

T.C
SELÇUK ÜNİVERSİTESİ
EĞİTİM BİLİMLERİ ENSTİTÜSÜ

**THE ATTITUDES OF EFL INSTRUCTORS
TOWARDS LEARNER AUTONOMY AND EUROPEAN
LANGUAGE PORTFOLIO AT SELÇUK UNIVERSITY**

YÜKSEK LİSANS TEZİ

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HAZIRLAYAN
MERAL SERVİ

KONYA 2010



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Tezin Adı		Attitudes of EFL Instructors towards Learner Autonomy and European Language Portfolio at Selçuk University		

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Tezin İngilizce Adı	Attitudes of EFL Instructors Towards Learner Autonomy and European Language Portfolio at Selçuk University			

SUMMARY

The study was conducted at the School of Foreign Languages at Selçuk University. This study aimed to investigate the views and perceptions of instructors working at School of Foreign Languages, Selçuk University on Learner Autonomy and European Language Portfolio (ELP).

In this study, 69 instructors participated in this study. The data gathered for this study is both quantitative and qualitative. The participants were asked to answer the questions in the questionnaires about learner autonomy and ELP and to state their reasons for the answers. The data were analysed and displayed through frequencies and percentages.

The results revealed that the attitudes of the participants towards learner autonomy was generally positive and neutral to positive though the instructors showed strong resistance to learner autonomy in some issues such as the ones concerning classroom management and administration. For ELP, the results revealed that the instructors generally did not have enough information on European Language Portfolio, Language Passport and on how to prepare European Language Portfolio in class though some of the instructors had already had lots of information.

KEY WORDS: learner autonomy, European Language Portfolio (ELP), Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR), European Language Passport.



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Tezin Adı	Selçuk Üniversitesinde Görev Yapan Öğretmenlerin Öğrenen Özerkliğine ve Avrupa Dil Portfolyosuna Karşı Tutumları		

ÖZET

Bu çalışma, Selçuk Üniversitesi, Yabancı Diller Yüksekokulu'nda gerçekleştirilmiştir. Çalışmanın amacı Selçuk Üniversitesi, Yabancı Diller Yüksekokulu'nda çalışmakta olan okutmanların öğrenen özerkliği ve Avrupa Dil Portfolyosu ile ilgili algı ve görüşlerini tespit etmektir.

Yapılan çalışmada 69 okutman yer almıştır. Çalışma için toplanan veriler hem nitel hem nicel özelliktedir. Okutmanlardan çalışmada öğrenen özerkliği ve Avrupa Dil Portfolyosu ile ilgili ankette yer alan soruları cevaplandırmaları ve sebepleri yazmaları istenmiştir. Elde edilen veriler analiz edilip sonuçlar frekans ve yüzde olarak değerlendirilmiş ve sunulmuştur.

Sonuçlar okutmanların genel olarak öğrenen özerkliğine karşı olumlu ve nötr-olumlu görüşlere sahip olduklarını, bunun yanında sınıf yönetimi veya yönetim gibi bazı konularda öğrenen özerkliğine karşı olumsuz yaklaşıtlarını göstermektedir. Avrupa dil portfolyosu, Avrupa dil pasaportu, Avrupa dil portfolyosunun nasıl hazırlanacağı ile ilgili sonuçlar, okutmanların bu konuda genel olarak çok fazla bilgi sahibi olmadıklarını ortaya koymuştur.

ANAHTAR KELİMELELER: Öğrenen Özerkliği, Avrupa Dil Portfolyosu, Avrupa Dil Pasaportu, Diller için Avrupa Ortak Çerçeve Programı.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Firstly, I would like to thank my advisor, Assistant Professor Dr. Ece Sarıgöl, not only for her guidance and academic help, but also for her toleration, patience and encouragement throughout the whole process.

I would like to extend special thanks to my colleague and my friend half way round the world, Melanie Brooks for her invaluable support in proofreading and encouraging me for my work and Kristina Smith for her guidance throughout the thesis.

I am also very grateful to Professor Dr. Ali Murat Sünbül for his advice on the early research process.

Also of course many words of thanks are owed to my nuclear family, my dear husband Muhammet and my son Mehmet Efe, who have tolerated me continuously working on the computer.

Finally, I would like to thank my colleagues for their help during the data collection process.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AVA	: Audio Visual Aids
CoE	: Council of Europe
CEF/ CEFR	: Common European Reference for Languages
CRAPEL	: Centre de Recherches et d' Applications en Langues
EFL	: English as a Foreign Language
ELP	: European Language Portfolio
ELT	: English Language Teaching
SOFL	: School of Foreign Languages

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the study

The field of English Language Teaching has taken many steps forward due to the changes in education technology, economy and politics in the world in the last 20 years. The current trend in language teaching is more individual, more communicative and more functional (Thanasoulas, 2000). The communicative language teaching suggests that there should be a desire to communicate, a communicative purpose, no teacher intervention and no materials control. In Communicative Language Teaching in the communicative activities teacher intervention should be minimised, on the contrary the teacher should promote the process of communicative language teaching by giving immediate answers to the students in the relatively uncontrolled conversations (Harmer, 2001). As it can be seen, learner autonomy is the key term in applying the current theories and applications in foreign language classes. But this brings about some problems including the teachers having difficulty putting themselves in a pseudo passive controller role in the classroom and learners being unaware of how to benefit from the autonomy in learning.

The language classroom has gained a new perspective with the development of learner centered approaches in the last three decades. This new perspective has changed the roles of learners and teachers in the classroom. In today's language classroom, learners are expected to take more responsibility for their own learning, and teachers are expected to help learners become more independent inside and outside the classroom. These developments have brought the concept of "learner autonomy" in the field of language teaching (Benson, 2001).

The prominent figure in learner autonomy, Holec (1981), defines learner autonomy as a situation in which learners accept the overall responsibility for their own learning. Little (1991) argues that learner autonomy not only entails learning but also

learning how to learn. Thus it can be argued that learners involved in the management of their learning and their development will increase the intrinsic motivation.

Learner autonomy in formal education contexts is an educational concept in which learners accept the responsibility for their own learning. Besides, if the learners are aware of their objectives, learning will be more effective and they will be able to promote their learning.

1.2 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study in question is to investigate the perceptions of EFL instructors at Selcuk University on learner autonomy and their knowledge on ELP. Also it is aimed to make them reflect on these notions and find out how ELP would help them promote learner autonomy in class. Sixty-nine EFL language instructors working at School of Foreign languages at Selcuk University participated in the study.

1.3. The Research Questions

The study investigates the following research questions:

1. What are the opinions and attitudes of ELT instructors on learner autonomy?
2. How much do the instructors know that ELP helps promote learner autonomy?

The answers to these questions will lead the researcher to have an idea if the instructors have a positive opinion on promotion of learner autonomy by means of implementation of ELP at School of Foreign Languages.

1.4. Significance of the Study

The study is important because language teachers have been experiencing the difficulty of getting students to have interest in foreign language and learn it effectively. One of the possible solutions to this problem is getting students to be more autonomous in language learning and learning responsibilities. The results of the study will reveal the attitudes of EFL instructors towards learner autonomy and display their knowledge of ELP in an EFL setting. The results may also offer new insights to EFL teachers and other scholars in language learning and teaching.

1.5. Limitations of the Study

The most important limitation of the study was being unable to apply the same questionnaire to another institution in Turkey where ELP is implemented. Making comparisons between two preparatory schools would give us more clear results about whether instructors using ELP in class have different understanding of learner autonomy or the conception of European Language Portfolio (ELP).

Another important limitation is the limited time for the survey. More time would enable the researcher get questionnaires from more colleagues. And more important than that, ELP could be implemented in class and feedback could be taken from students as well if the school had not had limited time of instruction.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

2.1. Introduction

The European language portfolio is a document developed by the Language Policy Division of the Council of Europe, piloted from 1998 to 2000, and launched in 2001, the European Year of Languages, including language passport that shows the language competence of a person, a detailed Language Biography describing the owner's experiences in each language and finally, there is a Dossier where examples of personal work can be kept to illustrate one's language competence. Compiling a language portfolio also requires the learner to directly or indirectly participate actively in the learning process, implement his/her learning strategies, be the decision maker about what to add in the portfolio and reflect on what to do to improve the content of the portfolio, which is the common aim in the last years by the teachers of English who are more likely to have a student centered atmosphere in class. All this guidance of the ELP helps the learners to have the ability to take charge of one's learning, which is the exact definition of learner autonomy. ELP is a good way to foster the learner autonomy which has recently been desirable and most importantly, makes the learners of ESL alert about what to learn, how to learn and why, which are the critical questions on the way to the learner autonomy.

