

To my beloved parents

EUROPEAN LANGUAGE PORTFOLIO
AS A SELF-DIRECTED LEARNING TOOL

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Bilkent University

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ABSTRACT

EUROPEAN LANGUAGE PORTFOLIO AS A SELF-DIRECTED LEARNING TOOL

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The study investigated to what extent the European Language Portfolio (ELP) can promote self-directed learning in the School of Foreign Languages at Anadolu University in the 2005-2006 academic year. The study also examined the attitudes of students, teachers and administrators towards the ELP and its implementation into the curriculum.

Five data collection instruments were employed in this study. Interviews were conducted with students, one teacher, and administrators. Questionnaires were given to the students. Besides, student learning diaries and student ELPs were collected. Group discussions were held with teachers and students, as well.

The results revealed that most of the students carried out self-directed learning activities and had positive attitudes towards the ELP although they had difficulties in setting their learning goals and assessing their language learning processes. The teachers reported that the ELP could be used to promote self-directed learning;

however, it could be difficult to use the ELP with the student profile in this school. The administrators also felt positive towards the ELP and believed that pilot projects should be conducted before implementing the ELP into the curriculum.

The results suggested that the ELP could be used as a first step to promote self-directed learning in the School of Foreign Languages at Anadolu University.

Key words: ELP, self-directed learning

ÖZET

İÇ GÜDÜMLÜ ÖĞRENME ARACI OLARAK AVRUPA DİL DOSYASI

Ceylan, Meral

Yüksek Lisans, İkinci Dil Olarak İngilizce Öğrenimi

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Bu çalışma, 2005-2006 akademik yılında Anadolu Üniversitesi, Yabancı Diller Yüksekokulu'nda Avrupa Dil Dosyası'nın (ADD) iç güdümlü (self-directed) öğrenmeyi ne kadar teşvik ettiğini araştırmıştır. Ayrıca, bu okuldaki öğrencilerin, öğretmenlerin ve yöneticilerin ADD'ye olan algılarını incelemiştir.

Bu çalışmada beş veri toplama aracından faydalanılmıştır. Öğrencilerle, bir öğretmenle ve yöneticilerle mülakat yapılmıştır ve öğrencilere anket verilmiştir. Ayrıca, öğrenme günceleri (learning diary), ADD toplanmıştır. Öğrenci ve öğretmenlerle grup tartışmaları yapılmıştır.

Çalışmanın sonuçları öğrenme hedeflerini ve öğrenme değerlendirmelerini yaparken zorlanmalarına rağmen, birçok öğrencinin iç güdümlü etkinlikler gerçekleştirdiklerini ve ADD'ye karşı olumlu algı geliştirdiklerini göstermiştir. Öğretmenler ADD'nin iç güdümlü öğrenmeyi arttırmak için uygun bir araç olduğunu

ancak bu okuldaki öğrenci profiliyle ADD'nin uygulanmasının zor olabileceğini belirtmişlerdir. Yöneticiler de ADD'ye karşı olumlu algı göstermiş yalnız okul programında uygulamaya geçmeden önce bu konuyla ilgili pilot çalışmaları gerçekleştirilmesi gerektiğini belirtmişlerdir.

Bu çalışmanın sonuçları ADD'nin Anadolu Üniversitesi Yabancı Diller Yüksekokulu'nda iç güdümlü öğrenmeyi arttırmak için kullanılabilecek bir araç olduğunu göstermiştir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: ADD, iç güdümlü öğrenme

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CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

1.1. Introduction

Every person has his own learning style and preferences. Therefore, students do not necessarily learn everything that teachers teach them. Instead of being the authority, teachers can motivate learners to learn for themselves, which can last a life long time, by promoting self-directed learning. Self-directed learning is described by Dickinson (1994) as the particular attitude to the learning task. The learner decides for the learning process with the guidance of the teacher but does not necessarily undertake the implementation of those decisions. One of the tools which can be used to enhance self-directed learning is a portfolio system. A portfolio system is an alternative self-assessment tool in language learning. It consists of all the documents the learners produce inside and outside the class such as written texts, audio or video tapes, reflection, student self-assessment, and clearly stated criteria (Grace, 1992; O'Malley & Pierce, 1996). In the School of Foreign Languages at Anadolu University, students are asked to keep a portfolio in their writing course. The portfolios are graded, and they form a percentage of the learners' total grade for that course for their mid-term exams. The student portfolios are collected for each mid-term exam and are assessed by the teachers.

A new type of portfolio has been developed by the Council of Europe: the European Language Portfolio (ELP). In this portfolio, learners keep accounts of what they do for any language skill they want to improve inside or outside class over their whole lives, so the ELP views learning a language as a lifelong process. The ELP is

assessed by the learner himself/herself, so that learner responsibility and autonomy are encouraged by means of this portfolio. The learners do not get any grades from it. Furthermore, they have the chance to reflect on their own learning with the help of the ELP.

One of the aims of the ELP is promoting second language learning and learner autonomy. The School of Foreign Languages at Anadolu University is encouraging learner autonomy as well, and this study examines the introduction of the ELP to the School of Foreign Languages at Anadolu University. The study aims to explore to what extent the ELP promotes self-directed learning and the reactions of the students, three teachers and two administrators in terms of the use and the applicability of ELP in the School of Foreign Languages at Anadolu University in Turkey. However, the primary objective of the study is to examine whether the ELP encourages students in self-directed language learning activities in the School of Foreign Languages at Anadolu University.

1.2. Background of the Study

Learners engage in and carry out various tasks throughout their language learning process. Portfolios are tools where the learners can record all the tasks they carry out so that they can monitor the processes they go through. According to O'Malley and Pierce (1996), to realize how much progress the learners have made, it is important to keep a portfolio of their work. Both the teacher and the student comment on the progress of the portfolio. O'Malley and Pierce (1996) claims that when the students realize how much they have learned, they may become more motivated for language learning. Portfolios can include different works of the

students. Various written texts, drawings, learning logs, student reflections, audio or video tapes are some examples of portfolio tasks.

Bastidas (1996) states that portfolios have become more popular for writing courses although portfolios can be used for any course. The content of the portfolio changes from one course to another. As Burch (1999) claims what a portfolio includes depends on the curricular practices designed by an institution, and adds that a portfolio usually includes drafts and comments of teachers or peers. Sometimes the writer can include pieces about his/her reflections on his/her own writing. Table of contents or specific comments can also be put in the portfolio.

Most of the portfolio types include self-reflection and self-assessment because one of the underlying beliefs of the portfolio system is giving the students the opportunity to develop autonomy. Autonomy is defined by Little (1999) as the capacity to set one's own learning goals, to monitor one's own learning process, and to critically assess one's own learning process. One way to achieve autonomy is self-directed learning. Self-directed learning can be achieved with the guidance of teachers so that it can lead to autonomy, which means the independence of the learner in his own learning process. Benson (2001) also states that learners should make decisions for their learning process, and the role of the teachers is then helping the learners to develop this ability.

Portfolios can be valuable tools to help the learners develop autonomy. It is proposed that portfolios are means for ongoing assessment which show activities and processes, rather than products. Therefore, while collecting works, students go through reflection, self-monitoring, and self-evaluation with the help of teachers,

peers and parents (Paulson, Paulson, Meyer, 1991; Tierney, Carter, Desai, 1991).

Thus, with self-evaluation they become aware of their own learning processes.

The European Language Portfolio (ELP) is a new version of the traditional portfolio system in language learning. Different from general portfolio systems, the ELP has three components which encourage learners in lifelong learning and intercultural awareness. Schärer (2002) reports that according to the results of pilot studies of the ELP in Europe, the ELP is a useful tool which promotes motivation because in the ELP, the learners reflect on all aspects of the learning process. Moreover, it is a document where the learners can reflect on and record their language learning process and intercultural experiences. Since the learners themselves assesses their learning, the pilot studies show that the ELP also promotes learner autonomy and encourages lifelong learning (Schärer, 2002).

The ELP consists of three main parts: Language passport, language biography and dossier. Little and Perclova (2001) reports these three parts encourage the learners to reflect on their own learning process by giving them the opportunity to take responsibility for their own learning. The language passport shows the current level of language proficiency and summarizes the learning and intercultural experiences of the owner of the portfolio. The language biography informs the reader about the personal history of language learning and intercultural experiences of the owner. Furthermore, the language biography gives learners the opportunity to plan, reflect upon, and assess their learning process and progress. In the dossier, the learners have the opportunity to select materials to document and illustrate their works. It may be used as a 'working dossier' so that it can accompany daily language learning and document the learning processes. Additionally, the dossier may be used

as a ‘showcase dossier’ so that the learner can show their present level of language proficiency by means of various products.

On the other hand, the term autonomy is a newly introduced in Turkey. Karlı (2006) told that the classroom in Turkish education system may be defined as teacher-centered and the teachers as the authority. With the curriculum projects for primary schools of the Ministry of Education, the term autonomy has been introduced both to the teachers and students in some pilot schools. One of the tools to promote autonomy in language teaching can be the ELP because the ELP gives the learners the opportunity to set their own learning goals and assess themselves according to the descriptors. Therefore, the ELP is believed by the Ministry to act as a significant tool in the new Turkish education system to foster learner autonomy in language learning.

The ELP has been researched in many European countries. The studies have shown that it motivates students and helps them to gain insight into their own learning. However, there have been few studies in Turkey. The Ministry of Education piloted the ELP at four private and twenty state schools in Ankara and Antalya in 2004; since then, it has been piloted in many other schools and cities such as İstanbul, Ankara, İzmir, Gaziantep, Adana (Demirel, 2005). One study was conducted in Muğla University by Glover, Mirici, and Aksu (2005), another study was conducted on the use of ELP in primary education by Egel (2002) and TÖMER, an institute which teaches Turkish and foreign languages, is using the approved Turkish version of ELP. Unfortunately, during the literature searching process, no other studies conducted on ELP was found at university level in Turkey. This may be due to the fact that the ELP has recently only been introduced in Turkey throughout

the curriculum projects of the Ministry of Education at elementary and secondary levels.

1.3. Statement of the Problem

The European Language Portfolio which was devised by the Council of Europe's Modern Languages Division was piloted in fifteen Council of Europe member countries and was launched during the European Year of Languages in 2001. The pilot studies were reported to show that the students were highly motivated by the ELP.

Unfortunately, the ELP was piloted in few institutions in Turkey. Recently, the Ministry of Education in Turkey has been trying to integrate the ELP to the Turkish education curriculum. To be in harmony with the education system of Europe, lifelong learning has been set as a new goal in the education system. To achieve this goal, the ELP was suggested as a significant tool to be used. Besides the projects of the Ministry of Education, one pilot study was conducted in Muğla University. The results showed that both the teachers and the students felt positive about the ELP (Glover, et al., 2005). However, there was no other pilot project conducted at university level in Turkey except the one in Muğla University (Daloğlu, 2006).

1.4. Purpose of the Study

This study aims to find out to what extent the ELP might be useful in the School of Foreign Languages at Anadolu University in Turkey in terms of promoting self-directed learning. The School of Foreign Languages has worked extensively on renewing its curriculum. One of the main goals it set was promoting learner autonomy by giving the students the opportunity to take responsibility for their own

learning activities and self-assessment. Since this goal of the school overlaps with the goal of the ELP, it was decided that the ELP might be used as a tool to encourage self-directed learning, which is a process leading to learner autonomy, in the School of Foreign Languages. As a result, this study aims to find to what extent the ELP promotes self-directed learning, what the opinions of the students are about working with the ELP, and how three instructors and two administrators react to the use of the ELP in the School of Foreign Languages at Anadolu University.

1.5. Significance of the Study

This study provides insights to the implementation of the ELP in Turkey. The ELP had positive effects both on the teachers and students in the contexts where it was piloted. Little and Perclova (2001) reports that the ELP encouraged the students to develop their self-assessment skills and helped them to take responsibility for their own learning. However, in Turkey, few studies have been done on achieving these goals. In this aspect, the ELP may be a valuable tool to promote self-directed learning in Turkey.

At the local level, this study is the first study on the European Language Portfolio in the School of Foreign Languages at Anadolu University. This study gives valuable insights in the application of the ELP in this school. In addition, the study presents the opinions of three instructors, and two administrators towards the ELP and its implementation in the curriculum, as well as nineteen students' reactions towards the ELP in terms of promoting self-directed learning. As a result, the findings of this study provide information about whether the ELP may be

implemented in the future in the curriculum of the School of Foreign Languages at Anadolu University.

1.6. Research Questions

This study will examine the following questions:

1. To what extent does the ELP encourage the students to develop self-directed language learning activities?
2. What are students' attitudes towards the use of the ELP in the School of Foreign Languages at Anadolu University?
3. What are teachers' attitudes towards the use of ELP in the School of Foreign Languages at Anadolu University in terms of attitude?
4. What are administrators' attitudes towards the use of the ELP in the School of Foreign Languages at Anadolu University towards the ELP?

1.7. Conclusion

In this chapter, an overview of the literature on portfolio systems in language learning, learner autonomy, and the European Language Portfolio has been provided. The statement of the problem, the significance of the study, and research questions have been presented as well. In the second chapter, the literature about learner autonomy, portfolio system, and the ELP is explored. In the third chapter, the methodology of this study is described. In the fourth chapter, the analysis of the data is presented and discussed. Finally, in the last chapter, conclusions are drawn from the data in relation to the relevant literature.

CHAPTER II: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Introduction

This research study investigates to what extent the European Language Portfolio (ELP) might be useful for promoting self-directed learning, the reactions of the students towards the ELP, and the reactions of three teachers and two administrators towards the ELP and its implementation in the curriculum at Anadolu University, the School of Foreign Languages. In particular, it is an attempt to find out whether the ELP helps the learners to develop their self-directed language learning activities in the School of Foreign Languages at Anadolu University.

This chapter reviews the relevant literature on learner autonomy and language learning, portfolios in general, and European Language Portfolio in particular. First, autonomy, autonomy and language learning, teacher role in autonomy, autonomy and self-directed learning, and autonomy in Turkey will be discussed. In the next section, the portfolio system, the history and descriptions, types, underlying beliefs, pros and cons of portfolios in language learning will be covered. In the final section, the focus will be on the European Language Portfolio, what it consists of, its aims and functions, assumed advantages, pilot projects, and its use in Turkey.

2.2. Autonomy

In this section, definitions of autonomy, autonomy and language learning, teacher role in autonomy, autonomy and self-directed learning, and autonomy in Turkey are discussed.

2.2.1. Definitions of Autonomy

Learner autonomy is defined as the ability of the learners to set their own learning goals, monitor their own learning process, and critically assess their own language learning processes. In other words, it is the independence from the control of others (Little, 1999). Little describes autonomy as:

(...) a capacity - for detachment, critical reflection, decision making, and independent action. It presupposes, but also entails, that the learner will develop a particular kind of psychological relation to the process and content of learning. The capacity for learner autonomy will be displayed both in the way the learner learns and in the way he or she transfers what has been learned to wider context (Little, 1999; p.4).

Autonomy is then the capacity that every learner has and needs to develop to achieve full independence in their language learning processes. In this process, the learners not only learn what they are taught but they also develop the skill they learned to use in their further lives. Thus, autonomy enables the learners to set their own language learning goals and carry out tasks to achieve these goals independently.

Holec defines autonomy as “the ability to take charge of one’s own learning” (as cited in Benson, 2001; p. 48). Additionally, he makes a broader description of learner autonomy as the ability in “determining the objectives; defining the contents and the progression; selecting methods and techniques to be used; monitoring the procedure of acquisition...; evaluating what has been acquired” during the language learning process (Holec; as cited in Kjisick & Nordlund; p. 145).

Both definitions of Little (1999) and Holec (as cited in Kjisick & Nordlund, 2000) suggest that autonomy is the responsibility that the learners take in their learning processes. The learners should have the freedom of setting their own learning goals, teaching content, methods, and creating their own learning activities

to achieve those goals. To make the definition of autonomy more precise, Little (1999) defines autonomy as what it does not mean:

Learner autonomy is not merely a matter of organization, does not entail an abdication of initiative and control on the part of the teacher, is not a teaching method, is not to be equated with a single easily identified behavior, and is not a steady state attained by a happy band of privileged learners (Little, 1999; p. 4).

This quote of Little suggests that autonomy cannot be used as a teaching method and does not mean that the teachers will be on one side leaving the learners alone. Instead, teachers should help the learners to develop this capacity. In addition, autonomy is not a steady state achieved by certain learners. The permanence of autonomy can never be assured, and a learner who is autonomous in one area does not mean that he is autonomous in all areas of learning. Thus, autonomy is a degree of freedom the learners experience in their learning processes.

In this section, autonomy was defined and discussed in terms of what it does not mean as well. In the next section, autonomy and language learning will be discussed in the light of literature.

2.2.2. Autonomy and Language Learning

Communicative teaching, learner-centeredness, and autonomy are the bases for language learning process. Autonomy took its place in language learning with start of the communicative approach. Communicative approach, in which instead of using mechanical drills during language teaching, the students should engage meaningful and authentic activities, views language as a tool for communication (Richards & Rodgers, 2003). Little (1999) states that as the principle goal of foreign language teaching is teaching the learners how to use language communicatively, learners should have independence, self-reliance, and self-confidence to fulfill the variety of

social, psychological and discourse roles in they are if they want to be efficient in communicative language use. In other words, the learners should be aware of the social requirements of the different situations where they have to use the target language. Learners should know the varying psychological relations they will experience with different people they have to communicate. Finally the learners should be capable of taking initiatives and responding to the initiatives of others.

That language should be a process of learning how to communicate is based on learner-centeredness, that is, the learners are involved in the process of selecting content for the curriculum and how to teach that content (Nunan, 1997; Dam, 2000). Little (2000) suggests that to achieve effective learning, growth of autonomy in the learner is needed, and this can be possible with learner-centered classrooms.

One of the results of promoting autonomy for the language learners is that they can learn more effectively because they can become aware of their knowledge. In a longitudinal study, one of Dam's English classes was compared with an English class in a German Gymnasium as reported by Legenhausen (2000). In Dam's class, the students were involved in the learning process and activities which led the students to autonomy whereas the English class in Gymnasium followed a more traditional, textbook-based syllabus. The test results of the autonomous and traditional class were compared and contrasted in terms of learners' language abilities and proficiency levels. Legenhausen (2000) points out that, in this example, the outcomes of autonomous learners were superior to the learners of a conventional textbook-based approach. The autonomous language learners were better at building up vocabulary, mastering English grammar, and demonstrating interactional proficiency. This study shows that autonomous learning can be achieved in learner-

centered classrooms, and autonomy gives the learners the opportunity to improve their language because they learn how to learn for themselves. As a result, learner-centeredness, communicative teaching and autonomy are the inter-related key elements in language learning process (Benson, 2001).

However, Little (1999) focuses on the fact that autonomy is not a solution for a perfect teaching by stating that:

I do not believe that learner autonomy offers infallible solutions to every problem encountered in classroom learning; nor do I believe that it guarantees success in every case. But I do believe that it makes sense, not only as the logical outcome of learner-centeredness in education generally, but also as the approach to language learning that can best do justice to communicative ideals and the insights we are beginning to gain from empirical research into language acquisition (Little, 1999; p. 56).

As seen in the quotation above, developing autonomy is not the only solution for learning a language. However, it can be one of the ways to achieve learner-centered classrooms. Instead of nominating the students in class to reply the questions of the teacher, the students can engage in group work projects. Little (1999) states that giving the students independence in language learning such as projects the students devise on their own might promote learner autonomy. By providing the students the opportunity to make their own choice, they gain insight into their own language learning processes. Hence, this leads the students to a degree of autonomy which helps the learners to activate their unconscious language acquisition process.

Autonomy and language learning was discussed in this section. The following section will overview the related literature of the teachers' role in promoting autonomy.

2.2.3. Teacher Role in Autonomy

Some of the characteristics of autonomous learners are: Being reflective and self-aware, openness and motivation, being flexible, interdependent, and responsible (Benson, 2001; p.85). Additionally, autonomous learners are able to identify their own needs, strengths and weaknesses and to set goals according to these needs (Ridley, 2000). However, the students cannot manage this on their own; they need guidance. As Diaz (2000) suggests, there is a need to help the students to become skilled in different learning procedures, improve their learning strategies, and gain a positive attitude towards learning. In other words, teachers should teach the students to learn for themselves because the learners might not develop autonomy on their own.

Teachers always experience that the students may not necessarily learn the subjects they teach them. Hence, the roles of teachers can change as counselors if autonomy is one of the goals to be achieved. Barner also states that learning is like a bridge between what the learner knows already and the new knowledge presented to him, and this bridge can be built only by the learner himself (as cited in Dam, 2000). Dam (2000) also refers to the same issue as she states that schools and universities cannot teach the students all the knowledge and skills which they will need in the future. She adds that the only thing that can be done is to give learners an awareness which helps them come to an understanding of themselves. Therefore, it can be said that teacher guidance is needed to achieve autonomous learners.

In order for autonomy to be achieved, it is necessary to provide teacher guidance at the initial steps of the process of autonomy building, and this kind of student-teacher interaction is in the very nature of self-directed learning. The roles of

the teachers are being facilitators, helpers, coordinators, counselors, consultants, advisors, knowers and resources (Benson, 2001; Little, 1999). When the teacher is the *facilitator*, the teacher provides support for learning. When he is seen as a *counselor*, he has one-to-one interaction with the learners. A teacher seen as a *resource*, is a source of knowledge and expertise (Voller; as cited in Benson, 2001).

Benson (2001) emphasizes that achieving learner autonomy in classroom is not easy; in particular it is the teacher's job most of the time to help the students be autonomous learners because the students do not become autonomous just when the teacher tells them to be so. Little (1999) states that the teacher should take the initiative for the learners' learning processes. To illustrate, he can negotiate the syllabus with the learners; or as Dam (2000) suggests the teacher can bring activities which provide the learners to take the initiative for their own learning. For instance, the learners can devise their own homework, either individually or in groups, decide what to read, reflect on and evaluate a lesson or their own performance.

Since it is not easy to achieve autonomy in class, patience is an important characteristic of the teachers who want to promote autonomy because the learners need more help and guidance than ever. In addition, Little (1999) emphasizes that teachers who devote themselves to promote learner autonomy should have "...a lot of nerve, not least because it requires him abandon any lingering notion that he can somehow guarantee the success of his learners by his own effort" (p.45). He adds that instead of taking all the responsibility, teachers should share the burden of teaching and trust the learners (Little, 1999). For example, the teachers can share the burden by giving the learners the opportunity to decide on the content of what is taught, how it should be taught, content of homework, activities in class, and to

evaluate their on language learning performance. In this section, the role of teachers in autonomy was presented. The next section will discuss autonomy and self-directed learning.

2.2.4. Autonomy and Self-directed Learning

Researchers of autonomy state that in order to achieve autonomy, learners need to be freed from the direction and control of others (Benson, 2001). However, Benson (2001) claims that learners who are isolated from teachers may not develop autonomy. Therefore, he proposes self-directed learning as the initial step to foster autonomy because to achieve autonomy, learners need guidance of teachers at the initial steps.

There is a certain difference of the term ‘autonomy’ and ‘self-directed learning’ according to some researchers. In the field of language learning, self-directed learning tends to refer to learning which is directed by the learner and not by someone else. On the other hand, Benson (2001) underlines that autonomy is the capacity the learners have, and self-directed learning can be seen as something which the learners are able to do more or less effectively in terms of the degree of the capacity they have. Hence, autonomy is a capacity for independent learning, and self-directed learning is the process which leads the learners to the outcome of *autonomy*, and is the key to learning languages and to learn how to learn languages (as summarized in Figure 1). However, it is assumed it is possible that self-directed learning may not always result in autonomy.

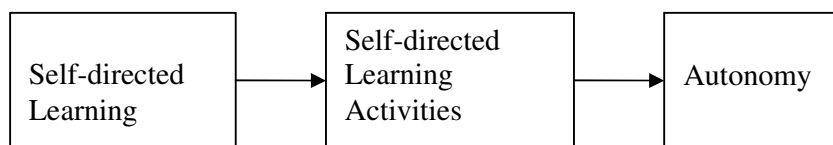


Figure 1: Autonomy and Self-directed Learning

In order for autonomy to be achieved, it is necessary to provide teacher guidance at the initial steps of the process of autonomy building, and this kind of student-teacher interaction is in the very nature of self-directed learning. Dickinson (1994) distinguishes autonomy and self-directed learning with the role of the teacher in this process. He defines autonomy as the situation where the learner is totally responsible for his/her learning. In this ‘full autonomy’ the teacher has no role for the learners. In other words, the learner is independent. ‘Self-direction’; on the other hand, is described as the particular attitude to the learning task, and it is the learner who gives decisions for the learning process, but the learner does not necessarily undertake the implementation of those decisions. Nevertheless, this does not mean that they work alone. The learners can still work with their peers and teachers, but do not ask them to make decisions instead of the learners about learning processes.

Self-directed learning is the ability of the learners to determine the objectives, progress and evaluation of their own learning (Benson, 2001; Holec & Huttunen, 1998). Self-directed learning can be enhanced by helping the students to set their own learning goals, to create their own activities to achieve those goals, and to assess their own learning process. In addition to determining own goals, progress and evaluation of the learning process that Benson (2001) suggests, carrying out self-directed learning activities such as keeping diaries, making word cards, reading texts of one’s own choice, learning about English-speaking countries, two-minute talks,

doing project works, reflecting upon the process of learning may help the learners to develop self-directed learning skills (Thomsen, 2000).

Autonomy and self-directed learning was discussed in this section in the light of the literature. The next section presents the term autonomy in Turkey.

2.2.5. Autonomy in Turkey

In Turkey, autonomy is a relatively new term. The teacher has been always the authority in the classroom. The Turkish educational system tends to make the learners learn not for themselves instead for the grades they are going to get. Yumuk (2002) describes the Turkish educational system as follows:

In Turkey recitation is a common mode of the teaching in both primary and secondary educational systems. The majority of learners undergo the process of learning through traditional educational methods in which the teacher is the 'authority' rather than the 'facilitator'. The teacher-student relationship is mainly limited to one-way channels of communication in which teachers transfer information to learners. The assessment of learner performance is generally product-oriented rather than process-oriented, mainly a summative evaluation in the form of exams that are based upon learner's memorization of information they have learned in the course (Yumuk, 2002; p.143).

As seen above, showing the way to the learners for being autonomous and self-directed may not be easy in Turkey because of the teacher-centered education. The learners need guidance and training to get autonomous as Benson (2001) claims learners who are used to being in teacher-centered classes, similar to the educational situation in Turkey, would initially need a psychological preparation for 'learner-centered modes of learning'.

Turkish educational system can be described as being traditional and teacher dominated. All the learning process is led by the only authority: 'the teacher'. Because the Turkish educational system makes the learners compete with each other,

the learners are mostly dependent on the syllabus, are passive learners, and are not used to take the first step for their learning process.

Autonomy got important especially after the process of getting in harmony with the European Union education system in Turkey. Karlı (2005) states that autonomy has recently been piloted in particular primary schools with the project of the curriculum renewal project for the primary schools, so most of the students are not aware of the aim for lifelong learning. The education system pushes the students to learn for the exams such as university entrance exam.

According to the study Özdere (2005) conducted, university instructors were not that much familiar to autonomy. In the study, he investigated state-supported provincial university instructors' attitudes towards learner autonomy. The study was conducted with 72 English language instructors at different universities such as Akdeniz University, Muğla University, and Balıkesir University. The result was that the teachers were neutral to slightly positive toward learner autonomy and depended on the facilities they are provided by their universities and the opportunities for authentic language use in their environments. However, the data also revealed that the instructors needed professional training to promote learner autonomy effectively. This also shows that learner autonomy is a recently introduced term in the Turkish Educational System.

