



## The effect of different self-assessment tools on students' attitudes towards learning English

**Burcu ŞENTÜRK**, *Bartın University, Turkey*, [burcuak.senturk@gmail.com](mailto:burcuak.senturk@gmail.com) ORCID: 0000-0001-8951-3256

**İsmail Hakkı MİRİCİ**, *Hacettepe University, Turkey*, [hakkimirici@gmail.com](mailto:hakkimirici@gmail.com) ORCID: 0000-0002-0906-0259

**Abstract.** The study investigated the effect of self-assessment via the European Language Portfolio (ELP), a unit based checklist and a learner style inventory on students' attitudes towards learning English. The data were collected via an attitude scale adopted from Dörnyei and Csizér (2006) and from Ryan (2005). The results of the study indicated that the ELP, learner style inventory and unit based checklists were the tools which have potential to promote self-assessment on the condition that they are used effectively both by EFL teachers and their students, and as a consequence they may support developing positive attitudes towards learning English. Additionally, it was found. In addition, both the teachers and the students believed that the ELP was a tool for self-assessment; however, the implementation that the students felt positive towards the use of the ELP and working with it as far as they used it correctly as part of their curriculum of the ELP in the school curriculum needs support since they do not have enough information about the use and the effectiveness of the ELP.

**Keywords:** Self-assessment, ELP, unit based checklist, learner style

Received: 03.09.2018

Accepted: 24.09.2019

Published: 15.01.2020

### 1. INTRODUCTION

In every part of the world English has extensively been taught in every stage of the education system. Teaching English as a foreign language (EFL) is targeted even in pre-primary school period. While some learners may learn it with ease and master it in a component way, some learners may have difficulty in developing their proficiency and make relatively slow improvement. To be able to understand the reasons behind this, a big number of researches have been conducted with different learner profiles. Second-language acquisition (SLA) researchers discuss that although the learners follow a general development process, each of them has different degrees of success. The question of "What makes some language learners more successful than others in the same opportunities?" has been one of the important debates since the 1970s. Some scholars think that the differences in L2 success mainly depended on two domains: cognitive and affective. Cognitive factors are intelligence, language aptitude, and language learning strategies, while affective factors refer to language attitudes, motivation, and language anxiety. Recently, particularly these affective factors of attitude and motivation have been the focus of several researches (Carreira, 2005; Cheng & Dörnyei, 2007; Dörnyei & Csizér, 2002; Ehrman, Leavera & Oxford, 2003; Gardner & Lambert, 1972; Gardner, 2005; Guilloteaux & Dörnyei, 2008; Matsumoto & Obana, 2001; Skehan, 1989, 1991; Yang, 2008; Yu & Watkins, 2008).

As Brown (2000) points out, attitudes are cognitive and affective; that is, they are related to thoughts as well as to feelings and emotions. Yashima (2002) reports that motivated students have greater self-confidence in their second language, resulting in a greater willingness to communicate. Noels et al. (2000) discuss that a strong correlation between instrumental motivation and Self-Determination Theory, which deals with students' need for competence, satisfactory social connections, and autonomy.

Autonomous learners take charge of one their own learning (Holec, 1981). Self-assessment is one of the practices to develop learner autonomy because it may help learners to satisfy their educational, emotional, psychological and social needs promoting their self-actualization as well as their emotional and intellectual development. During the process of self-assessment, learners develop critical-analytical skills and a better self-awareness. Additionally, since they are treated

as equal partners in the learning and assessment processes, their self-esteem and self-respect are enhanced and they develop a positive self-concept as their opinions are valued. This has, in turn, a positive impact on their motivation which constitutes a key feature of successful learners (Ushioda, 1996). By taking charge of their own learning process and learning outcomes, learners can 'appreciate their strengths, recognize their weaknesses and orient their learning more effectively' (Council of Europe, 2001: 192). As a result, the assessment process becomes more transparent and it enables learners to achieve their short and long-term goals more easily.

Governments, institutions, schools and teachers seek the ways through which they can foster learner autonomy, motivation and attitudes towards learning English. There are many strategies not only teachers but also students can adopt to boost motivation and learner autonomy inside and outside the classroom by the help of self-assessment tools. One effective way of introducing and establishing self-assessment of foreign language achievement and proficiency in L2 education is through the European Language Portfolio (ELP), which is a document whereby language learners through formal or informal education can record and reflect on their own language learning and experiences of culture.