2.2. CEFR and ELP

2.2.1. Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR)

The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment, abbreviated as CEF or CEFR is the guideline put together by the Council of Europe as the main part of the project "Language Learning for European Citizenship" between 1989 and 1996. In November 2001, a European

Union Council Resolution recommended using the CEFR to set up systems of validation of language ability.

The Council of Europe, the continent's oldest political organization, was set up in 1949 to

- defend human rights, parliamentary democracy, and the rule of law
- develop continent-wide agreements to standardize member countries' social and legal practices
- promote awareness of a European identity based on shared values and cutting across different cultures.

When the last aim is of interest, it is the language through which it is only possible to understand the culture and recognize the values of another country. As each nation state has its own language, The Council of Europe has seen the promotion of language teaching and learning as one of its major priority areas, with the development of inter-cultural awareness viewed as an essential part of the development of competence in another language or other languages. So, the CoE introduced plurilingualism, implying action on governments and individuals. Governments have the responsibility to extend the range of language opportunities and exposure to other languages available to their citizens; individuals should be helped through language teaching and the development of their own learning skills, to extend their ability to communicate with users of another language (Morrow, 2004).

CEFR is a reference document aiming to set clear standards to be attained at successive stages of learning and evaluating in an internationally comparable manner for language education including assessment. These standards include the language syllabuses, curriculum guidelines, examinations, textbooks, etc. across Europe. It provides a clear definition of teaching and learning objectives and methods and the necessary tools for assessment of proficiency, which makes it of a particular interest to course designers, textbook writers, testers, teachers and teacher trainers - all who are directly involved in language teaching and testing (Council of Europe, 2001).

The contents of the CEFR are designed to;

- describe different language qualifications,
- identify different learning objectives,
- set out the basis of different achievement standards (Morrow, 2004).

In the intergovernmental level, the work of the Council of Europe for a cultural cooperation with regard to modern languages has derived its coherence and continuity from three basic principles set down in the preamble to Recommendation R (82) 18 of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe:

- that the rich heritage of diverse languages and cultures in Europe is a valuable common resource to be protected and developed, and that a major educational effort is needed to convert that diversity from a barrier to communication into a source of mutual enrichment and understanding;
- that it is only through a better knowledge of European modern languages that it will be possible to facilitate communication and interaction among Europeans of different mother tongues in order to promote European mobility, mutual understanding and co-operation, and overcome prejudice and discrimination;
- that member states, when adopting or developing national policies in the field of modern language learning and teaching, may achieve greater convergence at the European level by means of appropriate arrangements for ongoing co-operation and co-ordination of policies (Council of Europe, 2001; 2).

In the pursuit of these principles, the Committee of Ministers called upon member governments;

- to promote the national and international collaboration of governmental and non-governmental institutions engaged in the development of methods of teaching and evaluation in the field of modern language learning and in the production and use of materials, including institutions engaged in the production and use of multi-media materials.
- to take such steps as are necessary to complete the establishment of an effective European system of information exchange covering all aspects of language learning, teaching and research, and making full use of information technology (Council of Europe, 2001; 2).

In the personal level one must not forget that the process of language learning is continuous and individual. Thus CEFR describes in a comprehensive way what language learners have to learn 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 description also covers the cultural context in which language is set. The Framework also defines “levels of proficiency” which allow learners’ progress to be measured at each stage of learning and on a life-long basis (Council of Europe, 2001; 1).

No two users of a language, whether native speakers or foreign learners, have exactly the same competences or develop them in the same way (Council of Europe, 2001; 17). For instance an individual in his/her mother tongue may be able to talk to everybody without any misunderstanding in a social community but his speaking level may not be sufficient to make a presentation at a conference. In the same way his/her writing ability may not be good enough to write a formal letter or a scientific article. Even some people having a second language from the family background may only recognize the second language and take part in simple social conversations but not read or write a word in that language. The same thing happens in the foreign language learning.

This fact is what makes CEFR to define the levels of proficiency with vertical and horizontal dimensions:

Since learning a language is a matter of horizontal as well as vertical progress as learners acquire the proficiency to perform in a wider range of communicative activities. Progress is not merely a question of moving up a vertical scale. There is no particular logical requirement for a learner to pass through all the lower levels on a sub-scale. They may make lateral progress (from a neighbouring category) by broadening their performance capabilities rather than increasing their proficiency in terms of the same category. Conversely, the expression ‘deepening one’s knowledge’ recognizes that one may well feel the need at some point to underpin such pragmatic gains by having a look at ‘the basics’ (that is: lower level skills) in an area into which one has moved laterally (Council of Europe, 2001; 17).

2.2.1.1. The Common Reference Levels

CEFR provides ‘can-do’ proficiency descriptors common to all languages. There are six criterion levels that Common European Framework defines to have a standard in many areas relating to language instruction; A1, A2, B1, B2, C1, C2. Course designers, classroom instructors, and administrators take the reference into consideration while designing the language instruction or curriculum. In this way a standard will be achieved throughout European countries (Terzi, 2005).

While selecting the Common Reference Levels, Waystage and Threshold Levels, which were already specified by the Council of Europe, were taken into consideration. The Threshold Level was specified by the Council of Europe as what a learner should know or do to communicate effectively in everyday life and if the learner has the necessary skills and knowledge. This description of the Threshold Level affected the language teaching to a great extent. First of all, the Council of Europe developed the model for English, and then it was developed and specified for French. Afterwards, it became a basis for planning of language programs, designing more interesting and appealing course books, designing syllabuses and assessment tools. After developing and extending the Threshold level, the focus of attention has been directed to “socio-cultural and ‘learning to learn’ components”, and a lower level, Waystage Level, and also a higher level of specification, Vantage Level, were developed.

It is perhaps worth emphasising the salient features of the levels, as shown below by the empirically calibrated descriptors:

1. Level A1 (Breakthrough)

It is the point at which the learner can interact in a simple way, ask and answer simple questions about themselves, where they live, people they know, and things they have, initiate and respond to simple statements in areas of immediate need or on very familiar topics, rather than relying purely on a rehearsed repertoire of (tourist) phrases.

2. Level A2 (Waystage)

It reflects the Waystage specification with the majority of descriptors stating social functions: greet people, ask how they are and react to news; handle very short social exchanges; ask and answer questions about what they do at work and in free time; make and respond to invitations; discuss what to do, where to go and make arrangements to meet; make and accept offers.

3. Level B1 (Threshold)

It reflects The Threshold Level, with two particular features:

1. maintaining interaction and getting across what you want to: give or seek personal views and opinions in an informal discussion with friends; express the main point he/she wants to make comprehensibly; keep going comprehensibly, even though pausing for grammatical and lexical planning and repair is very evident, especially in longer stretches of free production,
2. coping flexibly with problems in everyday life: deal with most situations likely to arise when making travel arrangements through an agent or when actually travelling; enter unprepared into conversations on familiar topics; make a complaint.

4. Level B2 (Vantage)

It reflects three new emphases:

1. effective argument: account for and sustain opinions in discussion by providing relevant explanations, arguments and comments; explain a viewpoint on a topical issue giving the advantages and disadvantages of various options,
2. holding your own in social discourse: interact with a degree of fluency and spontaneity that makes regular interaction with native speakers quite possible without imposing strain on either party; adjust to the changes of direction, style and emphasis normally found in the conversation,

3. a new degree of language awareness: correct mistakes if they have led to misunderstandings; make a note of "favourite mistakes" and consciously monitor speech for them.