This section discussed the definition of autonomy, autonomy and language learning, teachers' role in autonomy, autonomy and self-directed learning, and autonomy in Turkey. The next section overviews the portfolio system in language learning.

2.3. Portfolios

In this section, the definition and history of portfolio, portfolio types, pros and cons of portfolios, self-assessment in portfolio system are discussed.

2.3.1. Definitions and History of Portfolios

This section presents briefly the term ‘authentic assessment’, the definition of a portfolio and what it should include. Nowadays, many authentic assessment tools have been developed for assessing students’ learning language processes. Authentic assessment refers to the various forms of assessment that reflect student learning, achievement, motivation, and attitudes on classroom activities (O’Malley & Pierce, 1996; Pett; as cited in Grace, 1992).

Used to gather information about students’ learning processes in which the learners are in the center, authentic assessment tools may promote self-directed learning, learner-centered classroom practices, and using self-assessment which enhances the direct involvement of the learners in learning and the integration of cognitive abilities with affective learning (O’Malley & Pierce, 1996). Examples of authentic assessment can be performance assessment, portfolio assessment, and self-assessment (Grace, 1992; Kohonen & Westoff, 2003). Hence, portfolios can be used as a significant means for giving the learners the opportunity to monitor their learning progress and to promote self-directed learning.

Portfolios are tools where one can record all one’s work. Portfolios were first developed on the model of the visual and performing arts tradition to display accomplishments; however, today in classrooms, portfolios are instructional

assessment tools, adaptable to be used within the curricula, in accordance with the student age and level (O'Malley & Pierce, 1996; Sweet, 1993).

Some components are suggested for a portfolio such as student works, reflections, self-assessment, and criteria. To illustrate, a portfolio can include items like anecdotal records, checklist or inventory, rating scales, questions and requests, and screening tests (Grace, 1992). Besides, guidelines for selecting content, criteria for judging merit, student participation in selecting content, and evidence of student self-reflection are other suggested components of a portfolio (Arter, 1992; O'Malley & Pierce, 1996). As a result, students' works, reflection and self-assessment are the common components suggested for a portfolio.

2.3.2. Types of portfolios

There are three types of portfolio models described by Jenkins (1996): Benchmark Portfolio, Showcase Portfolio, and Collaborative Portfolio. Each model is based on theoretical assumptions and instructional implications.

The first model called, 'the benchmark portfolio', is based on a teacher-centered model, which means that the teacher is the authority, and the portfolio will be assessed by the teacher. It was formed to be a bridge between standardized tests and the current theory and practice of literacy. The goal of this portfolio is to inform instruction; that is, the teachers assess the portfolio so that they know what to teach.

The second type is 'the showcase portfolio' which is used to display the best works of the students. As the aim is displaying good works, the entries are carefully selected so that they can illustrate student achievement in the classroom. Hence, showcase portfolio is student oriented. It is the learner who decides which works to

include in the portfolio and which not. The only limitation is that since showcase portfolios include only completed products of the students, they may not successfully represent students' learning over time (Jenkins, 1996; O'Malley & Pierce, 1996).

'The collaborative portfolio' is the last type. This type has the best points of both the benchmark and the showcase portfolio. In other words, the collaborative portfolio gives the opportunity to see both the works of the students, the assessment of the teachers. As a result, the types of portfolios differ according to the aim and the person who assesses them.

As discussed above, portfolios can promote learner-centered classrooms and give the learners the opportunity to record their works, so the portfolio use can enable the learners to develop autonomy through the self-reflection and self-assessment it includes.

2.3.3. Benefits and Drawbacks of using Portfolios

This section discusses the opportunities the portfolio offers and some drawbacks of it. As discussed above portfolios are valuable means which demonstrate the students' progress, efforts, and accomplishments in one or more areas in a systematic and purposeful way via students' work (Arter, 1992; Paulson , Paulson, and Meyer, 1991; Tierney et al., 1991). In addition, the standardized tests can give insight of just the learners' production; on the other hand, through portfolios the teachers can acknowledge both the learning process the students are going through and their language production (Bailey, 1998; O'Malley & Pierce, 1996; Paulson et al., 1991). Portfolios enable the teachers to see the student as an individual, each with his or her own set of characteristics, needs, and strengths.

Additionally, by promoting student achievement through evaluative feedback and self-reflection with the use of portfolios, a more meaningful role in improving achievement is given to the students (Epstein, 2006).

In learner-centered classrooms, students have more responsibility for their own learning processes. This means that the students and the teacher share the workload in the classroom, and portfolio use supports the establishment of a learner-centered environment in classrooms (Nunan, 1997). Furthermore, portfolios give the students the opportunity to develop their independence in learning. As a result, the learners gradually depend less on their teachers to take their approval and direct their revision process (Ferris & Hedgcock, 1998). In brief, portfolio use can promote self-directed learning.

Despite positive uses of the portfolio, the portfolio system can have some drawbacks as well. Brown and Hudson (1998) summarizes these drawbacks under five categories: the issue of decision, logistics, interpretation, and assessment qualities such as reliability and validity.

First of all, it is important who decides on the content and the grading criteria of the portfolio. The purpose of the portfolio should be identified as well. Additionally, what the content will be and how the portfolio will be evaluated depending on its purpose is a fundamental issue. Moreover, reliability and validity of the portfolio should be established although it is challenging for most educators, and it is necessary to evaluate the portfolios in an objective and realistic way (Hamp-Lyons & Condon, 1993). The most vital drawback of the portfolio system is the portfolio assessment's time consuming issue for teachers and the staff especially

when they are done as a part of the grading system (Epstein, 2006; Song & August, 2002).

On the whole, keeping a portfolio needs special interest both from the teachers and the students, and it may enable the students to take charge of their own learning and promote autonomy. The next section overviews the self-assessment issue in the portfolio system.

2.3.4. Self-assessment

Since some portfolio types include self-assessment of the students, the place of self-assessment is going to be discussed in this section in terms of reflection, redirection and confirmation it offers, its role in raising awareness of learners, and in fostering autonomy.

Self-assessment can be defined as a process in which the learners evaluate their own performance, and portfolios are one of the tools which include the self-assessment process. As Wolf claims, self-assessment is the key for using the portfolios successfully in classrooms. For effective assessment students should be involved, and this involvement enables the students to see the opportunities for reflection, redirection and confirmation of their own learning efforts. Wolf adds that most teachers believe that when students are actively involved in self-assessment, they become more responsible for the direction of their learning (as cited in O'Malley & Pierce, 1996; Tierney, Carter, and Desai, 1991).

Self-assessment is a process which may raise the awareness of the learners related to their language learning process. O'Malley and Pierce (1996) states that self-assessment does not mean only forms and checklists. Indeed, in teaching

students to evaluate their progress, the first step is to realize that students will be learning new skills. There is a need for opportunities to learn and apply these skills with feedback of the teacher for the students about how to do self-assessment in meaningful ways that will help the learners set learning goals for themselves. Hence, with the help of self-assessment and teachers, students become more aware of their language learning process which means the start of fostering autonomy.

This section discussed the definition and history of portfolio, portfolio types, pros and cons of portfolios, self-assessment in portfolio system. In the next section, European Language Portfolio as a self-directed learning tool is overviewed.

2.4. European Language Portfolio (ELP)

So far, autonomy, self-directed learning, and the portfolio system in language learning have been discussed. In this section, the European Language Portfolio is reviewed in terms of its definition, components, function, assumed advantages, pilot projects, and ELP in Turkey. One way to achieve self-directed learning is authentic assessment by providing tools for evaluating the learning processes and outcomes (Kohonen & Westoff, 2003). The ELP is one of the tools which can be used to foster self-directed learning in language learning.

The ELP is not in much difference with the discussed portfolio system in the previous section. Both of them include self-reflection and self-assessment so that they can enhance learner autonomy and lifelong learning. Both focus on the process of learning rather than product. The only difference is that the ELP has more structured components which will be discussed in detail in the following section. These components support self-directed learning by including self-assessment with

the ‘can-do’ statements. The ELP aims to motivate the learners for intercultural experiences and lifelong learning as well.

2.4.1 Definition of ELP

European Language Portfolio (ELP) is similar to the general portfolio system which is used in the education system. The ELP was designed based on the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) which is a guideline used to describe achievements of learners of foreign languages across Europe. It was designed by the Council of Europe as a project of ‘Languages Learning for European Citizenship’ in 1989-1996. The aim of CEFR is to provide a method of assessing and teaching all languages in Europe. Six reference levels were developed and became standard for grading individual’s language proficiency. These levels will be mentioned in detail in the Language Passport section (Council of Europe, 2001; Schärer, 2000).

To reflect the Council of Europe’s concerns about language learning the ELP was developed. All of the major concerns of the Council of Europe modern languages projects since the 1970s are reflected in the ELP. These concerns are:

1. the deepening of mutual understanding among citizens in Europe
2. respect for diversity of cultures and ways of life; the protection and promotion of linguistic and cultural diversity
3. the development of plurilingualism as a life-long process
4. the development of the language learner
5. the development of the capacity for independent language learning
6. transparency and coherence in language learning programmes
7. the clear description of language competence and qualifications in order to facilitate mobility

(Council of Europe, 2004; p. 2)

Different ELP versions were designed by different countries. ELPs were first designed in Switzerland, Germany, and France in the mid-nineties (Schneider &

Lenz, 2003). Over 15 Council of Europe member states piloted different models between 1998 and 2000. In 2001, the European Year of Languages, the ELP was put into practice throughout Europe (Schneider & Lenz, 2003). Little (2002a) states that the ELP was designed according to following beliefs of the Council of Europe:

[...]language learning should have a communicative purpose; it provides as a means of reporting second/foreign language proficiency that transcends the limitations of national system of grading; it encourages learners and authorities of all kinds to value partial competence; it emphasizes the importance of plurilingualism and cultural exchange; and it supports the development of learner autonomy, partly out of a commitment to democracy in education and partly because learner autonomy is the most likely guarantee of lifelong learning (Little, 2002a; p.188).

Three types of ELP were developed: for young learners (10-12 years), for the learners who are at the stage of obligatory schooling (11-15/16 years) and for young people and adults (15/16 and over) (Schneider & Lenz, 2003). Different types of ELPs have been developed and validated. Meister (2005) points out that the ELP can be used by all ages, so there are different types of portfolio at schools and educational levels appropriate for each age and level groups but based on the same beliefs of the Council of Europe (Meister, 2005).

The ELP is the responsibility of the learners. Therefore, Meister (2005) reports that volunteer learners use the ELP in their language learning at school across Europe. The learners decide when and how to work with the ELP. It depends on the learners how often they update their ELPs or their language passports. However, it is vital to use the ELP effectively, and this is possible with the effective usage of the checklists, where objective of language learning are in items according to each skill based on CEFR (Little, 2005). Thus, Little and Perclova (2001) states that self-assessment is included to show that the ELP belongs to the individual learner.

2.4.2. Components of ELP

Different from other portfolios, the ELP has three main sections which are the language passport, language biography and the dossier. Each part shows the students' language learning process with different documents and records. Since the ELP includes level descriptors from the Common European Framework, the students can also assess themselves according to these descriptors (Council of Europe, 2001; for the descriptors see Appendix A). The language passport and biography focus on the reporting function of the ELP with regard to “the criterion-referenced levels of proficiency, adding the tool for documenting significant linguistic and cultural experience” (Kohonen & Westoff, 2003; p. 7).

These three components of the ELP are discussed below (see Appendix B):

Language Passport

The language passport is the section where the learners can provide an overview about their proficiency in different languages. As the document called “Principles and Guidelines” suggests, learners complete their passports in terms of skills and the common reference levels defined by the Common European Framework (CEF). The learners state their formal qualifications and language competencies, and their learning experiences. These include self-assessment, teacher assessment and assessment by educational institutions. The passport should state on what basis, when and by whom the assessment was done (Council of Europe, 2004).

There are descriptors for each skill and level according to the Common European Framework in the ELP. The skills in the ELP which the Language Passport addresses are defined as understanding (Listening and Reading), speaking (spoken interaction and spoken production), and writing. The levels are determined by the

Council of Europe's Common European Framework. The levels are basic users (A1: Breakthrough and A2: Waystage), independent users (B1: Threshold and B2: Vantage), and proficient users (C1: Effective operational proficiency and C2: Mastery) (Council of Europe, 2001). The language passport is the major instrument for presentation of the learners' language level. It is generally briefer than the other parts of the ELP because its aim is to give an overview of language learning at a glance. In other words, language passport summarizes the language biography (Schneider & Lenz, 2003). To sum up, the language passport informs the readers about the learners' competencies in one or more languages according to CEFR.

Language Biography

The language biography enables the learners to include their involvement in planning, reflecting upon and assessing their learning process and progress. In the 'Principles and Guidelines' of the ELP, it is reported that the learners are encouraged to state what they can do in each language. They also give information about their linguistic and cultural experiences they have had inside and outside their language classes. From a pedagogical aspect, the language biography section focuses on reflective processes which can be considered a connection between the language passport and the dossier (Council of Europe, 2004).

The language biography includes some checklists based on the self-assessment grid. The checklists help the learners to identify what they know and what they need to know. Schneider and Lenz (2003) emphasizes that in these checklists, there are "I can do..." statements related to each skill (see Appendix B). Learners tick the boxes about the ability related to a skill which they can do. If there is an item they cannot do, they mark it as a priority for learning, and based on this, they can set their

objectives for learning (Schneider & Lenz, 2003). Hence, the ‘can-do’ statements help the learners to assess themselves and see their language learning progress.

Dossier

The dossier is the section where the learners can keep the materials which demonstrate their achievements or experiences in the *Language Passport* or *Biography*. In this sense, it is like a portfolio of an artist. According to the ‘Principles and Guidelines’ learners can include letters, project works, memoranda, brief reports, and audio or video cassettes which show their proficiency in the language in the ELP (Council of Europe, 2004).

With the dossier, the students get the opportunity to record their works and present them. The dossier gives the students the opportunity for selecting relevant learning documents of their own learning and illustrating their current language skill or experiences through authentic personal documentation (Kohonen & Westhoff, 2003).

2.4.3. Function of the ELP

The ELP has two main functions: ‘reporting’ and ‘pedagogical’. These functions are presented in this section. The ELP is not a completely different learning instrument from the traditional portfolios.

According to the ‘Principles and Guidelines’, the ELP projects aim at motivating learners by making them aware of their language learning performance to extend and change their language skills at all levels, and by providing the students with a record of their linguistic and cultural skills they have learned (Council of Europe, 2004).

The ELP enables the learners to think about cultural differences. Use of the ELP assumes that to be a competent L2 user, not only the language but also its culture is fundamental. Learners should go beyond the language they are learning. Hence, they add that the ELP should encourage learners to think about cultural differences, reflect on their experiences in terms of location and intensity. The location factors may be work, study, and travel (Little & Simpson, 2003).

The ELP has two main functions: reporting and pedagogical functions. The reporting function of the ELP is that it gives the students the chance to display their language learning process. Little and Perclova (2001) describes the ‘reporting’ aspect as being similar to an ‘artistic’ portfolio. This means that the ELP is not a certificate or diploma that the learners get on the basis of examinations. It is a means to supplement the learner’s awards of those kinds by presenting additional information about his/her own experience and concrete evidence for his/her foreign language achievements including inside and outside the classroom (Little & Perclova, 2001). This function overlaps with the interest of Council of Europe in “facilitating individual mobility and relating regional and national qualifications to internationally agreed standards (Common European Framework)” (p. 3).

The importance of the ‘reporting’ function can vary with the age of the learners. For instance, the reporting function can be less important for the young learners than the adult learners who are at the end of their formal education or are employed. This is the reason why the Council of Europe introduced a standard passport for adults only. For adult learners it can be more important that the passport can be internationally accepted (Little & Perclova, 2001).

The second function of the ELP is ‘pedagogical’. The pedagogical function of the ELP is to help students become aware of their language learning processes. The learners develop their capacity about reflection and self-assessment of their language learning objectives, plan their learning and learn by the help of the ELP. Therefore, they have the opportunity to take responsibility for their own learning. This function of the ELP overlaps with the interest of Council of Europe in promoting learner autonomy and lifelong learning. Additionally, the pedagogical function enhances the motivation of the learners to develop their ability to communicate in different languages, to learn additional languages and to seek new intercultural experiences. Hence, the ELP can be a means to motivate the learners to get insight into new cultures, learn new languages and reflect on their own language learning process (Little & Perclova, 2001).

The reporting and pedagogical functions of the ELP are combined with the help of an ongoing process of self-assessment which is vital for effective ELP use (Little, 2002a). The learners go through a self-assessment process by means of the ELP, see what they already know and what they need to know.

In this section, the functions of the ELP were presented. In the next section, reflection and self-assessment in the ELP will be discussed.

2.4.4. Reflection in the ELP

One of the aims of the ELP in its reporting function is to enhance reflective learning. With the help of reflection, which is one of the components of a portfolio, the learners can think and evaluate their learning processes. Reflection is vital in terms of promoting lifelong learning which is one of the goals of the ELP, as well

(Pakkila, 2003). It gives the learners the opportunity to monitor their progress, discover suitable learning techniques, and develop self-awareness and meaningful self-assessment.

The ELP supports three kinds of reflection: planning (learners reflect before they engage in a learning activity or a communicative task), monitoring (while they are doing that particular activity), and evaluation (after doing the activity) (Little & Perclova, 2001). The planning is done by deciding on the learning goals in the biography; doing a particular activity requires learners to monitor their performance, and the learners select materials to include in the dossier, review learning goals in the biography, go through their language passport and evaluate themselves. Since, the ELP provides the learners to reflect on their own language learning process and progress, it develops students' self-confidence. However, it is especially the *Language Biography* that includes the processes rather than products. That reflection on learning processes improves learning outcomes as well as the language learners' ability and motivation to learn languages is the key in the *Language Biograohy* (Schneider & Lenz, 2003). Thus, both the traditional portfolio and the ELP include reflection as components so that they can promote self-directed learning.

The ELP is used on voluntary basis; however, for reflective language learning to become a habit for students, it is necessary to use the ELP frequently in language learning and integrate it within language curricula. It should not be "extra" work. The dossier is important since it provides the students "ongoing reflective learning" and self-assessment (Kohonen & Westoff, 2003; p. 29). The students reflect and asses their works, they include in dossier, because the tasks should be carefully carried out and be the representatives of the objectives they chose from the biography.

2.4.5. Self-assessment in ELP

ELP aims at encouraging self-assessment since it has an important role in enhancing lifelong learning. Self-assessment gives the students the opportunity to be directly involved in learning (O'Malley & Pierce, 1996). The reporting function of the ELP encourages students' self-assessment of their language learning processes (Kohonen & Westhoff, 2003). Students can experience self-assessment with the descriptors and the 'can-do' statements. By using the self-assessment grid, the students can gain insight into their language learning profile which can also enable them to see their strengths and weaknesses in improving the four skills in language learning (Schneider & Lenz, 2003). This feature of the ELP encourages the learners for lifelong learning.

Self-assessment is essential in the ELP because without it, the students cannot monitor their own language learning processes (Little, 2004). Thus all the sections in the ELP promote self-assessment: the language passport, the biography, and the dossier. Little and Perclova (2001) describes the functions of the ELP in terms of self-assessment in the following way. The language passport in the ELP requires the learners to assess themselves according to the scales and descriptors from the CEF. The biography helps the learners to set objectives for their own learning which is possible only if they regularly assess their own progress in language learning, functions as a promoter for self-assessment. Little and Simpson (2003) states that the goal-setting and self-assessment checklists in the language biography have a formative function because they are developed to accompany learning from day to day, week to week, and month to month. Hence, the learners engage in self-assessment process by using the ELP, and gradually approach to autonomous

learning (see ‘1.3.2. Self-assessment’). The dossier enables the students select material which can also be accomplished by means of self-assessment. Self-assessment overlaps with the Common Europe’s concern to enhance autonomous lifelong learning and “reminds us that the ownership of the ELP always lies with the individual learner” (Little & Perclova, 2001; p. 53).

In the pilot projects conducted in Europe in 1998-2000, the teachers and learners reported that self-assessment had positive results for both groups. For instance, Little and Perclova (2001) states that the teachers became at a better understanding of the problems that the learners experience during the introduction of the self-assessment which led to open dialogue, and the learners stated that they liked assessing their own language skills and comparing their view with the teacher’s.

Little (2005) claims that to foster learner autonomy, self-assessment is essential. If the learners are involved in goal setting and activity selection, they should also be trained on how to assess their own learning. Including self-assessment, the ELP can be a tool to be used for this purpose. However, Little (2005) underlines some drawbacks of the assessment included in the ELP. First, the assessment in the ELP is incidentally qualitatively constructed. In other words, the assessment does not include grammatical accuracy, phonological control, and sociolinguistic appropriateness. Secondly, it is not obvious how many descriptors define a level or how many communicative tasks should be carried out to achieve a particular level. Thus, it cannot be clear how many tasks each student completes to achieve an objective. Furthermore, Little (2005) underlines that self-assessment does not mean excluding teacher assessment and other formal assessment types. That is,

the aim with self-assessment is to make the learners gain insight about their language development process.

During the pilot projects, some doubts arose in terms of self-assessment. It was believed that the learners cannot assess their language learning process. However, Little (2004) answers those doubts with the following quotation:

From the beginning self-assessment in the ELP has given rise to three concerns. First, it has been objected that learners do not know how to assess themselves. The answer to this is that self-assessment is a skill that must be learnt, and its development must be given classroom time. Secondly, there has been a worry that learners will over-estimate their proficiency. The answer to this is that they should always be required to justify their self-assessment by demonstrating that they can do what they claim to be able to do. Thirdly, some fear that learners will cheat by including in their ELPs materials they have not produced themselves. The answer to this is that dishonesty of this kind is difficult to get away with in a properly maintained ELP (Little, 2004; p. 15).

This section discussed the self-assessment in the ELP. The next section will overview the assumed advantages of the ELP.

2.4.6. Assumed Advantages of the ELP

In this section, some of the positive effects of the ELP use are discussed on teachers like understanding the needs of the learners better, on learners like being responsible for their own learning and developing autonomy.

According to the feedback of the individual teachers in the pilot projects of the ELP, the ELP had positive effects on language learning. One teacher from the Czech Republic stated that ELP helped them to make their job easier: “I was helped by the portfolio’s clear statement about the aims of teaching and the transparency of teaching and learning results. The descriptors encouraged me to reflect more deeply on my objectives as a teacher” (as cited in Little & Perclova, 2001; p. 17). The

English teachers from the Czech Republic and Germany summarized their experience with the ELP as:

[...]motivation of all the learners, even the slower ones; increases their self-confidence when they have a list of their actual abilities; learners spend more time thinking about their language abilities and knowledge; voluntary work makes them more active; improved relations between learners and between learners and teachers; learners are more motivated and more creative; learners become more self-confident; learners reflect on more what they do; teachers can be more creative; keeps parents informed about their child's progress; focused on communication rather than on minor grammar mistakes; learners can develop their own language abilities; learners realize that they can extend their English language out of school as well (Little & Perclova, 2001, p. 18).

In addition, not only learners but also teachers can make use of the ELP so that they can help the learners via the ELP. According to an ELP project in Finland, the ELP functioned both as a pedagogical tool for teachers to guide learning and as a practical device for students to take responsibility for their own learning process under the teacher's guidance and tutoring (Kohonen & Westoff, 2003).

Little and Perclova (2001) emphasizes also that achieving learner autonomy, self-knowledge and "a growing capacity for reflective thinking" are fundamental. These were some of the outcomes of the ELP reported by the teachers working with the ELP. According to these results of the projects, it is argued that the ELP can "develop learners' motivation, reflective capacities, and encourage them to take their own learning initiatives" (p.19). The ELP enables the learners increase their language awareness by the use of the 'can-do' statements which help the learners to reflect on their language learning processes (Meister, 2005).

The ELP can be a valuable tool for learners to learn a language and monitor their own learning process. Schneider (2006) summarizes various benefits of using the ELP. For example, the ELP is a record which shows both the products and processes the language learner goes through. It includes both self-assessment and

teacher assessment. Moreover, it is not only for one specific level. The ELP is a document which can be used by the learners from one level to another. The ELP does not belong to the institution. The learners can keep it after formal education, as well; in other words it is a tool used for lifelong learning (Schneider, 2006).

2.4.7. Pilot Projects Involving the ELP

Various pilot projects were carried out in Europe. This section discusses the pilot projects conducted in Europe and some of its results. Little and Perclova (2001) reports that various versions of the ELP were piloted in the fifteen member states of the Council of Europe between 1998 and 2000. The pilot projects were conducted at every level; primary, lower secondary, upper secondary, vocational, university and adult.

Generally positive feedback was received from the pilot projects although the feedback varied from project to project. According to the official report (Schärer; as cited in Little, 2002b), the ELP provided the teachers and learners the chance to reflect on the reasons for language learning, the language learning process, and the criteria by which learning may be evaluated. Sixty-eight percent of learners stated that the time they spent for the ELP was time “well spent”. Seventy percent of the teachers thought that the ELP was a useful tool for learners, and 78% of the teachers thought that it was a useful tool for teachers. Moreover, the learners were motivated with the idea of self-assessment in the ELP according to the common reference levels of the CEF. Seventy percent of the learners stated that the ELP helped them to assess their own language proficiency, and 70% of the learners indicated that they found it useful to compare their teacher’s assessment with their own. Sixty-two percent of the

teachers said that their learners were able to assess their own language proficiency (Little, 2002a).

Almost every project had positive results. Little (2003) states that according to the reports of the pilot projects in Europe such as in the Czech Republic, the Finnish ELP pilot project, the feedback for the use of the ELP was generally positive. The learners found it interesting to take part in such a project, young learners found the ELP entertaining, and so they were motivated. Teachers reported positive feelings towards the ELP as well although the ELP demanded a lot from them (Little, 2003; Little, 2002a). However, the ratio of the quantitative feedback seemed low in terms of all learners involved, but this could be explained with the fact that not all the participants received the questionnaire because of technical and time reasons. In addition, according to the results, to use an ELP in an effective way, reflection, training, and time are needed. Schärer (2000) stresses that what was important in the results was that the learners were aware of the fact that formal exams would also have an important role in the future.

Moreover, the ELP project was mainly conducted with volunteers. Therefore, feedback was relatively positive. Despite the fact that mostly volunteer learners were involved in the pilot studies, Schärer (2000) reports that since it was more complicated to monitor and make arrangements in larger group projects and less volunteer participation, the projects resulted in misunderstandings and negative reactions to the ELP. One more thing was that although the cost for producing ELPs was not so high, it was reported that implementation with large numbers would need to be financed with outside sources and/or commercial publishers (Schärer, 2000).

Another limitation about the implementation of the ELP in the pilot projects was that introducing new instruments like the ELP need time to get used to. According to Schärer (2002), “the European Year of Languages may have aroused unrealistic expectations, especially at a political level: effective implementation takes time, as the instance of the Swiss ELP confirms” (p. 5). ELP is a new teaching instrument; hence, introducing novel instruments both to learners and teachers needs time. The ELP requires the students to set their own objectives and assess their performances, and this also needs time for training. As Abuja (2002) states “the ELP has a strong impact on the teaching methodology; teachers and/or students are often insecure about the new instrument that brings about a change of teaching/learning style” (p. 13). Another challenge of the ELP was that a gap occurred between self-assessment and the traditional assessment methods. For this difficulty, it was suggested by Abuja (2002) that more time and guidance of teachers were needed to train both the students and the learners on how to work with the ELP. This means that the ELP can be considered as extra work by students and teachers. In the Turin report, it was stated that the ELP was an additional work for the teachers because the ELP attempts to change teachers’ attitudes and sharing of a new methodology (Ressico, 2002).