The ELP is a language learning and reporting instrument developed by the Language Policy Division of the Council of Europe. It consists of: (a) a language passport which summarizes the learner's linguistic identity, language learning and language qualifications in an internationally transparent manner, (b) a language biography which enables learners to assess themselves, set learning targets, monitor their progress and record learning and intercultural experiences, and (c) a dossier in which learners keep samples of work that best represent their L2 proficiency. The ELP serves a double function: (a) its documentation and reporting function enables learners to record their proficiency in different languages and their learning experiences in a comprehensive, comparable and transparent way so that they can be widely recognized across Europe, (b) its pedagogical function lies in the fact that it enhances learners' motivation and helps them to reflect on their learning experiences, plan their learning and learn autonomously. These two functions of the ELP are complementary and they are performed through learner self-assessment (Little, 2005: 325).

The attitudes and behaviors that determine a learner's preferred way of learning is called "learning styles." Most learners do not know about their learning style preferences; they are just aware that they feel more comfortable with some activities than others. However, learning styles are one of the most important factors that help determine how- and how well- the learners can learn a language (Oxford, 2003).

Learning styles are the general approaches- for example, global or analytic, auditory or visual - that students use in acquiring a new language or in learning any other subject. These styles are "overall patterns that give general direction to learning behavior" (Cornett, 1983, p.9). "Learning styles are the biologically and developmentally imposed set of characteristics that make the same teaching method wonderful for some and terrible for others" (Dunn & Griggs, 1988: 3).

Finally, checklists, rating scales and rubrics are assessment tools that state specific criteria that allow teachers and students to make judgments about developing competence. They list specific behaviors, knowledge, skills, attitudes, and strategies for assessment, and offer systematic ways of organizing information about individual students or groups of students. Checklists usually offer a yes/no format in relation to the specific criteria and may be directed toward observation of an individual, a group, or a whole class. Checklists may be single-use or multiple-use. Rating scales allow for an indication of the degree or frequency of the behaviors, skills and strategies, or attitudes displayed by the learner. They may be used to gather individual or group information, and are usually single-use. Multiple-use rating scales may be achieved by having students or teacher complete the same rating scale at different times during the school year and making comparisons. Rubrics are an expanded form of rating scale that list several specific criteria at each level of the scale. They may be used to assess individuals or groups and, as with rating scales, may be compared over time.

The quality of information acquired through the use of checklists, rating scales, and rubrics is highly dependent on the quality of the descriptors chosen for assessment. Their benefit is also

dependent on students' direct involvement in the assessment and interpretation of the feedback provided. Since the ELP, learner style inventory and the unit based checklist are believed to foster learner autonomy and self-assessment, this study aims to look into the effect of these three self-assessment tools on students' attitudes towards learning English as a foreign language.

The current study focuses on revealing answers to the following main research question "Is there any significant difference in terms of the effectiveness of the self-assessment when students use the ELP, unit based checklist and the learner style inventory in the EFL context in a Turkish university?"

## 2. METHODOLOGY

### 2.1. Instruments

In this study, scales were used to gather data to examine the attitudes of participating students. First, attitude scales were distributed to students before they started using the self-assessment tools at the beginning of the year. The classes participated in this study were chosen according to the convenient sampling. The teachers with whom the researcher had personal contacts and who could help for data collection and also who were volunteers were included in the study with their classes. After the students used each self-assessment tool, they were given the same scale.

#### 2.1.1.1. Attitude Scale

The data collection instrument used for this study was an attitude scale adopted from Dörnyei and Csizér (2006) and from a recently designed scale by Ryan (2005). Göktepe (2014) used this scale in her study and before she used it, she did the reliability analysis and checked the validity and reliability of it. The reported alpha reliability of Göktepe's adapted perception scales was measured at  $\alpha = .89$  which shows that it is reliable. She also validated it by two expert opinions and did the necessary changes according to the feedback she got from them. After the permission was taken from her to use it in this study, it was translated into Turkish by the researcher in this study to make it easier for the learners to understand the items and give suitable responses and the back translation process was done as well since the English version was used in Göktepe's study.