5. Level C1 (Effective Operational Proficiency)

It is characterised by access to a broad range of language that results in fluent, spontaneous communication:

1. express him/herself fluently and spontaneously, almost effortlessly; has a good command of a broad lexical repertoire allowing gaps to be readily overcome with circumlocutions; there is little obvious searching for expressions or avoidance strategies - only a conceptually difficult subject can hinder a natural, smooth flow of language,
2. produce clear, smoothly flowing, well-structured speech, showing controlled use of organisational patterns, connectors and cohesive devices.

6. Level C2 (Mastery)

It is the degree of precision and ease with the language of highly successful learners who convey finer shades of meaning precisely by using, with reasonable accuracy, a wide range of modification devices and have a good command of idiomatic expressions and colloquialisms with awareness of connotative level of meaning (North, 2007).

Here it should be noted that the proficiency levels above give an idea of general language capabilities but these descriptors are divided into categories by understanding (listening and reading as sub-categories), speaking (spoken interaction and spoken production as sub-categories) and writing since as stated above one's proficiency level in reading may not be the same with the proficiency level in speaking. This is also taken into consideration in the European Language Passport

where the proficiency levels of a language user are expressed in each category (listening, reading, spoken interaction, spoken production and writing). The self-assessment grid is based on the six level scale of the Common European framework of reference for languages developed by the Council of Europe. Below is the self-assessment section (Council of Europe, 2001) which includes can-do statements:

Understanding

Listening

A 1: I can understand familiar words and very basic phrases concerning myself, my family and immediate surroundings when people speak slowly and clearly.

A 2: 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 points in short, clear, simple messages and announcements.

B 1: 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 points of many radio or TV programmes on current affairs or topics of personal or professional interest when the delivery is relatively slow and clear.

B 2: 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.

C 1: I can understand extended speech even when it is not clearly structured and when relationships are only implied and not signaled explicitly. I can understand television programmes and films without too much effort.

C 2: 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.

Reading

A 1: I can understand familiar names, words and very simple sentences, for example on notices and posters or in catalogues.

A 2: 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.

B 1: 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.

B 2: 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.

C 1: 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.

C 2: 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.

Speaking

Spoken interaction

A 1: 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.

A 2: 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.

B 1: 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).

B 2: 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.

C 1: 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.

C 2: 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.

Spoken production

A 1: I can use simple phrases and sentences to describe where I live and people I know.

A 2: 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.

B 1: 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.

B 2: 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.

C 1: I can present clear, detailed descriptions of complex subjects integrating sub-themes, developing particular points and rounding off with an appropriate conclusion.

C 2: 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.

Writing

A 1: 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.

A 2: I can write short, simple notes and messages. I can write a very simple personal letter, for example thanking someone for something.

B 1: I can write simple connected text on topics which are familiar or of personal interest. I can write personal letters describing experiences and impressions.

B 2: 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.

C 1: 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.

C 2: 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.

The CEFR does not focus exclusively on the behavioral dimension of L2 proficiency. It also offers a scaled summary of what it calls ‘qualitative aspects of spoken language use’ – range, accuracy, fluency, interaction, and coherence – and scaled descriptions of general linguistic range, vocabulary range, vocabulary control, grammatical accuracy, phonological control, orthographic control, sociolinguistic appropriateness, flexibility, turn-taking, thematic development, coherence and cohesion, spoken fluency, and propositional precision (Council of Europe, 2001).

The general importance that CEFR holds in terms of language teaching is to think about language teaching and learning in a broader sense giving value to individual development. Another highly important feature of CEFR is that it is a set of objective standards for language teachers and learners in different countries.

2.2.2. European Language Portfolio (ELP)

The European Language Portfolio (ELP) is described by the Council of Europe (CoE) as a document in which those who are learning or have learned a language - whether at school or outside school - can record and reflect on their language learning and cultural experiences.

The European Language Portfolio was developed and piloted by the Language Policy Division of the Council of Europe, Strasbourg, from 1998 until 2000.

ELP was adopted at the 20th Session of the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education of the Council of Europe, Cracow, Poland, 15-17 October 2000. At this conference the Ministers of Education of all the member States of the Council of Europe recommended that governments, in keeping with their education policy, support the introduction of a European Language Portfolio which is a personal document to record one’s 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.

A very important issue to be regarded about ELP is the age of the ELP owner. The reports and documentation of a child cannot include the same information as an adult which makes the authorities have 3 types of ELP according to the age. Schneider and Lenz (2001) suggested three fundamentally different types of ELP, according to the basic stages of individual and social development:

- a) Stage 1 Language Portfolios for very young learners possibly up to 10-12 years;
- b) Stage 2 Language Portfolios for use during the remaining years of obligatory schooling (11-15/16years);
- c) Stage 3 Language Portfolios for young people and adults (15/16 years upward).

Language learning is often different in each of these stages, as concerns objectives, motivation, methods, places, contacts, "value", etc. and the exact boundaries will vary depending on the (national) context due to the different educational systems in each country.

According to North (2000) CEFR tries to maintain "social moderation" by establishing a common understanding of a set of standards by discussion and training. This is accomplished by scaling the second language proficiency with the level A, B and C with different communicative skills at each level.

The Council of Europe also tries to draw the learners into the process of "social moderation". And this is possible by designing individual learning programmes which is one of the objectives of CEFR and ELP is the practical means of achieving this aim.

This reflects the Council of Europe's long-standing commitment to learner autonomy as a prerequisite for effective lifelong learning (Holec, 1979).

2.2.2.1. Aims and Functions of ELP

The Council of Europe has two main aims with the ELP project:

- a) to motivate learners by acknowledging their efforts to extend and diversify their language skills at all levels;
- b) to provide a record of the linguistic and cultural skills they have acquired (to be consulted, for example, when they are moving to a higher learning level or seeking employment at home or abroad).

Points a) and b) refer to the two basic functions of the European Language Portfolio:

a) The pedagogic function

It enhances the motivation of the learners

- to improve their ability to communicate in different languages,
- to learn additional languages,
- to seek new intercultural experiences.

It incites and helps learners to

- to reflect on their objectives, ways of learning and success in language learning,
- to plan their learning,
- to learn autonomously.

It encourages learners to enhance their plurilingual and intercultural experience, for example through

- contacts and visits,
- reading,
- use of the media,
- projects.

In practice it can be stated that, although a wide range of portfolios have been produced in a number of European countries, they all share fundamental principles. In particular:

b) The documentation and reporting function

The European Language Portfolio aims to supplement certificates and diplomas by presenting information about the owner's foreign language experience and concrete evidence of his or her foreign language achievements; and a pedagogical function - to make the language learning process more transparent to learners, help them to develop their capacity for reflection and self-assessment, and thus enable them gradually to assume more and more responsibility for their own learning (Little, 2002).

Schneider and Lenz (2001) stated that the European Language Portfolio must be seen as a recent addition to the Council of Europe's projects in the field of modern languages. Therefore, every ELP should reflect the overarching aims of the Council of Europe in the field of modern languages:

- the deepening of mutual understanding among citizens in Europe;
- respect for diversity of cultures and ways of life;
- the protection and promotion of linguistic and cultural diversity;
- the development of plurilingualism as a life-long process;
- the development of the language learner;
- the development of the capacity for independent language learning;
- transparency and coherence in language learning programmes.

2.2.2.2. Three Parts of ELP

The Principles and Guidelines approved by the Council of Europe define the three components of the ELP so that the learners have the possibility to use each of these according to their particular needs in their different learning contexts as follows:

- **The Language Passport** section provides an overview of the individual's proficiency in different languages at a given point in time; the overview is defined in terms of skills and the common reference levels in the Common European Framework; it records formal qualifications and describes language competencies and significant language and intercultural learning experiences; it includes information on partial and specific competence; it allows for self-assessment, teacher assessment and assessment by educational institutions and examinations boards; it requires that information entered in the Passport states on what basis, when and by whom the assessment was carried out. To facilitate pan-European recognition and mobility a standard presentation of a Passport Summary is promoted by the Council of Europe for ELPs for adults.