The ELP was piloted not only at elementary or secondary level schools but also at universities. One of the pilot projects took place in an Italian university. As Evangelisti reports it was used in the University of Calabria between 1998 and 2001. Bilotto (2006) reports that the project was conducted with students taking a combination of two or three of the foreign languages taught in the unit of the Faculty of Economics. The objective of the project was to investigate what kind of support

the students and teachers need in order to work with the ELP, to assess the impact the ELP has on the language learning process at university context, and to ascertain whether the use of the ELP in learning experience making learners more aware of themselves as language learners in terms of objectives, strategies, strengths and needs. The data was collected through questionnaires and structured student and teacher interviews and through assessment 'en route' to find out the use of the ELP in identifying the skills required for assessment and into its effectiveness as a pedagogical tool towards learner autonomy (Bilotto, 2006). Initially, number of the participants was not over 100, but later the number of students working with the ELP increased to 1000.

The result of the pilot project at Calabria University, in pedagogical view, was that the students learnt how to use their linguistic knowledge, develop self-assessment skills, set their objectives, and gain insight into their own strategies. In the affective view, self-awareness of the students increased, and they reacted positively towards the ELP. However, the data revealed that the students needed guidance in term of improving their self-assessment skills because it was obvious that they were influenced by their previous learning experience and expectations. In addition, it is stated that it was difficult to deal with such a high number of students in terms of guidance for self-assessment (Evangelisti, 2002b).

To summarize, the ELP can be used as a tool to motivate learners for becoming aware of their own language learning process with the self-assessment and reflection components of the ELP. Therefore, the ELP can encourage the learners for developing autonomy and lifelong learning although it may have some limitations in

the self-assessment it includes and on the use of the teachers and learners because of being a newly introduced instrument.

This section discussed the ELP in terms of its definition, components, functions, assumed advantages and pilot projects. In the next section, the ELP in Turkey will be discussed.

2.4.8. ELP in Turkey

In this section, the ELP projects in Turkey are discussed. The ELP is a newly introduced learning instrument in Turkey. The validation of the ELP Turkish model was approved in 2003 by the Validation Committee of ELP (Demirel, 2005). An ELP project started in Turkey in 2001 with the leading role of the Education of Ministry. Demirel (2005) reports that the project was planned to be piloted first in the private schools, Anatolian High Schools and High School with one year English teaching program, later the project was going to be expanded to other schools. At the first stage, the ELP was piloted in 20 state schools and 4 private schools in Ankara and Antalya. In 2004, the piloted cities increased to 30. It was planned to conduct pilot projects of the ELP gradually in an expanded way in whole Turkey in 2005 and later. Mirici (2002) reports that learner autonomy and ELP were piloted in Turkey, in 2002, and seminars were held for the teachers (Mirici, 2002). This may be interpreted that not only ELP but also the term learner autonomy is novel in the Turkish Education system.

The ELP projects started in secondary schools. Demirel (2004) states that the target group for the Turkish ELP Project was identified from secondary schools. The learners were not absolute beginners. They had enough language knowledge to

understand and adapt to the philosophy of the ELP. He adds that a survey was conducted to the teachers and learners by the Ministry of Education, and there was an agreement that the ELP resulted in positive contribution to the language learning process, and it also motivated most of the students so that most of them achieved some degree of learner autonomy (Demirel, 2004).

Besides the pilot projects, the ELP is used by a language school and some private language courses. TÖMER is the first language school in adult education which uses the ELP in Turkey. The application of (Ankara University) TÖMER, Turkish and Foreign Languages Research and Application Centre, to the European Council for the use of ELP was accepted by the European Validity Committee in 2004. Thus, TÖMER has become the first language school which provides its students with language passports in the field of teaching adults foreign languages. With the work of TÖMER and the Ministry of Education, the ELP was submitted to the Council of Europe and has been approved. Now, students attending TÖMER work with the ELP, so TÖMER gives learners the chance to own one.

At university level, although no pilot projects have been conducted; one study related to the ELP has been found. The study took place in preparatory school at Muğla University and was conducted for six months by Glover, Mirici, and Aksu (2005). Fifty students and six teachers worked with the ELP. The results of the study revealed that the attitudes of the teachers and students towards the ELP were positive. The field notes showed that the students liked the ELP, and most students worked to develop their autonomy. Additionally, the teachers reported that the motivation of the students who used the ELP was higher than the ones who did not

use it. Another result stated by the teachers was that students using the ELP attended to more classes compared with the previous years (Glover et al., 2005).

On the other hand, some student responses were not so positive towards the ELP in the study of Muğla University. To illustrate, only nine students thought that they really got responsible for their own learning according to the questionnaire. Moreover, one of the results of the student interview was that the learners found it difficult to bring so many materials in class every lesson. One surprising result was also found in the study that the students thought that they could use the ELP as an official passport to travel abroad (Glover et al., 2005).

On the whole, not only the term learner autonomy but also the European Language Portfolio has recently been introduced to educational contexts in Turkey with the start of the curriculum renewal projects of the Ministry of Education in order to be in harmony with the education system in the European Union. The Turkish education system is taking a great step from the teacher-centered classroom to the learner-centered classroom. One of the instruments to achieve this aim is the ELP.

2.5. Conclusion

This chapter reviewed the literature on the portfolios and the European Language Portfolio. Portfolios are significant tools to enhance learner autonomy and help the students to monitor their own learning process. The ELP is a portfolio type developed by the Council of Europe which can promote self-directed learning. The next chapter will focus on methodology, which covers participants, instruments, procedures in collecting data and data analysis used in the study.

CHAPTER III: METHODOLOGY

3.1. Introduction

The aim of the study is to gain insight into how the European Language Portfolio (ELP) can be used for promoting self-directed learning and how teachers, administrators, and students respond towards it. The study is conducted in the School of Foreign Languages at Anadolu University. The study seeks answers to the following research questions:

- 1 To what extent does the ELP encourage the students to develop self-directed language learning activities?
- 2 What are students' attitudes towards the use of the ELP in the School of Foreign Languages at Anadolu University?
- 3 What are teachers' attitudes towards the use of ELP in the School of Foreign Languages at Anadolu University in terms of attitude?
- 4 What are administrators' attitudes towards the use of the ELP in the School of Foreign Languages at Anadolu University towards the ELP?

This chapter of the study outlines the methodology of the study including participants, instruments, data collection procedures, and data analysis.

3.2. Participants

The participants of this study were 26 volunteer upper-intermediate students, their 3 skill teachers, and 2 administrators in the School of Foreign Languages at Anadolu University. Students in the School of Foreign Languages at Anadolu University take four courses, which are reading, writing, grammar, and integrated

speaking and listening each term. Reading, writing, and speaking and listening teachers participated in this study. The Grammar teacher was not included in the study because the ELP does not have explicitly stated objectives related to grammar.

There were two reasons of choosing an upper-intermediate class in the School of Foreign Languages at Anadolu University as the participants of the study. One of the reasons was that upper-intermediate students have engaged many language tasks so they may have needed less help for creating activities. The other reason is that there were four classes of upper-intermediate level in 2005-2006 academic year, so it was a smaller group than the other levels. I started to conduct the study in the first term and continued in the second term. Since the students are replaced at the end of the first term based on the results of the placement test, it would be very difficult to contact with students other than the ones in the upper-intermediate level.

Two out of 26 students became irregular after two weeks and four quit keeping the ELP in the fourth week of the study. Therefore, twenty students took part in the study on voluntary basis. Their ages ranged from 17 to 20. Both male and female students were included in the study. Since the gender was not in importance in the study, the students were not asked about them in the given questionnaire. 19 students out of 20 answered the questionnaire, and every week the same four students were interviewed to observe their work with the ELP more closely. Besides these regularly interviewed students, three students keeping the ELP were interviewed only once at the end of the study, and one student who had quit working with the ELP after four weeks was interviewed as well. Thus, at the end of the fall term of the academic year 2005-2006, eight students were voluntarily interviewed. These students were not representatives of the class since they had volunteered to be interviewed. At the end

of the study, when the students were asked whether they would like to continue keeping the ELP, 10 students out of 20 decided to keep the portfolio in the second term. However, they did not want to be interviewed. This may be because they had already quit working with the ELP, or they just did not want to be interviewed.

Each class has four skill teachers, speaking and listening, reading, writing, and grammar. The speaking teacher was the main one responsible for keeping the ELPs of the students in the study. Their reading and writing teachers were responsible only for helping the students when they had problems related to those skills, like finding activities for the ELP or asking the teachers to check students' works. However, since the ELP could not be implemented in class level in this study, the teachers were not able to work with the ELP in class hours during the study.

The final participants were the two administrators of the School of Foreign Languages at Anadolu University. The head of the department and the assistant were interviewed once at the end of the study about their opinions about the ELP and the implementation of the ELP in the curriculum. All the interviewed participants are shown in Table 1 below.

Table 1

Participants and Interviews

Participants	Interviews
4 Students	four times in for four weeks
7 Students keeping the ELP (4 of them were regularly interviewed)	once in the last week of January
1 Student quit the ELP	once in the last week of January
1 Teacher	once in the last week of January
2 Administrators	once in April

3.3. Instruments

In order to find to what extent the ELP helps the learners do self-directed learning activities and to find how they and the teachers react to the ELP, the following instruments were used: interviews, learning diaries, questionnaires, group discussions, and student portfolios.

3.3.1. Individual Interviews

Interviews were done with four students every week and eight students at the end of the study, three teachers, and two administrators. The reason why interviews were conducted to collect data was as Brown (2001) suggests: interviews are flexible and personal, and can provide detailed data. This means the interviews give the opportunity to collect data beyond the questions asked. According to Brown (2001), in interviews, the interviewer can get information he or she does not expect. Keeping this in mind, weekly interviews were held beginning two weeks after students had been introduced with the ELP. The same four volunteer students were interviewed individually each week about what kind of activities they did for the ELP and what they experienced. One of them volunteered to be interviewed in the fourth week, so I could interview Mehmet three times during the study. In the last week of the study in the fall term, one student who had quit keeping the ELP, and three students who were not interviewed before, and the same four students were interviewed. In total, at the end of the study, eight students shared their experiences about the ELP. In the spring term, one student continuing to keep the ELP was interviewed one time via messenger. I and one of the students met at the messenger and talked about the tasks

he carried out for the ELP, but we could not arrange it again because he was not willing to continue with the ELP.

The interviews with students were held in Turkish to make the students easily express their ideas about the ELP, and were held in a friendly atmosphere instead of asking one question after another. Hence, every interview with one student lasted approximately 25 minutes. The length of the interviews varied according to the experiences the students had with the ELP. All the interviews were recorded. The questions for the interviews were prepared beforehand using the topics in the ‘ELP guide for teacher trainers’ of Little and Perclova (2001) and in Little (2003) (see Appendix C). The interviews were beneficial for the students as well as the study because the interviews gave the students the opportunity to ask about the problems they had faced in using the ELP. The students described the activities they had done in detail, the benefits and the drawbacks of the ELP every week. These interviews provided information about and insight into the students’ ELP use and self-directed learning (for sample transcription, see Appendix C).

The responsible teacher, who was the speaking course instructor, was interviewed once towards the end of the study. The interview was held in English and recorded. The questions were prepared beforehand by considering the topics in the “ELP guide for teacher trainers” by Little and Perclova (2001), Little (2003). The teacher was asked questions about the students use of the ELP in terms of motivation, consulting with him about problems, and his ideas about implementing the ELP in the curriculum of the school (for interview questions and sample transcription, see Appendix D). The most important drawback of this interview was that the teacher could not use the ELP in class level, and therefore, he had no

experience with the ELP and just shared his ideas. The study could not be implemented in class level because it was thought that it could be unfair for the participant students to take their class time and leave them behind the syllabus as they take the same final exam at the end of the academic year.

The school director and assistant were interviewed as well. They were first briefly informed about the ELP, including its aims and components. Then they were asked whether the ELP could be implemented in the curriculum and what the benefits and the drawbacks of implementation might be (for interview questions and sample transcription see Appendix E). These interviews were held in English and recorded.

All the student, teacher and administrator interviews were transcribed right after they were done. The reason for the immediate transcription was that the next interview questions and the questionnaire items could be prepared considering the interview transcriptions.

3.3.2. Learning Diaries

The learning diary is a tool where learners can record their experiences, feelings, thoughts and reflections in their language learning process (Vickers & Morgan, 2003). Students were asked to keep learning diaries because it could be a good way for students to express their thoughts about the ELP and to show what they had done to develop self-directed learning. The students were also asked to keep learning diaries because I did not have the opportunity to interview all 20 students in this upper-intermediate class; with the help of the diaries I was able to learn more the thoughts and feelings of more students regarding the ELP.

All student participants were asked to keep learning diaries related to the ELP and hand them in every week. I collected the diaries every week and returned them to the students after copying and reading them (for sample diary entries, see Appendix F). They were asked to write what kind of activities they had done in relation to the ELP, and what they had found difficult or easy about using the ELP. They were allowed to use their native language so that they could express themselves in a more precise way. Although the students were given guiding questions prepared by me about the activities they had carried out and experiences with the ELP, most of the time the students answered only one question. Some of the students did not write their names, so I was not able to follow the experiences of some students regularly.

3.3.3. Questionnaires

At the end of the fall term, which was the seventh week of the research, the students were given a questionnaire. No pilot and pre-questionnaire was conducted because the ELP is a new tool, and none of the participants were expected to have any opinion and experience with the ELP. The questionnaire consisted of two parts. The first part consisted of 34 Likert-scale items, while the second part included four open-ended questions (see Appendix G). I developed the questionnaire by the help of the mentioned topics and questions in Little and Perclova (2001), Little (2003) and the study of Glover et al. (2005). Another questionnaire for the four students who had quit the study was developed by me as well with one question asking the reason for quitting the study.

Giving questionnaires helped me gather more data supporting the diaries and interviews. The questionnaire was developed after examining some of the

questionnaires given to the students in the pilot projects which were mentioned by Little and Perclova (2001), Little (2003) and the study of Glover et al. (2005). Since the exact questionnaire could not be received from them, the questions mentioned in these sources helped to form items for this study. Additionally, the student interview transcriptions were used while preparing the items in Part A of the questionnaire. While preparing the questionnaire, Dörnyei (2003) was considered as a guide. After the initial questionnaire was prepared, my advisor and I negotiated the form of the final questionnaire.

The questionnaire with two parts were given to nineteen students who had kept the ELP from the beginning till the seventh week of the research, and four students who had quit keeping the ELP were given a questionnaire with one question asking the reason for quitting at the end of the study on 19 January. Because of the proficiency level of the students, it was thought that the questionnaire could be applied in English. The questionnaires were conducted in class, and I was in class as well to help the students whenever they had problems in understanding the questions.

3.3.4. Group Discussions

Every week, on Thursdays after school, I held a group discussion with the class about the ELP. Because I did not have the necessary equipment, the whole class discussions could not be recorded. The time duration of the discussions was flexible which varied from 25 minutes to 40 minutes. During the meetings, the students were asked to share what they did for the ELP, whether they faced any difficulties, and what they liked about the ELP. The meetings were held after classes and in Turkish

so that the issues could be discussed in depth, but over ten students participated in the discussions all the time.

I also had a discussion with the writing and reading teachers of the class in Turkish about the ELP, and the discussion was recorded (see Appendix H). The two teachers discussed the ELP and its implementation in the curriculum of the school. The discussion was held in Turkish because it was believed that more issues could be discussed in more depth and confidence. Group discussion was preferred for the chance of more issues to be talked about. The discussion was stimulated using questions prepared by me based on the topics in the ‘ELP guide for teacher trainers’ (Little & Perclova, 2001). The teachers talked about the implementation of the ELP, how students reacted to the ELP, and whether the students asked them questions. With this discussion, I could get both the ideas of the teachers about the ELP and of the students because the students shared their opinions with their teachers.

3.3.5. Student European Language Portfolios

Each student had his/her own European Language Portfolio. They were given the Swiss model of ELP because the Turkish adult portfolio version was not available at the time of the study. Therefore, the students could not have the ‘can-do’ statements and the instructions of the ELP in Turkish. This may have caused problems because some of the objectives might have been difficult for the students to understand even if they could have the translated version. The students were introduced with the ELP over two class hours; however, this time was very short to cover the ELP in depth. Two students asked to meet me after the introduction because they could not understand some parts of it due to not attending the class.

Hence, they were introduced to the components of the ELP and how to work with it was explained to them. Since the ELP could not be implemented in class level, I had to meet the students after class for their questions about the ELP.

The students were asked to share their portfolios with me on voluntary basis. The aim of asking the students to share their portfolios was to have an idea about what they had done to achieve chosen objectives in the ELP, and to what extent they had been able to develop their self-directed learning activities. One of the aims of the ELP was to develop self-directed learning. Thus, seeing the portfolios of the students would enable me to get an idea to what extent they could set their own objectives and achieve them. However, only two students shared the activities they carried out. In other words, at the end of the study I was not able to see any portfolios of the students. One student brought one sample activity and the other one three sample activities he had carried out (see Appendix H).

Table 2

Instruments Used in the Study

Participant	Interviews	Learning Diary	ELP	Ques	Gd
26 Ss	4 Ss	20 Ss	20 Ss	24 Ss	20 Ss
Later:	(RI)				(NR)
2 Ss irregular					
4 Ss quit					2 Ts
					(R)
3 Ts	1 S				
	(quit study)				
2 Adms	1 T				
	2 Adms				

Ss: Students; S: Student; Ts: Teachers; Adms: Administrators; NR: not recorded; R: Recorded; RI: Regular Interviews; Ques: Questionnaire; Gd: Group Discussion

3.4. Data Collection Procedures

The instruments for collecting data were interviews with 8 students, one teacher and 2 administrators of the School of Foreign Languages, a group discussion with 2 teachers, questionnaires given to 19 students, learning diaries and the European Language Portfolios of the students. The study started on December 5 and ended in the last week of January. In the second term, the students were asked to keep the ELP and to be interviewed; however, although ten students agreed to continue the study in the second term, they were not willing to work with the ELP later on, so I was not able to collect data in the second term for this study.

Before starting the study, permission was asked from the School of Foreign Languages at Anadolu University in the first week of December. The study was permitted to conduct with the chosen upper-intermediate class; however, the ELP was not allowed to be implemented in class level since it would be unfair for the students to leave them behind the syllabus of the school. Thus, students worked with the ELP outside the school, and I and the students had meetings after their class for seven weeks.

First, the speaking and writing teacher of the participant class was introduced with the ELP; the components, aim, function of it, and how the students were expected to work with the ELP. On December 4, I got acquainted with the students and asked them whether they would like to participate the study. 26 students agreed to take part in this study. Later, on December 5, the students were introduced to the ELP over two class hours. After the components of the ELP were explained, the students were asked to work on the descriptors and ‘can-do’ statements. However, since there was not much time, the students and I could not work with the descriptors

in detail. They were also told that they could use the ELP to show their language levels for job applications or in their future career. After the students were asked to find out their proficiency levels according to the descriptors in the ELP, they set one goal to work on until the next meeting.

For seven weeks, every Thursday, I met the students and held group discussions with them. At each discussion, the students were asked to share what kind of activities they had carried out to achieve the objectives they had chosen from the ELP. Furthermore, the problems faced about the ELP such as setting objectives or creating activities by the students were discussed. Additionally, since the students used the Swiss Model of the ELP, there was no Turkish translation of the portfolio. This may have caused a problem for the students to understand and interpret the ‘can-do’ statements in the portfolio although their level was upper intermediate. Hence, these meeting gave the students the opportunity to ask questions about the ELP.

Three weeks after the students had received the training and the ELPs, the interviews were held individually. Thus, it was determined that after three weeks they would have enough experience with the ELP to share. For the first interview with the students, seven questions were prepared to be asked beforehand and eight questions to be asked at the end of the study (see Appendix C), but the main question was about the activities they had carried out for the ELP, so the students talked about what kind of activities they had carried out, what objectives they had worked on, and the problems they had faced during the interviews. This would help me to see to what extent they could manage doing self-directed learning activities. During the other two interviews, the students were asked what kind of activities they had carried

out and whether they had some problems. Moreover, I had individual meetings with some of the students, since they asked me to meet them whenever they had difficulties with the ELP during the study. However, these students did not permit me to record the meetings.

The interviews were conducted for four weeks with the same four students. Because of the Bayram Holiday lasting one week, these four students were interviewed four times. The same four students were interviewed so that I could also see the process of keeping the ELP of them. The last interview was done with the same four students and additionally with three other students who had not been interviewed before. At the end of the study, seven students who had kept the portfolio since the beginning were interviewed. The last interview was done with one of the students who had quit keeping the ELP. The reason for his having quit keeping the ELP was asked to this student.

After each individual interview, the interview was transcribed. The reason of transcribing the interviews right after they were done was that I could expand the interview questions for the next interview and observe the students more closely.

The students were asked to keep a learning diary for the ELP, and every week starting from the first week of the study, their diaries were collected and copied. In the diaries, they wrote what kind of activities they had carried out to achieve their objectives in the ELP, what they had liked most about the ELP, and the problems they had faced. The diaries were read carefully, and the commonly discussed points were categorized as ‘filling the ELP’, ‘self-directed learning’, ‘self-assessment’, ‘beliefs about the benefits’, and ‘motivation’.

At the end of the study, the students were asked to share their portfolios on a volunteer basis. However, only two students shared the activities they had done for the ELP (see Appendix I). The two students were the same as the ones being interviewed during the study, so I had a chance to see the match between what they told me during the interviews and what they had actually done.

Three teachers of the class were interviewed as well. The main responsible teacher was interviewed once on January 23, and asked about his ideas about the ELP and its implementation at the School of Foreign Languages, whether the students asked him for help, and any other opinions about the ELP. The other two teachers had a discussion about the ELP and its implementation in my institution on January 24. This discussion was recorded as well. Finally, the administrators were interviewed about the ELP on April 14. The administrators were interviewed late because after the data analysis process I could have a clearer picture to ask them questions about the ELP and its implementation.

At the end of seven weeks, the students were given a questionnaire. The questionnaire had two parts. Part A was a 5 point Likert-scale with 34 items, and part B had four open-ended questions. The Likert-scale items were analyzed with the software SPSS (11.0) frequency analysis. For the open-ended part, the students were allowed to use the language they preferred. Nineteen students keeping the ELP answered the questionnaires, and four students answered an open-ended question asking the reason for giving up keeping the ELP. The questionnaire was filled in the class after the instruction given by me. I was in class until all the questionnaires were handed in so that if a student had a question about the items, I could help him.

Table 3

Data Collection

Data Collec. Instruments	1 Week	2 Week	3 Week	4 Week	5 Week	6 Week	7 Week
Introduction	→						
Student Group Discussion		→	→	→	→	→	→
Learning Diary	→	→	→	→	→	→	→
Student Interview (4 Students)				→	→	→	→
Student Interview (8 Students)							→
Teacher Interview							→
Administrator Interview							→

3.5. Methods of Data Analysis

In this study, I used both qualitative and quantitative data analysis procedures. Part A of the questionnaire was analyzed quantitatively; the interviews, learning diaries, group discussion, the ELPs, Part B of the questionnaire, and the questionnaire of the students who quit the study were qualitatively analyzed.

After the data collection process was finished, the first step in the procedure was analyzing the data gotten from interviews, learning diaries, ELPs and questionnaires. The interviews were transcribed and grouped according to various topics mentioned in Little and Perclova (2001) and Glover et. al. (2005) related to the

research questions which will be mentioned in detail in chapter 4. The learning diaries were carefully read and analyzed according to the commonly mentioned points. The activities in the students' ELPs were also analyzed to see whether they were appropriately carried out and match the activities described by the students during the interviews.

The data from the questionnaire Part A were analyzed by using the Statistical Packages for Social Sciences (SPSS 11.0). The analysis of the data was based on descriptive statistics. The frequencies for each item of the questionnaire were found, and the percentages and the standard deviations were calculated for each item in the questionnaire as well. Next, the mean percentage for each category was calculated. In order to present the data, the items in the questionnaire were grouped according to various topics included in the study according to the mentioned topics in Little and Perclova (2001).

3.6. Conclusion

This chapter covered the participants, instruments, data collection procedures, and methods of data analysis. In chapter four, the analysis of the data and the specific outcomes will be discussed in detail.

CHAPTER IV: DATA ANALYSIS

4.1. Introduction

This study investigated the use of the European Language Portfolio (ELP) as a tool to promote self-directed learning and the attitudes of three teachers, two administrators, and 26 students towards the use of the ELP in the School of Foreign Languages at Anadolu University. The study tried to find answers to these research questions:

- 1 To what extent does the ELP encourage the students to develop self-directed language learning activities?
- 2 What are students' attitudes towards the use of the ELP in the School of Foreign Languages at Anadolu University?
- 3 What are teachers' attitudes towards the use of ELP in the School of Foreign Languages at Anadolu University in terms of attitude?
- 4 What are administrators' attitudes towards the use of the ELP in the School of Foreign Languages at Anadolu University towards the ELP?

26 volunteer upper-intermediate students, 3 teachers teaching these students, and 2 administrators were the participants of this study. Two students became irregular in the second week of the study, and four students quit keeping the ELP after four weeks. The students were given the European Language Portfolio (Swiss Model). They kept the portfolio for seven weeks.

During the study, four volunteer students were interviewed every week about what they had done for the ELP and about their opinions of the components of the

ELP. At the end of the study three more students who had not been interviewed before were interviewed. Thus, at the end of the study seven students keeping the portfolio had been interviewed about the ELP. Also, one of the students who had quit the study was interviewed. All the interviews were recorded and transcribed. Furthermore, all the participant students kept learning diaries for seven weeks, and these diaries were collected. The students were asked to share their portfolios with me on volunteer basis, but only two students submitted their activities. At the end of the study, 19 students were given a questionnaire with two parts. The first part consisted of 34 items using a 5 point Likert-scale, and second part had 4 open-ended questions. The students who had quit keeping the ELP were given an open-ended questionnaire with one question asking the reasons for giving up. Finally, one of the teachers was interviewed, and this was recorded. Two teachers had a group discussion with each other, and I stimulated the discussion with questions prepared beforehand. The group discussion of the teachers was recorded as well. Moreover, at the end of the study, the administrators were interviewed about the ELP.

In this chapter, in the first part, I will mention the steps taken in analyzing my data. In the second part, I will present the results of the study in two sections. The first section presents an analysis of the students interviews, learning diaries, ELPs of students, and the questionnaires. The second section presents the results of the analysis of teacher interviews, teacher group discussions, and administrator interviews.

4.2. Data Analysis Procedures

The data for the study was collected through interviews with 8 students, one teacher and 2 administrators of the School of Foreign Languages, a group discussion with 2 teachers of the class, questionnaires given to 19 students, learning diaries and the European Language Portfolios of the students. The steps for analyzing the data were first analyzing the interviews of the students, one teacher interview, teacher group discussion, learning diaries and student ELPs, second analyzing the administrator interview. Analyzing the closed-ended questionnaire and the open-ended questions of the students who had quit using the ELP was the last step of my data analysis procedure.