#### 2.1.1.2. Student European Language Portfolio

Each student had his/her own European Language Portfolio. At Bülent Ecevit University School of Foreign Languages, CEFR oriented language education is adopted; therefore, all students use the ELP as part of their curriculum like most of other universities adopting the CEFR. The ELP use is crucial in foreign language learning since it is a necessity of CEFR oriented language education. Self-assessment, learner autonomy and cultural diversity are the main principles of the CEFR oriented language education; therefore, since the ELP is a self-assessment tool, it should be a requirement but not a luxury in CEFR oriented language education. Bülent Ecevit University School of Foreign Languages is using the ELP as part of their curriculum since they are adopting the CEFR oriented foreign language education like many other institutions. The BEDAF model of the ELP is used at the preparatory school. The BEDAF young adult model was chosen because it was easier for the book sellers to provide it and include it in the student material package and also since it is very user friendly in terms of usage. It is very easy to understand as the Turkish translations are also given for each item and very practical.

#### 2.1.1.3. Learner Style Inventory

The students were given the Turkish translation of learner style inventory in a class hour and asked them to complete it with their own information. After they answered the questions, they calculated their results and evaluated themselves. Visual, auditory and tactile learning styles were examined in the study. The teacher gave information about each learning style and they discussed it with the students. Then, she gave some clues about ways to develop each learning style and encouraged them to do some activities in and out of the class. After this introductory class, the teacher did separate classes focusing on each learning style (visual, auditory and

tactile). It enabled learners to be aware of their learning style and try to develop the ones those are missing.

#### *2.1.1.4. Unit Based Checklists*

After each unit, the students were given the Turkish translation of unit based checklists which include the questions examining whether or not the students understood each topic in each unit. The students gave answers like 'Yes, no, to some extent' and they discussed their answers with the teacher. If the students gave a negative answer to the question, they discussed the ways to improve those. Therefore, this self-assessment tool also helps students to evaluate themselves continuously throughout the semester, so have a chance to improve themselves and try to judge their learning.

### **2.2. Participants & Setting**

The study was conducted in an EFL setting, at the Department of Basic English at Zonguldak Bülent Ecevit University, Zonguldak, Turkey, where university students study English for general purposes during a complete academic year before they start their university education at their departments. 40 B1 level and 40 A2 level and 225 A1 level students at the Department of Basic English at Bülent Ecevit University, Zonguldak, Turkey participated in the study. The students were all four-year undergraduate students. The medium of instruction at the university is English for the English Language and Literature Department and English Language Translation Department. Other departments have %30 of their courses in English; these departments are Electric-Electrical engineering, Civil engineering, Management and Economics. There are also students from other departments who study English voluntarily at preparatory school. The study was carried out with the preparatory school students of these departments. At the beginning of the academic year, students were given an English Proficiency Examination and the students getting 60 and higher grades on this exam started their education in their departments. The students whose English were not sufficient enough to pass this exam were divided into three levels (A1, A2, B1) according to the result of the placement test and start English Preparatory Education in groups of 15 to 20 students.

### **2.3. Procedures**

The procedure is given below:

- **1st Week (26-30 September 2016):** Meeting with the instructors
- **2nd Week (03-07 October 2016):** Conducting Attitude Scale
- **3rd Week (10-14 October 2016):** ELP First Check
- **4th Week (17-21 October 2016):** Learner Style Inventory + Unit Based Checklists were conducted and from now on after each unit, unit based checklists were given, demo lessons for each learner style was presented
- **14th Week (26-30 December 2016):** Conducting Attitude Scale for the second time

The students first filled in the scale and then filled in the ELP in the first check. During the semester, each class used the determined self-assessment tool and at the end of the semester, each class was given the attitude scale for the second time.

### **2.4. Data Analysis**

All the quantitative data was analyzed using a statistical software program; namely, SPSS version 22.00.

### 3. RESULTS

***Is there a statistically significant difference in the attitudes of learners towards learning English according to their use of three different self-assessment tools namely the ELP, unit based checklist and the learner style inventory?***

In the study, 157 A1 level students used only ELP as a self-assessment tool, 46 A1 level students used ELP and the learner style inventory and 50 A1 level students used ELP, learner style inventory and the unit based checklist as self-assessment tools. At the beginning of the term, the students were given the attitude questionnaire and after the use of these self-assessment tools for 14 weeks, the students were given the attitude questionnaire for the second time. A MANOVA test was run to see which self-assessment tool affected the students' attitudes towards learning English. Table 1 shows the descriptive statistics of the students using different self-assessment tools.