- **The Language Biography** facilitates the learner's involvement in planning, reflecting upon and assessing his or her learning process and progress; it encourages the learner to state what he/she can do in each language and to include information on linguistic and cultural experiences gained in and outside formal educational contexts; it is organized to promote plurilingualism, i.e. the development of competencies in a number of languages.

While all parts of the ELP may be considered to have a pedagogic function, the Language Biography is the part that focuses on pedagogic aspects. It has three particular aims:

- to encourage learners to have more language and intercultural contacts.
- to motivate learners for more and better language learning
- to help learners to reflect on their language learning and intercultural experiences, plan effectively, and thereby to become more autonomous learners.

Little (2005) states that the language biography section has a goal-setting and self-assessment checklist for each of the theme-related units of work. Within each checklist the descriptors are grouped according to level, but in the interests of user-friendliness we do not distinguish visually between the five communicative skills. The A1 checklist for food and clothes, for example, has the following items:

- I can understand the names of the clothes I wear to school and the food I eat in school.
- I can read the words for the clothes I know and the food I like and don't like.
- I can ask for things in shops and ask how much they cost.
- I can say what food and clothes I like and don't like.
- I can write words for different foods and for the clothes we wear.
- **The Dossier** offers the learner the opportunity to select materials to document and illustrate achievements or experiences recorded in the Language Biography or Passport (Council of Europe, 2001).

Each of the three parts (the language passport, the language biography and the dossier) contributes to either of the two basic functions every ELP has:

- a) documentation/ reporting
- b) motivation/ pedagogy.

However, the parts do not serve these functions to the same degree. While the *Language Passport* is mainly a reporting instrument, the two other parts may serve both functions equally, depending on the instruments provided for the concrete target group, and the uses learners and teachers decide to make of them. It is important to understand that documentation and reporting are functions that are not only directed towards the "outside": Parents, new teachers and even the learners themselves may be interested in an overview of a student's language skills and intercultural experiences. For this reason, the *Language Passport* part may play an important role even in ELPs for very young learners.

2.2.2.3. Practical Uses of ELP

The European Commission is working to develop the entrepreneurial spirit and skills of EU citizens. Such goals will be easier if language learning is effectively promoted in the European Union, making sure that European citizens and companies have the intercultural and language skills necessary to be effective in the global marketplace. The European Union is built around the free movement of its citizens, capital and services. The citizen with good language skills takes advantage of the freedom to work or study in another member state.

Besides, Europe is a growing market for job opportunities. Graduates who are fluent in a European language go into areas like the civil service, public relations, European Union institutions, European multinational companies, the armed services, customs and excise and research bodies within and outside the European university sector (King, A., Thomas, G. 1999). Speaking a language can lead to promotion and opportunities abroad.

Many people have language skills that are not reflected in the qualifications or certificates they have gained. This may be because they have not been assessed or learned in formal education. At the same time, some basic foreign language skills may be sufficient to meet people, do shopping, or listen to a song...etc.

The ELP enables the language user to see and evaluate what he/she can do in another language, and to record all the language skills gained and experiences with other cultures.

Besides recording the current skills, the ELP helps to develop the skills through practice and experience. It helps the language user to become self-managing as he/she recognizes his/her strengths, weaknesses and plans for further progress. Also, he/she consciously or unconsciously reflects on learning styles and the one which suits him/her the most. For a job application, the ELP may be a part of the CV. Especially the Dossier section proves and illustrates what the applicant can do using another language.

Little and Perclová (2001) listed the learners' experiences reported by the teachers who worked with the ELP in the pilot study;

- 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
- Learners can develop their own language abilities
- Learners realize that they can extend their English language out of school as well

Curriculum Innovation on the Basis of the European Language Portfolio

The ELP is designed to:

- encourage the lifelong learning of languages, to any level of proficiency
- make the learning process more transparent and to develop the learner's ability to assess his/her own competence
- facilitate mobility within Europe by providing a clear profile of the owner's language skills
- contribute to mutual understanding within Europe by promoting plurilingualism (the ability to communicate in two or more languages) and intercultural learning (Suter, 2002).

Briefly we can say that people of Europe are building a single Union out of many diverse nations, communities, cultures and language groups trying to exchange ideas and traditions people with different histories but a common future. So the ability to understand and communicate in other languages is a basic skill for all European citizens. ELP is a practical tool to reach this goal.

2.3. Learner Autonomy

Although the term learner autonomy seems new to most of the language teachers it has been popular for 30 years. In the last three decades, learner autonomy has become a “buzz word” and “central concern” in education to promote life-long learning, and attracted increasing attention in language learning, especially when language teaching shifted to more communicative and learner-centred approaches (Little, 1991:2).

Learner autonomy is a complicated concept. It does not merely mean that the learner is self-sufficient and independent. Autonomy in foreign language learning is more of an 'attitude' or even a philosophy than a methodology. It is not concerned with one specific method, but allows for any method which the individual learner finds beneficial to his' learning purposes (Fenner et al, 2000).

2.3.1. Defining and Describing Learner Autonomy

There is variety of definitions of learner autonomy but the term learner autonomy is generally defined as “the capacity to take charge of, or responsibility for, one’s own learning” (Benson, 2001: 47). Some other definitions from different sources may give a broader idea about what learner autonomy is:

[Autonomy is] the extent to which learners demonstrate the ability to use a set of tactics for taking control of their learning (Cotterall 1995: 195).

[Autonomy is] a constantly changing but at any time optimal state of equilibrium between maximal self-development and human interdependence (Allwright cited in Little 1995: 178).

Of all the definitions on learner autonomy the definition of Holec, who is regarded as the father of learner autonomy, is the most famous. In his report to the Council of Europe Holec (1981:3) describes autonomy as “the ability to take charge of one’s own learning”. He expands the basic definition as follows:

To take charge of one’s own learning is to have, and to hold, the responsibility for all the decisions concerning all aspects of this learning, i.e.:

- _ determining the objectives;
- _ defining the contents and progressions;
- _ selecting methods and techniques to be used;
- _ monitoring the procedure of acquisition properly speaking (rhythm, time, place, etc.);
- _ evaluating what has been acquired.

The autonomous learner is himself capable of making all these decisions concerning the learning with which he is or wishes to be involved.

Similarly, Little (1991: 4) views autonomy as “a capacity—for detachment, critical reflection, decision-making, and independent action”. However, he adds an essential psychological dimension, which entails that “the learner will develop a particular kind of psychological relation to the process and content of his learning”.

What Benson (2001: 49) adds to the definitions of learner autonomy as a vital element is that the content of learning should be freely determined by the learners. Autonomous learners should be free to determine their own goals and purposes if the learning is to be genuinely self-directed. It also has a social aspect, which may involve control over learning situations and call for particular capacities concerned with the learner’s ability to interact with others in the learning process. According to Benson, “control over learning necessarily involves actions that have social consequences” (Benson, 2001: 49):

All of the definitions mentioned above imply that learner autonomy is the situation in which learners have responsibilities and choices concerning their own learning process. According to Little (1991) and Holec (1981) autonomous learners are able to determine their own objectives, define the content and progressions of their own learning, select the appropriate methods and techniques to use, monitor their own process of acquisition, and evaluate the outcome of what they have acquired and what they need to learn. Autonomous learning is seen by Holec as a double process. On the one hand, it entails learning the foreign language; on the

other, learning how to learn. Thus, they know how to accelerate and regulate their own learning beyond a school context: it is a life-long process of constantly developing awareness.

2.3.1.1. Misconceptions on Learner Autonomy

Having explained clearly what learner autonomy is, it is important to discuss what it is not. Little (1991) has stated that there are some misconceptions about learner autonomy:

-- The first misconception is that learner autonomy is synonymous with self-access learning, self-instruction, distance learning, individualized instruction, flexible learning or self-directed learning. Each of these approaches may promote the development of learner autonomy, but none of them have the same broad meaning with learner autonomy.

-- The second misconception, learner autonomy's being accepted as the absolute freedom of learners. However, freedom, in learner autonomy, is limited by social relations and requirements of learners.

--Third misconception is that all the initiative is taken by the learners and helping learners to become autonomous is a threat to the teacher's job. In fact, only educators can determine the limits of freedom and responsibility of learners. And after the students become autonomous over several years, the teacher remains an authority in the language, and a consultant to the autonomous learner in language learning.

