

The Yesterday And Today Of The European Language Portfolio In Turkey

Ilknur Pekkanli Egel
iegel@uludag.edu.tr

ELT Department
Faculty of Education
Uludag University
Bursa
Turkey

Abstract

Concern for research in this area stems from the point that Turkey since 2001 has taken part in the piloting phase of the European Language Portfolio. After the piloting phase, the Ministry of Turkish National Education has decided to officially launch the European Language Portfolio in the academic year of 2009-2010. In Turkey, Ankara University and Bilfen Schools have also developed European Language Portfolio models and have had these models validated by the Council of Europe. The purpose of the present study is to investigate the development of European Language Portfolio models in Turkey. Firstly, the background of the situation on the formation of the European Language Portfolio by the Council of Europe is addressed. Secondly, the origin of the European Language Portfolio within the Turkish national education system is described. The next section dwells upon the issues relating to the present stage of European Language Portfolio implementation in Turkey. Positive outcomes of European Language Portfolio implementation in other Member States are shortly addressed. Finally, while the study illustrates that the European Language Portfolio has proved to be an important innovation in foreign language learning, the implementation change in Turkey necessitates sustained effort to promote the concepts of the European Language Portfolio so as to reach long lasting effects.

Keywords: European Language Portfolio, primary and secondary education.

Introduction

The European Language Portfolio (ELP) is a type of document that the Council of Europe (CoE) has formed for those who are learning or have learned a language in formal or informal settings, to be able to record and reflect on their language learning and cultural experiences. The ELP “is a personal tool for all Europeans to develop into plurilingual and inter-culturally competent citizens (Scharer, 2000, p. 3).” The CoE organised a piloting scheme for different versions of ELP’s to be discussed in order to accommodate all ages and specific users of foreign languages. The results of this scheme were found to be positive and most of the European Union members were interested.

Therefore, in 2001 with the dissemination of the “European Year of Languages” the CoE officially launched the implementation of the ELP.

The European Language portfolio

In the last decade, the CoE has searched for approaches promoting the teaching and learning of languages in a multilingual, multicultural and life-long perspective on the basis of equal opportunities for all members of society by taking into account the Recommendations of the CoE (Huber, 2002). As a result, the CoE published the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages* (CEF), in 1995 as a source for the development of rating scales to assess the attainment of a particular learning objective. In addition, there are also descriptors that may assist in the formulation of criteria for languages.

In the CEF a common basis is formed for the elaboration of language syllabuses, curriculum guidelines, examinations, textbooks, etc. across Europe. This framework describes in a comprehensive way what language learners have to learn to do in order to use a language for communication and what knowledge and skills they have to develop so as to be able to act effectively. The cultural context in which the language is set is also covered. Another important feature of this Framework is that it defines levels of proficiency, which allow learners’ progress to be measured at each stage of learning and on a life-long basis.

The global scale of language proficiency guidelines originating in the CEF is based on six levels within three broad bands relating to specialist (C1, C2), functional (B1, B2) and foundation language skills (A1, A2). These six levels are an interpretation of the classic division into basic, intermediate and advanced. A "Hypertext" branching principle is adopted, starting from an initial division into three broad levels. The CoE claims that such a simple "Global Scale" makes it easier to communicate the system to non-specialist users and will also provide teachers and curriculum planners with orientation points. However, the CoE also notes that in order to orient learners, teachers and other users within the educational system for some practical purpose, a more detailed overview is necessary. Such an overview is presented in the form of a self-assessment grid showing major categories of language use at each of the six levels (A1, A2, B1, B2, C1, and C2). It is intended to help learners to profile their main language skills, and decide at which level they might look for a checklist of more detailed descriptors in order to self-assess their level of proficiency. See Appendix A for an example of the self-assessment grid for levels A1, A2, B1, and B2 from the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages* cited from the CoE website: <http://www.coe.int/T/DG4/Portfolio>

The reference levels in the CEF are used for both formal and informal language assessment. As pointed out by Glover et al. (2005) there are many language testing organizations and systems using these reference levels, for example members of the Association of Language Testers in Europe - ALTE (available <http://www.alte.org>) and a Diagnostic Language Assessment System shortly called DIALANG (available

<http://www.dialang.org/english/index.html> a free diagnostic testing service available on the Internet).

