While preserving the genuineness of the interviews was important, certain standardized adjustments were necessary; for example, the Russian term “подвал” (*basement*) was replaced with its Armenian equivalent, “նկուղ”. Similarly, Russian terms for military vehicles, weaponry, and personnel ranks were transcribed using their formal Armenian equivalents. Transcripts were submitted as Word documents via email according to strict deadlines, and each submission received detailed instructor feedback. This feedback focused on linguistic accuracy - including spelling, lexical choice, grammar, and syntax - while also evaluating the depth and relevance of the responses to assess the level of effort students had invested in data collection. Students were given one week to

address this feedback and submit a revised Armenian draft. Only after finalizing the Armenian versions did students begin translating the interviews into English.

Students were instructed to produce a free translation that would evoke the same emotional and rhetorical effect on English readers as the original Armenian texts. For this three-week translation task, students were encouraged to utilize AI tools such as ChatGPT and Gemini AI. Prior to translation, they received explicit instruction on the ethical and responsible use of AI, ensuring these tools were employed specifically for resolving vocabulary gaps, improving sentence fluency, or rendering complex thoughts into natural English phrasing. The translated English versions then underwent a peer-review stage, followed by one week designated for revision. The final submissions were subjected to AI-detection analysis, with texts accepted only when AI metrics remained below 8 - 10%. Evaluation of the English transcripts assessed grammatical precision, vocabulary use, syntax, spelling, topical relevance, and the overall level of narrative detail.

The fourth phase was the public presentation (Larmer et al., 2015). For this final stage, the project culminated in the publication of a bilingual edited volume titled *"2020 Artsakh War Through the Eyes of the Survivors: An Interview Anthology."* Prior to compilation, the interviews underwent a rigorous selection process wherein narratives lacking sufficient detail or formal written consent were excluded. Only transcripts containing thorough responses and explicit written authorization for public distribution were selected for publication. In total, the anthology featured 25 interviews conducted by 44 students, published by the "Armav" publishing house. The book is currently available in print, with plans underway to digitize the volume and provide open-access electronic availability across various digital platforms.

As already discussed, PBL methodology involves identifying real-life problems specific to the discipline and aiming to solve them, with the output presented and disseminated on digital platforms. This teaching methodology is about applying the knowledge, analyzing and synthesizing the language and different sources, evaluating different choices and creating outputs. During this process students develop their professional skills, language skills, social skills, empathy, and digital literacy (Condliffe, 2017; Hill et al., 2021; Pellegrino & Hilton, 2012).

Beginning with professional knowledge and skills, these competencies were developed across the first two project phases - the launch phase and the knowledge/skills acquisition phase (Larmer et al., 2015). Student mastery was evidenced through the core tasks completed in each stage. During the first phase, students worked in groups to brainstorm potential problems using mind maps. After pooling their responses, they learned to analyze the data using relative frequency distribution to isolate the topic of greatest shared interest: documenting

the survival stories of the people of Artsakh. This methodology constitutes professional knowledge, equips future Social Science professionals to identify workplace challenges, and allows them to systematically prioritize key issues. Interviewing matters because PR experts apply interviewing skills in executive profiling, media interactions, and crisis-communication media engagements (Newsom & Haynes, 2017; Wilcox & Reber, 2016). Meanwhile, Service students practice interviewing to gather qualitative user feedback, conduct client intake, and lead staff training (Bolton et al., 2018). Similarly, Tourism students use interviewing techniques to analyze guest experiences, identify customer needs for tailored travel packages, and collect structured feedback (Guthrie & Anderson, 2010). Focus group feedback confirmed that students had no prior exposure to relative frequency calculations before this introductory phase.

As for the second phase, the focus shifted to interviewing as a data collection tool. Students read assigned book chapters and journal articles covering interview structures, content, implementation strategies, and methodological advantages/disadvanatges. They also analyzed video recordings of actual interviews to evaluate their strengths and weaknesses. According to focus group data, while students possessed a basic awareness of what an interview was, their prior knowledge was extremely limited; they lacked an understanding of its practical advantages, structural requirements, and procedural nuances. The project was their first practical opportunity to conduct real-life interviews. Furthermore, none of the participating students possessed prior experience in conducting interviews, a gap they noted with concern, and recognized how a lack of practical research skills hindered their professional competitiveness. Consequently, they welcomed the opportunity for real-world practice. Additionally, instructor observation of the students' syllabi also confirmed the lack of any lessons or units about the practical implementation of interviewing as a data collection tool. Their successful execution and submission of the interviews demonstrated that they had acquired both the conceptual framework of high-quality interviewing and the practical skill to carry it out.