--The fourth one is that learner autonomy entails the isolation of learners, perhaps in a self access language learning center, with the assumption that the physical setting defines autonomy. However, learner autonomy promotes interaction and interdependence among learners. Autonomy is primarily a matter of attitude to learning rather than the physical setting of the learning.

--Fifth misconception is that learner autonomy is absolute. However, as it is stated by Nunan (1997) also, learner autonomy has some degrees, and achieving complete autonomy is always ideal, but not real.

---The sixth misconception is accepting learner autonomy as a new method. However, as it is mentioned by Benson (2001) as well, it is neither a method, nor an approach. It is an attribute to increase learner involvement in learning.

--The last misconception is that learner autonomy is a fixed state and once acquired, it can be applied to all learning areas. On the contrary, it is a hard-won state that must be fostered and maintained persistently (Little, 1991).

From a teacher's point of view, we can conclude that autonomy does not offer learners absolute freedom of decision making and does not mean that teachers will give up all control in classroom, either.

2.3.1.2. Describing Autonomous Learners

Autonomous learners are those who are consciously aware of the learning process, who can adapt their strategies according to the given task, and thus who are able to take control and responsibility of their own learning without spoon feeding.

Several researchers have attempted to profile the autonomous learner by building up characteristics associated with autonomy in literature. Littlewood (1996) defines an autonomous person as one who has an independent capacity to make and carry out the choices which govern his or her actions. This capacity depends on two main components – *ability* and *willingness*.

Dickinson (1993) identifies five characteristics of autonomous learners:

- *they understand what is being taught that is they are aware of the teacher's objectives;*

In order to be aware of the objectives of a particular exercise, a learner has to be *active*; this involves things like reviewing the lesson beforehand; taking note of the statement at the top of the exercise saying what the exercise is trying to teach, and listening carefully to the teacher when s/he introduces the lesson and the activities.

- *they are able to formulate their learning objectives;*

Independent learners select and construct their own objectives and purposes in addition to the teacher's. That is, they are not in competition with the teacher and the teacher's objectives, but are often objectives which develop out of the lesson being studied. Thus, a student may want to expand his vocabulary in a particular area, or another student may be aware of difficulty in pronouncing a particular sound, and want to practice this.

- *they are able to select and make use of appropriate learning strategies;*

Learning strategies are simply the techniques that learners use to understand a piece of language, to memorize and recall language, to perfect pronunciation, checking what the lesson is about before the class; being aware of the objectives for a particular activity; assessing oneself, and so on.

- *they are able to monitor their use of these strategies;*

For example, someone involved in perfecting pronunciation might try merely repeating the target sound, but then discover that as soon as the sound is used in a word, they cannot get it right; they may try repeating sentences; or they may spend a long time listening to the correct pronunciation, and repeating it silently to themselves. Some people find it useful to use a mirror to check that they have the correct lip positions and so on.

If there is more than one technique for a particular learning task, then the learner has a choice; the point is that some techniques are more useful for one learner than for another, and learners have to be encouraged to find the best technique for themselves.

- *they are able to self-access, or monitor their own learning,*

A very important aspect of being an active and independent learner, is a student's willingness to monitor his/her own learning; to check how well a piece of work was done, or how accurately a sentence was imitated and so on. A learner who is actively involved in her own learning is active in self monitoring.

Candy (1991, cited in Benson, 2001:85) groups 100 competencies associated with autonomy under 13 headings. According to Candy, an autonomous learner will:

- be methodical and disciplined,
- be logical and analytical,
- be reflective and self-aware,
- demonstrate curiosity, openness and motivation,
- be flexible,
- be interdependent and interpersonally competent,
- be persistent and responsible,
- be venturesome and creative,
- show confidence and have a positive self-concept,
- be independent and self-sufficient,
- have developed information seeking and retrieval skills,
- have knowledge about, and skill at, learning process,

- develop and use criteria for evaluating.

Ideas like these, as Tudor (1996, cited in Motteram, 1998) points out have led to the notion that **learner training** is inevitable if learners are going to become independent in their studies. We also have to be conscious of cultural background and make positive use of existing learning styles if we are going to make progress in this area.

Scharle and Szabó (2000:11) propose that learner training can be done in two ways; by developing skills and attitudes implicitly, that is, helping students to use strategies but not actually discussing strategies with them, or explicitly, by the conscious participation of the learners.

Although there are many factors describing an autonomous learner, there is a hot line where learners shouldn't be considered as a particular kind of robotic beings who do as are computerized but viewed as learners who (can) possess particular cognitive skills or abilities. Otherwise the learner would be surrounded by limitations, which is just the opposite of what is intended by the philosophy underlying the term "autonomous learner".

2.3.2. Historical and Theoretical Background to Learner Autonomy

Second Language Acquisition which has a history of many centuries precedes institutionalised learning and even in the modern world, millions of individuals continue to learn second and foreign languages without the benefit of formal instruction. Although there is much that we can learn from their efforts, however, the theory of autonomy in language learning is essentially concerned with the organisation of institutionalised learning. As such it has a history of three decades. Historical and theoretical background of learner autonomy is described under subtitles of philosophical and pedagogical background to learner autonomy in this section.

2.3.2.1. Philosophical Background to Learner Autonomy

Although learner autonomy has become popular since 1960s (Finch, 2001), learner autonomy in the field of foreign language was explicitly articulated in the 1979 report prepared by Holec for the Council of Europe under the title “Autonomy in Foreign Language” (Holec, 1981). Holec, in this report views the development of learner autonomy as a primary requisite of learning beyond school in democratic societies stating that;

the need to develop the individual’s freedom by developing those abilities which will enable him to act more responsibly in running the affairs of the society in which he lives (Holec, 1981:1).

The report prepared by Holec’s project report to the Council of Europe is a key early document which mentions learner autonomy in the field of foreign language learning (Little, 1991).

The primary aim of The Council of Europe’s Modern Languages Project in 1971 was to provide adults with opportunities for lifelong learning. The approach developed at CRAPEL (*Centre de Recherches et d’ Applications en Langues*) was influenced by the field of adult *self-directed learning*, which insisted ‘on the need to develop the individual’s freedom by developing those abilities which will enable him to act more responsibly in the affairs of the society’ (Benson, 2001). Autonomy or the capacity to take control of one’s own learning was seen as a natural product of the practice of self-directed learning.

As an outcome of this project, CRAPEL was established under the directory of Yves Châlon who is considered to be the father of autonomy in language learning, became the focal point for research and practice in the field of autonomy. After Châlon, Henri Holec, still a prominent milestone within the field of autonomy today, became the leader of CRAPEL.

2.3.2.2. Pedagogical Background to Learner Autonomy

As we have mentioned above the basic ideas of learner autonomy in language teaching have become popular in the last three decades due to the shift towards more communicative language teaching. Contrary to the past, language teaching is no longer the one in which teachers teach and learners learn. Because of this, teachers have to learn to let go and learners have to learn to hold of their learning (Wenden, 1991). Kumaravadivelu (2003) has stated that learner autonomy has become a desirable goal in language teaching and learning for students to maximize their chances for success in today's rapidly changing world.

The idea that learner autonomy bases on states that if learners are involved in decision making processes regarding their own learning, they are likely to be more enthusiastic about learning (Littlejohn, 1985). Besides, learners' active involvement in their own learning will lead to a better understanding of the nature of learning and of the requirements of the task at hand.

Also, learning is likely to be more purposeful and more focused in both the short and long term (Little, 1991; Holec, 1981). Benson (2001), suggested that the current value of learner autonomy to language educators may well lie in its usefulness as an organising principle for broader possibilities contained within a framework of communicative and learner-centered pedagogies.

Communicative teaching, learner- centeredness, and autonomy share a focus on the learner as the key agent in the learning process and several researchers in the fields of communicative language teaching and learner- centered practice have incorporated the idea of autonomy into their work.

To sum up, it can be said that pedagogical justification for the concept of autonomy to language learning is due to the **communicative** approach to the language teaching and learning.