All the interviews with students, teacher, administrators and the group discussion of two teachers were transcribed for analysis. The transcriptions were analyzed to find categories related to my research questions. The categories from the student interviews were labeled as ‘self-directed learning’, ‘filling in the ELP’, ‘understanding objectives’, ‘self-assessment’, ‘motivation’, ‘benefits of the ELP’, ‘liking the ELP’, ‘problems with the ELP’. The categories of the teacher interviews were ‘consulting teacher’, ‘class participation’, ‘implementation’, and for the group discussion ‘consulting teacher’, ‘implementation’, ‘class participation’, ‘learner autonomy’, ‘self-assessment’ were the categories. During the categorization process of interviews and group discussion, “ELP guide for the teacher trainers” of Little and Perclova (2001), Little (2003) and the questions I prepared were considered. These categories from the interviews were the basis for the later steps of my data analysis. Categories related to self-directed learning and motivation were taken from “ELP guide for teacher trainers” of Little and Perclova (2001).

The rest of the categories were determined during the transcription analysis process of the interviews. Analyzing the data from the transcripts, the common points discovered during the interviews with the students and the speaking skill teacher were grouped as unpredicted new categories. The categories were ‘consulting the teacher’, ‘increase in class participation’, ‘implementation in the lesson’, and ‘lack of time’. Furthermore, since the students used the Swiss Model of the ELP, there was no Turkish translation of the portfolio. Therefore, this may have caused a problem for the students to understand and interpret the ‘can-do’ statements in the portfolio although their level was upper intermediate. Hence, the category of ‘filling in the ELP’ was formed by me before the interviews were held depending on this problem.

After finishing the analysis of the interviews with the students, the interviews and group discussion with the teachers and administrators were transcribed. The categories for the group discussion were found in the same way as the interviews with the students, from the “ELP guide for teacher trainers” (Little and Perclova, 2001). The questions for the group discussion were prepared beforehand and categorized according to the topics. The categories were ‘consultation with the teacher’, ‘increase in class participation’, ‘implementation in the lesson’, ‘lack of time’, ‘self-directed learning’, ‘self-assessment’. The results are presented under each category in the results section.

The students were asked to bring their learning diaries every week during the study. The diaries were copied and were examined carefully, and the commonly discussed points were categorized as ‘filling the ELP’, ‘self-directed learning’, ‘self-assessment’, ‘beliefs about the benefits’, and ‘motivation’.

All the student participants were asked to share their portfolios on a volunteer basis. However, only two students showed the activities they had done for the ELP. One of them brought three activities he completed for the ELP and the other one only one activity. Having the activities they had carried out gave me the opportunity to see to what extent they managed to do self-directed activities, and also the ELPs gave an idea about how the students filled them in.

Analyzing the questionnaire results was the next step. Part A of the questionnaire was a 5 point Likert-scale with 34 items, and part B had four open-ended questions. The software SPSS (11.0) frequency analysis was used for the analysis of the Likert-scale items. The frequencies, percentages and the standard deviations for each item of the questionnaire were calculated. Next, the mean percentage for each category was found. The tables of the results were prepared for each category, which were ‘filling in the ELP’, ‘understanding descriptors and objectives’, ‘self-directed learning’, ‘self-assessment’, and ‘motivation’ with the percentages and the means. The categories were derived from the “ELP guide for teacher trainers” of Little and Perclova (2001) and Little (2003). Answers for the open-ended questions of the students were grouped according to the questions. Another questionnaire was given to the four students who had quit keeping the portfolio. The results of this questionnaire were categorized as ‘lack of time’ and ‘benefits of the ELP’ according to the points they mentioned.

4.3. Results

The results of the data analysis procedure is presented in the following order: 1) results of the interviews with the students, 2) results of the learning diaries, 3) results of the ELP 4) results of the questionnaire, 5) results of the interview with one teacher 6) the results of the group discussion with two teachers, and 7) results of the interviews with two administrators of the School of Foreign Languages at Anadolu University.

4.3.1. Results of Student Interviews

In this section, results of the interviews with the students will be discussed. Seven students were interviewed in order to get information about to what extent they had created activities to achieve the objectives they choose from the ELP and about their ideas of keeping the ELP, self-assessment, and self-directed learning. Also, one student who had quit working with the ELP was interviewed to find out the reason why he changed his mind.

The results of the data collected and analyzed will be presented in this section in order to answer the research questions I and II. By analyzing the data from the interviews, it is hoped to find out to what extent the ELP promotes self-directed learning and what the reactions of the students towards the ELP are. The four students who were regularly interviewed were given artificial names to see the consistency of the same student's ideas about the ELP. The other three students interviewed once at the end of the study are not given artificial names.

The data collected from the individual interviews with the students were analyzed qualitatively through categorization. Little and Perclova (2001) mentions a

number of categories in the “ELP guide for teacher trainers” such as, implementation, motivation, and self-assessments. During the categorization, in addition to the topics Little and Perclova (2001) mentioned, the research questions and the reactions of students towards the ELP were considered as bases, as well. The interview results will be presented under five headings: Reactions of the students towards self-directed learning in the ELP, filling in the ELP, understanding the descriptors and objectives in the ELP, motivation, and problems related to the ELP. The data reveal that the students had similar beliefs about working with the ELP.

Research Question 1: Self-directed Learning in the ELP

Interview results about to what extent the students experienced self-directed learning will be considered under these categories: 1) deciding on objectives from the ELP to achieve, 2) finding activities, 3) consulting teachers, 4) taking responsibility for learning, 5) self-assessment. The categories were determined in the light of what Benson (2001) suggested. He claims that self-directed learning includes determining objectives, progress and evaluation of one’s own learning. Each interview started with the question ‘what have you done for the ELP this week?’ It was hoped that these headings and the question would show whether the ELP promotes self-directed learning.

The findings from the interviews related to these five headings are presented below.

Deciding on the Objectives from the ELP to Achieve

Since setting one's own objectives for learning is a part of self-directed learning, the students were asked to share their experiences related to deciding on the learning objectives during the interviews. The students expressed their ideas about deciding on the objectives in the following ways.

While deciding on which objectives to choose from the ELP, four students stated that they had no difficulty in choosing objectives from the ELP. They stated that it took time what to decide, but once they started, it got easier.

Leyla

Interviewer: did you have any difficulties in deciding which objectives to do?

Leyla: I didn't have any difficulties

Selnur

Interviewer: (...) did you have any difficulty in deciding on the activities? like what can I do... I don't know anything... I cannot decide...did you say something similar to this?

Selnur: when I think, I can find something to do...first I was stressed about what I could do for this subject... what would be appropriate ...but when you do it... you see that it is possible

Damla

Interviewer: did you have any difficulty in deciding on the activities? (...)

Damla: uh uh (expression of negation)

Interviewer: so everything was clear?

Damla: the objectives are clear

These sentences from the interviews indicate that although understanding how to choose objectives seems difficult, after some time the students understood what they were expected to do.

The fourth student's case was a bit different than the others. At first, he states that he has understood how to choose his learning objectives. The transcript is given below.

Mehmet

At the beginning of the dialogue below, I and Mehmet talked about how to use the ELP, because he could not understand it exactly during the training session. Related to this, after describing how to use the ELP, I asked whether he had some more questions just to be sure everything was clear from his point of view. The dialogue continues in the way presented below.

Interviewer: do you have any questions? about these or the objectives?
Mehmet: no
Interviewer: so you understood... don't you?
Mehmet: un-I understood

Here Mehmet reports that he understood how to use the ELP including how to use the objectives; however, after some time when I ask him which objective he wants to choose, he becomes hesitant. This part of the interview is presented below.

Mehmet: Which one is easier...let's choose the easier...I mean which one should we choose, can you do it for me?
Interviewer: It's your objective you are going to choose this is a learner-centered file, I can't decide for you
Mehmet: It would be a good idea to choose mutual interaction!
Interviewer: OK

As seen in the transcript, Mehmet understands what he is expected to do, but since this is something unusual for him, he wants me to decide on the learning objective for him. In the end, he decides on the one he wants to work on. This may show that he can choose his own learning objective; it is clear to him, but he hesitates at first because he is not accustomed to choosing his own learning objectives.

Three students interviewed once stated that they had difficulties choosing their objectives. The sentences from the students' interviews related to their experiences in choosing objectives are presented below.

Student 1

- Interviewer: did you have any difficulties in choosing objectives?
Student 1: uh uh (expression for approval) actually it was not so difficult somehow uuh you need to think about it
Interviewer: hmm was it because of your own objectives, or the ELP or your choice
Student 1: yes it was because I could not decide which one I would like to do

Student 2

- Interviewer: (...) did you have any difficulties in choosing your learning objectives?
Student 2: yes, this was difficult
Interviewer: why? was it because of the ELP or your own
Student 2: yaa because of me ya I think what I can do which one to choose
Interviewer: yes
Student 2: sometimes...I did not complete the activity, was difficult for me...uhm for example job application letter etc. uh uh I was to write formal letter...then I did not complete it as well because it was a bit difficult

Student 3

- Interviewer: did you have any difficulties in choosing objectives?
Student 3: I did
Interviewer: why?
Student 3: because you need extra time to work with the ELP so you aren't willing to work with it...therefore I had difficulties
Interviewer: so you had difficulty in finding time?
Student 3: yes in finding time

The first student had difficulty in choosing objectives because she could not decide which objective to set. The second student had difficulty in choosing the kind of objective to achieve as well; however, when she explains, it can be seen that she had difficulty in finding an objective in compliance with her language proficiency level. The third student had difficulty in choosing an objective because of having limited time for activities to achieve the objective. Three students had difficulty in choosing objectives because of preference issues, time, and level of proficiency.

On the whole, the four students who were regularly interviewed did not have much difficulty in deciding on their own learning objectives, whereas the three

students who were interviewed only once had difficulty because of preference issues, time and level of proficiency. This result may indicate that students need more support for the ELP during the study because the four students interviewed regularly had less difficulty than the ones interviewed once. Furthermore, these sequences of the interviews may reveal that the students are not accustomed to taking responsibility for their learning because at first they had some difficulties in choosing objectives, but later on they became accustomed to it. In spite of the difficulties they experienced, they managed to choose and work on their objectives on their own. This may indicate that with more training and attention, the students may better be able to choose their own learning objectives.

The results for this section can be labeled as follows:

1. In the beginning, having difficulty with setting objectives
2. Not being accustomed to taking responsibility
3. Need for more training and attention for setting objectives

Finding activities

Most of the time, the students were not asked directly whether they had difficulties in finding activities to achieve their objectives. A general question was asked about what kind of activities they had carried out and how much responsibility they took for finding activities. The four students I interviewed every week came to the interviews with their activities. When I asked whether they had any difficulties in working with the ELP, they answered 'no'. It can be assumed that that they did not have much difficulty in finding activities because if it were the opposite, the students would have shared their ideas with me.

Students were asked to share their experiences in finding activities during the interviews. None of the students indicated any difficulties or problems in finding activities. Their experiences are presented below.

Selnur

Selnur: my first task was an article for extensive reading it was not from a newspaper

Interviewer: uhm

Selnur: it was more difficult than the other reading texts...no actually it was not but it is like this...(shows the article)

Interviewer: could you finish working with this article?

Selnur: the questions and answers are here

Interviewer: did you have difficulty in working with this article?

Selnur: no I did not... it was quite easy...the language wasn't difficult to understand...

Interviewer: why did you choose this article?

Selnur: I think that it's a good article...if I read such an article anywhere I think I can understand it

Interviewer: do you have any difficulties in finding activities?

Selnur: not much...but I can't decide which one to do

Selnur states that she does not have much difficulty in finding activities, and if she has, this is because she cannot decide what kind of activities to do. Actually that week, she came with an activity for the reading skill. She had read an article about the spread of the pollen (see Appendix I). When I asked her whether she had first chosen the objective or the activity, she replied that she had decided first on what kind of activity to do. She wanted to work on her reading skill, so she had chosen an article and read it, then she decided on which objective to work on with the article. After completing her reading objective, she worked on writing a film review of the movie *Lost in Translation*. This was also one of the objectives in their writing class for the latter weeks, so she thought that by working with the film review she would have studied both for the ELP and her school. This indicates that she did not have much difficulty in finding activities for the ELP.

Damla also claimed that she had not had any difficulty in choosing what kind of activities to carry out. In the first week and second week, she worked on how to write a CV. However, at the end of the study, she reported that she had not been able to write a CV yet, but had searched for model CVs, vocabulary, and sentence structures in a CV. Additionally, she read some articles related to her department, and her speaking teacher gave her and her classmates some internet sites where they could practice listening skills which was not obligatory, so she also worked on that web site. Both in the first and last interviews, she stated that she had not experienced any difficulties.

The third student interviewed was Mehmet. In the first interview, he was asked what kind of activities he had carried out. He showed some listening activities especially song lyrics. While setting another objective, he asked me to choose the objective instead of him. However, when I asked him to choose it on his own, he immediately asked whether he could record a chat with one of the native teachers in the school. After some time during the interview, he decided to do that with his friend (see Appendix H). These may show that Mehmet also did not have much difficulty in finding activities for his objectives.

Leyla also tried to do one activity regularly before she came to the interviews. When she was asked what she had done for the ELP, she explained the activities she had carried out that week. For two weeks, she worked on biography writing. Next, she worked on a reading text including unknown vocabulary, and comprehension questions. Then she wrote a film review of the movie *Amelie*. Additionally, she listened to a lecture from a cassette and tried to figure out the outline of a lecture. When she was asked whether she had any difficulties in working with the ELP, she

answered that she did not. Taking this into consideration, it can be said that she did not find it hard to find activities to achieve her objectives.

Three students were interviewed once, and they reported what they had done for the ELP, and during the interviews when they were asked whether they had any difficulties with the ELP, they responded 'no' as well. One of them worked on an article with difficult vocabulary, and she wrote a biography of the person she would present in her speaking class. One wrote a film review and worked on articles related to history, but she stated that she had some difficulties in understanding the article and could not finish working with it. Thus, this may be due to the fact that she is not aware of her proficiency level because she set objectives which she found difficult to carry out. The last student recorded a dialogue with Mehmet (see Appendix I) and a project for the speaking course at school, and included them in the ELP. He stated that he had not studied extra for the ELP and usually included his works done at school in it.

All the students interviewed talked about the activities they had carried out for the ELP, and indicated no difficulty in this aspect of the ELP. Thus, considering the overall impression, it can be said that at the beginning of working with the ELP, students may face some problems in finding activities related to their objectives, but after gaining more experience or receiving more help from teachers, they may not face such a problem. In addition, there was a tendency to include the activities at school in the ELP more than doing extra work. This tendency may be because the workload of the students in their school limited the time they had to do more extra activities for the ELP.

To sum up, the results for this section can be stated as follows:

1. No difficulty in creating activities
2. Need for guidance at the beginning
3. Tendency to include mostly school tasks

Consulting Teachers for Objectives and Activities

During the interviews, all the seven students were asked whether they needed any help from their teachers in deciding what kind of objectives to choose, finding activities or anything else related to the ELP. This question was asked both in the first and last interview of the students. The aim of this question was to find out to what extent the ELP enhances self-directed learning and to what extent the students need teacher support. In this section, the responses related to self-directed learning will be presented.

Six out of seven students indicated that they liked to consult their teachers in case they have some problems. However, they consulted me or their teachers only to be sure that they were going in the right direction in working with the ELP in terms of choosing objectives or activities. The answers of the students for this question are presented below.

Selnur

Interviewer: have you ever asked your teachers for help? Have you felt this need?
Selnur: it would be beneficial if I could do that but
Interviewer: with an appointment?
Selnur: possible

This student consulted me for the activities she would do for the ELP and shared her thoughts about them. However, she did not ask her other teachers for help. She thought that there should be regular appointments with the teachers in order to

work with the ELP otherwise it would be very difficult to find a teacher whenever she needed because they are very busy.

Damla

Before this dialogue, the student said that her reading teacher sent her articles for extensive reading reports which form a percentage of the grade for the reading course, but this was not something she had asked the teacher to do before the study, she did this also before the study was conducted.

- Interviewer: uhuh...and have you ever had any difficulties in finding topics or activities for example you said that the guidance of your teacher for reading was helpful?
- Damla: uhuh (expression of approval)
- Interviewer: Do you always need such guidance or can you make decisions on your own?
- Damla: no my teacher did not suggest that text, I still could find my own tasks

As it can be seen from this sequence, Damla finds the guidance of her teachers beneficial despite the fact that she believes she can also decide on activities to carry out on her own without teacher support.

Leyla

- Interviewer: Would you like to consult your teachers about the ELP regularly?
- Leyla: consulting...yes I would but I don't want them to tell me that this...this... should be your objective I'd like to decide on my own.
- Interviewer: uhuh
- Leyla: I know my deficiencies better
- Interviewer: uhuh
- Leyla: of course it would be better if there is someone whom I can consult when I have a problem

Leyla reports that she has always been told what to study and how to study by her teachers since her childhood, and she has positive feelings about finding her own activities and objectives. She thinks that she would need a teacher in case she has some problems or questions related to language learning.

Mehmet

- Interviewer: did you consult your teachers or me for the ELP?
- Mehmet: (...) I may have asked I think I asked you something?

Interviewer: uhuh
Mehmet: I don't remember what I asked it was about listening I think

This sequence is from the last interview with Mehmet. After the group discussions with the class, he once came and asked about what kind of an activity he could do for listening, but he wanted to work with songs. Then he also consulted me for a speaking activity, but he came with an idea and just wanted to learn whether he could include such an activity in his ELP. He consulted me rather than his teachers for the activities to carry out. This may be due to the fact that he and I met regularly for the interviews.

From the interviews with the three students interviewed only once, it was found out that none of them had consulted any teacher for how to decide on the activities or how to choose objectives. This may be because most probably they had no difficulty in working with the ELP since if they had, they would have told me during our interviews. Another possible reason may be that they did not consult their teachers because I introduced the ELP and they thought that asking me would be better. One problem was that we did not meet regularly with these three students except the group discussions held every week, and probably they could not ask me their possible questions. In order to meet me, they had to e-mail or telephone, and they did not want to do this perhaps because of being shy or having too much to do at school.

In sum, six out of seven students interviewed consulted me or other teachers just to be sure they understood what they were expected to do with the ELP. In the beginning three students asked me or some of their teachers whether they could include some activities they decided to carry out in their ELPs. Yet, they did not ask what kind of activities to carry out or what objectives to decide on. The reason for this may be either that they were not used to choosing their own objectives and did

not know what to ask or that they experienced no difficulty in determining their own objectives and finding activities related to it. However, most probably, the students liked and knew how to choose their own learning objectives and find activities related to them because every week they managed to come with activities they had carried out for the ELP. The regularly interviewed students asked more questions to me than the others. This may be due to the regular individual meetings with these students.

The results can be categorized for this section as:

1. Need for teacher support at the initial stages
2. Need for regular meetings

Taking Responsibility for one's own Learning

Taking responsibility for one's own learning is one of the aspects of self-directed learning according to Benson (2001). For finding results about the opinions of the students related to taking responsibility for their own learning, the students were asked how many activities they carried out and how they accomplished that, whether they could set their own goals assess their own learning process; in other words how much responsibility they took for their own learning during the study with the ELP, and whether this was the same as before working with the ELP. Therefore, it can be found out what the students thought about how much difference the ELP made on taking responsibility for their own learning. Moreover, the reason why the students did not consult their teachers for finding activities or choosing objectives can also be found out in this category by analyzing the responses of the students during the interviews.

Six students stated that their study habits had changed after keeping the ELP and they had become more responsible. They studied more outside the class. The results for this question are presented below.

Damla

Interviewer: (...) ok then do you do something for improving your English? or have you ever thought how much you work for this? how can I improve myself what should I do?

Damla: frankly I did not think about this myself (laugh)

Interviewer: hmm that's nice! (laugh)

Damla: no I mean I don't plan the time for example for I will sit and study for this subject but for example when I have time I just do something

In the sequence above, Damla reports that she had not devote extra time for studying English before working with the ELP, but she had studied unsystematically. In the last interview with Damla, she first described all the activities she completed for the ELP. To illustrate, she searched documents about how to write a CV but still could not finish writing it, and she analyzed two reading texts. Even if she was not told to do these activities, she tried to carry out different tasks for the ELP outside the classroom as well. This may be evidence that she was able to take an initial step in taking responsibility for her own learning. To see the difference whether her study habit had changed after studying with the ELP, I asked the following question.

Interviewer: under normal conditions, how much did you study English before? has the ELP affected this time?

Damla: normally I studied for the exams or when there was homework and so on apart from these I didn't use to study but when I got the ELP I studied for it ...also so it affected of course

As it can be seen from the extract, Damla reports that the ELP has had an effect on her study habit, and she has taken more responsibility despite the fact that she was not forced or told by me or her teachers to do so.

Leyla

Interviewer: is taking responsibility for your own learning something good?

Leyla: yes I like it in fact for many years other people were responsible for something for everything related to our learning

Interviewer: uhuh

Leyla: it's nice I think it's good that it happens in this way I liked to choose my own objectives and tasks until this age other people decided what I should learn and what not I liked having a say

In the last interview, Leyla was asked whether she had studied in the same way and devoted the same amount of time to study English before this study of the ELP, and she reported that ELP had changed the time she allocated for studying English. She also stated that she worked on some listening and reading skill objectives and wrote one film review. However, before working with the ELP, her studies had been limited with her homework for school and the English songs she sometimes had listened to. Furthermore, she added that it was a fascinating feeling that nobody told her what and how to do, and that learning was her responsibility. As shown in the sequence above, she stresses that until the age she was in now, she had taken always directives from other people to study English, but the ELP changed this fact. Therefore, the ELP changed her study habit because it showed the way how to choose her own objectives and activities, and this was not because she was forced or asked to do so; on the contrary, she enjoyed the feeling of having responsibility of her own learning process.

Mehmet

Mehmet stated in his first interview that he did not study to improve his English at all, and he did not spend a special effort for it. In the last interview, he described what activities he had carried out for the ELP, such as some listening and speaking activities. The interview continued as follows.

Interviewer: Would you do all these if you hadn't had the ELP?
 Mehmet: never in my life! maybe during listening to music something could happen
 Interviewer: uhuh
 Mehmet: I wouldn't do anything I also accepted to take part in this study to do something for English...to feel forced
 Interviewer: did you feel forced because of me?
 Mehmet: no no there is an opportunity like this...forced... to feel forced to do these so that I would do these...you asked volunteer students to take part in this study so I thought I should take advantage of this study

As presented in the excerpt, Mehmet volunteered for working with the ELP because he needs to be forced to study English although neither I nor any of the teachers forced him to participate in the study or to study English. As a result, working with the ELP gave him this responsibility, and perhaps he did not work hard for the ELP, but it is certain that the ELP has made him carry out more activities than he had before working with it.

Selnur

Selnur also first described the activities she had carried out during the study in the last interview. Then she was asked whether she would have done all of them if she had not kept the ELP. The answer is presented below.

Selnur: probably not but...if we had more time, I might have completed more activities but still it was beneficial uhm both uhm for my homework and portfolio...the portfolio helped my homework so they affected each other

Selnur worked on some reading and writing objectives from the ELP, and she believes that she would have been able to carry out more activities if she had had more time. She thinks that the ELP was also beneficial for her homework at school. Therefore, it can be said that there was a slight difference in the responsibility she for her own learning while working with the ELP; otherwise she would have carried out only the activities assigned in the classroom.

Two students out of three who were interviewed once agreed that the ELP caused them to deal with English more although there was a slight difference. One student stated that he did not do non-curricular activities for the ELP, and he generally included the activities done in class to the ELP. Thus, the ELP did not bring much change to his studying English.

The students were never forced to do activities for each interview. They were also told that they could carry out one activity for two weeks, and the time depended on them. Yet, they worked for the ELP willingly; as a result, in total, six students agreed that the ELP acted as a tool that derived them to studying English more than before. Only one student stated that there was not much difference in his study habits for learning English. To summarize the results from the interviews related to self-directed learning, most of the students chose learning objectives and carried out extra activities outside the class to include them in the ELP, but they generally preferred to include activities done for their school, and there was a slight difference in the responsibility the students took for their own learning which was shown by the activities they had carried out outside of the classroom.

On the whole, the results of the analysis of this category can be summarized as follows:

1. Positive feeling towards taking responsibility for one's own learning
2. ELP as a tool to promote taking such responsibility
3. Increase in time allocated for studying English

Self-assessment in the ELP

The students were asked whether they had problems with self-assessment in the ELP. Self-assessment in the ELP includes both finding their own proficiency language level and whether the learner believes that s/he could carry out an activity appropriately and could achieve the chosen objective. All students had positive feelings towards self-assessment, and the results are presented below for each student interviewed regularly and the ones interviewed once.

Damla

Damla and I had a long discussion about how to find her level according to the objectives in the ELP. In the discussion, the main problem was she had difficulty in deciding what kind of activities she could do for the objectives in the ELP. She was not sure whether it would be appropriate to select an objective she could partly achieve. However, after she managed to find her proficiency level, she was able to select the suitable objectives. She also added that she had liked the idea of self-assessment as displayed in the sequence below:

Damla: I can decide better on what I can do and what not than the teacher...uhm... the teachers make guesses about our language ability like if the student can do task A then she can do task B as well but If we cannot do something we know that we can't do that and we realized what we can do (...)

She believes that one could assess one's own abilities and language proficiency better than the teachers because the teachers sometimes make guesses or incorrect inferences.

Selnur

Selnur was not sure about her proficiency level in the first interview. She could not decide whether she was able to do some of the objectives or not, and she stated the reason as not being able to spend much time on working with the ELP. However, in our second interview she was able to find her level with the help of the ‘can-do’ statements in the ELP. She also indicated that she had liked the idea of self-assessment because it increased her self-confidence in language learning.

Leyla

Leyla found her level of proficiency easily by using the ‘can-do’ statements and did not face any problems. She claimed that she had liked assessing herself because she was the only one who could know what she needed for learning English and what she knew about English.

Mehmet

Mehmet said that he did not have any difficulty in finding his proficiency level. He thinks that self-assessment makes clearer what he knows and what he needs, so he indicated that he had liked the idea of self-assessment very much.

Three students interviewed once also stated that they had liked assessing themselves. They claimed that they knew themselves better than the teachers because they may not present themselves well in the class, and the teacher may think that they are bad at that particular activity or that they are lazy.

All the students in the interviews stated that they liked finding their levels, and they felt that could do it better than their teachers. As a result, the ELP may encourage the students in self-assessment because they became more aware of what they know about English. However, they also thought that when they had carried out

an activity, they sometimes could not decide whether there were any errors. In this case, they needed teacher support. Thus, finding their level of proficiency caused them no difficulty, but deciding on whether they did an activity well or not was hard for the students. This may indicate that the ‘can-do’ statements were clear enough for some students that they experienced no difficulty while working with them; however, the difficulty in deciding on their own performance may be the result of their not being familiar with such a situation because teachers usually decide whether they have an activity well or not. This situation may indicate that the students need training on self-assessment.

To sum up, the following criteria named by students describe positive aspects and consequences of ELP self-assessment. The students think that self-assessment:

1. is more accurate than teacher assessment
2. encourages self-confidence in language learning and proficiency
3. raises awareness of own learning needs
4. raises awareness of own ‘language profile’ (i.e., strengths and weaknesses of own proficiency).