The CEF paved the way for the first pioneer applications of the ELP, which “have grown out of the work on the Council of Europe Modern Languages project during the 1990’s. In 1991, the CoE again held an intergovernmental symposium in Rüşchlikon where a large number of language experts participated in elaborating, “further the goals, objectives and functions of the proposed common framework of reference and the idea of a European Language Portfolio was conceived” (Kohonen, 2001, p. 78).

On the 17th of March 1998, the CoE Committee of Ministers came together at the 623rd meeting of the Ministers’ Deputies. This committee, under the terms of Article 15.b of the Statute of the CoE passed Recommendation No. R (98) 6. In this Recommendation of the Committee of Ministers to Member States concerning Modern Languages, in section G under the sub-heading “*Specification of Objectives and Assessment*” it is recommended that, among other measures, learners develop and use a personal document called the ELP. In this portfolio, Europeans are expected “to record their qualifications and other significant linguistic and cultural experiences in an internationally transparent manner as part of an effort to extend and diversify language learning at all levels in a lifelong perspective (Scharer, 2000, p. 4).” The Committee of Ministers to Member States Concerning Modern Languages, considered Recommendation No. R (98) 6, then developed and piloted the ELP. Results of pilot projects conducted in 15 member States in an initial pilot phase (1998 to 2000) were encouraging and allowed for the exploration of the practical potential, feasibility and effects of the ELP.

The ELP is a document valuing all types of language competence gained both formally and informally. The ELP is the property of the learner and as reported by Scharer (2000, p. 4) the aims of the ELP are stated as:

- The deepening of mutual understanding and respect among citizens in Europe;
- The protection and promotion of linguistic and cultural diversity;
- The development of learner responsibility and learner autonomy;
- The promotion of life-long language and intercultural learning aiming for competent plurilingual and self-confident European citizens;
- The clear and transparent description of competences and qualifications to facilitate mobility and personal growth.

The ELP consists of three parts: a Language Passport, Language Biography and Dossier. Schneider and Lenz (2001) in their *ELP: Guide for Developers*, affirm that all ELP versions should respect a basic division of the ELP into the above-mentioned three parts. These parts, though, can serve the aims and basic functions of the ELP in differing ways. Based on the information presented by the website of the CoE (<http://www.coe.int>), the parts of the ELP can shortly be defined as:

The Language Passport - The language passport is described as an updateable overview of one’s experience in and ability with different languages. This part of the ELP records

formal qualifications, diplomas, and self-assessments. The Language Passport section of the document also provides an overview of the individual's proficiency in different languages at a given point in time. This overview is defined in terms of skills and the proficiency is defined according to the CEF. The owner of the ELP records her/his formal qualifications and describes the language competencies as well as significant language and intercultural learning experiences gained. This section also includes information on partial and specific competence; it allows for self-assessment, teacher assessment and assessment by educational institutions and examinations board. Information entered in the Passport includes when, why, and by whom the assessment was carried out. A standard presentation of a Language Passport for the ELP's designed for adults are promoted by the CoE in order to facilitate pan-European recognition and mobility.

The Language Biography - In this component of the portfolio, a record of the learner's personal language learning history is kept. This is to help the learner evaluate his learning objectives and reflect on his own language learning and inter-cultural experiences. The Language Biography not only facilitates the learner's involvement in planning, it also aims to encourage the learner to state what he can do in each language and also include information on linguistic and cultural experiences gained through formal and informal educational contexts. This component of the ELP is organized to promote plurilingualism, i.e. the development of competencies in a number of languages.

The Language Dossier - In this component of the portfolio, the learner is able to collect pieces of his work and the language certificates that s/he owns. The reason for this collection is to document and illustrate the skills, experiences, and achievements in the language learning process. Here, the language learner has the opportunity to choose the materials to document and illustrate the achievements or experiences that are recorded in the Language Biography or Language Passport sections of his portfolio.