A critical outcome of this phase concerned research ethics, particularly when working with vulnerable populations on sensitive topics. Within the Armenian higher education context, there is a notable absence of certified IRB (Institutional Review Board) instructors to navigate these complex ethical standards. All instruction regarding ethical open-ended interviewing and responsible public dissemination was delivered directly through this PBL project under the guidance of an IRB-certified instructor. The conducted interviews confirm that they

successfully internalized and practiced ethical research standards within the project.

For the social skills, the students developed active listening, verbal clarity, teamwork, conflict resolution, adaptability, and negotiation skills while working with one another and the interviewees (Hargie, 2019). In the first phase of working with one another, teams were required to negotiate logistical decisions, such as identifying interviewees, selecting shared interview locations, and assigning roles for conducting and recording the interviews. This stage demanded constant adaptation and clear communication, as students needed to distribute the workload equally. They also had to articulate the rationale behind complex translation and transcription choices in the second phase - such as handling informal register, managing dialectal variations, replacing Russian borrowings with appropriate Armenian equivalents, and rendering these concepts into English without losing valuable contextual nuance. Reaching consensus required active listening; each student brought their own interpretation of specific lexical items, forcing the group to evaluate competing suggestions to select the most accurate version for the final transcript. During focus group discussions, participants reflected that maintaining transparent, open communication was essential; without it, their best collaborative ideas would not have emerged. They noted that managing project deadlines and workload was feasible only through balanced participation and regular updates.

When interacting with interviewees in the second phase, students further refined their active listening and conflict resolution skills. Active listening extended beyond detailed note-taking and backchanneling; it required knowing when to maintain silence. When interviewing war survivors, managing pauses became vital, as the narratives were often laden with intense, unprocessed emotion that could be triggered by a single prompt. In focus group sessions, students described instances where an interviewee broke down in tears; rather than interrupting or pressing forward, students learned to sit in silence and give time to the participant to compose themselves before continuing. This conscious behavior was a direct outcome of the project's preparatory phase such as watching interview videos with similar scenarios, which equipped learners to handle sensitive, emotionally-charged interactions.

Regarding conflict resolution in the second phase, students encountered complex ethical challenges, such as safeguarding the anonymity of soldiers' families or participants who requested that their parents' identity remain concealed. Conversely, other interviewees agreed to participate only on the condition that their stories were made publicly available. While the course instructor mediated these underlying conflicts, the students themselves served as the direct messengers of

these resolutions to the participants. In focus group reflections, students rated conflict resolution as one of the most challenging skills to master during the project, noting that they would have struggled to navigate these dilemmas without guidance. Nevertheless, they valued the experience, concluding that the critical takeaways were the necessity of careful planning and a comprehensive understanding of their sample population - two factors that provided the flexibility to manage how immediate on-the-spot decisions impact overall research outcomes. The third phase of the project - creating and revising (Larmer et al., 2015) - was the one that develop these social skills.

The creation and revision as the third phase (Larmer et al., 2015) fostered empathy (Decety & Jackson, 2004; Šmitienė et al., 2026). Throughout the interviews, students listened to harrowing accounts of loss - of children, parents, and spouses lost during the war and in the aftermath of the blockade, with several families having endured multiple casualties. They witnessed the grief of a mother who had lost both her husband and son to the war, and shared the pain of a son who spent years searching for his missing father. During the focus group discussions, students reflected that hearing these personal narratives allowed them to experience the reality of the war closely and deeply. While they were intellectually aware of the war's horrors, they admitted they had not fully grasped the true extent of the misery and devastation that the war caused. The accounts felt so overwhelming that they almost seemed surreal, leaving students deeply moved by the resilience of individuals who survived under conditions lacking basic food, security, and defense.