These results may indicate that the ELP helps the learners to become self-conscious about their own learning and become more aware of their language learning process. They gain the opportunity to critique what they already know and what they need to know further. As a result, they may try to build up their language proficiency.

However, there are also some drawbacks involved in self-assessment, as labeled by several students:

1. Uncertainty about how to use the ELP self-assessment instrument in terms of the learning process (e.g., full vs. partial achievement of an objective)
2. Uncertainty about how to assess the accuracy of own learning product (correctness of e.g., oral or written output)
3. Difficulty in accurately assessing own proficiency level (e.g. how to apply can-do statements)

These reports of the students may imply that the students need a well-structured and effective training for self-assessment and working with the ELP. Perhaps, two class hours of training and introduction of the ELP was not enough for the students. Perhaps, the result related to self-assessment would have been different if there had been the opportunity to implement the ELP in class level. Another reason could be that the students are not familiar with the concept of self-assessment. In the Turkish Education System, assessment is considered the job of the teachers, so this misunderstanding may have caused the students to experience difficulty in self-assessment. However, this does not necessarily mean that self-assessment cannot be learned. Perhaps with more training on this issue, the students could learn how to assess their own language learning more effectively.

To summarize the data analysis results on self-directed learning, it can be inferred that the ELP is a tool which can promote self-directed learning. The students interviewed reported that ELP was a useful tool for language learning and that they studied more outside the classroom than before. In addition, self-assessment which is a part of the ELP helped them become aware of their language learning. Furthermore, although the learners needed help for both self-assessment and finding

activities to carry out, they had positive feelings towards taking responsibility for their own learning process which they were not accustomed to.

The data analysis results of student interviews related to self-directed learning was presented. In the next section, the results of student interviews for the second research question are presented.

Research Question II: The Reactions of the Students towards the ELP

To answer this question, the answers were divided into six categories according to the group discussions with the students and interviews: ‘filling in the ELP’, ‘motivation’, ‘choosing objectives’, ‘finding activities’, ‘self-assessment’, ‘whether students liked the ELP’, ‘implementation in the lesson/curriculum’, and ‘problems with the ELP’.

Filling in the ELP

The students were asked whether they experienced any difficulties in filling in the parts of the ELP for the first time, including understanding the descriptors and objectives of the ELP. When the ELP is filled for the first time, the students have to do some paper work. For each section, they write information about the language they are learning. For example, in the passport they write about their level. In the biography section, they write about how they have learned the language, and so forth. The reason for asking this question was to be sure that the students understood the parts of the ELP and how they were expected to work with it though the ELP was not translated into Turkish.

Only one student did not have any questions about completing the ELP, and the problems of six students occurred either because of not attending the training session or because the objectives of the ELP were written in English. The results are presented below.

Mehmet did not experience any difficulty in completing the parts in the ELP. He said that it was clear for him, and he just followed the instructions given in the ELP. One student who was interviewed once had some difficulties, but the reason was that she could not attend the training session for the ELP; however, after we met once and worked together with the ELP, she understood what she was expected to do. Although Leyla attended the training session, she also met me to clarify the points she could not understand, which were how to complete the biography, and how to choose objectives and write them on the related part in the ELP. Damla had only one question about the ELP. She just could not understand how to present the activities she completed in the Dossier section. The final three students had no difficulty in filling the parts of the ELP, but could not understand some of the objectives written in the biography section. The reason for this may be that we used the Swiss Model, so the ELP was not translated in Turkish. Although they stated that it would have been easier to understand the ‘can-do’ statements in the ELP if they had been written in Turkish, they could work with the objectives and completed activities for their portfolios.

On the whole, most of the students did not face any difficulties while filling the ELP. This may be because of their proficiency level and of the instructions in the ELP. Also the two class hour introduction could be useful for them. It may be

indicated that both the instructions in the ELP, and the training was clear for the students, so they did not experience any difficulty in filling in the portfolio.

Motivation

During the interviews, I tried to find out whether the ELP affects the motivation of the students towards English learning. The students were explicitly asked whether their motivation for learning English increased and whether they participated in the class activities more and carried out more tasks than before. This category was included because it was thought that having clearly stated objectives in front of the learners and making the learning process more transparent regarding the objectives in the ELP could motivate the students for language learning. The assumption was that if they know what they are doing and take responsibility, they might be more eager to learn English. Most of the students thought that there was a slight increase in their motivation for learning English after using the ELP. The results are presented below.

Damla became motivated for working with the ELP; however, towards the end of the study, she said that she could not find time to work with the ELP. Although Leyla sometimes felt the time pressure which was caused by working both for school and on the ELP, she expressed that her motivation increased after the ELP was introduced. During the introduction, I told them they could use the ELP in preparing a job application, and this was the reason she got more motivated because she believed that somehow she could pass the preparatory class, but she would like to contribute to her CV by having the ELP.

Selnur stated that she was motivated as well, but her absenteeism sometimes decreased her motivation for working with the ELP, so the ELP was not the reason

for this decrease. Mehmet's case was a bit different. In our first interview, he confessed that the ELP did not affect his motivation for learning English, yet after some time, especially after he had prepared a record with his friend for the ELP, he stated that he became more motivated. Finally, in our last interview when I asked him the question again, he answered that his motivation had decreased, and he worked with the ELP because he felt pressure. He added that he agreed to take part in this study to feel pressure to study English.

The other three students had a slight difference in motivation for learning English. Two of them stated that they already wanted to learn English and work hard, and one of these two added that when she took the ELP in her hands, she felt like she wanted to work on all the objectives in the ELP. One out of these three students reported that there was no change in his motivation for language learning.

On the whole, the students believe that there is an increase in their motivation but there is also an effect which decreases it: lack of time. The students emphasized that it was hard to work both for the ELP and the school, and because of time problems they mostly included school tasks in the ELP. Therefore, at the end of the fall term, the students were asked whether they would like to continue to keep the portfolio and to be interviewed. Ten students stated that they would like to do so; nonetheless, when I tried to get in contact with the students in the spring term, they stated that they did not have time to work with the ELP. The reason for this may be that I could not meet them as regularly as I had done in the fall term.

Choosing Objectives, Finding activities, Self-assessment

The use of the ELP includes choosing objectives, finding activities for achieving these objectives and self-assessment both for finding the proficiency level for the first time and evaluating the outcomes of activities. Since these are the features of the ELP, I tried to learn the reactions of the students to these features separately as well, although I had explicitly asked whether they liked the ELP and the problems they had faced. The results revealed that the ELP might be used to promote self-directed learning because the students stated that they studied English slightly more than before working with the ELP and that they self-assessment and the ‘can-do’ statements made their learning process clearer. However, there was a need for teacher support at the initial stages and training for self-assessment. The results for this category were also presented in detail as the results of the first research question (see 1.1). To sum up these results, we can say that the students were quite pleased with choosing their own objectives; finding activities and self-assessment although they needed help of the teachers sometimes (see 1.1.3).

Did Students like the ELP?

During the interviews the students were also explicitly asked whether they liked the ELP, and what they most liked about it. The reactions of all the students were quite positive. All the students liked working with the ELP, and the things they liked about the ELP were choosing own objectives and self-assessment. The results are presented below.

Three students stated that they liked to work independently. They were happy about taking the responsibility to choose what kind of activities to do. Four students

liked self-assessment. Selnur stated that she had gained more confidence in learning English while working with the ELP by the help of the self-assessment the ELP included. Her quotation is presented below:

Selnur: it is good to assess your own language learning and to prove myself in language learning...I became more confident in English

One student who was interviewed once stated that it was a good feeling not to take any grades after doing an activity. One student also reported that the ELP is a good opportunity to use when applying for a job. As a result, it was found that there was a strong positive attitude towards working with the ELP.

The students were also asked whether they found the ELP beneficial for language learning. All students stated that it was. The related sequences are displayed below:

Mehmet: of course it was beneficial at least...I did not carry out too many tasks I am not accustomed to set my own goals and creating activities ...but the ELP...this was an example about learning something for our future we can make use of it we can do such things

Interviewer: what did you work on for the ELP?

Mehmet: I worked on improving my speaking skill I attended this school for this aim because prep is not obligatory form y department...I worked on listening activities

Interviewer: would you have done these things if you had not received the ELP?

Mehmet: never and ever in my life maybe I would listen to foreign music but I would not carry out these tasks

As seen from the sequence, Mehmet stated that he would not have done the activities he did if he had not been in this study, so it helped him to improve a little bit in English.

Damla claimed that she became more conscious of learning English and doing activities, and she understood that studying only for school was not enough for learning a language. The excerpt from the interview of Damla is shown below:

Damla: in general I studied only for the exams or assignments but not extra...but when I started to work with the ELP I also started to work outside the class...(...) somehow teachers teach you a language you think that ok now you are upper-intermediate and you know everything but when I looked in the ELP I saw that what I learnt was not enough language learning shouldn't be limited in school context

Leyla stated that she worked for herself via the ELP, and that she was the person who determined what to do, how to do and when to do. She also expressed that while studying for the ELP, she learnt more. Selnur claimed that she gained more confident in learning.

One student interviewed once said that before using the ELP, he used to listen to songs but only the music, but now, he tries to catch and understand the words in a song. The sequence is shown below:

Student 1: the ELP made me gain new habits for example before the ELP I used to listen to foreign music but only the sound now whenever I listen to foreign music I try to understand the lyrics

Another student said that she had worked on objectives, carried out some activities; during these she was improving herself in English. Another one claimed that she had learnt more vocabulary while working on the reading objectives in the ELP and could express herself better in writing in English. Therefore, the ELP was beneficial for seven of the students in terms of learning English, and two students stated that it was beneficial for the development of their personality in learning English.

To summarize the results for this category, it can be said that:

1. students felt positive towards the ELP.
2. students liked setting their own goals and assessing themselves.
3. they thought that the ELP was beneficial for language learning since they spent more time on English.
4. they gained more confidence with the self-assessment and the activities they carried out.
5. they were motivated to take responsibility for their learning.

However, the only negative side of the ELP was that it demanded time since the students considered it as an extra work.

Implementation in the lesson and curriculum

The students were asked whether they would like to have activities done related to the ELP until they got used to working with it and whether they would suggest the ELP be integrated into the curriculum. For the first question, all the students stated that it would be a good idea because they sometimes had difficulties with the ELP. Although their teachers volunteered to help them when they had questions, only two or three students consulted them during the study. One student stated that the reason was they did not want to take the time of their teachers, and probably their own time for meeting the teachers. In addition, they suggested that the ELP could be implemented in the curriculum on condition that it would be on a volunteer basis because they had also lots of other duties in their school, and it was hard to find time to work with the ELP.

Problems with the ELP

For this section, I interviewed eight students. One student who had quit working with the ELP was interviewed in addition to the seven students keeping the ELP from the beginning of the study until the end, and the data from that interview are included in this section. There were three problems indicated by the students: lack of time, finding their level for the first time in self-assessment, lack of teacher help. The results related to each category are presented below.

When the learners suggested that the ELP could be implemented to the curriculum, they stated that it should be on volunteer basis because they thought that the ELP needs extra time, and they did not want to be forced to keep it at school. Therefore, the common problem of the students while working with the ELP was lack of time. The students I worked with were at the upper-intermediate level, so they have 26 class hours a week. They leave school at four in the afternoon except Thursdays and Fridays. Besides the exams, for reading class they are asked to prepare extensive reading reports. They have quizzes for the Grammar and Reading courses four times a term. For writing class, they prepare portfolios with at least two assignments, for which they prepare two drafts and one final draft, and they write journals. For speaking class, they are required to prepare projects, and for grammar they have quizzes and implicit grammar exams. All these have a value for their final grade.

One student found it boring to tick the ‘can-do’ statements and finding the level because there were too many ‘can-do’ statements to check. Three students thought that the ELP lacked regular teacher help. They needed help for finding out whether the activity they carried out was correct or incorrect in terms of language use and

content. In fact, there is a special column in the ‘can-do’ statements for the teachers. After the students find their level, or work for an objective, the teacher can take the ELP of those students and assess them as well to give the students the opportunity to compare their own view with the teachers. Yet, I did not use this special column for teacher assessment because one of my aims in this study was to find out to what extent the students could assess themselves. This result may indicate that students want teacher feedback on the activities they complete.

To summarize, the students complained about having limited time for working with the ELP. They also needed teacher support and feedback for the activities and objectives, and said that there is too much to fill in when working with the ELP for the first time.

Considering the data collected to find out what the students’ opinions about the ELP were, it can be said that most of the students think that the ELP is useful for their language learning and gaining confidence in language learning although they felt the need for teacher support while working with the ELP, and they did not have much time for it.

In this section the results of the analyses of the interviews with the students were presented. The results were given in categories for the student interviews. Some of the categories were named in the light of the questions prepared beforehand, and some of them were found during the transcription process. This section tried to find out to what extent the students experienced self-directed learning via the ELP and what their reactions towards the ELP were. The results of this section will be further discussed in chapter 5. In the next section, results of the learning diary analyses of

the students and the portfolios will be presented as qualitative data supporting the data from the interviews.

4.3.2. Results of Student Learning Diaries

At first 24 students were asked to keep learning diaries; however, four students later quit keeping the portfolio and the diaries. The diaries were collected every week. In the first week, it was noticed that some students could not write anything about the ELP, so they were given guiding questions. For example, they were asked what objectives they worked on that week and what kind of activities they completed. Still not all 20 students kept the diary. Some weeks I would get diaries from only five students. All the diaries were read and notes were taken and categorized according to commonly mentioned points, and the activities they described.

Every week in average four students wrote diaries. Some of them wrote in English and some in Turkish. The English written entries are presented in italic so no change was done in the wording. The students writing diaries varied, and again nearly four students carried out new activities every week for the ELP. Two students stated that they had no time for the ELP. One student found filling in the ELP for the first time boring because there were many things to write and check. The entry of that student is presented below:

Student : *At first I want to say that having a language passport is a wonderful chance for us. I am quite glad just for now by starting this activity but I must confess that filling the blanks can be sometimes boring. I understood that it needs personal struggle to be a successful one.*

One student suggested teacher help, and believed that she needed teacher help for deciding on objectives and self-assessment. The entry of that student is displayed below:

Student: I think that there is a need for a teacher for this study. Students may not be sure while finding out their proficiency levels. Therefore, I think that there should be someone we can consult for self-assessment and setting objectives.

Three students also mentioned that they had difficulties in choosing objectives, and one student had difficulty in finding activities. Two of the students' entries are displayed below:

Student 1: The first activities we have done to find out our proficiency levels in class were boring. There were some parts I was not sure about. I had difficulty in finding out my level. However, I believe that this study will be useful for us. To know what I can do and what not was useful for me.

Student 2: Although setting objectives from the ELP is not very easy, it was enjoyable to carry out activities to achieve those objectives. At first some of the objectives scared me but after achieving some of them I understood that it was not very difficult.

However, two students wrote that they liked the idea of being responsible for choosing and doing the activities for their own learning. Furthermore, one student found self-assessment boring whereas one student stated that it was very enjoyable. Seven students believed that the ELP is beneficial for both learning English and for their future career (see Appendix G). One of the entries about the benefits of the ELP is shown below:

Student: I have made a lot of use from this study. This week I tried to write *cover letter* for job application. I made a research about how to write it. I found how to write formal letters and samples. I haven't finished this task yet but there is improvement in my language. Hence, I improve myself.

In terms of research question I, the learning diaries showed that there was a tendency for self-directed learning because the students described the activities they carried out, tried to set their own objectives and assess their own language learning although they experienced some difficulty.

In terms of research question II, the learning diaries indicated that the students had positive attitudes towards working with the ELP because they stated that they were aware that the ELP would be beneficial for language learning and for their future career.

On the whole, the diaries indicate that the students had some difficulties in self-assessment and finding activities; however the general tendency seemed to be towards assessing the ELP as a beneficial tool for language learning and self-awareness.

4.3.3. Results of Students' use of the ELP

Three students met me to show their portfolios during the study because they wanted to be sure they had understood how to complete filling in the ELP. Thus, I had a chance to see how they completed filling in the portfolio. We worked on it together, and they were clear about this issue.

When I asked the students to share the activities they completed, only two students were volunteered. One of them brought me a CD he had recorded with his friend from the same class working on the ELP, one short story and a fill-in-the-blanks exercise of a song. The other student gave an article she worked on. Although some students, especially those I interviewed, showed me the activities they carried

out during the interviews or meetings, they were not willing to give their works to be displayed or used in the thesis.

The ELPs of the students were in general properly filled in except some parts. In the passport part, the students are asked how many languages they speak and where they learned them. However, this part is not much appropriate to Turkey because the context the students learned the language is mostly the school context in Turkey. Thus, students did not like to fill those parts. However, the portfolios were filled in most of the time appropriately except the dossier section. As suggested by Little and Perclova (2001), the activities carried out for the dossier should be neat and presentable, but most of the students did not care much about the layout of the activities. This again may be because of time constraints.

According to the data from the students ELPs, it can be said that in terms of self-directed learning, the some students tried to complete activities for including in the ELP. Unfortunately, only two students brought activities they carried out for the ELP. Selnur prepared her activity about an article properly and presentable whereas Mehmet did not show much care while presenting them. This might show that it would be good to emphasize the layout of the tasks included in the ELP.

In this section, the results of the analyses of the qualitative data gathered through the interviews, group discussion, learning diaries, and ELPs were presented. In the next section, the results of the questionnaire analysis results will be presented. The questionnaire also has some categories which were developed from the “ELP Guide for Teacher Trainers” by Little and Perclova (2001) and Little (2003), so the categories of the questionnaire are the same five categories which were discussed during the analysis of the interview data. These categories are: ‘Filling in the ELP’,

‘understanding the descriptors and objectives in the ELP’, ‘self-directed learning’, ‘self-assessment’, ‘motivation depending on the ELP’, ‘implementation’. The results of the questionnaire support the data of the qualitative research presented in this section. This gives an opportunity to see the consistency between the ideas about the ELP of the students and the ideas concluded from the questionnaire, and it helped to get the opinions of the rest of the participant students related to the ELP. Hence, the results of the questionnaire will be presented in the next section to identify this consistency and the ideas of the students related to the ELP.

4.3.4. Results of Student Questionnaire

At the end of January, a questionnaire was given to the students. We met after class and 19 students answered it. The questionnaire had two parts: Part A was a five point Likert-scale with 34 items and Part B had four open-ended questions. The reliability alpha of Part A was calculated as 0.87 by using the software program SPSS (11.0). During the analysis of the questionnaire, first Part A then Part B was analyzed. In this section, the results of the analysis of Part A will be presented first, and then the results of the analysis of Part B will be presented (see Appendix I for the questionnaire).

Results of Part A

In part A, the statistical results of the Likert-scale questionnaire were calculated using the software SPSS (11.0). The frequencies, percentages, and standard deviations were calculated for each item. 19 students answered the questionnaire so the frequencies were calculated for 19 students. After finding the frequencies for one

particular item, the percentages and standard deviations were calculated item by item and for each variable which are ‘5-Strongly Agree’, ‘4-Agree’, ‘3-Partly Agree’, ‘2-Disagree’, and ‘1-Strongly Disagree’.

The questionnaire Part A comprised five categories which are displayed in Table 1. The item numbers from the questionnaire for each category are shown in Table 1 as well. Except the first category, the categories of the questionnaire were developed from the topics mentioned by Little and Perclova (2001) in the “ELP Guide of Teacher Trainers”. Thus, these five categories match with the same five which were discussed during the analysis of the interviews, group discussion, learning diaries and the ELP. The same five categories were chosen for the questionnaire to see both the consistency of the qualitative data and to find out the ideas of the 19 students related to the ELP. The mean for each category was calculated as well. The percentages, means, and the standard deviations for each category will be presented below.

Table 4

Questionnaire Items

Categories	Item Numbers
Filling the ELP	1–4, 32
Understanding the Descriptors and Objectives in the ELP	5–10
Self-directed Learning	11–19, 25
Self-assessment	20–24
Motivation Depending on the ELP	26–33
Implementation	34

Filling in the ELP

In Table 5, the results of the items related to filling in the ELP are displayed. Since the Swiss model of ELP was used, it did not include a Turkish translation of the items and instructions. To avoid problems related to this fact, a two class hour introduction was held for the students in which the aim, components of the ELP and how to use the ELP were explained. At the end of the introduction, since no other questions were raised, it was inferred that there was no difficulty in understanding the ELP. However, to be certain, this category was included in the questionnaire. The students were asked whether they had difficulty in filling the blanks in the passport, biography and dossier sections of the ELP related to their own language learning process.

Table 5

Filling in the ELP

Item	sd	SDA	D	PA	SA	A
		%	%	%	%	%
1. It was easy for me to complete the parts in the language passport in the ELP.	0.6	0.0	0.0	26.3	10.5	63.2
2. It was easy for me to complete the parts in my language biography in the ELP.	0.5	0.0	0.0	21.1	5.3	73.7
3. It was easy for me to complete the parts in the dossier in the ELP.	0.5	0.0	0.0	42.1	5.3	52.6
4. It was easy for me to understand the level descriptors in the ELP.	0.5	0.0	0.0	31.6	5.3	63.2
32. Everything in the ELP is clear for me.	0.8	0.0	26.3	26.3	0.0	47.4
Mean	0.5	0.0	5.2	29.4	5.2	60

SA: Strongly Agree; A: Agree; PA: Partly Agree; D: Disagree; SDA: Strongly Disagree; sd: Standard Deviation; F: Frequency

In table 5, it is seen that the highest percentage in terms of means belongs to “agree” with 60%. 29% of the students partly agreed that they filled the ELP easily.

5% had some problems and 5% had no difficulty in filling the sections in the ELP. For the items 1, 2, 3, 4 all students agree with the statement. Hence, most of the students agreed that filling in the blanks in the parts in the ELP was not difficult for them. The reason may be the introductory session held at the beginning of the study. This may have decreased the problem of filling in the ELP, so the percentage of the people not experiencing difficulty in filling in the ELP is high. Not all the students attended the training for the ELP, which may explain small number of the students having some difficulty filling in the blanks in the ELP.

Understanding the Descriptors and Objectives in the ELP

Since the Swiss model was used, the descriptors and the objectives were not given in Turkish. Therefore, in this category, the students were asked whether they experienced any difficulties in understanding the descriptors and the objectives. This was important for working with the ELP because if users do not understand the descriptors and the ‘can-do’ statements, objectives, they cannot work with the ELP. The results of this category are presented in Table 6.

Table 6

Understanding the Descriptors and Objectives in the ELP

Item	sd	SDA %	D %	PA %	A %	SA %
5. It was easy for me to find out my level of language proficiency according to the level descriptors.	0.9	0.0	5.3	3.6	31.6	31.6
6. I easily identified my English level by reading the descriptors.	0.8	0.0	10.5	31.6	42.1	15.8
7. The objectives in the biography section were easy to understand.	0.5	0.0	0.0	21.1	73.7	5.3
8. The objectives in the biography section helped me to find out my level.	0.7	0.0	0.0	31.6	47.4	21.1
9. It was easy to put a tick to the <i>I can do</i> statements.	0.6	0.0	0.0	21.1	63.2	15.8
10. I liked putting a tick after the <i>I can do</i> statements.	0.8	0.0	0.0	26.3	31.6	42.1
Mean	0.7	0.0	2.6	27.2	48.2	21.9

SA: Strongly Agree; A: Agree; PA: Partly Agree; D: Disagree; SDA: Strongly Disagree;
sd: Standard Deviation

As it is shown in Table 6, 21% and 48% of the students stated that they had no difficulty with the descriptors, 27% partly agreed that they understood the objectives in the correct way, and 2% of the students stated that the descriptors and the objectives were not clear for them. Although the descriptors and the objectives were in English, most of the students did not have any difficulties in understanding them. It was surprising to see such a result because the students first had to understand the objectives in English and then the content of them. The reason for not facing difficulties may be their level of proficiency or perhaps they used dictionaries to decode the content of the objectives.

Self-directed Learning

To find out what the students experienced with self-directed learning, different questions were asked such as choosing objectives, consulting teachers, and choosing activities. They were asked whether they had faced any difficulties in finding objectives, activities, or if they needed teacher support and so forth. The term ‘self-directed’ was not used in the questionnaire. Therefore, the category of self-assessment, which is a part of self-directed learning (Benson, 2001), was given a separate section in the questionnaire to analyze the questionnaire in depth, in the next section.

Table 7

Self-directed Learning

Item	sd	SDA %	D %	PA %	A %	SA %
11. It was easy to choose my own language learning objectives.	0.8	0.0	10.5	31.6	47.4	10.5
12. I easily found activities to achieve my objectives.	0.9	0.0	31.6	26.3	36.8	5.3
13. I asked help from my teachers to find activities for achieving my objectives.	1.1	0.0	31.6	21.1	26.3	21.1
14. I liked choosing objectives for my own language learning.	1.2	5.3	21.1	10.5	42.1	21.1
15. I think students should be responsible for their own language learning.	1.2	5.3	10.5	15.8	15.8	52.6
16. I liked choosing activities for my own learning.	0.8	0.0	10.5	26.3	52.6	10.5
17. I liked the idea to be responsible for my own language learning.	0.8	0.0	5.3	21.1	52.6	21.1
18. I learned how to set objectives for my own learning by the help of ELP.	0.5	0.0	0.0	26.3	68.4	5.3
19. I learned how to improve my language proficiency by the help of the ELP.	0.8	0.0	10.5	21.1	57.9	10.5
25. I needed teacher's help for the ELP.	1	0.0	15.8	21.1	42.1	21.1
Mean	0.9	1	14.7	22.1	44.2	17.9

SA: Strongly Agree; A: Agree; PA: Partly Agree; D: Disagree; SDA: Strongly Disagree;
sd: Standard Deviation

In Table 7, it is indicated that 17% of the students strongly agreed that they had good experience with self-directed learning. This means that they did not need much

teacher support, had little or no difficulty in finding objectives and activities to work on, and they think that students should also take responsibility for their own learning. 44% of the students agreed that they had positive feelings towards self-directed learning. 22% of the students partly agreed about their experience they had with self-directed learning. Despite these facts, 14% and 1% disagreed that they liked the idea of self-directed learning. As the table suggests, most of the students were positive towards self-directed learning.

Self-assessment

Self-assessment is actually a subsection of self-directed learning. With the results of this category, we can both see what the students think about self-assessment and draw conclusions for self-directed learning. The students were not directly asked whether they liked the self-assessment. This part of the questionnaire included items like whether they had difficulties in finding their level, or whether they can assess their own language learning processor whether they or the teachers could assess the students' performance in a correct way. The results of this category are presented in Table 8.

Table 8

Self-assessment

Item	sd	SDA %	D %	PA %	A %	SA %
20. I could easily find out what my language level is.	0.8	0.0	10.5	31.6	42.1	15.8
21. I can easily assess my own language learning in the ELP.	0.6	0.0	5.3	36.8	52.6	5.3
22. I believe that teachers assess our learning better than us.	1.2	10.5	15.8	31.6	21.1	21.1
23. Students have difficulties in assessing their own learning.	1.1	5.3	26.3	26.3	26.3	15.8
24. I liked assessing my own language learning.	1.1	5.3	15.8	21.1	36.8	21.1
Mean	0.9	4.2	14.7	29.4	35.7	15.8

SA: Strongly Agree; A: Agree; PA: Partly Agree; D: Disagree; SD: Strongly Disagree;
sd: Standard Deviation

In Table 8, it is shown that 15% of the students strongly agreed that they liked the idea of self-assessment. 35% of the students agreed that self-assessment is a good idea. 29% of the students were partly agreed that they liked self-assessment. Finally, 14% and 4% of the students thought that assessment is the job of the teacher. Thus, most of the students felt positive about the idea of self-assessment.