The functions of the ELP can be described as: a) the pedagogical function—it aims to motivate learners by acknowledging their efforts to extend and diversify their language skills at all levels; and b) the reporting function—where it aims to provide a record of linguistic and cultural skills that the learner has acquired (Schneider & Lenz, 2001). Kohonen (2000), coordinator of the Finnish ELP project, claims that the use of both the pedagogical and reporting functions of the ELP are crucial for developing the potential of the ELP towards increasingly autonomous and socially responsible language learning.

It is stated by Scharer (2000) that although the ELP was displayed to prove itself a valid pedagogic tool under the many different pilot conditions it needs to be noted that positive and negative feedback generally relate to very specific circumstances. For example, while the Czech Republic project has provided positive feedback, the Holland project has provided the opposite. The Czech Republic pilot project provides a positive feedback summary while claiming that the issue of motivation related to the ELP deserves further exploration.

The ELP Pilot Project of Turkey

The implementation of the ELP has progressed well, and almost all member states of the CoE have developed models which have either been validated by the European Validation Committee and are currently implemented, or they have developed models which are being used on a pilot basis. Being a member of the CoE, the Ministry of Turkish National Education (MNE) also investigated and evaluated the ELP project documents supplied by the Modern Languages Section of the CoE. It is pointed out by Demirel (2003) that Turkey, as a member state of the CoE, is fulfilling the requirements for the ELP and CEF under the auspices of the MNE by reforming foreign language curricula, developing the Turkish ELP model and improving the quality of language instruction in the educational system. According to Demirel (2003, p. 3) “these efforts will contribute to the language learning process in Turkey in order to harmonize with European Standards and also to support the language policy of the CoE by training plurilingual Turkish citizens as part of the integration process for a multicultural European society.” When embarking on a national program for development, the essentialness of the efforts of linking the Turkish language teaching policy and language teaching practices in Europe cannot be underestimated because Turkey has to be alert for significant developments and the outflows of research in this field.

The Ministers of Education of all the member States of the CoE recommended that governments, in keeping with their education policy, support the introduction of an ELP. In the “*2002 Yılı Başında Milli Eğitim*” (National Education at the Beginning of the Year 2002) periodical dated December 2001 and published by the MNE, it is stated that there are Special Expertise Commissions (Özel İhtisas Komisyonları) within this ministry and that one of them is the CoE Language Portfolio Special Expertise Commission MNE, 2001. This commission was formed after the European Ministers of Education met in Cracow, Poland, 15-17 October 2000. In this periodical, it is also noted that in Turkey, the CoE Language Portfolio Special Expertise Commission was formed under the coordination of Özcan Demirel from Hacettepe University. This commission presented a seminar in the year 2001 to 30 secondary school foreign language teachers chosen from Antalya and Ankara, the ELP pilot provinces of Turkey.

The piloting procedures of the ELP in the Turkish Educational system began with the MNE’s Board of National Education’s acceptance of piloting the ELP project in 24 piloting schools at secondary education level appointed in the Ankara and Antalya provinces.

The Turkish pilot project as reported by Demirel (2002) began with the determining of the long term and short-term objectives of the ELP to be attained. Then, an in-service teaching program for piloting teachers was designed accordingly, and finally, a seminar on the ELP was held in October 2001 in Ankara. In this seminar, the ELP project was introduced in detail, existing sample ELP models of other European countries were examined, language descriptors used in the portfolio were analyzed and the implementation process of the ELP in Turkey was discussed. As a result of the seminar, a

steering committee for the ELP project was established in order to design the ELP model for Turkish high school students 15 years of age and older.

The Turkish ELP project committee had developed a sample ELP model for high school students, which the MNE had published under the name “European Language Portfolio - Avrupa Dil Gelişim Dosyası”. The MNE found it suitable to first implement the ELP in 20 piloting high schools located in Ankara and in Antalya. A teacher from each piloting school took part in the project and they were all obliged to take part in an in-service training program for the ELP seminar held in October 2001 by the Board of Education in Ankara, then the ELP implementation process of the project started at the beginning of the 2002-2003 academic year (Demirel, 2003). As can be seen in Table 1 (cited from Demirel, 2005), in 2004, the number of piloting schools reached 30 and the ELP was implemented in 9 different cities located all around Turkey.