A central concern raised by the students in the focus group discussion was the overwhelming sense of hopelessness expressed by many participants, whose inability to foresee a better future only deepened their sorrow. Moved by these interactions, students established enduring relationships with several families, choosing to visit them periodically after the project ended so as not to leave them isolated in their grief. Ultimately, these experiences enabled students to develop a profound sense of empathy and compassion for the participants' suffering. Navigating this harsh reality equipped students with a heightened capacity for empathy that extends beyond the classroom - preparing them to better understand and support future co-workers, community members, or anyone facing hardship.

Regarding digital literacy skills, students developed them in the presentation phase (Larmer et al., 2015; van Deursen & van Dijk, 2014). In this pase they learned how to record audio interviews, transcribe spoken data using information technologies, and format text according to specific publishing requirements in Microsoft Word. Focus group discussions revealed that none of the students had

prior experience with speech transcription. As a novel task, they characterized it as particularly demanding and time-consuming, noting that transcribing an answer to a single question could take hours due to the phonetic and lexical complexities of the Artsakh dialect, which frequently challenged speech intelligibility. To navigate these difficulties, students gained platform fluency by utilizing AI-powered transcription tools, specifically Otter.ai and Fireflies.ai, to convert spoken audio into draft texts.

Simultaneously, students refined their document editing skills in Microsoft Word, learning how to structure complex text, embed and align images, and visually differentiate interview prompts from participant responses. They also developed professional digital communication skills by composing contextualized, formal emails to both their course instructor and the book editor. For many participants, communicating with the instructor in English represented their first experience drafting professional emails in a foreign language as shared in the focus group discussion.

Finally, as instructor observations showed students engaged in the post-publication dissemination process, using various social media platforms to raise public awareness and promote the book. Through this self-directed activity, they practiced collaborative multimodal authorship by designing visual posts that integrated photographs of the book with promotional captions.

As this was a methodology implemented in an ESP course for professional purposes, the students' language development was also examined in the creation and revision phase (Larmer et al., 2015). The students were at B1 proficiency level according to the curriculum of the university. This level was also confirmed by the Ultimate Vocabulary Levels Test. Based on the analysis of the interviews at the lexical, grammatical and syntactic levels through language profiling, the following outcomes were detected. The PR students acquired specialized professional vocabulary related to news media, information dissemination, and publishing (*anonymous, awareness, blacklist, to disclose, rumour*), to crisis communication (*to assess, to assure, chaotic, conflict, to escalate, negotiation, tension, uncertainty*), and to public opinion and public action (*confidence, conspiracy, demonstration, indifference, perception*). There were also gains in the words describing organisations, and public events such as *affairs, affiliated, anniversary, mayor, memorial,* and *official*. The interviews also contained the vocabulary to describe hospitality and customer care for Service students (*to approach, cleanliness, to ensure, expectation, hygiene, inquire, to insult*). Other profession-related vocabualry was bound to supplies, rationing and distribution (*coupon, designated, distribute, basic necessities, portion, to register, reserves, scarce,*

shortage, to spoil, unavailable), safety and emergency services (*critical, to evacuate/evacuation, rescuer, shelter*), and jobs or households (*accountant, chores, household, establishment, laundry, mechanic, occupation, retirement, saleswoman, senior specialist, shopkeeper, stable job, tuition fees, tutoring*). There was also travel- and transport-connected vocabulary for Tourism students, i.e. *to accompany, belongings, convoy, delay, to encounter, to fuel, to postpone, to proceed,* and *trunk*. Words related to borders and checks included *checkpoint, to confiscate,* and *inspect/inspection*. Places, nature and landscape were expressed with *birthplace, cave, district, homeland, lively, orchard, province, regional, remarkable, rural, scent,* and *villager*. Culture, food and heritage vocabulary was *cemetery, dairy, dialect, enthusiast, ethnographic ensemble* and *rehearsal*. Students acquired domain-specific vocabulary pertaining to accommodation, residential arrangements, and migration such as *displacement, emigration, immigration, refuge, to relocate, rental, residence, to settle,* and *temporary*. Considering the specificity of the project, the students also acquired military terms such as weaponry names (*artillery, gunshots, gunfire, explosions, drones, bullets, ammunition, tank*), military equipment names (*military unit, military outposts, vehicle, truck, checkpoint, barricade, wood stoves*), names of military personnel (*Russian peacekeepers, military, regiment, battalion, platoon, non-commissioned officer, company captain, tank mechanic, rescuers, troops*), as well as war-related words (*blockade, bombardment, combat operations, battlefield, frontlines, raid, evacuation, displacement, forced displacement, emigration, immigration, siege, genocide, surrender, diversion groups, refugees, wounded, injured, corpses, morgues, combat, shooting, shelling*). Moreover, the students began to distinguish between formal vocabulary and slang, perceiving their differences and context-specific uses. This was connected to the interviewees' dialect, which also included many Russian words. However, the assignment had to be submitted in writing; hence, the students had to search for more formal synonyms for those informal lexical units such as “подвал” and “basement”.