**Table 1:** Descriptive statistics of the students using different self-assessment tools in the first check

<b>Self-Assessment Tools</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. Deviation</b>	<b>N</b>
<i>ELP</i>	3.85	.51	164
<i>ELP + Learner Style Inventory</i>	4.02	.41	50
<i>ELP + Learner Style Inventory + Unit Based Checklist</i>	4.09	.30	37

N: Number of students

When Table 1 is examined, it is seen that the mean score for the students' responses using the ELP, learner style inventory and unit based checklist is the highest (M: 4.09) in the first check. The second highest mean score is the students using the ELP and the learner style inventory (M: 4.02) and the lowest is the students only using the ELP (M: 3.85).

**Table 2:** Language learning attitude scores across the use of different self-assessment tools

<b>ANOVA</b>	<b>Sum of Squares</b>	<b>Mean Square</b>	<b>df</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>Sig.</b>
<i>Between Groups</i>	2.194	1.097	2	5.032	.007
<i>Within Groups</i>	54.071	.218	248		
<i>Total</i>	56.265		250		

A one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was carried out to determine if there were any significant differences in the participants' attitudes towards learning English among participants according to their use of different self-assessment tools. The results indicated that there was statistically significant difference among the groups,  $F=5.03$ ,  $p<.01$ .

**Table 3:** Descriptive statistics of the students using different self-assessment tools in the second check

<b>Self-Assessment Tools</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. Deviation</b>	<b>N</b>
<i>ELP</i>	3.80	.49	164
<i>ELP + Learner Style Inventory</i>	4.07	.45	50
<i>ELP + Learner Style Inventory + Unit Based Checklist</i>	4.10	.42	37

N: Number of students

Table 3 shows the descriptives of the second implementation of the attitude questionnaire. Since there was a significant difference among the groups in terms of their use of different self-assessment tools in the first check and after it the students used these tools, in the second implementation of the questionnaire, the change in the attitude of the groups using different self-assessment tools were expected to be seen. Therefore, in order to see if there was a significant difference in the attitudes of the learners after they used these tools, a one-way ANCOVA test was conducted since ANCOVA is used.

**Table 4:** ANCOVA comparisons across students' attitudes with their use of different self-assessment tools in the second check

<b>Tests of Between-Subjects Effects</b>						
<b>Dependent Variable: check2</b>						
<b>Source</b>	<b>Type III Sum of Squares</b>	<b>df</b>	<b>Mean Square</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>Sig.</b>	<b>Partial Eta Squared</b>
Corrected Model	6.785 <sup>a</sup>	3	2.262	10.394	.000	.112
Intercept	33.609	1	33.609	154.471	.000	.385
check1	2.285	1	2.285	10.502	.001	.041
ELP	3.187	2	1.593	7.324	.001	.056
Error	53.741	247	.218			
Total	3882.812	251				
Corrected Total	60.526	250				

a. R Squared = .112 (Adjusted R Squared = .101)

**Table 5:** Estimated marginal means

<b>ELP</b>					
<b>Dependent Variable: check2</b>					
<b>ELP</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. Error</b>	<b>95% Confidence Interval</b>		
			<b>Lower Bound</b>	<b>Upper Bound</b>	
ELP	3.819 <sup>a</sup>	.037	3.747	3.891	
ELP+Checklist	4.052 <sup>a</sup>	.066	3.922	4.183	
ELP+Checklist+Learnerstyle	4.070 <sup>a</sup>	.077	3.918	4.223	

a. Covariates appearing in the model are evaluated at the following values: check1 = 3.9216.

A one-way between groups analysis of covariance was conducted to compare the effectiveness of the use of different self-assessment tools. Preliminary checks were conducted to ensure that there was no violation of the assumption of normality, linearity, homogeneity of variances, homogeneity of regression slopes, and reliable measurement of the covariate. After adjusting for pre-intervention scores, there was a significant difference between the three intervention groups according to their use of different self-assessment tools on post-intervention scores,  $F(2,24) = 7,32$ ,  $p = .001$  partial eta squared = .05.