2.3.2.3. Social and Economic Background to Learner Autonomy

After Holec's project report to the CoE on learner autonomy and The Council of Europe's Modern Languages Project aiming to provide lifelong learning by self-directed learning and the pedagogical tendency towards communicative approach, learner-centeredness entailing learner autonomy all give us a historical and pedagogical background for the term autonomy and how it gained importance in the course of recent history.

When we come to today and today's needs, we confront the social and economic aspects which provide us with answers to the question what the role of learner autonomy is in today's technologically fast global village.

In today's world equipped with technology and increasing opportunities, learner autonomy is needed in terms of 'social and economic necessities' of the society.

Benson (2001: 19) lists the following benefits of the learner autonomy as;

- *Information explosion;*

The notion has both increased the quantity of learning that is expected of students and altered its quality. Teacher contact time is limited but exposure time to knowledge is not limited to class by the help of computer and telecommunication technology such as the internet, vast number of TV channels and new generation phone technologies.

- *Growing student numbers*

The rapid increase in the number of people attending educational institutions and the growth of adult education have forced educational authorities to search for alternative means of providing education to individuals with diverse needs, opportunities and preferences. Open-learning and distance-learning have grown rapidly and traditional institutions have diversity of students.

- *Commercialisation of public education;*

With the increasing number of private sector language teaching institutions, the 'service' role has led to a wide range of learning options and innovations associated with autonomy such as self-access learning and learning training.

- *Growth of technology in education;*

Apart from the personal consumer electronics (audio, video, computer and the internet) that have freed students from the need to attend classes at predetermined times and locations, new educational technologies and the self-access boom lead to the production of sophisticated self- instructional multimedia materials.

- International travel.*

The importance of language within the education sector has increased migration, tourism and the internationalization of business and education. It means that learners of a language who have contact with speakers of other languages are likely to have far more diverse and complex communication needs than at any other time in the past.

In the light of these changes, the successful learner is increasingly seen as a person who is able to construct knowledge directly from experience of the world, rather than one who responds well to instruction.

2.3.4. Promoting Learner Autonomy

Autonomy is regarded as the goal of education rather than a procedure or a method. Dickinson (1993) states that work towards this goal is likely to be teacher directed initially, and it proceeds as a co-operative enterprise between teacher and learners involving the learners progressively in taking on more responsibility for their own learning.

How can a teacher promote autonomy in a classroom setting? Which materials should be chosen? What should self-access centers include? What should be changed in the curriculum for the sake of autonomy? Benson (2001: 111) lists practices associated with the development of learner autonomy under six broad headings:

- Resource-based approaches* emphasise independent interaction with learning materials including self-access, self-instruction and distance learning. The aim is to provide learners with opportunity to exercise control over learning plans, the selection of learning materials, and the evaluation of learning.
- Technology based approaches* emphasise independent interaction with educational technologies similar to resource-based approaches but differ from them in their focus on the technology used to access resources. These may include student-produced

video, computer-enhanced interactive video, electronic writing environments, concordance, informal CD-ROMs, E-mail language advising, and computer simulations.

- *Learner based approaches* emphasise the direct production of behavioural and psychological changes in the learner in contrast to resource-based and technology-based approaches. Learner training/ development with the help of strategies is highlighted.
- *Classroom-based approaches* emphasise learner control over the planning and evaluation of classroom learning. They take part in the decision making process and thus take control of their learning.
- *Curriculum-based approaches* extend the idea of learner control to the curriculum as a whole. The assumption is that learner autonomy cannot be reached only by classroom practice but it should pervade the whole curricular system.
- *Teacher-based approaches* emphasise the role of the teacher and teacher education in the practice of fostering autonomy among learners. Teachers' professional development and teacher education are key words and teachers' roles are as facilitators, counselors and resources.

In practice, approaches are often combined sometimes in eclectic ways. They can also be regarded as dimensions of learner autonomy since they are interdependent.

2.3.4.1. How Can Learner Autonomy be promoted?

In an ideal educational setting, learner autonomy is sought after not only by learners and teachers but also national and international educational institutions.

Paiva (2005), in parallel to Benson's approaches, proposes that changes in educational policies, curriculum and assessment; making use of technology; teacher training; suitable context can promote development of autonomy.

2.3.4.1.1. How Can We Promote Learner Autonomy Through Classroom Practice?

No students can be provided with all knowledge and skills they will need for their adult lives by the school or university. It is vital for young persons to have an understanding of themselves, an awareness of their environment and how it works and to have learned how to think and learn (Dam, 2000). This will promote students' self-esteem to cope with ever-changing life and engage in new learning experiences as socially responsible persons. That is, the goal of education is life-long learning or learner autonomy (Wenden, 1987). For language education, it is a fact that no language schools or programs can teach students all that they need for their communication inside and outside the classroom. Learning a language is a life-long process that can be done mostly by the learners. They are the ones who know their communicative needs best and the ones who know what needs to be done and how to do it to achieve their goals. Taking learners' roles as crucial in their learning and stimulating learner autonomy should be the aim of language education because autonomous language learners would be truly effective language learners and language users (Little, 2001).

Brajcich (2000:1) suggests that learners should be given opportunities to learn according to their own individual styles and preferences. He suggests a list of practical tips to develop learner autonomy in language classrooms:

- 1. Encourage students to be interdependent and to work collectively.* In this way, the students will depend on their teachers less, and gain more autonomy. Pairs and groups can read dialogues together, do information-gap activities and consult each other on the meaning and clarification of the task at hand.
- 2. Ask students to keep a diary of their learning experiences.* This will make students become more aware of their learning preferences and start to search new ways to become more independent learners.
- 3. Explain teacher/student roles from the outset.* Asking the opinions of students on issues related to the roles delivered to teacher and learner can be useful. Learning about autonomy may be something the students are hearing for the first time and some might

react negatively to it. Therefore, learning about learner autonomy should be introduced gradually over time as the students experience its benefits.

4. *Progress gradually from interdependence to independence.* Enough time should be allocated for students to adjust to new learning strategies. The development of learner autonomy should be started from larger groups, then work towards smaller groups, pairs, and finally individuals.

5. *Give the students projects to do outside the classroom.* This will increase the students' motivation and responsibility.

6. *Give the students non-lesson classroom duties to perform.* This will also increase the student's motivation.

7. *Have the students design lessons or materials to be used in class.* An "interests and ability" inventory at the beginning of every school year is a good practice of this point. This will promote student control over the management of learning resources.

8. *Instruct students on how to use the school's resource centers.* Students should be encouraged to go and use school libraries, language labs and language lounges.

9. *Emphasize the importance of peer-editing, corrections, and follow-up questioning in the classroom.* This will increase the interdependence among the students involved.

10. *Encourage the students to use only English in class.* By telling the students that this is a great chance for them to use only English, and few opportunities like this exist for them, students will be able to achieve their goals easier.

11. *Stress fluency rather than accuracy.* With this, much more information could be conveyed and absorbed if students spent less time worrying about their language accuracy.

12. *Allow the students to use reference books.* They can develop autonomy and independence by looking up information and meanings on their own, in pairs, or in groups.

We can list aspects of fostering autonomy as:

- political and pedagogical aspects;
- national / international setting and classroom practices;

- theoretical and practical dimensions.

When students get autonomy in their learning, they may become "more effective learners and carry on their learning outside the classroom, transferring learning strategies from one specific school subject and/or activity to others" (Ellis and Sinclair, 1989). However, they will have a better chance to attain these ideal attitudes if the teacher aims his/her teaching at preparing students for independence.

Autonomy for the learner means that he takes responsibility over his own learning process. It does not mean that learners are to be held responsible for the failure of educational systems throughout the world. Teachers must find ways to lead their learners to this autonomy, however, they have to share with them this responsibility of helping students develop their rationality and of helping them cultivate rational judgment and action.

Little (2001) states that language learning depends crucially on language use: we can learn to speak only by speaking, to read only by reading, and so on. Thus, in formal language learning, the scope of learner autonomy is always constrained by what the learner can *do* in the target language; in other words, the scope of our autonomy as language learners is partly a function of the scope of our autonomy as target language users.