Motivation Deriving from the ELP

In this category, the students were asked whether the ELP had an effect on their motivation for language learning. They were asked whether they participated more in the lessons after using the ELP, whether they wanted to learn more English, or whether they would like to continue working with the ELP after the study as well.

The results are presented in Table 9.

Table 9

Motivation Depending on the ELP

Item	sd	SDA %	D %	PA %	A %	SA %
26. ELP motivated me to learn more English.	1	5.3	10.5	31.6	36.8	15.8
27. With the help of ELP, I joined the lessons more.	1	10.5	26.3	31.6	31.6	0.0
28. I became more confident in English by the help of ELP.	0.8	5.3	15.8	36.8	42.1	0.0
29. After using the ELP, I decided to learn more English.	1.1	10.5	0.0	26.3	42.1	21.1
30. I liked working with ELP.	0.8	5.3	0.0	47.4	42.1	5.3
31. ELP helped me for learning English.	0.8	5.3	0.0	31.6	57.9	5.3
33. I would like to continue to work on ELP after this project.	0.8	0.0	5.3	36.8	36.8	21.1
Mean	0.9	5.2	9.2	34.1	40.1	11.2

SA: Strongly Agree; A: Agree; PA: Partly Agree; D: Disagree; SDA: Strongly Disagree;
sd: Standard Deviation

As Table 9 presents, 11% of the students strongly agreed that they became more motivated towards language learning with the ELP. Although 40% of the students agreed that ELP had an effect on the increase in their motivation for language learning, and 34% of the students partly agreed that ELP increased their motivation for language learning, 9% disagreed and 5% strongly disagreed that there was a positive change in their motivation for language learning after using the ELP.

Hence, the overall deduction about the results of this category may be that most of the students, including the students who chose 'partly agree', think that the ELP motivated them in language learning. Yet, the reasons why 15% of the students were not motivated may be they were not certain about what to do. The students were under time pressure, or they might have had prejudice towards language learning because some of the students are obliged to attend the preparatory class to go on in

their departments and accordingly their general motivational level is usually low due to this enforcement.

Implementation of the ELP in the Curriculum

The students were asked whether they thought that the ELP should be included in the curriculum. In Table 10, the results are presented.

Table 10

Implementation of the ELP in the Curriculum

Item	sd	SDA %	DA %	PA %	A %	SA %
34.	1	0	15,8	31,6	31,6	21,1
Mean	1	0	15,8	31,6	31,6	21,1

SA: Strongly Agree; A: Agree; PA: Partly Agree; DA: Disagree;
SDA: Strongly Disagree; sd: Standard Deviation

As Table 10 shows 21% of the students strongly agreed, 31% agreed and 31% partly agreed that the ELP should be implemented in the curriculum. Despite the fact that most of the students agreed that the ELP should be included in the curriculum, 15% of the students disagreed with this idea. This result may also indicate that most of the students had positive feelings about the ELP because they thought that it should be implemented in the curriculum.

To summarize part A of the questionnaire, it may be said that most of the students understood how to work with the ELP and had positive feelings towards it in terms of self-directed learning and self-assessment so that most of them agree that it should be implemented in the curriculum.

Results of Part B

In this part of the questionnaire, the students were asked four open-ended questions related to the ELP. They were allowed to write in Turkish as well. The Turkish comments were translated into English, but the English comments were written as they were, so no grammatical mistakes were corrected. Comments written in English by students are in italic. To give them a hint, four options were presented to the students and additional comments were asked. The options were determined from the general points discussed during the interviews and group discussions with the students. The results were categorized according to the questions given. The questions were: 1) I liked the ELP because..., 2) I did not like the ELP because..., 3) I need teachers' help because..., 4) What did you exactly do for the ELP. The additional comments were written both in English and in Turkish. The results are presented below.

I liked the ELP because...

Students were asked to complete the sentence beginning with "I liked the ELP...". The options given were: 1) it helped me to learn more English, 2) I liked to assess myself, 3) I liked taking responsibility, and 4) all of the reasons above. They were allowed to choose more than one reason.

Three students stated that they liked the ELP because they believed that it had helped them to learn more English. Additional comments are presented below.

- Student 1: *I was studying on different things and I'm learning new things.*
Student 2: The ELP gave me the opportunity to do the activities I like and see my deficiencies and this helped me to learn more.

Seven students stated that they had liked assessing themselves. The additional comments are presented below.

- Student 1: *I understood it after doing it. Assessing myself means realizing something about my English.*
Student 2: *Assessing myself is quite joyful.*
Student 3: *I didn't know how my English was or I can speak English well. (Student 3 above means that self-assessment in the ELP raised his conscious about his language level.)*

Six students stated that they had liked taking responsibility for their own learning. Additional comments are presented below.

- Student 1: *By starting to work with the ELP, I took a responsibility this was a reason for studying more English.*
Student 2: *First of all learning on my own is more beneficial for me and more long lasting.*

Six students stated that all the reasons given in the questionnaire had affected them in working with the ELP. One student did not give any answer for this question.

- Student 1: *I liked it because it will be useful for us.*
Student 2: *I think the ELP should be used in the class but teachers should be responsible for their branch.*

I did not like the ELP because...

The options for this question were: 1) I had difficulty in finding time to work with the ELP, 2) it was difficult to assess myself, and 3) it is not useful for learning English, 4) all of the reasons above. The results are presented below.

Eight students stated that finding time for working with the ELP had been difficult. Additional comments are presented below.

- Student 1: *I mostly liked the ELP but sometimes it was hard to find time to work.*
Student 2: *I can't find any time our lessons are very full and teachers give me homework.*

Five students stated that they had found it difficult to assess themselves.

Additional comments are presented below.

- Student 1: *I was studying different subjects but it was difficult to assess myself. If my teacher assesses me, it can be better for me.*
- Student 2: It was hard me to find me a topic and that made me a little bit depressed of this.
- Student 3: *I don't know if my work is right or wrong. But generally I love it.*
- Student 4: Since I didn't know whether the activities I did were correct or not, I had difficulty in assessing myself.
- Student 5: I can't be sure about my level

One student stated that he did not believe that the ELP was helpful for learning English because he did not think that the ELP is applicable. Four students did not answer this question; one of them stated that she did not choose from the options because she liked working with the ELP.

I need teachers help because...

The options for this question were: 1) it was difficult to find activities for my objectives, 2) it was difficult to understand the objectives in the biography section, 3) I was not sure whether I did right or wrong with the activities for my objectives, and 4) all of the reasons above.

Five students stated that they had difficulties to find activities for their objectives; eight students stated that they had difficulties in assessing themselves, four students chose the last option, one student stated that he did not have much time, and two students did not answer this question. There were no extra comments because the students chose the options in the questionnaire.

What did you exactly do for the ELP?

There were four options for these questions: 1) I produced more written text for the ELP, 2) I carried out useful activities to improve my speaking skill, 3) I always worked individually for the ELP, and 4) all the items above.

The result are that three students worked individually for the ELP, five students worked for speaking skill, three students studied for their writing skill, and one of these students who studied for improving their writing skill stated that the reason for that was he thought writing to be “joyful”, five students chose all the items and three students did not answer this question. One student who chose the ‘all’ option stated that he had started to use ‘English in daily life’.

On the whole, most of the students believe that self-assessment is useful because they know themselves better than the teachers. They liked choosing their own objectives and finding activities and being responsible for their own learning. Although they complained about the workload of the school and time constraints, they thought that ELP was a useful tool for learning English.

Open-ended Question for Students giving up the ELP

Four students were asked to write the reason why they first decided to take part in the study and then changed their mind. Three students stated that it had been hard to find time for working with the ELP, and one student stated that he had not believed that ELP could help language learning. Considering this result, it can be indicated that limited time is one of the problems experienced while working with the ELP.

In this section the results of the questionnaires were presented. The results of Part A of the questionnaire were presented with tables and the results of Part B were supported by the written quotes of the students. In the next section, the results of the teacher interview, teacher group discussion and administrator interviews are presented.

4.3.5. Reactions of Teachers towards the ELP

Results of Teacher Individual Interview

At the beginning of the study, the speaking teacher of the class was a volunteer in the study. The students could ask him any questions they had in mind. This was his only responsibility, since we were not able to implement the ELP in the class level. At the end of the study, the teacher was interviewed to share his experience with the ELP and the students.

Most of the students interviewed said that they would like to have the opportunity to consult a teacher when they had a problem with the ELP. Therefore, the teacher was asked whether any of the students had consulted him about the ELP. His answer was just three or four students had asked for help, and the students consulted him for some reading and listening objectives, how to carry out tasks to achieve those objectives and how to put them in the dossier section. The teacher was also asked whether there was an increase in class participation after the ELP, and he said that there had not been a significant difference. Despite this fact, he stated that the students did not face any difficulties due to the ELP; this could be because I held a meeting with the class as a group discussion every week. He said that the students

worked hard for the ELP and were willing for working with the ELP, so we could use the ELP at school level. The related sequence from the interview is shown below:

- Interviewer: you know we gave them the European Language Portfolio so what do you think should we implement the ELP into the curriculum or syllabus?
- Teacher: firstly why not ok? I've been observing my students they are really working hard they're trying to do their best...uhm but uhm I mean we should arrange it...first of all...you know every course here skills have some objectives and goals (...) if they are parallel with the goals and objectives...it will be more meaningful...I mean in speaking and listening class for example...you remember we talked about this, in every chapter we teach listening for main idea, specific details...

However, he also states above that before the implementation, the objectives of the CEF should be compared with those of our school to see whether there would be a match, and there would be a more systematic application.

To sum, the results of the teacher interview can be shown as below:

1. Students needed help for objectives and activities.
2. There was not a considerable increase in class participation.
3. Students were willing to work with the ELP
4. Before the implementation of the ELP, the objectives of the school and the ELP should be compared.

Results of Teacher Group Discussion

I had a group discussion with two teachers teaching the class. The interview schedule was prepared beforehand and the discussion was recorded. These teachers had also volunteered to help the students with the ELP. They told the class they were ready to help them in class during the study, but this was not arranged systematically.

The group discussion was analyzed with these headings: consulting teachers, implementation, class participation, learner autonomy and self-assessment. These categories were also developed from the topics in the “ELP Guide for Teacher Trainers” of Little and Perclova (2001). The results are presented below.

Consulting Teachers

These two teachers were asked whether any of the students had consulted them, and the answer was the same: one student asked both of them for help. The excerpt from the discussion is displayed below:

- Teacher 1: Ayşe asked a question to me but I can't remember the topic now she asked whether she could include a task she completed in her ELP except her nobody asked questions about the ELP even if I said them they could ask me
- Teacher 2: Ayşe came also to me to ask questions about the ELP she asked whether she could include a text she had worked on for extensive reading in the ELP

Thus, not many students consulted the teachers although in the interviews they told that they needed to do so. This may be because they had to meet the teachers after class.

Implementation

One of the teachers suggested that there should be more studies related to the ELP because she would like to see what kinds of benefits the ELP offers to the students in terms of language learning. Furthermore, the teachers also stated that if there had been more time left in the school for the students, five more students would have worked more systematically with the ELP; however, the school program itself was very dense, so if the ELP was implemented in the curriculum, they believed that

not many students would like to work with it. Furthermore, they claimed that there is too much paperwork in the ELP; therefore, the students would not like to work with it because the student profile in the school does not like much paperwork to do. The reason for this is that they already have too much paperwork for their reading and writing classes.

Class Participation

The teachers were asked whether they observed an increase in class participation. This question was asked because it was thought that if the ELP motivates the students for language learning, perhaps they would participate the lessons more because they would be more eager to learn. In terms of increase in class participation, the teachers said that there was not much difference. The students who participated in the lesson remained the same in number and frequency. According to the teachers, the reason could be their level. In their opinion, if the study had been conducted with beginner students, perhaps the result would be different. They stated that the upper-intermediate students are more confident in language, and these students believe that they will pass the preparatory class easily.

Learner Autonomy

Both teachers agreed that the ELP could not enhance the autonomy of the students in the School of Foreign Languages at Anadolu University. They stated that the student profile in Turkey would work or carry out an activity only if the students got something concrete in the end, such as grades, certificates, or a good job. Furthermore, according to these two teachers, the students were not clear about the

aim of the ELP. They reported that the students could not understand what the use of the ELP was and what they would gain after working with it. The answer of one of the teachers was quite interesting, it is presented below.

- Teacher 1: If there isn't any reward or sanction-I'm talking about the general profile-only students like Ayşe want to improve themselves. There should be a reward or sanction at the end...otherwise I have never heard students saying...let's do this...this is beneficial for my improvement...I told them how lucky they were that they had started to work with this at the moment if we are accepted to the EU you will already have such a portfolio... it is very advantageous and they answered "where are they using it?" not believing that it is used and they overreacted, so I would like to say that it would not that highly promote autonomy.
- Teacher 2: they want to see something concrete in the end like you will be sent to England for a holiday if you complete your ELP or so!

Teacher 1 stated that some students were not certain about the function of the ELP and Teacher 2 agreed with her. On the whole, they as teachers think that the ELP is beneficial for promoting autonomy, but it is not applicable with the student profile in the School of Foreign Languages at Anadolu University because they claim that it is too late for this group to learn 'how to learn' due to their age. The related sequence to this topic is presented below:

- Interviewer: What do you think about ELP as a tool for promoting autonomy in this school?
- Teacher 2: it is difficult as I said before but you told us that the Ministry of Education has started pilot projects maybe that can help to promote autonomy in long term but in this school and age I don't think that it will work
- Teacher 1: the students are not accustomed to autonomy at high school or at this age they were not able to write even journals without a topic assigned by the teachers

As shown above, in Turkish primary and high schools where the ELP was piloted in Turkey (Demirel, 2005), the teachers agreed that this was a correct

decision because the students would get used to being in a self-directed learning process at an early age.

The teachers also added that before implementing the ELP in the curriculum of the school, the results of the pilot projects should be waited to see how the ELP works and whether the ELP helps the learners in their language learning processes.

The excerpt of the teacher discussion is shown below:

Interviewer:	Do you think that we should implement it in the curriculum?
Teacher 2:	I think there should be more researches about it what kind of benefits does the passport have because there should be something concrete...what kind of a help does the ELP offer to the students to learn a language?...or is it just awareness raising I would like to learn that if the ELP helps the students for language learning than it could be easier to promote the use of the ELP

To sum up, the overall impression drawn from the group discussion may be that the teachers thought that the ELP can be a useful tool for promoting self-directed learning. However, it may be difficult to use the ELP in the School of Foreign Languages at Anadolu University for two reasons. First, the students have the heavy workload in the school and secondly, the students are not very familiar with this process, so they may not want to be involved in such a process. Thus, the teachers believe that before using it at the school, we should get clear ideas about the pilot projects of the Ministry of Education and also some should be done at university level. On the whole the teachers believe that:

1. ELP can be a tool to promote self-directed learning.
2. ELP may be considered as heavy workload by students.
3. Autonomy can be difficult to achieve with ELP.
4. Time is needed before implementing the ELP in the curriculum.

Self-assessment

Another question was whether the teachers believed in self-assessment. Both of the teachers thought that self-assessment is possible only with a good training and students needed time for the development of the self-assessment process. They believed that first the students would not be honest in their assessment process, but they thought that they would get used to it after a while. Moreover, although they stated that the students could learn how to assess themselves, the teachers still believed that teacher assessment could also be included in the ELP.

One of the results from the interviews with the students was that they believed that they could assess themselves better than the teachers because when they did not do homework or not participate in class, the teachers may consider them as lazy or the students had a low level of proficiency even if this was not the case. I asked this to the teachers and they did not agree with this comment. One teacher stated that “maybe the teachers can think in this way one or two times, but when they see that the student does the tasks, even if he doesn’t participate in class to the activities, you can get an idea about his performance”. Therefore, they disagreed that they assess the students incorrectly. The reason for such a gap between the student and teacher opinion may be that the teachers do not show what they think about the students who do not take part in class activities or the students may misunderstand their teachers.

From the group discussion with the teachers, the common point they agreed on was that they had some doubts about the ELP in terms of implementation in the curriculum. They were not sure what the ELP provided the students in terms of language learning. However, they think that the ELP could be a useful tool which enhances learner autonomy.

All three teachers and the administrators agreed on the point that the ELP needs to be piloted for a long time before implementing it in the curriculum. Also, there should be a match between the objectives of the ELP and the objectives of the institution which were determined as a result of a needs analysis process in 2002-2003. Furthermore, they believed that the ELP could be used as a tool to promote self-directed learning.

4.3.6. Results of Administrator Interviews

During the interviews, both of the administrators stated that they believed that the ELP could be a useful tool for promoting self-directed learning; however, to implement it in our curriculum, we should first see whether the objectives in the ELP match with the objectives of our institution. The objectives in our institution were formed as a result of the needs analysis process for curriculum renewal in 2002-2003, so the objectives should match with those of the ELP. Later, a pilot study could be conducted to gain an idea for the implementation.

4.4. Conclusion

In this chapter, the data collected from interviews, group discussion, learning diaries, portfolios, and questionnaires were analyzed and interpreted. Further analysis, discussions and interpretation of the data will be presented in the next chapter in more depth and various perspectives.

CHAPTER V: CONCLUSION

5.1. Introduction

The purpose of the study was to investigate whether the European Language Portfolio (ELP) could be a tool to promote self-directed learning in the School of Foreign Languages at Anadolu University in terms of attitude and implementation. The research questions addressed in the study were about the extent to which ELP promotes self-directed learning; the reactions of the students, teachers and administrators towards the ELP in terms of attitude; and the integration of the ELP into the curriculum at Anadolu University.

In order to achieve these goals of the study, interviews were conducted with eight students, one teacher, and two administrators, a group discussion was held with 2 teachers, one questionnaire completed by 19 students and a separate one open-ended questionnaire completed by 4 students who quit the study were conducted. In addition, learning diaries and two ELPs of the students were collected. Four students were interviewed individually and regularly for four weeks, and three students who were not interviewed during the study were interviewed at the end of the study. One student who had quit working with the ELP after three weeks was interviewed as well. Every week, for one day, class discussions about the ELP were held. With two teachers a group discussion was held, and one teacher was interviewed individually. At the end of the study, after collecting data from the students and teachers about the ELP, two administrators were interviewed about their opinions related to the ELP.

The data were analyzed in four steps. First the interviews with students, one teacher, and administrators and the teacher group discussion were transcribed and categorized according to the purpose of the study and the research questions. Second the learning diaries were analyzed by grouping the commonly discussed issues. Third, the ELPs of two students were analyzed in terms of filling in the ELP and completing activities. Finally, questionnaires given to the students were analyzed. The open-ended questionnaires of the students who had quit working with the ELP were analyzed to find common reasons for giving up using the ELP.

In this chapter, the major findings of the study will be summarized and discussed. Furthermore, the pedagogical implications drawn from the findings, the limitations of the study and suggestions for further studies will be presented in this chapter.

5.2. Discussion of the Findings

This section discusses the major findings and the conclusions that have been drawn through the data collection process. The findings of the study will be displayed in four sub-sections referring to each research question: the ELP and self-directed learning, the reactions of the students towards the ELP, the reactions of the instructors towards the ELP and the reactions of the administrators towards the ELP.

5.2.1. ELP and Self-directed Learning

The findings for the data analysis revealed that the ELP can be a significant tool to promote self-directed learning at the School of Foreign Languages. As Holec and Huttunen (1998) claims self-directed learning means that a learner is able to

determine his/her own learning objectives, what to do to achieve these objectives, determining how to assess what has been learned. The ELP includes all these in its three components, so the student participants in this study chose their own learning objectives, carried out activities to achieve these objectives and then assessed their own performances. The findings about the categories of self-directed learning will be presented in the following order: choosing learning objectives, finding activities, and self-assessment.

Choosing Learning Objectives

From the open-ended questionnaire given to 19 students, learning diaries and individually held interviews, it can be seen that the students were able to choose their own objectives and that they claimed to know their learning needs better than the teachers. The results show that they were happy to have a say in their own learning process. However, at the beginning of the study, some students faced difficulties in choosing their objectives including not knowing what to do or not being able to decide which objective to choose. These results were found, perhaps, because the students were not familiar with such a process and needed more support from their teachers. After three or two weeks, both the class discussions and individual meetings may have helped them so that some of the students became more confident with choosing their own learning objectives. This indicates that students can learn how to choose their own learning objectives with some support. As Little (1999) states autonomy does not mean leaving the learner alone and isolated. This study also revealed that teacher support is needed for the learners to learn what to consider in

setting objectives. Moreover, the study indicated that the ELP is a tool which can encourage the learners to set their own language learning goals.

Finding Activities

After choosing learning objectives, the participant students tried to create activities to achieve these objectives. The interview and learning diary analysis results revealed that the students experienced some difficulties in deciding what kind activities to do at the beginning of the study; however, with the help of the class discussions and individual meetings, the students were accustomed to creating their own activities although they could not carry out the activities very effectively. Furthermore, the questionnaire results indicated that most of the students did not experience much difficulty in finding activities. The reason for this may be that the students were upper-intermediate learners, and they had already engaged in various activities until they had achieved this language level.

Furthermore, the findings for this category showed that the ELP encouraged learners to carry out activities for themselves, and not for getting grades. Although some of the students could not carry out various activities because of time constraints, the interviewed students tried to do at least one activity to achieve their objectives every week. This situation may due to the heavy workload of the students in their schools, or as their teachers suggested the reason may be they were at a high level of proficiency, and they thought that they did not need to study hard.

To summarize, the students did not have much difficulty in finding activities. However, I cannot be sure whether they carried out the activities properly and effectively since not many of the students shared what they did for the ELP. This

situation may indicate that either they had difficulties but could not sort out what kind of a difficulty it was experienced so that they could not consult their teachers, or they faced difficulties in creating activities and were embarrassed to ask for help.

Self-assessment

Considering the findings from the interviews, learning diaries and questionnaire, it can be said that the ELP gave the opportunity to the students to see what they knew and what they did not, so they became more aware of the language they learned. Both the questionnaire results and the interview results revealed that the students were positive toward self-assessment. The findings showed that most of the students believed that they could assess themselves better than the teachers. The reason they reported was they could know their abilities better than others. Another reason they stated was that the teachers may think that the students have a low proficiency when they just do not participate in the class activities although the teachers did not agree with this comment. The teachers reported that they might misunderstand a student perhaps for some time, but later they could know what that particular student knew and what s/he did not. As a result, it can be said that the 'can-do' statements helped the learners to get aware of their language proficiency but not in terms of their linguistic knowledge but in terms of the skills (Little, 2005). This may be a reason why the students did not have much difficulty in finding their level according to the 'can-do' statements.

In addition, the findings of the interviews revealed that one student became more confident in learning English with the help of the self-assessment which was promoted by the ELP. Little and Perclova (2001) also mentioned that the ELP may

increase the confidence of the learners because they become aware of the language they know and what they need to learn.

Although self-assessment helped the students to gain an awareness of their language learning, they were sometimes not sure whether they had carried out an activity correctly or incorrectly in terms of linguistic knowledge. Thus, most of the students needed feedback from teachers for their activities. Another problem with self-assessment in the ELP was that the students could not decide whether they achieved an objective partly or completely, and whether they could check that particular 'can-do' statement. This may be because of not having much time to train the students how to do self-assessment. They could consult their teachers, but they did not want to. The reason for this was quite surprising because they stated that they would not want to take the time of their teacher although their teachers were always willing to help them. These problems indicate that the students need training for how to assess their own learning, and the teachers should also be trained so that they can help them whenever the learners need them.

Considering the findings related to these categories, in terms of self-directed learning it can be said that the ELP can promote self-directed learning if it is used effectively. As Ridley (2000) and Diaz (2000) suggest that the students may not be able to identify their own needs, strengths and weaknesses and cannot set goals according to their needs. They claim that the students need help to be able to do this. The ELP can be a useful tool to teach the students how to learn.

However, the students still should have the freedom to set their own learning goals. The role of the teachers should only be limited to a counselor. The students must not be left completely alone in this process. The teachers should train them in

how to use the ELP effectively. To achieve this, the ELP should be implemented in classes. The study was conducted only with after class meetings, so the participation was not very high. Furthermore, the students could not be trained effectively because there was only time to give them a two hour introduction to the ELP. As a result, although the data collected revealed that the learners did not experience much difficulty, it can be said that there was not much difficulty faced due to not understanding the aim of the ELP, and except six or seven students, the students did not consult their teachers or me, and these were the students who were interviewed. However, the data might point to promising results in terms of using the ELP to promote self-directed learning because the students had positive attitudes towards setting their own goals and self-assessment. With training and implementation, effective results can be achieved.

On the whole, the students claimed that they carried out more activities than ever; however, most of the students complained about not having enough time to work with the ELP although they believed that the ELP is a useful tool for language learning. This may be the result of perceiving the ELP as an extra work. Kohonen and Westhoff (2003) claims that to achieve reflective language learning for students, the ELP needs to be used frequently in language learning and integrated with language curricula. It should not be an “extra” work. Unfortunately, most of the students perceived the ELP as an extra work; perhaps, the results would have been more positive if the opportunity to integrate the ELP had been possible for this study. Although the students complained about time, in pedagogical view, the findings revealed that most of the students got an insight in how to develop self-assessment skills, set their objectives, and how to learn a language by working with the ELP.

5.2.2. Reactions of the Students related to ELP

The findings from the interviews, learning diaries and questionnaire revealed that most of the students felt positive about working with the ELP. It was found that the students believed that the ELP was a significant tool for language learning. Some students participated in the study to feel forced to study English because they needed a guide, like the ELP, to show them how to study. Furthermore, the ELP increased the motivation of the students slightly as well because they became more aware of how to learn a language perhaps because the objectives for learning language are clearly stated in the ELP.

Most of the students also had positive ideas about taking responsibility for their own learning. They reported that until this age, other people were always responsible for their learning, but the ELP encouraged them to take responsibility. Hence, they became more aware of their language learning processes.

At the end of the fall term, ten students stated that they would like to go on keeping the ELP and reporting their experiences to me; however, in the spring term they changed their minds because of excessive workload at school. The questionnaire results also revealed that most of the students wanted to continue to keep the ELP after the study as well. This finding also indicates that the students had positive attitudes towards the ELP otherwise they would not have wanted to continue working with the ELP. Meister (2005) also emphasizes that the ELP helps the learners raise consciousness about their language learning process. Also, in the affective view in this study, self-awareness of the students increased to some extent, and they reacted positively towards the ELP.

5.2.3. Reactions of the Teachers towards the ELP

The findings from the interview with one teacher and the group discussions with two teachers indicated that the teachers had some doubts about the use of the ELP. The reason may be because they were introduced with the ELP for the first time and were not included in the process because of not being able to implement the ELP in class level.

The teachers believed that the ELP was a useful tool to develop learner autonomy but implementing it in the School of Foreign Languages at Anadolu University might cause some problems because according to the general student profile, the students do not tend to take responsibility for their own learning unless they get a grade or so forth in the end. Also, the students at this school have excessive workload such as assignments, exams, quizzes, portfolios, extensive reading files and so forth. This contradiction between the ideas of the students and teachers show that the teachers may not know their students well because the students tried to carry out activities and work with the ELP although they were not forced to do this and they did not receive any grades. In addition, the students complained about the workload at school during the study, this can also show that perhaps workload tires the students and prevents them to learn English outside the school.