Table 1: Distribution of the European Language Portfolio for secondary education piloting groups

City	No. of schools	No. of teachers	No. of students
Ankara	12	24	486
Antalya	7	14	224
İstanbul	5	10	285
İzmir	1	2	76
Adana	1	2	80
Gaziantep	1	2	72
Bursa	1	2	48
Edirne	1	2	46
Düzce	1	2	40
Total	30	60	1,357

Demirel (2003) reports that before the implementation phase of the Turkish ELP project, a number of seminars were organized to support and train teachers in the use of the CEF of Reference for Languages and the ELP. An expert was invited from the CoE to give a lecture on the ELP and to check the Turkish ELP model that was not yet validated. A seminar was also held in June 2002 in Antalya. As stated earlier, at the beginning of the 2002-2003 academic year the implementation process of the project started, later a feedback seminar was held in Ankara in March 2003. The aim of this seminar was to evaluate the teaching-learning process in the piloting schools and also to disseminate the idea of the ELP on a nationwide basis. In Ankara there was another seminar held in June 2003. Here, it was decided that each piloting school would prepare a test book for one band of the CEF language descriptors ranging from A1 to C2.

The first Turkish ELP model for students aged 15+, after being submitted for validation to the CoE Secretariat of the Language Policy Division in the year 2003, was approved by the European Validation Committee. This first validated Turkish ELP model, being

the 47th validated ELP model of the CoE was numbered 47.2003 (to find the list of validated ELP models see: www.coe.int/T/DG4/Portfolio/documents). This validated model was prepared in CD format by the MNE and distributed to the employment of teachers and students at piloting schools. Another reason why the year 2003 was very important for Turkey was that it held the European Language Portfolio Council of Europe Seminar.

The European Language Portfolio Council of Europe Seminar is an event conducted by the CoE and aims to address issues relating to the further development and implementation of the ELP. Every year this seminar is held in a different country found suitable and appointed by the CoE. For example in 2001 it was held in Coimbra, Portugal. In the year 2002, two seminars were held, the first in Turin, Italy and the second in Luxembourg. The following year this seminar was held in Turkey in the city of Istanbul, 23-25 October 2003. The seminar was sponsored by the Turkish Ministry of National Education, the Turkish National Education Foundation and the Association of Turkish Private Schools. The seminar was coordinated by David Little and it is possible to find his report relating to this seminar on the CoE website (http://www.coe.int/T/DG4/Portfolio/?L=E&M=/main_pages/events.html).

In Turkey, under the auspices of the MNE the second ELP commission was formed in order to design a junior ELP model for children aged 05-09 and 10-14. This ELP model was prepared and piloted in 15 primary schools (see Table 2 for the distribution of the junior ELP in primary schools). This model was sent to the CoE for validation and in 2006 the Turkish Model for learners aged from 10-14 was approved by the European Validation Committee.

Table 2: Distribution of the European Language Portfolio for primary education piloting groups

City	No. of schools	No. of teachers	No. of students
Ankara	7	28	357
İstanbul	4	16	285
İzmir	1	4	86
Gaziantep	1	3	66
Bursa	1	3	54
Düzce	1	3	36
Total	15	56	884

Özcan Demirel, the first co-coordinator for the Turkish ELP piloting project also applied to the CoE for the translating of the book titled “Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Teaching, Learning, Assessment” into Turkish. This application was approved and the right for translation and publication of the book was given to the Turkish MNE. Under the coordination of the Board of Education, a

translation commission was formed in 2005 and the book was translated. However, the book is still not officially published by the MNE.

The CoE notes that different ELP models are being or will be developed in member States by educational authorities or institutions undertaking to produce an ELP according to the age of learners and differing national contexts. Ankara University was the first institution to develop and implement an ELP model for adult learners. This model gained validation by the CoE in 2004 and at present is the only validated ELP model for adults in Turkey. Ankara University has a Turkish and Foreign Languages Research and Application Centre (TÖMER) which was founded in 1984 as a part of Ankara University for the purpose of teaching Turkish to foreigners. TÖMER is the institution which issues, upon payment, the ELP to adults in Turkey.