**Table 6:** Post Hoc comparisons across students' attitudes towards learning English – second check

<b>Multiple Comparisons</b>						
<b>Tukey HSD</b>						
<b>(I) ELP</b>	<b>(J) ELP</b>	<b>Mean Difference (I-J)</b>	<b>Std. Error</b>	<b>Sig.</b>	<b>95% Confidence Interval</b>	
					<b>Lower Bound</b>	<b>Upper Bound</b>
ELP	ELP+Checklist	-.27101*	.08168	.003	-.4636	-.0784
	ELP+Checklist+Learnerstyle	-.29057*	.07649	.001	-.4709	-.1102
ELP+Checklist	ELP	.27101*	.08168	.003	.0784	.4636
	ELP+Checklist+Learnerstyle	-.01956	.09825	.978	-.2512	.2121
ELP+Checklist+Learnerstyle	ELP	.29057*	.07649	.001	.1102	.4709
	ELP+Checklist	.01956	.09825	.978	-.2121	.2512

\*. The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

Additionally, the results of Tukey's post hoc test (Table 6) revealed differences between the group using only the ELP as a self-assessment tool and other groups with the group using the ELP + Learner style inventory + unit based checklist having higher mean score ( $M=4.10$ ) than the group using the ELP + Learner style inventory ( $M=4.07$ ) and the group using only the ELP as a self-assessment tool ( $M=3.80$ ).

Repeated measures test was also run for these three groups and the change in their attitudes can be seen from the tables. Table 7 shows the results of the repeated measures tests.

**Table 7:** Repeated measures test results for students using only ELP

<b>Self-Assessment Tools:</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. Deviation</b>	<b>N</b>
<b>Only ELP</b>			
1 <sup>st</sup> check	3.84	.52	164
2 <sup>nd</sup> check	3.80	.49	164

N: Number of students

**Table 8:** Repeated measures test results for students using ELP +Learner Style Inventory

<b>Self-Assessment Tools:</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. Deviation</b>	<b>N</b>
<b>ELP + Learner Style Inventory</b>			
1 <sup>st</sup> check	4.02	.58	50
2 <sup>nd</sup> check	4.07	.06	50

N: Number of students

**Table 9:** Repeated measures test results for students using the ELP + Learner Style Inventory + Unit Based Checklist

<b>Self-Assessment Tools:</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. Deviation</b>	<b>N</b>
<b>ELP + Learner Style Inventory + Unit Based Checklist</b>			
1 <sup>st</sup> check	4.08	.30	37
2 <sup>nd</sup> check	4.10	.42	37

N: Number of students

When tables are examined, it is clear that students using three different self-assessment tools gave more positive answers to the questions; therefore, their mean scores are higher at the beginning and also become higher in the second application of the questionnaire. The second is the students using the ELP and the learner style inventory and finally the last one is the students only using the ELP. Even the scores decreased in the second application of the interview, it was high since it was above the cut-off point. The results of the repeated measures tests were significant with the score of  $p=.00$ .

## 4. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

### 4.1. Discussion on the Effectiveness of the ELP as a Self-Assessment Tool

The findings from the scales 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. 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. Therefore, they had more positive attitudes towards learning English after they used the ELP. This result is in line with that of Karagöl (2008) that she states self-assessment checklists and learners' taking active role in choosing their tasks fostered their autonomy and this in turn raised positive attitudes towards learning a language. Similar to the feedback received from teachers taking part in piloting projects from 1997-2000 (Scharer, 2000), the ELP exerts a positive influence on language learning. This result also supports that of Glover, Mirici and Aksu (2005). They state that their result showed a positive attitude toward the ELP and most of the students reported that they became more interested in their own learning with the help of the ELP. They also propose that the teachers agreed that the ELP contributed to the motivation of the students and that the attendance in the ELP user class

remained high to the end of the year. As Kohonen (2000) argues, when teachers make the goals more concrete and emphasize their importance for life-long learning, they can motivate their students towards developing a commitment for their own learning. Learners in the research context also stated that they benefited from the descriptors since the descriptors led them towards accomplishing the task at hand.