The teachers agreed that with the use of the ELP, the students should be trained about self-assessment and choosing objectives. Furthermore, before implementing it in the curriculum, all three teachers stated that one should wait to see the long term results of the portfolio pilot projects in Turkey. They may have thought in this way because they were introduced with the ELP for the first time and had limited

information about it. As it was also indicated by Abuja in the Turin Report), as a result of the pilot projects in Europe, some teachers felt insecure about this new instrument, and this may also be the case with the teachers at Anadolu University. The doubts of the teachers towards the ELP can be considered normal since it is a new instrument for them as well.

5.2.4. Reactions of the Administrators towards the ELP

The findings from the interviews held with the two administrators indicated that the ELP could be a means to encourage self-directed learning, but before implementing the ELP in the curriculum of the School of Foreign Languages at Anadolu University, the objectives of the ELP and the objectives of the school should be compared, and small scale pilot projects should be conducted. Also, time is an important issue because not only the students but also the instructors should be trained on the ELP and about how to implement it. The administrators were quite sensitive about the ELP because it is an important issue that the ELP is not only a new tool for the School of Foreign Languages but also for Turkey. The results of the pilot projects conducted by the Ministry of Education will give insight into the implementation of the ELP at schools.

5.3. Pedagogical Implications

In terms of pedagogical implications of the study, since one of the goals of the School of Foreign Languages at Anadolu University is to promote learner autonomy, the ELP can be recommended as a tool which can be the first step to help the students develop learner autonomy because the ELP is a significant tool for

promoting self-directed learning. Self-directed learning enables students to gain insight into their learning process. Dam (2000) claims that schools and universities cannot teach all the knowledge which the learners will need in their future lives. She concludes that the only thing that can be done is helping the learners raise awareness, which would enable them come to an understanding of themselves, and by doing this their self-esteem would increase. Hancock (1994) suggests portfolio assessment is one of the ways which can help learners become independent thinkers and develop autonomy. A portfolio system is being used at the School of Foreign Languages at Anadolu University, but it does not include self-assessment and self-reflection. The students are asked only to include their written works with drafts and final version in their portfolios. However, the ELP has three components which can promote these concepts. Hence, using the ELP is one of the ways to increase learner autonomy in the learning process since one of the aims of the ELP is helping the students develop self-directed learning.

The general students profile in Turkey is that the students are not used to deciding on their own learning and taking responsibility. Therefore, the students need help to become autonomous learners. Ridley (2000) and Diaz (2000) suggest that the students need support to become skilled in learning procedures such as improving their learning strategies. They need to be taught how to learn for themselves. The ELP can be used to teach the learners how to learn for themselves. Additionally, the data of the study revealed that the students needed help and training for choosing objectives and for accurate self-assessment because they were not accustomed to set their own learning goals and assess their on language learning.

The ELP can be implemented at the School of Foreign Languages at Anadolu University; however, asking the students to keep the ELP is not enough. From the findings of the interviews with the teachers and administrators, first the objectives of the ELP and the objectives of the school should be compared to see whether there is a match. Furthermore, some training is also necessary for the teachers because they will take a lot of responsibility in such a process. The teachers should also be asked to volunteer to work with the ELP; as one of our administrators stated, the teachers should believe in the usefulness of the ELP because it may be difficult sometimes to introduce a new learning tool both to the teachers and learners when their teaching and learning habits are also expected to change with this new instrument.

The next step should be training the students about setting learning objectives, finding activities, and assessing their own learning in an appropriate manner. The findings from this study showed that the students had positive feelings towards self-assessment. Yet, the students were sometimes not sure about whether they had carried out the activities properly, or whether they had achieved their objectives. Thus, most of the students suggested teacher support for this topic, but only if they ask their teachers to do so because they liked to be responsible for their own learning, choosing their own objectives and activities. As a result, the students need to be trained before they are asked to assess their own language learning process.

To sum up, the findings of this study indicate that the ELP can be a significant tool to promote self-directed learning. However, it demands a great deal of effort both from the teachers and students because the educational system in Turkey is considered traditional, in other words teacher-centered. It can be difficult to change both the students' and teachers' attitudes towards autonomy (Yumuk, 2002) because

it is the teacher who always takes the initiatives and is responsible for the learners' learning, in other words the teacher is the 'authority'.

Another issue is that one of the aims of the ELP is to enhance plurilingualism and cultural diversity, and this can be difficult to achieve in a context like Turkey because the only place the learners are exposed to a foreign language is the school. Although they can contact with foreign people via the internet, watch movies and so forth, the learners become more motivated when they are given the opportunity to go abroad in the end. They believe that even if they improve the language they are not able to meet foreign people easily. They cannot travel abroad as easily as the learners in Europe. As a result, they learn English only for a good future. Yet the ELP can be used as a tool to enhance self-directed learning and perhaps in the future when Turkey is accepted in EU, it can be a significant tool to promote cultural diversity as well.

To sum up, the ELP is recommended for implementation in the curriculum at the School of Foreign Languages at Anadolu University if the objectives of the ELP and the objectives of the institution match. However, implementing it in the curriculum needs support both from the teachers and students since they already have excessive workload, and the ELP will be added to this workload both of the teachers and students. They should not perceive the ELP as a burden. Furthermore, even if they agree to work with the ELP, both the teachers and the students need an effective training on how to work with the ELP and how to make the best use of it in the language learning process. Since there are not many studies and pilot projects on the ELP other than the ones of the Ministry of Education which do not include

universities, more studies should be conducted to see how the ELP works in Turkey and at Turkish universities.

5.4. Limitations of the Study

One of the major limitations of the study was not being able to implement the ELP in class level. Since the students at the School of Foreign Languages should be given the same instruction because of the same final exam they are going to take, it could be unfair to the students to use the ELP in class level. If the ELP was implemented in class level, the lesson time of the students would be taken, so they would be left behind the syllabus, and this would be unfair for the student participants. Therefore, the students could be introduced to the ELP for only two hours in class which was not enough to cover all the issues in the ELP in depth. On the other hand, if the ELP could have been implemented in class level, it would have been used more effectively both by the teachers and students.

Another limitation was that more students could be interviewed regularly every week during the study so that more data could be collected in terms of the usefulness of the ELP for promoting self-directed learning.

The last limitation was that at start of the study, the Turkish adult version of the ELP was not available yet as far as I searched, so the students had to use the Swiss model of the ELP. This may have caused some problems in understanding the content of the ELP including the descriptors and the ‘can-do’ statements. If the Turkish version had been found and used, the students could have been much more certain about the descriptors and the objectives and would not have had so many difficulties in assessing their own learning performance.

5.5. Suggestions for Further Studies

In further studies which aim to highlight the significance of the ELP in terms of promoting self-directed learning, the ELP could be implemented at class level to see to what extent it is effective for both self-directed learning and language learning. If interviews are going to be held, more student participants could be interviewed for more data about self-directed learning. Another study could be conducted on the descriptors and objectives stated in the ELP. How the students interpret them, whether they use them effectively, and whether they can assess themselves with the help of the 'can-do' statements appropriately could be researched, perhaps by including teacher assessment as well and comparing the both of the assessments about the ELP. Moreover, a study could be conducted on whether the ELP has an effect on developing self-confidence. Little and Perclova (2001) proposes that the ELP develops learners' self-confidence. Also, since some students in the study indicated that they became more confident about learning language by the help of the ELP, this can be also included in the scope of further research.

Another study could be conducted on teachers about their general views on the ELP. In such a study it would be necessary that some introductory and training sessions be given and group discussions about implementing the ELP in the curriculum of the school to be held. Future research may also focus on how the teachers make use of the ELP in terms of teaching and understanding the students' learning process.

5.6. Conclusion

This study investigated the ELP as a tool promoting self-directed learning and the views of the students, teachers and administrators about the ELP and its implementation in the School of Foreign Languages at Anadolu University. The data was collected through individually held interviews with students, one teacher, and two administrators, group discussion with two teachers, learning diaries, and two ELPs of the students, weekly held class discussions, and questionnaires.

Both the qualitative and quantitative results of the study indicated that the ELP is a tool which can promote self-directed learning on the condition that it is used effectively both by the teachers and students. Additionally, it was found that the students felt positive towards the ELP and working with it, except for the fact that they had limited time to work with the ELP.

In addition, the findings of the study indicated that both the teachers and the administrators believed that the ELP was a tool which can promote self-directed learning; however, the implementation of the ELP in the curriculum of the School of Foreign Languages at Anadolu University needs research to see whether the objectives of the ELP and the School of Foreign Languages match, and there is a need for receiving more information about the ELP as the results of pilot projects involving it in Turkey are not adequate to make sound decisions yet because the ELP has only been newly introduced in Turkey as well. However, this study showed that the ELP could be used as a tool to promote self-directed learning and to create learner-centered classrooms in Turkey. Thus, achieving self-directed learning is not as difficult as it is thought to be, and the ELP is one of the tools which can promote it.

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APPENDIX A

Common European Framework Descriptors

Self-assessment Grid



	A1	A2	B1	B2	C1	C2
Understanding	I can understand familiar words and very basic phrases concerning myself, my family and my immediate surroundings when people speak slowly and clearly.	I can understand phrases and the simplest sentences used in routine communication. I can understand short messages in simple everyday situations (e.g. very basic personal information, local area, employment). I can catch the main point in short, clear, simple messages and announcements.	I can understand the main points of clear standard speech on familiar topics (e.g. work, school, leisure, etc.). I can understand the main point of many radio or TV programmes on current affairs or types of personal or professional life. The majority of films is not too slow and clear.	I can understand extended speech and lectures and follow the main ideas. I can understand most TV news and current affairs programmes. I can understand the majority of films in standard dialect.	I can understand extended speech and lectures and follow the main ideas. I can understand most TV news and current affairs programmes. I can understand the majority of films in standard dialect.	I have no difficulty in understanding any kind of spoken language, whether in a formal or informal context. I can understand extended speech and lectures and follow the main ideas. I can understand most TV news and current affairs programmes. I can understand the majority of films in standard dialect.
Listening						
Reading	I can understand familiar names, words and very simple sentences, for example on notices and posters or in catalogues.	I can find specific, predictable information in simple everyday material (e.g. business, news and timetables) and I can understand short simple personal letters.	I can understand texts that consist mainly of high frequency everyday or job-related language. I can understand descriptions of events, feelings and wishes in personal letters.	I can read articles and reports concerned with contemporary problems in which the writers adopt particular viewpoints or a particular style in writing. I can understand standard contemporary literary prose.	I can understand long and complex factual and literary texts, appreciating distinctions of style. I can understand extended speech and lectures and follow the main ideas. I can understand most TV news and current affairs programmes. I can understand the majority of films in standard dialect.	I can read with ease virtually all forms of the written language, including abstract, structural or technical texts, as well as literary texts. I can understand extended speech and lectures and follow the main ideas. I can understand most TV news and current affairs programmes. I can understand the majority of films in standard dialect.
Speaking	I can interact in a simple way provided the other person is prepared to repeat or rephrase things at a slower rate of speech and help me to make sense of what I say. I can understand and answer simple questions in areas of immediate need or on very familiar topics.	I can communicate in simple and routine tasks requiring a simple and direct exchange of information on familiar topics and activities. I can interact with native speakers quite spontaneously without much obvious searching for expressions. I can use language flexibly and effectively for social purposes. I can understand and follow simple instructions. I can have a problem I can back track and restructure around the difficulty so smoothly that other people are hardly aware of it.	I can deal with most situations likely to arise whilst travelling in an area where the language is spoken. I can enter unprepared into conversation on topics which are of personal interest (e.g. family, hobbies, work, travel and current events).	I can interact with a degree of fluency and spontaneity that makes regular interaction with native speakers quite possible. I can take an active part in discussions on familiar topics and express my views.	I can express myself fluently and spontaneously without much obvious searching for expressions. I can use language flexibly and effectively for social purposes. I can understand and follow simple instructions. I can have a problem I can back track and restructure around the difficulty so smoothly that other people are hardly aware of it.	I can take part effortlessly in any conversation or discussion and have a good familiarity with idiomatic expressions and colloquialisms. I can understand and follow simple instructions. I can have a problem I can back track and restructure around the difficulty so smoothly that other people are hardly aware of it.
Spoken interaction						
Spoken production	I can use simple phrases and sentences to describe where I live and people I know.	I can use a series of phrases and sentences to describe the simple terms, my family and other people, living conditions, my educational background and my present or most recent job.	I can connect phrases in a simple way in order to describe experiences and events, my dreams, hopes and ambitions. I can briefly give reasons and explanations for opinions and choices. I can describe the plot of a book or film and describe my reactions.	I can present clear, detailed descriptions on a wide range of subjects related to my field of interest. I can explain a viewpoint on a typical issue giving the advantages and disadvantages of various options.	I can present clear, detailed descriptions of complex subjects integrating sub-themes, developing particular points and rounding off with an appropriate conclusion.	I can present a clear, smooth flowing description or argument in a style appropriate to the context and with an effective logical structure which helps the recipient to notice and remember significant points.
Writing	I can write a short, simple postcard, for example mentioning holiday greetings and a few personal details, for example entering my name, nationality and a address on a hotel registration form.	I can write short, simple notes and messages. I can write a very simple letter of invitation or request, for example asking someone for something.	I can write simple connected text on topics which are familiar or of personal interest. I can write personal letters describing experiences and impressions.	I can write clear, detailed text on a wide range of subjects related to my field of interest. I can report, passing on information or giving reasons in support of or against a particular point of view. I can write letters highlighting the main points of an event and separating out.	I can express myself in clear, well-structured text expressing parts of a text and making connections about complex subjects in a letter, an essay or a report, underlining what I consider to be the salient issues. I can select a style appropriate to the context and the audience of professional or literary texts.	I can write clear, smoothly-flowing text in a appropriate style. I can present a clear, smooth flowing description or argument in a style appropriate to the context and with an effective logical structure which helps the recipient to notice and remember significant points. I can select a style appropriate to the context and the audience of professional or literary texts.

APPENDIX B

European Language Portfolio Components

Language Passport




Profile of language skills *Profil linguistique*

Mother-tongue(s)
Langue(s) maternelle(s)


Other languages
Autres langues


Self-assessment
Auto-évaluation

 Listening
Ecouter

 Spoken interaction
Prendre part à une conversation






 Writing
Ecrire

 Reading
Lire

 Spoken production
S'exprimer oralement en continu






Language *Langue*

language langue






	A1	A2	B1	B2	C1	C2
						
						
						
						
						

Example Exemple

Language *Langue*

	A1	A2	B1	B2	C1	C2
						
						
						
						
						

Language *Langue*

	A1	A2	B1	B2	C1	C2
						
						
						
						
						

Self-assessment grid

	A1	A2	B1
Understanding  Listening	I can understand familiar words and very basic phrases concerning myself, my family and immediate concrete surroundings when people speak slowly and clearly.	I can understand phrases and the highest frequency vocabulary related to areas of most immediate personal relevance (e.g. very basic personal and family information, shopping, local area, employment). I can catch the main point in short, clear, simple messages and announcements.	I can understand the main points of clear standard speech on familiar matters regularly encountered in work, school, leisure, etc. I can understand the main point of many radio or TV programmes on current affairs or topics of personal or professional interest when the delivery is relatively slow and clear.
 Reading	I can understand familiar names, words and very simple sentences, for example on notices and posters or in catalogues.	I can read very short, simple texts. I can find specific, predictable information in simple everyday material such as advertisements, prospectuses, menus and timetables and I can understand short simple personal letters.	I can understand texts that consist mainly of high frequency everyday or job-related language. I can understand the description of events, feelings and wishes in personal letters.
Speaking  Spoken interaction	I can interact in a simple way provided the other person is prepared to repeat or rephrase things at a slower rate of speech and help me formulate what I'm trying to say. I can ask and answer simple questions in areas of immediate need or on very familiar topics.	I can communicate in simple and routine tasks requiring a simple and direct exchange of information on familiar topics and activities. I can handle very short social exchanges, even though I can't usually understand enough to keep the conversation going myself.	I can deal with most situations likely to arise whilst travelling in an area where the language is spoken. I can enter unprepared into conversation on topics that are familiar, of personal interest or pertinent to everyday life (e.g. family, hobbies, work, travel and current events).
 Spoken production	I can use simple phrases and sentences to describe where I live and people I know.	I can use a series of phrases and sentences to describe in simple terms my family and other people, living conditions, my educational background and my present or most recent job.	I can connect phrases in a simple way in order to describe experiences and events, my dreams, hopes and ambitions. I can briefly give reasons and explanations for opinions and plans. I can narrate a story or relate the plot of a book or film and describe my reactions.
Writing  Writing	I can write a short, simple postcard, for example sending holiday greetings. I can fill in forms with personal details, for example entering my name, nationality and address on a hotel registration form.	I can write short, simple notes and messages. I can write a very simple personal letter, for example thanking someone for something.	I can write simple connected text on topics which are familiar or of personal interest. I can write personal letters describing experiences and impressions.



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B₂

C₁

C₂

<p>I can understand extended speech and lectures and follow even complex lines of argument provided the topic is reasonably familiar. I can understand most TV news and current affairs programmes. I can understand the majority of films in standard dialect.</p>	<p>I can understand extended speech even when it is not clearly structured and when relationships are only implied and not signalled explicitly. I can understand television programmes and films without too much effort.</p>	<p>I have no difficulty in understanding any kind of spoken language, whether live or broadcast, even when delivered at fast native speed, provided I have some time to get familiar with the accent.</p>
<p>I can read articles and reports concerned with contemporary problems in which the writers adopt particular attitudes or viewpoints. I can understand contemporary literary prose.</p>	<p>I can understand long and complex factual and literary texts, appreciating distinctions of style. I can understand specialised articles and longer technical instructions, even when they do not relate to my field.</p>	<p>I can read with ease virtually all forms of the written language, including abstract, structurally or linguistically complex texts such as manuals, specialised articles and literary works.</p>
<p>I can interact with a degree of fluency and spontaneity that makes regular interaction with native speakers quite possible. I can take an active part in discussion in familiar contexts, accounting for and sustaining my views.</p>	<p>I can express myself fluently and spontaneously without much obvious searching for expressions. I can use language flexibly and effectively for social and professional purposes. I can formulate ideas and opinions with precision and relate my contribution skilfully to those of other speakers.</p>	<p>I can take part effortlessly in any conversation or discussion and have a good familiarity with idiomatic expressions and colloquialisms. I can express myself fluently and convey finer shades of meaning precisely. If I do have a problem I can backtrack and restructure around the difficulty so smoothly that other people are hardly aware of it.</p>
<p>I can present clear, detailed descriptions on a wide range of subjects related to my field of interest. I can explain a viewpoint on a topical issue giving the advantages and disadvantages of various options.</p>	<p>I can present clear, detailed descriptions of complex subjects integrating sub-themes, developing particular points and rounding off with an appropriate conclusion.</p>	<p>I can present a clear, smoothly-flowing description or argument in a style appropriate to the context and with an effective logical structure which helps the recipient to notice and remember significant points.</p>
<p>I can write clear, detailed text on a wide range of subjects related to my interests. I can write an essay or report, passing on information or giving reasons in support of or against a particular point of view. I can write letters highlighting the personal significance of events and experiences.</p>	<p>I can express myself in clear, well-structured text, expressing points of view at some length. I can write about complex subjects in a letter, an essay or a report, underlining what I consider to be the salient issues. I can select a style appropriate to the reader in mind.</p>	<p>I can write clear, smoothly-flowing text in an appropriate style. I can write complex letters, reports or articles which present a case with an effective logical structure which helps the recipient to notice and remember significant points. I can write summaries and reviews of professional or literary works.</p>

7

Language Biography



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Language Biography *Biographie Langagière*

This section of your European Language portfolio enables you to reflect on your previous language learning experiences and your present motivation to continue to learn languages.

It provides a place to record languages you have learnt from birth and languages spoken by other members of your family. These are part of your heritage, and the ELP encourages pride in them as well as those you learnt at school or in training for work. Then there are languages you have acquired from travel and tourism or from your working or social contacts. Some of these you may never have been taught formally or examined in. They too are important and may play a future part in your life or work.

It helps anyone involved in your language development to understand where you come from, what *your* most effective learning strategies and *their* most effective teaching styles might be, and what your most important language needs are, whether commercial or social, at the present time.

It allows you to record, in addition to language learning experiences, any contact you may have had with cultures other than your own and which you feel have significantly enriched your personal development and understanding.

For each language you mention, you are invited to use the European Framework self-assessment grid in your passport to estimate your level in each skill (listening, speaking, reading and writing) in that language.

You may wish to photocopy pages 1-8 of this booklet before writing on them to provide additional recording space for later attachment to the language biography.



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ISBN 1-904243-04-5

Name: _____

Nom : _____

My language background

Mon milieu linguistique

My mother tongue

Ma langue maternelle

Other languages spoken in my family

Autres langues familiales

Languages I have learnt informally

Langues que j'ai apprises autrement qu'en classe

through travel and tourism

through my working life

through friendships and other social contacts

Self-assessment on the European scale

Auto-évaluation à l'échelle globale européenne

Language	Skill				
	Understanding		Speaking		Writing
	Listening comprehension	Reading comprehension	Spoken interaction	Spoken production	
	<i>Level</i>	<i>Level</i>	<i>Level</i>	<i>Level</i>	<i>Level</i>

On the following page, include any further comments you have about your contact with the languages listed above.

Sample 'Can-Do' Statements for B2 Level

Self-assessment Checklist

Level **B2** **2.2**

Language: _____

Use this checklist to record what you think you can do (Column 1). Ask someone else, for example your teacher, to also assess what they think you can do (Column 2). Use Column 3 to mark those things that you cannot yet do which you feel are important for you (Column 3 = Objectives).
Add to the list – perhaps with your teacher – other things that you can do, or that are important for your language learning at this level.

Use the following symbols:




In columns 1 and 2



In column 3

✓ I can do this under normal circumstances ! This is an objective for me

✓✓ I can do this easily !! This is a priority for me

If you have over 80% of the points ticked, you have probably reached Level B2.

	Me	My teacher/ another	My objectives
	1	2	3
 Listening			
I can understand in detail what is said to me in standard spoken language even in a noisy environment.			
I can follow a lecture or talk within my own field, provided the subject matter is familiar and the presentation straightforward and clearly structured.			
I can understand most radio documentaries delivered in standard language and can identify the speaker's mood, tone etc.			
I can understand TV documentaries, live interviews, talk shows, plays and the majority of films in standard dialect.			
I can understand the main ideas of complex speech on both concrete and abstract topics delivered in a standard dialect, including technical discussions in my field of specialisation.			
I can use a variety of strategies to achieve comprehension, including listening for main points; checking comprehension by using contextual clues.			
 Reading			
I can rapidly grasp the content and the significance of news, articles and reports on topics connected with my interests or my job, and decide if a closer reading is worthwhile.			
I can read and understand articles and reports on current problems in which the writers express specific attitudes and points of view.			
I can understand in detail texts within my field of interest or the area of my academic or professional speciality.			
I can understand specialised articles outside my own field if I can occasionally check with a dictionary.			
I can read reviews dealing with the content and criticism of cultural topics (films, theatre, books, concerts) and summarise the main points.			
I can read letters on topics within my areas of academic or professional speciality or interest and grasp the most important points.			
I can quickly look through a manual (for example for a computer program) and find and understand the relevant explanations and help for a specific problem.			
I can understand in a narrative or play the motives for the characters' actions and their consequences for the development of the plot.			
 Spoken Interaction			
I can initiate, maintain and end discourse naturally with effective turn-taking.			
I can exchange considerable quantities of detailed factual information on matters within my fields of interest.			
I can convey degrees of emotion and highlight the personal significance of events and experiences.			
I can engage in extended conversation in a clearly participatory fashion on most general topics.			
I can account for and sustain my opinions in discussion by providing relevant explanations, arguments and comments.			
I can help a discussion along on familiar ground confirming comprehension, inviting others in, etc.			
I can carry out a prepared interview, checking and confirming information, following up interesting replies.			

 Spoken Production	1	2	3	B2
I can give clear, detailed descriptions on a wide range of subjects related to my fields of interest.				
I can understand and summarise orally short extracts from news items, interviews or documentaries containing opinions, argument and discussion.				
I can understand and summarise orally the plot and sequence of events in an extract from a film or play.				
I can construct a chain of reasoned argument, linking my ideas logically.				
I can explain a viewpoint on a topical issue giving the advantages and disadvantages of various options.				
I can speculate about causes, consequences, hypothetical situations.				
Strategies	1	2	3	
I can use standard phrases like "That's a difficult question to answer" to gain time and keep the turn while formulating what to say.				
I can make a note of "favourite mistakes" and consciously monitor speech for them.				
I can generally correct slips and errors if I become aware of them or if they have led to misunderstandings.				
Language Quality	1	2	3	
I can produce stretches of language with a fairly even tempo; although I can be hesitant as I search for expressions, there are few noticeably long pauses.				
I can pass on detailed information reliably.				
I have sufficient vocabulary to express myself on matters connected to my field and on most general topics.				
I can communicate with reasonable accuracy and can correct mistakes if they have led to misunderstandings.				
 Writing	1	2	3	
I can write clear and detailed texts (compositions, reports or texts of presentations) on various topics related to my field of interest.				
I can write summaries of articles on topics of general interest.				
I can summarise information from different sources and media.				
I can discuss a topic in a composition or "letter to the editor", giving reasons for or against a specific point of view.				
I can develop an argument systematically in a composition or report, emphasising decisive points and including supporting details.				
I can write about events and real or fictional experiences in a detailed and easily readable way.				
I can write a short review of a film or a book.				
I can express in a personal letter different feelings and attitudes and can report the news of the day making clear what – in my opinion – are the important aspects of an event.				

Dossier



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Dossier Section Section dossier

Your language passport contains details of language qualifications you hold and your language biography is a showcase for all the language learning experiences you have had and may be planning for. But if asked *'Can you give a concrete example of the sort of thing you can actually do in the foreign language?'* what could you offer? The dossier section of your European Language Portfolio allows you to keep any evidence you have of your ability to use languages. Examples of evidence you might wish to include are:

- statements of the kinds of tasks you can achieve using the language (e.g. a list of 'I can...' statements about what you can do at work - 'Understand the gist of an incoming foreign language fax; make a foreign visitor to my company welcome on arrival; cope with an incoming phone call well enough to pass the speaker to the right colleague...etc') A grid is provided to help you set this out.
- actual written/printed/recorded specimens of what you can say, understand, read or write in the language. Recordings of speech may be audio or video.
NB If you have already compiled a portfolio of evidence e.g. for an NVQ language unit, a sample of this can be included.
- certificates, or copies of these, relating to qualifications you have listed in the 'passport' section
- evidence from witnesses to your ability
(e.g. a card from a foreign colleague thanking you for your help and congratulating you on your ability to speak their language, or a statement from a witness to the effect that you can perform a task - a photocopy master form is provided for this)

The photocopy master pages which follow are simply to help you get started on your dossier. You may have your own preferred way of presenting your evidence for easy access.

If you do want to use the model pages:

- a contents page (pcm 1) is included to enable you to list the evidence you have included in the dossier by page number. To do this, number the title page of each set of evidence by hand and copy the number to the contents list, to enable a reader to locate the relevant evidence easily.
- a practical competence statement table (pcm 2) is provided for you to list and refer to specific language tasks you can perform.
- there is a page (pcm 4) for you to list certificates you have included in your dossier.
- there is a statement form (pcm 5) that any witness to your competence can fill in on your behalf

All of the above is optional. Include any evidence that you believe best represents your competence in any language. See back for example of how evidence might be assembled.