2.3.4.2. The ELP as a Tool for Promoting Learner Autonomy

A language learner having an ELP should do the following items which direct them to be inevitably an autonomous learner (Little, 2004):

- Know what their whole language skills are according to the common reference levels and reflect on the next targets of theirs in order to improve their learning.
- Give more importance to productive skills (such as, writing and speaking) (which many learners try to avoid) as they see that their improvement really makes sense in the future.

- Reflect on the learning styles that are suitable to them so they learn how to learn which makes their job and also their teachers' job easier. This may also help them learn other languages, which leads to plurilingualism objectives of the ELP.
- When they discover the transparency of the targets of ELP, they can clearly see how their learning improves so they are keener on being engaged in the activities especially in communicative ones.

As ELP helps the teacher to convert any communicative activity into a recorded task and plan for individuals and the whole class both in short term and long term, and use portfolio approach in the assessment criteria. Thus, the learners experience the process and the results of implementation of ELP and become more autonomous in the long run.

Learner autonomy and the ELP

According to the *Principles and Guidelines* that define the ELP and its functions, the ELP reflects the Council of Europe's concern with "the development of the language learner", which by implication includes the development of learning skills, and "the development of the capacity for independent language learning"; the ELP, in other words, "is a tool to promote learner autonomy". The *Principles and Guidelines* insist that the ELP is the property of the individual learner, which in itself implies learner autonomy.

Learners exercise their ownership not simply through physical possession, but by using the ELP to plan, monitor and evaluate their learning. In this, self-assessment plays a central role: the ongoing, formative self-assessment that is supported by the "can do" checklists attached to the language biography, and the periodic, summative self-assessment of the language passport, which is related to the so-called self-assessment grid in the CEF (Council of Europe, 2001: 26–27).

Learner autonomy and the CEF (Common European Framework)

The CEF does not concern itself with learner autonomy as such. However, learner autonomy is implied by the concept of *savoir-apprendre* (“ability to learn”), which the CEF defines as “the ability to observe and participate in new experience and to incorporate new knowledge into existing knowledge, modifying the latter where necessary” (Council of Europe, 2001: 106). When the CEF tells us that “ability to learn has several components, such as language and communication awareness; general phonetic skills; study skills; and heuristic skills”, we may be prompted to recall the ways in which the ELP can support the development of reflective learning skills.

In principle Little (2008) proposes that the ELP can support the “autonomy” classroom in three ways:

1. When checklists reflect the demands of the official curriculum, they provide learners (and teachers) with an inventory of learning tasks that they can use to plan, monitor and evaluate learning over a school year, a term, a month or a week
2. The language biography is explicitly designed to associate goal setting and self-assessment with reflection on learning styles and strategies, and the cultural dimension of L2 learning and use
3. When the ELP is presented (partly) in the learners’ target language, it can help to promote the use of the target language as medium of learning and reflection

Thus, it is clear that in language learning, the development of autonomy requires that learners use the target language at once as medium of classroom communication, channel of learning, and tool for reflection. And learners take their first step towards autonomy when they recognize that they are responsible for their own *learning, which is the starting point where learner autonomy and ELP meet.*

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

3.1. Setting and Participants

The study was conducted at Selcuk University School of Foreign Languages with the participation 69 EFL instructors in the fall semester of 2009-2010 academic year. 16 (23.1%) of these had a teaching experience between 0-3 years (started teaching between 2006 - 2009); 25 (36.2%) of these had 4-6 years of experience (started teaching between 2003-2005); 28 (40.5%) of these had more than 6 years of experience.

At the time the study was conducted the preparatory class was compulsory but not a prerequisite for the continuation of the undergraduate study. Completing the first year at preparatory class, the students take some of the courses in English in their subject area at their departments.

The main aim of the preparatory class at School of Foreign Languages is to educate learners who can express themselves in the target language and who can fully follow and contribute to their study areas in the target language (<http://www.ydyo.selcuk.edu.tr/>).

3.2. Data Collection

The primary aim of the study was to find out students' and teachers' attitudes towards and perceptions about learner autonomy, the students' actual autonomous language learning practices and those recommended by their teachers. It was expected that the investigation would shed light on how ready students and their teachers appeared to take on the autonomous learning conditions and opportunities. The findings would also provide guidance for curriculum development, material revisions and inform classroom practice.

As for administering the questionnaires (Appendix A, Appendix B) to the participants, the researcher first visited the classes in order to clarify the purpose of the study. Besides, an introduction to the questionnaire was made in order to remove any ambiguities. The data collection process lasted approximately a month.

3.3. Instrument

To examine learner autonomy behaviours and perceptions and ELP knowledge of teachers, two questionnaires were used in the study. To gauge the knowledge of instructors on ELP, a 5-item questionnaire was designed by the researcher.

3.3.1. Learner Autonomy Questionnaire

The questionnaire, (see Appendix A) was adapted from Camilleri's (1997) study, 'Learner Autonomy: The Teacher's Views'. The original study investigated teachers' attitudes towards learner autonomy. The study was based on the idea that teachers may consider some aspects of teaching and learning a foreign language to be more suitable than others for the implementation of learner autonomy. To collect data for the study, a detailed questionnaire was administered to the English teachers in Slovenia, Malta, Poland, The Netherlands, Estonia, and Belorussia. The questionnaire was in English and members agreed to translate it into the subjects' mother tongue, if it was felt necessary. In October 1997, the questionnaires were administered in Belorussia, Estonia, Malta (Teacher Group 1), Malta (Teacher Group 2), Netherlands, Poland, and Slovenia by project members and the contributors.

The items in the questionnaire were designed to investigate English language instructors' ideas about how much the learners should be involved in determining different aspects of language learning areas. These included whether learners should be given a share of responsibility in the decision making process regarding the course objectives; course content; material selection; study time, place and pace; lesson methodology; class management; record-keeping; homework tasks; self-assessment;

learning tasks; and learning strategies. Respondents were asked to indicate their opinions on a five-point Likert scale, with ‘not at all’, ‘little’, ‘partly’, ‘much’ and ‘very much’ options for each item. In addition, respondents were given the option of writing a comment after each individual question.

3.3.2. ELP Knowledge Questionnaire

The researcher designed a 5-item questionnaire which gathers both quantitative and qualitative data for the study. The questionnaire asked the instructors to what extent the participants had knowledge on ELP related to learner autonomy and how ELP, which helps promote learner autonomy, can be prepared in EFL classes.

3.4. Data Analysis

The data for this study was composed of both quantitative data, from the learner autonomy and ELP knowledge questionnaires, and qualitative data, from the instructors’ statements through which they justified their opinions. Quantitative data were collected through Likert-type scale in the questionnaire. The questionnaire was conducted in English to avoid the possibility of meaning confusion due to translation, but in order to have participants state their reasons comfortably; they were allowed to state their reasons in English or in Turkish. Qualitative data were used in the interpretation of quantitative data in the discussion of results.

Before administering the questionnaire, the participants were informed about the aim of the study, and were guaranteed that the results would be confidential, and would not be used for other aims. The data collection process lasted for three weeks.

In order to analyze the qualitative data, the Statistical Packages for Social Science (SPSS 10.0) was used.

Both descriptive and inferential statistical procedures were used to present the data and draw conclusions. In order to present the data, the items in the questionnaire were grouped under various topics according to topic similarity.

For the questionnaires, items on the five-point Likert scale were assessed values ranging from 0 to 4. The scoring for the statements were as follows: 0 = Not at all, 1 = Little, 2 = Partly, 3 = Much, 4 = Very much

For qualitative data analyses, the reasons given to the questionnaire items in teacher questionnaire were first transcribed and then analyzed. After the reasons were analyzed, the reasons which were common were chosen and used as the basis for qualitative data for this study.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The aim of this study was to determine the views and perceptions of English instructors and students at SOFL on learner autonomy and ELP. Although the idea of learner autonomy is not new, it has recently been widely referred to, and given importance in the field of ELT (Smith, 2008). It is also one of the recent applications of ELP that the Turkish Education System is trying to put into practice in the classrooms of every subject. English instructors and students were requested to give their opinions on ELP and learner autonomy since the results would give valuable data for the sake of education of foreign language itself. Besides, the results may help the teachers develop a more fruitful language teaching practice.