The results of the study showed that teachers and learners reported positive attitudes towards the use of the ELP in the class and they stated that the ELP made them become more aware of the language learning process, clarify their objectives, produce materials with their own preferences and evaluate their own learning. These results are in accordance with the results of the pilot studies 1998-2001 (Scharer, 2001), other reports of the implementation from 2001 to 2008 (Scharer, 2004; 2008), some published research studies in Europe like Ushioda and Ridley (2002), Sisamakias (2006), Kohonen (2000) and the research carried out in Turkey concerning the implementation of the ELP and autonomy Egel (2003), Glover, Mirici and Aksu (2005), Koyuncu (2006), Ceylan (2006), Karagöl (2008). As Egel (2003) states in her research on the role of the ELP on learner autonomy in primary school children, the ELP is an innovation for language learning since it both provides a positive experience for primary school children and helps them in developing learner autonomy. Sisamakias (2006) also states as a conclusion of his thesis research on the ELP that students developed considerably in terms of their autonomous behavior and reflective skills in language learning and that became more objective in their self-assessments. Little (2009b) also supports these views stating that the ELP helps students organize their learning, make a record of their learning and empower them to take responsibility for their learning.

#### **4.2. Discussion on the Effectiveness of the ELP + Learner Style Inventory as Self-Assessment Tools**

Considering the findings from the interviews and the scales, it can be said that using different self-assessment tools is very useful for students. The more self-assessment they use, the more aware they get about their own learning. The results of the scales showed that the group using all three self-assessment tools had the highest attitudes towards learning English, and the group using the two self-assessment tool had the second highest scores, therefore; it can be concluded that using different self-assessment tools enabled learners to take actively part in their learning process, as a result had more positive attitudes.

The findings of the current study regarding the effect of self-assessment via European Language Portfolio, unit based checklist and learner style inventory on students' attitudes towards learning English confirm; Glover, Mirici, and Aksu (2005, p. 90) who stress that the ELP encourages language learning through reflection, self-awareness, and motivation; the Council of Europe (2001, p. 192) which views self-assessment in the ELP as a means for motivation, and increasing awareness thus helping learners to come to notice what they are capable of and what they are not capable of in all skills and direct their learning accordingly in a more effective way.

In the current study, it has been discovered that through the self-assessment tools, the participants themselves were able to monitor their gradual but steady progress in their interlanguage, which kept them motivated since, in this way, they were also feeling the sense of achievement. This is in line with Littlejohn (2001) who claims that one of the most important sources of positive attitude is "success in the task". He suggests that individuals generally like what they do well, which increases their possibility of doing it again with probably more effort. When more effort is put in, they generally get better, gaining more positive attitudes towards learning English. Likewise, this study has found out that after experiencing the task achievements through the ELP and the learner style inventory which enable learners to be aware of their learning styles and be more successful in those tasks, the participants were eager to keep studying the language to be able to achieve other descriptors.

The findings of this study also confirm Paiva (2005) who states that through self-assessment, the participants were able to keep track of their language learning process, which

also fostered their learner autonomy. Autonomy relies upon how willing a learner is in terms of taking responsibility for his own learning. By the same token, the ELP and the learner style inventory allowed the participants to take more responsibility for their own learning.

To sum up, based on the findings of the quantitative data, it can be concluded that the ELP, learner style inventory, and unit based checklists may be effective self-assessment tools and they may lead to gain more positive attitudes towards learning a language.

#### **4.3. Discussion on the Effectiveness of the ELP + Learner Style Inventory + Unit Based Checklist as Self- assessment Tools**

The findings from the scales revealed that most of the students have positive attitudes towards learning English as a foreign language. These results were in line with findings of Alkaff (2013), Tahaine and Daana (2013) and Al-Quyadi (2000), Momani (2009), Graham (2004), Tarhan (2003), Ushioda (2003), Karahan (2007), and Aydın (2007) which indicated that most students have positive attitudes towards learning EFL. The findings of the study also showed that the more self-assessment tools the students used the more positive attitudes they had towards learning English. These results were in line with results of Momani (2009), which indicated that there was a strong correlation between students' attitudes toward learning English and their use of self-assessment tools. The results also accorded with outcomes observed in a study conducted by Ismail (1988), which reported positive and significant relationship between self-assessment and attitude towards learning English. The findings were also supported by other research, such as that by Zimmerman, Bandura, and Martinez-Pons (1992) who found direct effects of attitude on performance, and also by Pajares and Miller (1994).