According to Scharer (2004) throughout Europe until the year 2004, over 1,250,000 learners have received and worked with a European Language Portfolio more or less intensively for a shorter or longer period and that 64 ELP models were validated by May 2004. In Scharer's report titled *A European Language Portfolio from piloting to implementation (2001 – 2004)* the following table displays that by the year 2004, in Turkey a total of 9800 language learners from various age levels had come into acquaintance with the ELP (2004, p. 50).

Table 3: Number of learners in Turkey with an ELP (Scharer, 2004, p.50)

Numbers of learners in Turkey with an ELP				06 07 04	
Educational sector	2000-2001	2001-2002	2002-2003	2003-2004	2004-2005
Primary Pilot version 6-11				150	300
Secondary I Pilot version* 11-14				300	500
Secondary II 19.2001 47.2003* 15-18			500	750	1500
Adult 56.2004**					7500
Total Turkey	All		500	1200	9800

Status:

* Projects of the Ministry of Education, Board of Education for secondary education

** Ankara University, TÖMER for adult education

In Turkey, a private educational institution named Bilfen Schools, entered this educational arena by developing another ELP Model for learners aged from 10-14. This model was approved of and gained validation by the committee in the year 2006. The following year Bilfen Schools submitted another ELP model which was designed for young learners in primary education aged 05-09 and was validated by the CoE in 2007

(see www.coe.int.) The ELP is used in the English lessons at Private Bilfen Schools (see www.bilfen.com).

Mirici, the coordinator of the Bilfen Schools ELP Project in his article titled “Development and Validation Process of a European Language Portfolio for Young Learners” (2008) states that Bilfen Schools --from kindergarten to middle school educate 3500 students and that they aim to use the ELP to promote effective teaching and to promote all 10-14 year old children in private schools where intensive foreign language teaching programs are implemented. The development of this ELP took over a year to complete and consisted of the following four phases: training, drafting, trialing and validation.

According to Mirici (2008) according to most foreign language teachers in Turkey the already existing descriptors in the various validated ELP models seemed too limited and that they had to adapt these descriptors according to their teaching situations in terms of the objectives of their curriculum, for example one of the Speaking A1 level descriptors is about the students being able to describe the place where they live in simple phrases (See Appendix B for sample page from ELP Bilfen Model 10-14 years). After the trialing phase of the ELP, the ELP Bilfen Model was accredited in 2006.

The final version of the ELP Model has the following features: It was specifically prepared for children in private schools in Turkey; The portfolio is in three languages; Turkish, English and German; Validated descriptors of the Bolzano-Alto Adige model no 69.2005 model were used and some new descriptors and examples relevant to the Turkish educational system were developed; The Language Passport section is adapted from the standard passport through suggestions of the Council of Europe Language Policy Division and at the back of the Language Passport there are soft pages for the teacher assessment if the owner wants the teacher to assess her/his level of proficiency; Since this is not an Adult passport the self-assessment grid includes the levels between A1 and B2; There is Biography section where the student reflects upon and records his language and intercultural competences for all languages regardless of in or outside of school training; The Dossier section is where the students put selected examples of all the work they have produced for all languages they have learned inside or outside of school; And finally there is a booklet called “Guide for Teachers and Parents” and this guide is available in Turkish, English and German (Mirici, 2008).

The CoE ELP official reporter Scharer (2007) notes that in the year 2007 there were more than 13,000 ELP owners in Turkey. A total of 10,000 of these owners were adults learning various foreign languages in 5 language teaching centers of TÖMER, Ankara University (See Table 4, cited from Scharer, 2007, p. 48). Scharer (2007) also adds that the Adult MoNE/APEC ELP model will be implemented in all language teacher centres for adults in Turkey by Ankara University.