Additionally, the students improved their grammar, specifically the use of the past tense such as past simple (e.g. *"My daily life **was filled** with love and warmth." , "Our life **turned** into a real nightmare.", "We **got together** as families, **took** the necessary supplies and **left** our settlement.", "I **worked** as a nurse for many years.", or "I **heard** the sound of heavy artillery*) and past perfect (e.g. *“The city **had completely been surrounded** by the enemy." , "People **had been trying** to leave since the early morning.", "The diversion group **had entered** the village.", "The war **hadn't happened**, I think I would still have come here to study”).* They

also applied the passive voice (*"The connection **was restored**." , "We **were evacuated** between the 27th and 29th.", "The house **was surrounded**.", "People **were being given** gasoline." or "The journey **was marked** by fear and terror."*) and conditionals (e.g. *"If the war hadn't happened, I think I would still have come here to study, but everything would have been different.", "No matter whatever happened, we would try to overcome the hardship" or* "If we left, that would be the end; there would be nothing left to protect"). The students became skilled in using conjunctions and connectives to make the transition between ideas smoother and more coherent (e.g. *"After that, each of us would run our business: I went to school, my father went to work, and my mother did the housework., "Later, my brother called and said the situation was very bad and that we should leave and when everything calmed down we would come back, but my grandfather did not let us go.", "Well, at first, we were all in one car - a 'Zhiguli.' Altogether, there were 2-3 families; around 11 of us were sitting in one car."* or *"Despite all the difficulties and losses, we were always satisfied with what we had.").*

In this section, it is also worth addressing the challenges of implementing PBL methodology in an ESP context. As Read (2020) highlights, maintaining student motivation presents a key hurdle. Because PBL is multi-phased and often spans several months, students can easily grow disengaged when tangible results are not immediately visible during the initial stages. The same happened in the current project. To address this issue, the instructor frequently reminded students of the social impact their projects would have on local communities, while emphasizing how mastering interview skills serves as a vital professional asset.

Another difficulty stemmed from the lack of existing models. Within EFL classes for Social Sciences - such as PR, Tourism, and Service - no local project had previously implemented a similar methodology or target outcome. As a result, showing students what was expected of them proved challenging, making the process very much a work in progress. However, once the questions for the structured interviews were finalized, students gained a clearer picture of what the final output would look like.

Given that this paper aims to share a data-driven, evidence-based account of implementing PBL methodology in an ESP classroom in Armenia, the sheer volume of required feedback warrants attention. Managing 83 students divided into groups of two or three - and offering feedback across four distinct stages - demanded significant effort. Furthermore, the eventual publication of the book required three additional rounds of review for the same set of interviews. This created an immense workload, highlighting the importance of factoring in the substantial feedback burden when planning such projects.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this study demonstrates that integrating Project-Based Learning (PBL) into an ESP course for Public Relations, Service, and Tourism students at V. Brusov State University yields rich, multi-dimensional learning outcomes. Guided by the four-phase framework of Larmer et al. (2015), the year-long initiative enabled 83 students to move beyond standard language exercises by collecting, transcribing, translating, and publishing survivor accounts from the 2020 Artsakh War. The findings confirm that authentic, socially meaningful tasks significantly advance students' professional competencies, social skills, and empathy. Interpersonally, learners mastered active listening, conflict resolution, and collaborative problem-solving while navigating deeply sensitive interview contexts. Digitally, they built practical fluency in AI transcription tools, document formatting, and multimodal public dissemination, culminating in the publication of the bilingual anthology *"2020 Artsakh War Through the Eyes of the Survivors."* Linguistically, language profiling verified substantial growth in domain-specific vocabulary beyond the B1 threshold, accompanied by concurrent grammatical and syntactic gains. Despite real-world implementation challenges regarding long-term student motivation and heavy instructor feedback demands, this data-driven account confirms that PBL effectively bridges language learning with genuine application, equipping Social Science students with vital professional, social capabilities and language skills.