### **5.CONCLUSION**

The results of the study have indicated that the ELP, learner style inventory and unit based checklists are tools which can promote self-assessment on the condition that they are used effectively both by the teachers and students and as a consequence support having more positive attitudes towards learning English. Additionally, it has been found that the students feel positive towards the ELP and working with it, except for the fact that they have limited knowledge about the use of the ELP as part of their curriculum.

In addition, both the teachers and the students believe that the ELP is a useful tool for self-assessment; however, during the implementation of an ELP oriented language education they need reliable and ongoing guidance about the use and effectiveness of the ELP in and out of language classes. Similarly, they are of the opinion that learner style inventory and the unit based checklists are also important tools which can promote self-assessment and learner autonomy. Teachers in a classroom know what they need to teach, but the students in those classes may not be aware of what they are going to do or learn about. Among the three alternative self-assessment tools studied in this research, the ELP has the highest potential to enable the students to see what they are doing in the classes and how proficient they are in each skill in each level. With the help of the ELP, they are able to keep record of and track their linguistic and intercultural progress in English.

One beneficial activity related to the ELP is to choose three materials they prepared and putting in the dossier part and discussing why they choose them. For example, when they have process writing activities in this way they may receive concrete feedback based on a material of their choice and they may correct their mistakes via their teachers's correction report. As an observer in an experimental classroom, I can safely claim that the students benefit a lot from the use of the ELP as a self-reflection tool. Similarly, based on their experience in the process of the research, the teachers who have more than 5 years of teaching experience are in favour of the use of the ELP in their school curriculum.

All in all, as a researcher and as an experienced English teacher, I really believe that the ELP could be used as a tool to promote self-assessment and to create learner-centered classrooms in Turkey. Thus, promoting self-assessment is not as difficult as it is thought to be, and the ELP,

learner style inventory and the unit based checklists are important tools which can promote it and should be used in language classrooms.

### **5.1. Pedagogical Implications & Further Research**

In order to benefit the most from the ELP, ELP holders should evaluate their progress through the checklists provided for each skill on a regular basis. It is recommended that the students evaluate their progress every four weeks or so. Furthermore, since the ELP enables learners to become more aware of their language abilities, while filling in the checklists for the ELP, in order to find out more about their language competences, the students need to be as sincere as possible as the ELP is the property of its holders. Additionally, learners should use the ELP in their language learning process because of the fact that it allows its users to record and monitor their language progress through the checklists, which they can show to formal authorities to report their language proficiency (the ELP's reporting function).

The general student 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 accurate self-assessment because they were not accustomed to set their own learning goals and assess their own language learning.

As for the pedagogical implications of the current study for language teachers, they should encourage their learners to use the ELP since it will facilitate their learning process. While doing so, teachers should discuss the importance of the ELP for learners' language development; how learners can benefit from it best, how frequently learners should refer to it, how they can efficiently use the components of the ELP; i.e., the language biography, the language dossier and the language passport. In other words, teachers should train their students as to how to utilize their ELPs most effectively and efficiently. However, for the teachers who do not understand the importance of the ELP, it is very crucial to learn more about the ELP.

The ELP can be implemented at the School of Foreign Languages at Bülent Ecevit University; however, asking the students to keep the ELP is not enough. From the findings of the interviews with the teachers and students, first some training is 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 the teachers 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, choosing 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 ELP is recommended for implementation in the curriculum at the School of Foreign Languages at Bülent Ecevit University. 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.

In further studies which aim to highlight the significance of the ELP and to other self-assessment tools like learner style inventory and unit based checklists in terms of promoting self-assessment, the ELP could be implemented at class level to see to what extent it is effective for both self-assessment and language learning. Additionally, in this study, some of the teachers also used the unit based checklists to assess their students, another study can compare the effectiveness of using the unit based checklists for students and teachers, how it affects students' attitudes towards learning language and their success. If interviews are going to be held, more student participants could be interviewed for more data about self-assessment and also more teachers can be interviewed. Also, student diaries can also be used to get more information about students. 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.

## Acknowledgements

This research is based on a PhD thesis entitled "The Effect of Different Self-Assessment Tools On Students' Attitudes Towards Learning English" submitted to Hacettepe University Graduate School of Social Sciences in 2017.