Table 4: Numbers of learners in Turkey with an ELP (2007)

Numbers of learners in Turkey with an ELP					15 09 06
Educational sector	2003-2004	2004-2005	2005-2006	2006-2007	Est. 2007-2008
Primary val pending 5-9 Bilfen	150	300			250
Secondary I 79.2006 10-14 Bilfen 80.2006 10-14	300	500	500	750	1250
Secondary II 19.2001 47.2003 15-18	750 750	750	1000	1250	1500
Adult 56.2004 Ankara Univ pilot MoNE/APEC		5000	5000	5000	10000
Total Turkey	1950	7300	12000		

As can be seen from Table 4, the validated ELP models all have validation numbers. For example; the 10-14 aged Bilfen Model is numbered 79.2006 meaning that it was the 79th model to be validated by the CoE and that it was validated in the year 2006. The 10-14 aged ELP Model designed by the Turkish MNE is numbered 80.2006 this shows that it was validated straight after the validation of the 10-14 aged Bilfen Model in 2006. Again from Table 4, it is possible to see that in Secondary II level Turkish students were acquainted with the 19.2001 model. This model is the 19.2001 - Sweden Model for learners in upper secondary and adult education including vocational education (see www.coe.int/T/DG4/Portfolio/documents).

In Turkey, the MNE will officially launch the implementation of the ELP for learners aged 15+ and the ELP for learners aged 10-14 in the following academic year (2009-2010). According to the official website of MNE (<http://www.adp.meb.gov.tr>) it is noted that in the globalizing world, foreign language teaching in our country, like in many other countries, has become a fundamental problem in education. An important step in the solving of this problem is going to be put into practice on a national basis in the following academic year. This practice is called “European Language Portfolio - Avrupa Dil Portfolyosu”. While at the phase of piloting project, the ELP was translated as and named “Avrupa Dil Gelişim Dosyası”. However, with the official implementation it is now renamed as “Avrupa Dil Portfolyosu”.

In the website of MNE (<http://www.adp.meb.gov.tr>) it is stated that every student in elementary and secondary school will receive a folder and language passport with the foreign language books supplied to them by the ministry. Students are expected to fill in the required details and from time to time are needed to update this information.

In Turkey it is possible for every citizen to download an ELP model designed for ages 10-14 and 15-18, free of charge, simply by writing their name, surname and ID number

on the website of the MNE. This website provides guidelines and information relating to the ELP. And there is also a section where issues concerning the ELP can be asked to the national coordinator İsmail Hakkı Mirici.

Conclusion

As formerly noted, in the following academic year Turkey will be officially launching the formal ELP implementation phase in all of its public elementary and secondary schools. Being on a nationwide basis this phase can provide both affirmative and negative results because such changes are challenging and require professional preparation. Other member states have started this phase beforehand and have expressed their experiences to the CoE.

An analysis of the ELP Interim Progress Reports prepared and published annually by the CoE since 2001 displays the fact that there have been positive outcomes reported by the member states. In the final report of 2007, Scharer (2008, p. 6) expresses “a number of implementation projects seem now to have reached dimensions necessary for long-term effects and benefits on a system level to develop. These include among others:

- The Spanish ELP project, which covers all regions and school sectors and includes regional as well as international languages
- The decentralized Swiss ELP implementation project, which covers all languages, school sectors and school types
- The ELP implementation project of Thüringen (Germany), with a reported penetration of 40% despite reduced financial support
- The ELP implementation project of the Russian Federation, which uses a snowball strategy in its multilingual and multicultural territory
- Irish ELP projects that focus on the linguistic integration of immigrants
- The Dutch electronic ELP project, which is breaking new ground
- The institutional ELP projects of ALTE/EAQUALS and CercleS in the adult and further education sectors respectively.”

Regarding ELP implementation, while there have been positive results, “a number of implementation projects do not seem to have developed as well as initially planned. Reasons seem to include: shifts in policy and priorities, insufficient clarification of ELP status, diffuse expectations and objectives, imbalance between goals and allocated resources, tensions between the official curriculum and the underlying concepts of the ELP, e.g. only few curricula so far define their goals in ‘can do’ terms that correspond to the ‘I can’ descriptors in the ELP checklists, etc.” (Scharer, 2008, p. 6).