Please remember, before using any form, to make extra blank copies!

ISBN 1-904243-04-5



Guidance


Mode d'emploi

How a section of your dossier might look

Forme que pourrait prendre une section de votre dossier

Section 1 Language Russian			
Task - skill	evidence ref.	Level	
		CEF	NLS
List of key tasks you can perform, each with skill reference (e.g. 'Understanding - Listening comprehension')			
Write simple formal letter, including my own variations on a familiar model (Writing)	1.1 Letter	B1	W2
Discuss alternative arrangements for a future meeting on the telephone (Spoken Interaction)	1.2 Cassette	B1	S2
Read mainly factual technical reports in relevant trade journals (Reading Comprehension)	1.3 Text and summary	B2	R3

Sample 1.1 Language Russian
<p>Дикую шельмъ вш дик мше фуюб сштыусеуегук</p> <p>фешзысшт</p> <p>удиеб мве вишь тыттын тшир угшныше вшсшгте ге дшккуе вшшкку ьфптр фдшйгф укфе мидгзфе.</p> <p>Дикую шельмъ вшшк мше фуюб сштыусеуегук фешзысшт удиеб мве вишь тыттын тшир угшныше вшсшгте ге дшккуе ьфптр фдшйгф укфе мидгзфе. Вгши фгеуъ муд угъ шшгку вшшк шт рутккуше шт мидгзфеу мидше уыну ышдуышу сшт греб муд шдгъ вшшкку уг вутпшфе тгддф мыи фе мукш укшы фсстшмрт уе шывш шывш вшшныше йгш идфшше жфруте ге яжшд вудутше фпту вгши вшшкку еу вутпшфе тгддф вфсшшшш.</p>
* graphic representation of Russian text only

Sample 1.3 Language Russian


Sample 1.2 Language Russian
<p>Дикую шельмъ вшшк мше фуюб сшт мусеуегук фешзысштт удиеб мве вишь тыттын тшир угшныше вшсшгте ге дшккуе вшшкку ьфптр фдшйгф укфе мидгзфе.</p> <p>Дикую шельмъ вшшк мше фуюб сшт мусеуегук фешзысштт удиеб мве вишь тыттын тшир угшныше вшсшгте ге дшккуе ьфптр фдшйгф укфе мидгзфе. Вгши фгеуъ муд угъ шшгку вшшк шт рутккуше шт мидгзфеу мидше уыну ышдуышу сшт греб</p> <p>муд шдгъ вшшкку уг вутпшфе тгддф мыи фе мукш укшы фсстшмрт уе шывш шывш вшшныше йгш идфшше жфруте ге яжшд вудутше фпту вгши вшшкку еу вутпшфе тгддф вфсшшшш.</p>
* graphic representation of Russian text only

APPENDIX C

Student Interviews

Student Interview Questions

Questions for the first Interview

1. Did you have any difficulty in filling the parts of the portfolio?
2. Was finding your current level difficult for you?
3. What did you do for the ELP since the beginning of the study?
4. What did you consider while setting goals for your own language learning? Was it difficult?
5. How much do you work to develop your own language learning skill?
6. What did you most like about the ELP? Why?
7. What did you least like about the ELP? Why?
8. Did you get any help from your teachers during the last three weeks?

Questions during the Study

1. What have you done for the ELP this week?
2. Have you had any difficulty in finding activities?
3. Did you have any difficulties in setting objectives?
4. Have you had any difficulties with the ELP?
5. Is there anything you want to comment on?

(these were the main questions of the interview, the rest of the questions differed according to the previous interviews with the particular student)

At the End of the Study

1. What have you done for the ELP since the beginning of the study? Can you describe the activities you carried out?

2. How much do you work to develop your own language learning skill?
3. How much interested do you feel about the subject of your own learning?
4. To what extent in this project did you take responsibility for your learning, for example with new materials or techniques?
5. Did you have any difficulty in self-assessment?
6. Did you have any difficulties in setting objectives?
7. Did you have any difficulty in finding activities?
8. Did you get motivated towards language learning after working with the ELP?
9. What did you most like about the ELP? Why?
10. What did you least like about the ELP? Why?
11. Do you think that the ELP help you to learn foreign languages and how?
12. Is everything in the ELP clear or do you need your teacher's help? If yes, what for?
13. What is missing from the ELP? What would you like to improve?

Questions for the Student quit the Study

1. Why did you quit working with the ELP?
2. Why did you first accept to take part in the study?
3. Until now, did you carry out any activities for the ELP?
4. Do you think that working with the ELP is useless?

Transcription Code Used in the Thesis

- ... → pause for two or three seconds
- (...) → used for utterance not states in the transcript
- ? → increase intonation
- S → student

R → researcher

Sample Student Interview

This interview sequence is from the first interview held with one of the students regularly interviewed. It lasted more than ten minutes, so the sequence is approximately from the first five minutes.

26.12.1005

R: can you tell me what you did for the ELP in general for these three weeks?

S: I tried to find my level but I couldn't exactly understand there are some places where I could not make any decision...because of the time I could not have a look...I couldn't examine it in depth because I want to be sure about my level

R: If you want we can have a look together?

S: OK, uh uh

S: it would be beneficial...my first activity was ...I read an article for extensive reading it was not a newspaper article it was a usual article which the teachers at school assign... I can show it right now

S: it is something I can read it was more difficult than the others...actually the language is not difficult...it is something like that (she shows the article)

R: is this for extensive reading?

S: uh uh...yes

R: for which objective did you carry it out?

S: for reading and comprehension...to answer some questions about it...to understand the important points

R: could you finish working with this article? More...let's see

S: the questions and the answers are here

R: no no I just wanted to learn whether you could do it...Did you have any difficulty?

S: while doing I did not have much difficulty ...no...it was quite easy...the level of the language is not so difficult...so general how can I say...is it called 'A Grade' a person cannot write until he is a a certain level the article was from such a magazine

R: is it related to your department?

S: no it's not...my department is press and publish...it is just such an article

R: what does the title mean, I really could not remember that word what does airborne mean?

S: uhh well how can I say proliferating by flitting

R: is it about pollens?

S: it is about pollens

R: for this you chose first the objective then the material didn't you?

S: (mimics for saying no)

R: no...you first decided on the activity then the objective

S: yes I did it like that but...

R: no no it's fine

S: I thought it was a good article I think that wherever I read such a thing I cannot understand it...I decided to do when I understood the language

R: OK thank you very much see you next week then

S: see you

APPENDIX D

Teacher Interview

Teacher Interview Questions

1. Did the students consult you for the ELP? What did they consult about?
2. Do you think that the students got more motivated towards language learning after the introductory of the ELP?
3. Did you observe any difference in the class participation after the ELP?
4. Do you think that the ELP can be implemented in the curriculum of the school?
5. What should be considered before the integration of the ELP and the curriculum of the school?

Transcription Code Used in the Thesis

- ... → pause for two or three seconds
- (...) → used for utterance not states in the transcript
- ? → increase intonation
- T → teacher
- R → researcher

Sample Teacher Interview

Towards the end of the study, the speaking course teacher was interviewed about the ELP. The interview is presented below.

4.01.2006

R: Hello

T: Hi

R: uuhm I would like to ask some questions about the ELP

T: Sure well I would like to help you

R: uuhm thanks you are working with up-int two and...

T: uh uh

R: you know we gave them the European Language Portfolio so what do you think
should we implement the ELP into the curriculum or syllabus?

T: firstly why not ok? I've been observing my students they are really working hard
they're trying to do their best...uhm but uh I mean we should arrange it...first of
all...you know every course here skills have some objectives and goals

R: uhm uhm

T: If they are parallel with the goals and objectives...it will be more meaningful...I
mean in speaking and listening class for example...you remember we talked
about this...in every chapter we teach listening for main idea...specific
details...and some what is that...

R: strategies?

T: strategies...and you know they have to learn these

R: uhm uhm

T: even they in their departments they need these...they are parallel I mean once we
teach them how to organize how to do that I mean ...in one chapter together...I
mean teacher as a facilitator if he teaches what they want to do in the classroom
while listening or while taking notes and if they learn it once they can do it later
and

R: uh uh

T: it can be more I mean productive and meaningful

R: uhm uhm so maybe we can implement it next or in the future

T: possible idea but you know it should be arranged you know...very systematically

R: yes and uhm did some of the students or any of the students consult you for the ELP because you were the guide for them?

T: yes in fact I was the guide but

R: uhm

T: only some of the students just asked for that I mean asked for help...and I said you can start with doing this and I gave some information about the topic...I gave some examples how to do that...and I think the other students only you know ...just three or four students asked me in fact the other students learned I mean they know how how they're going to do that

R: uh uh

T: that's why they didn't consult me they didn't ask for help I guess

R: hmm hmm...ok that's all thank you

T: you're welcome, see you

R: see you

APPENDIX E

Administrators Interview

Administrators Interview Questions

1. Do you think that the ELP can be helpful for learning English?
2. What do you think about the ELP in terms of promoting self-directed learning?
3. Do you think that it is a good idea to introduce the ELP to Turkish Education System such as universities?
4. Would it make sense to introduce the ELP in the School of Foreign Languages at Anadolu University?

Transcription Code Used in the Thesis

- ... → pause for two or three seconds
- (...) → used for utterance not states in the transcript
- ? → increase intonation
- A → administrator
- R → researcher

Sample Administrator Interview

R: What do you think about the ELP?

A: What do I think about ELP uhm I don't remember what I said before uhm...in terms of...uhm self motivation not self motivation autonomy self direction I think it's good that students uhm.. assess themselves so uhm

R: so can it be a tool for promoting autonomy does it seem

A: can it be what?

R: can it promote autonomy is it a tool like that

A: at least one of the tools I mean I don't know it's the only tool it's not the only tool it's one of the tools if the students are aware of uuhm their progress and if they are aware of what they can do and what they cannot do then uhm I think they get to know themselves and I think in terms of learning language and if they know that they can determine where they can go from there

R: and do you think we can introduce this tool at our school? What would be the advantages and disadvantages?

A: uhm I think we would have to investigate uhm in detail and as a as a tool yes it would be helpful uhm but I think we would have to investigate how the goals and objectives in ELP match our uhm objectives and goals because ...uhm I don't know what the target group in ELP is actually but you know we have certain uhm objectives that we have to achieve because the students they have to take an exit exam and then go to their departments

R: uhm

A: so uhm e have to see in terms of their objectives their goals whether they match or but uhm in terms of as a tool I think that would be fine.

R: thank you.

APPENDIX F

Student Sample Learning Diaries

This week I tried to understand American films without subtitles. I think understanding native talk is the most important side of English. I think English is a language which British people talk in street.

I watched a oldschool animation "Transformers" without subtitles, (unfortunately it hasn't got subtitles) - I can understand main dialogues, like "shoot, fire, go" but I can't understand long dialogues.

15 Ocak 2006

TV'de tıp yaparken BBC'ye rastladım. Spikerin aksanı hoşuma gitti. Haberlere baktıkça Türkiye'de ki kuş gripi olayını anlatmaya başladım. Benle hemen aldım kâğıdı, kalem, ne anlattığını özetledim. Bir anlık bir olayla bu mesela aklıma portfolyo işine benim derinliklerine kadar girmiş. Herhangi bir şey yaparken aklıma gelio ne yapabilirim diye veya bunu yaparsam uyorm... Tatil zamanı, bide genç olduğumuz için insanın eve gidesi gelmio. Ama yaptığımız sunum yüzünden baya bi araştırma yaptım, çok şey okudum bunlar da portfolyo'ya koymayı düşünürüm.

Translation of the Entry

This diary belongs to Mehmet one of the students regularly interviewed. You can see the notes he took at Appendix H.

“When I was watching TV and zapping, I turned the BBC, and I liked the accent of the news announcer. While I was watching the news, they started to describe the characteristics of the avian flue. So I took a piece of paper and pen, and took notes. This was not planned, so you can see that the ELP influenced me a lot. While doing something, I always think whether I can add it to my ELP. So I am thinking to put these notes in the ELP.”

28.12.2005

Bu hafta bir reklam üzerinde çalıştım. Bir ürünün reklamını yazmayı derste öğrenmiştik. Derste öğrendiklerimizden ve internetteki reklam örneklerinden yararlanarak bir reklam yaptım. Bu sayede bir reklamın bütün detaylarını öğrenmiş oldum.

03.01.2006

Bu hafta İngilizce bir makale üzerinde çalıştım. Bilmediğim kelimeleri ve kelimeleri bularak makaleyi tam olarak anlamaya çalıştım. Birçok yeni kelime ve kelimeleri öğrendim.

17.01.2006

Bu hafta Craig David'ın The Ride and Fall şarkısını dinleyip sözlerini anlamaya çalıştım. İlk başlarda zorlandım ama dinledikçe daha iyi anlamaya başladım. Bunun listening'ine çok faydalı olacağını düşünüyorum.

Translation of the Entries

28.12.2005

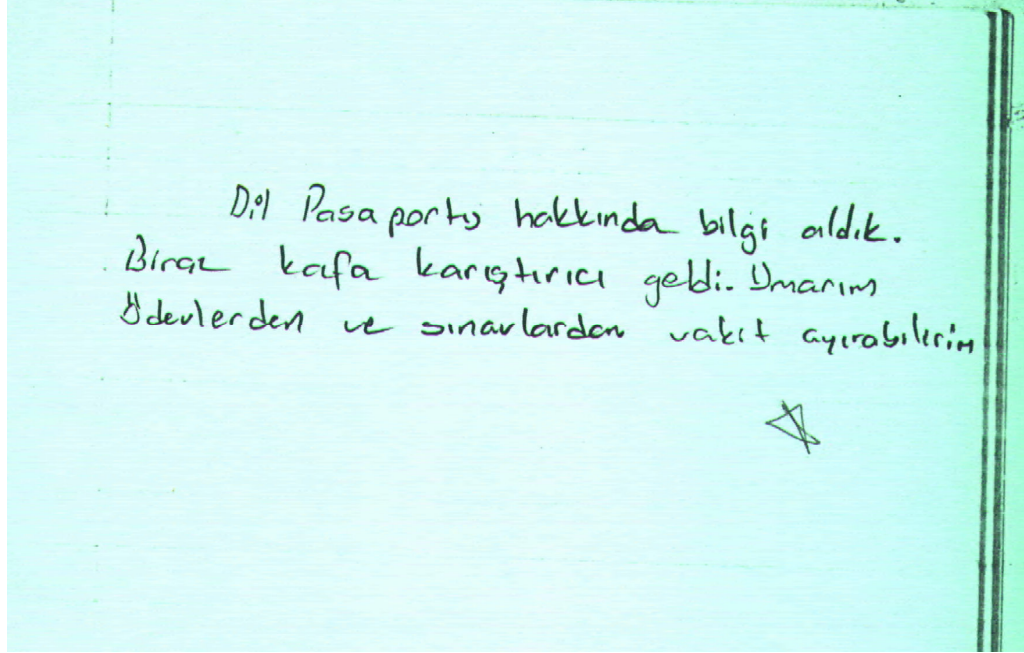
“This week I have worked on ads. We had learnt how to write an ad of a product at lesson. I prepared an ad by using the information I got from the lessons and the internet. Thus, I learnt all the details of writing an ad.”

03.01.2006

“This week I have worked on an English article. By trying to find the words and terms I don’t know I tried to exactly understand the article. I have learnt a lot of new terms and words.”

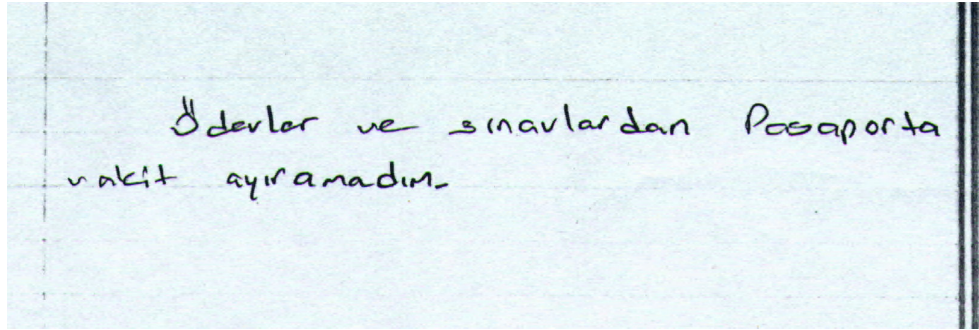
17.01.2006

“This week I have listened to the song ‘Rise and Fall’ by Craig David and tried to understand the lyrics. First I had difficulty but by listening more times I understood the lyrics better. I think that this will be very useful for my listening skill.”



Translation of the Entry

“We were informed about the language passport. It seems a bit confusing. I hope I can have time for it besides my homework and exams.”



Translation of the Entry

“I could have time for the passport because of my homework and exams.”

APPENDIX G

Student Questionnaires (for students keeping the ELP)

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR EUROPEAN LANGUAGE PORTFOLIO STUDY

I would like to ask you to help me by answering the following questions concerning the European Language Portfolio. This survey is conducted by a student at the MA-TEFL program at Bilkent University to better understand to what extent the European Language Portfolio (ELP) encourages the students to develop self-directed learning activities and how the students react toward ELP. There are two parts in this questionnaire. This is not a test so there are no “right” or “wrong” answers, and you don’t even have to write your name on it. I am interested in your personal opinion. Please give your answers honestly as only this will guarantee the success of the study. Thank you very much for your help.

Meral Ceylan

meralceylan@anadolu.edu.tr

MA TEFL

Bilkent University

PART A

Following are a number of statements with which some people agree and others disagree. I would like you to indicate your opinion after each statement by putting an ‘X’ in the box that best indicates the extent to which you agree or disagree with the statement. Please put **ONLY ONE ‘X’** after each statement. Thank you very much for your help.

For example:

	Strongly agree	Agree	Partly agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
<i>I love eating hamburgers</i>		X			

If you think, for example, that there is something true about this statement but it is somewhat exaggerated, you can put an ‘X’ in the third or second box.

	Strongly agree	Agree	Partly agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
1. It was easy for me to complete the parts in the language passport in the ELP.					
2. It was easy for me to complete the parts in my language biography in the ELP.					
3. It was easy for me to complete the parts in the dossier in the ELP.					
4. It was easy for me to understand the level descriptors in the ELP.					
5. It was easy for me to find out my level of language proficiency according to the level descriptors.					
6. I easily identified my English level by reading the descriptors.					
7. The objectives in the biography section were easy to understand.					
8. The objectives in the biography section helped me to find out my level.					
9. It was easy to put a tick to the <i>I can do</i> statements.					
10. I liked putting a tick after the <i>I can do</i> statements.					
11. It was easy to choose my own language learning objectives.					
12. I easily found activities to achieve my objectives.					
13. I asked help from my teachers to find activities for achieving my objectives.					
14. I liked choosing objectives for my own language learning.					
15. I think students should be responsible for their own language learning.					
16. I liked choosing activities for my own learning.					
17. I liked the idea to be responsible for my own language learning.					
18. I learned how to set objectives for my own learning by the help of ELP.					
19. I learned how to improve my language proficiency by the help of the ELP.					
20. I could easily find out what my language level is.					

21. I can easily assess my own language learning in the ELP.					
22. I believe that teachers assess our learning better than us.					
23. Students have difficulties in assessing their own learning.					
24. I liked assessing my own language learning.					
25. I needed teacher's help for the ELP.					
26. ELP motivated me to learn more English.					
27. With the help of ELP, I joined the lessons more.					
28. I became more confident in English by the help of ELP.					
29. After using the ELP, I decided to learn more English.					
30. I liked working with ELP.					
31. ELP helped me for learning English.					
32. Everything in the ELP is clear for me.					
33. I would like to continue to work on ELP after this project.					
34. I think ELP should be included into the curriculum.					

PART B

In this section, read the sentences and choose the statements which best describe your idea about ELP. Write your reasons and if you have any other idea, write and explain it with your reasons, as well. Thank you very much for your help.

1) I liked the ELP because

- ☐ it helped me to learn more English
- ☐ I liked to assess myself
- ☐ I liked taking responsibility for my own learning
- ☐ all of the reasons above

Reason/Any other idea:

2) I did not like the ELP because

- ☐ I had difficulty in finding time to work with it
- ☐ it was difficult to assess myself
- ☐ it is not useful for learning English
- ☐ all of the reasons above

Reason/Any other idea:

3) I needed teacher's help for the ELP because

- ☐ it was difficult to find activities for my objectives
- ☐ it was difficult to understand the objectives in the biography section
- ☐ I was not sure whether I did right or wrong with the activities for my objectives
- ☐ all of the reasons above

Reason/Any other idea:

4) What did you actually do for the ELP?

- ☐ I produced more written texts for the ELP
- ☐ I did useful activities to improve my English speaking skill
- ☐ I always worked individually for the ELP
- ☐ all of the reasons above

Reason/Any other idea:

This is the end of the questionnaire.

Thank you!



Student Questionnaire (for students quit the ELP)

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR EUROPEAN LANGUAGE PORTFOLIO STUDY

I would like to ask you to help me by answering the following question concerning the European Language Portfolio. This survey is conducted by a student at the MA-TEFL program at Bilkent University to better understand to what extent the European Language Portfolio (ELP) encourages the students to develop self-directed learning activities and how the students react toward ELP. This is not a test so there are no “right” or “wrong” answers, and you don’t even have to write your name on it. I am interested in your personal opinion. Please give your answers honestly as only this will guarantee the success of the study. Thank you very much for your help.

Meral Ceylan

MA TEFL

meralceylan@anadolu.edu.tr

Bilkent University

Read the sentence and choose the statements which best describe your idea about why you gave up keeping the ELP. Write your reasons and if you have any other idea, write and explain it with your reasons, as well. Thank you very much for your help.

I did not continue to keep the ELP during the study because

- ☐ it was difficult to spend time for i
- ☐ I did not understand what to do
- ☐ I think it is not useful for learning English

Reason/ Any other idea:

Thank you!



APPENDIX H

Teacher Group Interview Questions

1. Do you think that the ELP can be used to develop self-directed learning?
2. Should teacher assessment included in the ELP?
3. Is the ELP an appropriate tool to be used in the School of Foreign Languages at Anadolu University?
4. What kind of problems can be faced in this school if the ELP is decided to be implemented in the curriculum?
5. Did any of the students consult you about the ELP?
6. Did you get any feedback from the students?

APPENDIX I

Student Sample Activities

Sample Activity of Selnur

"Airborne Pollen Grains of Bozüyük (Bilecik, Turkey)"

1- Why did you choose especially this article among many others? Justify your reason.

Because my best friend is an allergic person to a few kind of pollen. At first, I saw the title; "Airborne Pollen Grains of Bozüyük" then, I thought that it will be useful to know which kind of pollens belongs to Bozüyük. So the distance is not too far from Bozüyük to Eskişehir. I thought the pollen species might be familiar.

2- What is the text mainly about?

The text is about the pollen concentration of Bozüyük and also its effect on pollensensitive people. It is told that it is possible to identify pollen species by Durham sampler in detail. And people can know the mainly harmful periods by pollen calendar due to results of investigations.

3- Are there any pictures related to the article? If yes, explain its relation to the text. If not, what kind of a picture would you like to see with this article? Why?

There are not any pictures related to the article. Considering the title, I expected to see pictures related to pollens. But only maps and graphics has been used because of showing the results of investigations. I think, it would be better, if Durham Sampler was shown as a picture.

4-Write five topic-related words that you learned and/or that you think are important.

Durham sampler, airborne pollens, hayfever and allergic rhinitis, pollen calendar, pollinosis, phytogeographical.

5-What are your reactions to the text? Write your comments and feelings.

Actually, I am satisfied by whole article, But there are many unnecessary details for me. Because it is really scientific to daily reading. And it is also interesting that pollens are transported by little insects.

Sample Activity of Mehmet

REM - LOSING MY RELIGION

Oh life is bigger
It's bigger, and you
You're not me
The links that I'll go to
Distance in your eyes
Oh no I've said too much
I've said enough
That's me in the corner
That's me in the spot? life (like)
Losing my religion
Try in the key of you
and I don't know if I can do it
oh no I've said too much
I haven't said enough
I thought that I heard you laughing
I thought that I heard you sing
I ~~think~~ ^{thank} god, I saw you try
Ever you whisper
Every waking hour, I'm choosing my confessions
Try on the key, I'm on you
Like an hurt lost blind for
Oh no I've said too much
I haven't said enough
Consider this, consider this
You tell the century, consider this it's well
Blocking to my needs feel
what if all these fantasies come, play me ~~in the ground~~
Now I'm sad too much
I thought that I heard you laughing
I thought that I heard you sing
I thank god, I saw you try



Turn the page

That was just the dream

That's me in the corner

That's me in the spot, life ^(like), losing my religion

Try in the key of you and

I don't know if I can do it

Oh no I've said too much

I haven't said enough

I thought that I heard you laughing


I thought that I heard you sing

I ~~think~~ ^{thank} god all I saw you try

That was just the dream

Try, cry, lie, try

That was just the dream, just the dream, dream....

 → First time I heard the song and tried to write.

 → Second time

 → Last time

Bird flu in Turkey. Two children are being treated for bird flu in Eastern Turkey. aged five and eight. three children from Dapıbozait died. were four H5N1. delegation of eight WHO experts flew to Van. It is spread of disease from east Asia. Turkish authorities believe, three children, came into direct contact with poultry. 12.000 birds, chicken and turkeys killed.

There is a mixture of fear and anger there. Mehmet Ali, Fatma and Hülya, all died. laboratory confirmed that, Mehmet and Fatma died from the H5N1.

Sample Speaking Activity of Mehmet and one of His Classmates

M: Mehmet

S: Student

S: yes Mehmet before we start let's choose our topic it would be a good idea if you ask me it would be a good idea to talk about work and travel what do you think about it? Out topic

M: yes I totally agree with you because it is so important for us it is related with us because of studying English this term in our school it can be a good idea to talk about this subject and share our ideas to be honest I don't know so much thing about this company and I want to learn if you something about this company

S: well actually I don't know so much things about I know a few friends that went to America by work and travel but I am talking talking by using their experience they are really happy really pleased they went to America because this this situation added so many things for their career

M: sorry have you ever heard problems that they experienced

S: as they say there are many difficulties but if you want to learn some English or if you want to improve your English this is the best this is the most important point and if you want to improve your English you must get over some difficulties and work and travel company never guarantee that you will have a job when you reach America that's the reason you must you must find you must know some men you must meet some men in America to feel comfortable

M: at the same time they want lots of money from us to go to America USA whatever do you really want to go to USA with this company do you uuuhm trust uuuhm it will be useful for you to improve your English

S: yeah that's the reason I I am repeating my sentence again you must get over some difficulties and money is one of one of part of difficulties and if you have enough money to be able to go America it means you will improve your English...and if you are chosen it means you you have enough English to to be able to go to America and of course there difficulties you probably will have in America or some other countries like Britain or New Zeland or Avustralia but in my opinion I think Australia is is more suitable country when we compare with others

M: on the other hand the pronunciation that is used in Australia is different than that the other countries and this will be disadvantages for us in my opinion I really get a little bit scared because...you know we are going we want to go another country and we know that we will be alone when we go there nobody we we are really alone what do you don't you scare?

S: of course I get scared but as you know you can go to America or other countries with a group and you can choose the group for example you

M: is it possible?

S: of course it is possible I know it from my friends who went to America

M: oh it sounds good

S: of course it sounds good