## REFERENCES

- Brown, H. D. (2000). *Principles of language learning and teaching*. 4th ed. White Plains, NY: Addison Wesley Longman.
- Carreira, J. M. (2005). New Framework of Intrinsic/Extrinsic & Integrative/Instrumental Motivation in Second Language Acquisition. *The Keiai Journal of International Studies*, 76, 39-64.
- Ceylan, M. (2006). *European language portfolio as a self-directed learning tool*. (Unpublished Master's Thesis) Bilkent University, Ankara.
- Cheng, H, F. & Dörnyei, Z. (2007). The use of motivational strategies in language instruction: The case of EFL teaching in Taiwan. *Innovation in Language Learning and Teaching*, 1,153-174.
- Csizér, K. & Dörnyei, Z. (2005). The internal structure of language learning motivation and its relationship with language choice and learning effort. *The Modern Language Journal*, (89), 19-36.
- Council of Europe, (1992). *Transparency and coherence in language learning in Europe: Objectives, evaluation, certification*. Report on the Rüşchlikon Symposium. Strasbourg: Council of Europe.
- Council of Europe (2000). *European language portfolio (ELP): Principles and guidelines, Document DGIV/EDU/LANG, (2000) 33*. Strasbourg, Council of Europe.
- Council of Europe (2001). *Common European Framework of References for Languages: Learning, teaching, assessment*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Dörnyei, Z. and K. Csizér. (2002). Some dynamics of language attitudes and motivation: Results of a longitudinal nationwide survey. *Applied Linguistics* 23 (4), 421-62.
- Ehrman, M. & Oxford, R. (1990). Adult language learning styles and strategies in an intensive training setting. *Modern Language Journal*, 74, 311-326.
- Gardner, R. C. & Lambert, W. E. (1972). *Attitudes and motivation in second language learning*. Rowley, MA: Newbury House.
- Glover, P., Mirici, İ. H., & Aksu, M. B. (2005). Preparing for the European Language Portfolio: Internet connections. *Turkish Online Journal of Distance Education- TOJDE*, 6(1), [Online: [http://tojde.anadolu.edu.tr/yonetim/icerik/\\_makaleler/179-published.pdf](http://tojde.anadolu.edu.tr/yonetim/icerik/_makaleler/179-published.pdf) Retrieved on 02 January 2016]
- Holec, H. (1981). *Autonomy and foreign language learning*. Oxford: Pergamon. (First published 1979, Strasbourg: Council of Europe)
- Koyuncu, S. (2006). *The effect of the European language portfolio on learner autonomy for young learners*. (Unpublished Master's Thesis) Çukurova University, Turkey.

- Little, D. (1991). *Learner autonomy 1: Definitions, issues and problems*. Dublin: Authentik.
- Mirici, I. H. (2000). European Language Portfolio: A tool for a common language education policy in Europe. *Journal of Interdisciplinary Education*, 6(1), 161-166.
- Mirici, İ. H. (2006). Electronic In-Service Teacher-Training for the New National EFL Curriculum in Turkey. *Turkish Online Journal of Distance Education*, 7(1), 155-164. [Online: <http://tojde.anadolu.edu.tr/yonetim/icerik/makaleler/244-published.pdf> Retrieved on 03 January 2016]
- Mirici, İ. H. (2008). Development and validation process of a European language portfolio model for young learners. *Turkish Online Journal of Distance Education*, 9(2), 26-34. [Online: <http://tojde.anadolu.edu.tr/yonetim/icerik/makaleler/399-published.pdf> Retrieved on 03 January 2016]
- Skehan, P. (1989). *Individual Differences in Second Language Learning*. London: Edward Arnold.
- Skehan, P. (1991). Individual differences in second language learning. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition*, 13, 275-298.
- Tokoz Göztepe, F. (2014). Attitudes and Motivation of Turkish Undergraduate EFL Students towards Learning English Language. *Studies in English Language Teaching*. 2 (3), 314-332.
- Yang, Nae D. (2003). Integrating Portfolios into Learning Strategy-Based Instruction for EFL College Students, *International Review of Applied Linguistics*
- Yang, J. S. R. (2008). Motivational orientation and selected learner variables in East Asian Language Learners in the United States. *Foreign Language Annals*, 36(1), 44-56.