The following year in Turkey, students who will be attending primary school grade 4 (the grade in which foreign language learning begins) will own an ELP of their own. Various studies have revealed that it is suitable for primary school to be the first official setting

for students to possess ELP's. For instance, Slovenia is also one of the countries that have piloted the ELP in primary schools (during the period of October 1998 until May 2000). About this piloting, Troha (2000, p. 78) states, "the main conclusion of the piloting in our country was the process of the introduction of 'portfolio thinking' should begin at the primary school level with children and their teachers".

After several years of piloting and gaining positive results, it is expected that Turkey, by beginning ELP implementation in primary schools will reach the desired outcomes and the official launching of the ELP will be beneficial for both the students and the wealth of the country.

References

- Council of Europe. (1995). *Common European Framework of references for languages*. Cambridge University Press.
- Council of Europe. (1997). *European Language Portfolio: Proposals for development*. Strasbourg Council of Europe.
- Council of Europe. (1998). *Modern languages: Learning, teaching, assessment. A Common European Framework of Reference*. Strasbourg, Council of Europe.
- Demirel, Ö. (2002). *Portfolio-oriented foreign language education in Turkey*. Paper presented at The International Symposium titled Changing Times Changing Needs at the Eastern Mediterranean University, Cyprus, 8-10 May, 2002.
- Demirel, Ö. (2003). *Implications of the European Language Portfolio Project in Turkey*. Paper presented at the international symposium titled Common European Framework and Foreign Language Education in Turkey at Uludag University, Bursa, 17-19 September, 2003.
- Demirel, Ö. (2005). Avrupa Konseyi Dil Projesi ve Türkiye Uygulamaları. *Milli Eğitim Üç Aylık Eğitim ve Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi*. Yaz 2005, yıl 33, sayı 167. (Online) Retrieved 21 May 2009 from <http://yayim.meb.gov.tr/dergiler/167/orta3-demirel.htm>
- Glover, P., Mirici, I. H., & Aksu, M. B. (2005). Preparing for the European Language Portfolio: Internet connections. *Turkish Online Journal of Distance Education*, January 2005, 6(1).
- Huber, J. (2002). From the first to the second medium-term programme of activities. In *The European Language Gazette*. No. 5, November 2002. By ECML (European Centre for Modern Languages of the Council of Europe). (Online) Retrieved 17 January 2009 from <http://www.ecml.at/news/gazette.asp?l=E>

- Kohonen, V. (2001). Developing the European Language Portfolio as a pedagogical instrument for advancing student autonomy. In L. Karlson, F. Kjisik, and J. Nordlund (Eds.), *All together now*. Papers from the Nordic Conference on Autonomous Language Learning (pp. 20-24). Helsinki University of Helsinki, Language Centre.
- Ministry of Turkish National Education. (2001). *2002 Yılı Başında Milli Eğitim* (National Education at the Beginning of 2002). Ankara. Milli Eğitim Basımevi (Turkish MNE Pub.).
- Mirici, I. H. (2008). Development and validation process of a European Language Portfolio model for young learners. *Turkish Online Journal of Distance Education*, 9(2), April 2008.
- Scharer, R. (2000). *A European Language Portfolio Pilot Project Phase 1998-2000 Final Report*. Modern Languages Division. Strasbourg, 31 Review. Council of Europe.
- Scharer, R. (2004) *A European Language Portfolio From piloting to implementation (2001 – 2004) Consolidated report - Final version*. Language Policy Division Strasbourg, DGIV/EDU/LANG (2004) 6 – Final. Council of Europe.
- Scharer, R. (2007) *European Language Portfolio: Interim Report (2006)*. Language Policy Division Strasbourg, DGIV/EDU/LANG. (2007) 1 Review. Council of Europe.
- Scharer, R. (2008) *Interim Report on the ELP Project (2007)*. Language Policy Division Strasbourg, DGIV/EDU/LANG. (2008) 1. Council of Europe.
- Schneider, G., & Lenz, P. (2001). *Guide for developers of European Language Portfolio*. Strasbourg, Council of Europe.
- Troha, A. D. (2000). *The ELP in Slovenia: Our experience and perspectives*. In *Babylonia* 4/2000.