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Ն. Հակոբյան – *Նախագծային ուսուցման մեթոդաբանության կիրառումը հասարակագիտական գիտությունների կրթության մեջ Վ. Բրյուսովի անվան պետական համալսարանում.* – Բարձրագույն բուհական համակարգը տևական ժամանակ է, ինչ դադարել է լինել տեսությունների և վերացական գիտելիքի փոխանցման միջոց հասարակական գիտություններում: Բարձրագույն բուհական կրթությունը պահանջում է շրջանավարտների մասնագիտական, հասարակական և իրական կյանքում կիրառվող հմտությունների զարգացում: Այս առումով նախագծային ուսուցումն ամենաարդյունավետ մեթոդներից է վերոնշյալ վերջնարդյունքներին հասնելու համար: Սույն հետազո-տությունն ուսումնասիրում է, թե ինչպես է նախագծային ուսուցումը կիրառվում Վ. Բրյուսովի անվան «Հանրային հաղորդակցության և սերվիս» ֆակուլտետի ուսանողներին անգլերենը որպես մասնագիտական օտար լեզու դասավանդելիս: Սույն ուսումնամեթոդական հոդվածի նպատակն է ներկայացնել, թե ինչպես է նախագծային ուսուցումը կիրառվել և ինչ վերջնարդյունքներ են գրանցվել հասարակայնության հետ կապեր, սերվիս և զբոսաշրջություն մասնագիտություններով ութսուներեք ուսանողների դասավանդելիս: Հոդվածում կիրառվել են տվյալահեն և փաստահեն նկարագրություններ: Այսինքն, հոդվածում մանրամասնվում են մեթոդաբանության իրացման յուրաքանչյուր փուլում ձեռք բերված վերջնարդյունքների վերլուծությունը, որն ամրպնդվում է ֆոկուսային խմբի և դասավանդողի զննումների միջոցով: Լեզվի պրոֆիլավորումը ևս կիրառվել է լեզվական ձեռքբերումների

զննման համար: Մեթոդաբանության կիրառության արդյունքում ուսանողները զարգացրել են իրենց մասնագիտական գիտելիքները, սոցիալական հմտությունները, թվային և լեզվական կարողությունները, ինչպես նաև հուզական հատկանիշները:

Բանալի բառեր՝ *նախագծային ուսուցման մեթոդ, հարցազրույցներ, սոցիալական հմտություններ, լեզվական կարողունակություն, մասնագիտական հմտություններ, կարեկցանք, թվային հմտություններ*

Н. Акопян – *Применение методологии проектного обучения при подготовке студентов социальных специальностей в Государственном университете имени В. Брюсова.* – В последние десятилетия высшее образование в сфере социальных наук сместило фокус с трансляции абстрактной теории на развитие профессиональных, социальных и жизненных навыков, необходимых выпускникам. В этом контексте методология проектного обучения является одним из наиболее эффективных подходов. В данной статье рассматривается внедрение и адаптация проектного обучения при обучении английскому языку как иностранному студентов факультета социальных коммуникаций и сервиса Государственного университета имени В. Брюсова. Цель статьи – показать, как применялась эта методология и каких результатов удалось достичь при обучении профессиональному английскому языку 83 студентов направлений «Пиар» (PR), «Сервис» и «Туризм». Методология исследования опирается на эмпирический описательный подход и предусматривает ретроспективный анализ результатов проекта в сопоставлении с профильной научно-методической литературой. Эмпирические данные подкреплены наблюдениями преподавателя, результатами фокус-группового исследования с участием репрезентативной выборки из 20 студентов, а также языковым профилированием. Полученные результаты свидетельствуют о том, что внедрение проектного обучения способствовало значимому повышению уровня профессиональных предметных знаний, социальных навыков, цифровой грамотности и языковой компетенции обучающихся, а также оказало позитивное влияние на их эмоциональное развитие.

Ключевые слова: *методология проектного обучения, проведение интервью, социальные навыки, уровень владения языком, профессиональные знания, эмпатия, цифровая грамотность*