Websites

Ministry of Turkish National Education

Retrieved 21 May 2009, from <http://www.adp.meb.gov.tr>

Bilfen Schools

Retrieved 21 May 2009, from

<http://www.bilfen.com/ilkogretim/index.asp?schoolName=atasehir&type=h>

Council of Europe

Retrieved 21 May 2009, from

http://www.coe.int/T/DG4/Portfolio/?L=E&M=/main_pages/introduction.html

http://www.coe.int/T/DG4/Portfolio/?L=E&M=/documents_intro/Data_bank_descriptors.html

http://www.coe.int/T/DG4/Portfolio/?L=E&M=/main_pages/events.html

Ankara University TOMER






Retrieved 21 May 2009, from

<http://www.tomer.ankara.edu.tr/english/index.html#>

Appendix A: Self-assessment grid for levels A1, A2, B1, and B2

		A1	A2	B1	B2
U N D E R S T A N D I N G	Listening	I can recognise 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.	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.
	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.	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.
S P E A K I N G	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).	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.
	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.	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.
W R I T I N G	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 relating to matters in areas of immediate needs. 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.	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.

Appendix B: Sample page from ELP Bilfen Model 10-14 years

	A1	A2
Anlama  Dinleme	Benimle, ailemle ve yakın çevremle ilgili tanıdık sözcükleri ve çok temel kalıpları, yavaş ve net konuşulduğunda anlayabilirim.	Beni doğrudan ilgilendiren konularla ilişkili kalıpları ve çok sık kullanılan sözcükleri anlayabilirim. (Örneğin; en temel kişisel ve ailevi bilgiler, alışveriş, yerel çevre, meslek). Kısa, net, basit ileti ve duyurulardaki temel düşünceyi kavrayabilirim.
 Okuma	Katalog, duyuru ya da afiş gibi yazılı metinlerdeki bildik adları, sözcükleri ve çok basit tümceleri anlayabilirim.	Kısa ve basit metinleri okuyabilirim. İlanlar, kullanım kılavuzları, münüleri ve zaman çizelgeleri gibi basit günlük metinlerdeki genel bilgileri kavrayabilir ve kısa kişisel mektupları anlayabilirim.
Konuşma  Karşılıklı konuşma	Karşımdaki kişinin söylediklerini daha yavaş bir konuşma hızında yinlemesi ve söylemek istediklerimi oluşturmada bana yardımcı olması koşuluyla, basit yoldan iletişim kurabilirim. O anki gereksinime ya da çok bildik konulara ilişkin alanlarda basit sorular sorabilir ve cevap verebilirim.	Bildik konular ve faaliyetler hakkında doğrudan bilgi alışverişini gerektiren basit ve alışılmış işlerde iletişim kurabilirim. Genellikle konuşmayı sürdürülebilecek kadar anlayamamam da kısa sohbetlere katılabilirim.
 Sözlü anlatım	Yaşadığım yeri ve tanıdığım insanları betimlemek için basit kalıpları ve tümceleri kullanabilirim.	Basit bir dille ailemi ve diğer insanları, yaşam koşullarımı, eğitim geçmişimi ve son işimi betimlemek için bir dizi kalıp ve tümceyi kullanabilirim.
Yazma  Yazılı anlatım	Kısa ve basit tümcelerle kartpostal yazabilirim, örneğin; tatil kartpostalıyla selam göndermek gibi. Kişisel bilgi içeren formları doldurabilirim, örneğin; otel kayıt formuna isim, uyruk ve adres yazmak gibi.	Kısa, basit notlar ve iletiler yazabilirim. Teşekkür mektubu gibi çok kısa kişisel mektuplar yazabilirim.

About the author

İlknur Pekkanlı Egel (Ph.D) graduated from ELT Department, Faculty of Education, Uludağ University in 1990. She has been working at this department as an instructor since 1990. In 1996, she gained her M.A. from Department of Translation and Interpretation, Bosphoros University and received her Ph.D. from Institute of Social Sciences, ELT Department, Anadolu University in 2003.