4.1. The attitudes of EFL Instructors towards Learner Autonomy

The questionnaire on learner autonomy has thirteen different items referring to different classroom experiences. Each item in the questionnaire has various number of sub-categories. These items are about objectives of a course, course content, material selection, time, place and pace of a course, learning tasks, methodology, classroom management, record-keeping, homework tasks, what is to be learned from materials, learner explanations, learning procedures and assessment in general. Teachers were asked to answer each sub-category with an item and state their reasons. Some of the teachers did not state any reason for their choices. The number of teachers who stated reasons are provided while presenting the results for each item. The number of the teachers who stated similar reasons are given in parentheses.

Each response type (i.e. ‘not at all’, ‘little’, ‘partly’, ‘much’, ‘very much’) was calculated and interpreted individually. However, Camilleri’s (1999) division was also used in the interpretation of the responses to get the big picture in terms of the perceptions of teachers on learner autonomy. According to this division, entries, “not at all” and “little” were accepted as a resistance to learner autonomy. “Partly” was interpreted as collaboration and negotiation between teacher and learner. “Much” and

“very much” were interpreted as strong support for learner autonomy. Camilleri (1999) presents the categorization for each reply as in the following;

Reply Interpretation

“Not at all”; “Little” indicates resistance to learner autonomy, “Partly” indicates collaboration and negotiation between teacher and learner, “Much”; “Very much” indicates strong support for learner autonomy. For this study, entries “not at all” and “little” were accepted as a resistance to learner autonomy. “Partly” was interpreted as collaboration and negotiation between teacher and learner. “Much” and “very much” were interpreted as strong support for learner autonomy.

4.1.1. The Instructors’ overall views on learner autonomy

As it is one of the main objectives of this study to display the views of EFL instructors on learner autonomy, a table of overall view on learner autonomy would be useful to show.

Table 4.1. An Overall Frequencies of views of instructors on learner autonomy

Item no	Item name	Subtitle	Not at all		Little		Partly		Much		Very much	
			N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
1	Objectives	a) short term	0	0	12	17.4	27	39.1	20	29	10	14.5
		b) long term	2	2.9	19	27.5	22	31.9	16	23.2	10	14.5
2	Course content	a) topics	0	0	20	29	17	24.6	16	23.2	16	23.2
		b) tasks	0	0	30	43.5	19	27.5	15	21.7	5	7.2
3	Selecting	a) textbooks	15	21.7	20	29	23	33.3	5	7.2	6	8.7

	materials	b) AVA	6	8.7	19	27.5	33	47.8	5	7.2	6	8.7
		c) realia	10	14.5	14	20.3	23	33.3	8	11.6	14	20.3
4	Time	a) time	12	17.4	27	39.1	25	36.2	5	7.2	0	0
	place	b) place	17	24.6	24	34.8	23	33.3	5	7.2	0	0
	pace	c) pace	0	0	17	24.6	26	37.7	26	37.7	0	0
5	Learning tasks		6	8.7	20	29	27	39.1	10	14.5	6	8.7
6	Methodology	a) ind./pair/group work	4	5.8	13	18.9	22	31.9	25	36.2	5	7.2
		b) use of materials	9	13	13	18.9	16	23.2	25	36.2	6	8.7
		c) type of class activities	4	58	18	261	20	29	15	217	12	174
		d) type of homework act.	4	58	18	261	18	261	13	188	16	232
7	Classroom Management	a) position of desks	4	58	23	333	14	203	22	319	6	87
		b) seating of students	7	101	19	275	7	101	30	435	6	87
		c) discipline matters	9	13	19	275	20	290	5	72	16	232
8	Record keeping	a) of work done	10	145	20	29	14	203	21	304	4	58
		b) of marks gained	16	232	14	203	19	275	10	145	10	145
		c) attendance	13	188	24	348	10	145	18	261	4	58
9	Homework tasks	a) quantity	17	246	4	58	38	551	10	145	0	0
		b) type	12	174	14	203	27	391	10	145	6	87
		c) frequency	12	174	28	406	24	348	5	72	0	0

10	What is to be learned from materials	a) texts	14	203	17	246	27	391	11	159	0	0
		b) AVA	19	275	12	174	33	478	5	72	0	0
		c) realia	14	203	15	217	33	478	7	101	0	0
11	explanations		4	58	6	87	9	13	24	348	26	377
12	Learning procedures		1	1.4	6	87	3	42	31	449	22	319
13	assessment	a) weekly	6	87	21	304	13	188	8	116	21	304
		b) monthly	2	29	11	159	22	319	17	246	17	246
		c) annually	2	29	12	174	20	29	18	261	17	246

When we look at the overall frequencies of views on learner autonomy, we can suggest that in most of the 32 items in 13 main questions in the questionnaire, the participants supported learner autonomy. Out of a total 32 items the instructors supported learner autonomy in 16 items (in one item the highest frequency was equal to *partly*), and suggested there should be a negotiation of learner autonomy in 7 items. And the participants stated that they resist to learner autonomy in 10 items. A detailed analysis of the results for each item in the questionnaire will be given in the following sections.

4.2. The attitudes of EFL Instructors towards Learner Autonomy on different aspects of classroom instructional decisions

4.2.1. Decisions on Objectives

The first item in the questionnaire was about learner involvement in establishing the objectives of a course of study. The instructors were asked to state their opinions and

reasons for these opinions about short-term and long-term objectives. Table 4.2. presents the results of the first question in the questionnaire.

Table 4.2. EFL instructors' Views on learner involvement in establishing the objectives of a course of study.

Item	Type	Not at all		Little		Partly		Much		Very much	
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Objectives	Short-term	0	0	12	17.4	27	39.1	20	29	10	14.5
	Long-term	2	2.9	19	27.5	22	31.9	16	23.2	10	14.5

4.2.1.1. Decisions on Short Term objectives

Table 4.3. Decisions on Short Term objectives

Item	Type	Not at all		Little		Partly		Much		Very much	
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Objectives	Short-term	0	0	12	17.4	27	39.1	20	29	10	14.5

The results for short-term objectives show that none of the teachers stated that learners should not at all be involved in establishing short-term objectives. It can be derived that the learners should participate in determining short term objectives. The teachers who stated for the participation of learners in determining short term objectives stated that the learners' participation is very important if the course of the study is short since the results of the study can be motivating for the learners. 12 (17.4%) teachers answered *little* and they stated that the students did not have enough experience and knowledge to determine the goals of a course of a study.

They also stated that it was the teachers' duty to determine the objectives of a course of a study. As for the resistance to learner autonomy in deciding short term objectives makes only 17.4% of all, which shows that there is not a strong resistance to learner autonomy in establishing short term objectives.

Twenty seven (39.1%) participants stated that students should be *partly* involved in decisions related to establishing short-term objectives of a course. The reasons generally addressed to the issues of motivation and negotiation with the learners. They stated that the learners should have a say in short term objectives. They also stated that the participation of learners increases the motivation of learners in a course. It is also stated that students would participate more if they were involved in decisions relating short term objectives.

Nearly half of the participants expressed supportive opinions towards learner involvement in short-term objectives. 20 (29%) teachers answered *much*, and 10 (14.5%) answered *very much*. When the number of teachers who responded *much* and *very much* are combined, 43.5% of the instructors had a strong support for learner autonomy. Of the participants who stated their reasons for supporting of the learner autonomy in establishing short term-goals declared that students knew their weaknesses and strengths so their decisions would be invaluable. They also stated that effective learning could only be achieved by including the learners in the learning process and in this way the motivation could be raised.

4.2.1.2. Decisions on Long Term objectives

Table 4.4. Decisions on Long Term objectives

Item	Type	Not at all		Little		Partly		Much		Very much	
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Objectives	Long-term	2	2.9	19	27.5	22	31.9	16	23.2	10	14.5

Although 17,4% of the instructors expressed resistance against learner autonomy in short term objectives, 30,4% (n=21) of the instructors stated resistance against learner autonomy in establishing long term objectives. Of the instructors who stated their reasons for resisting against learner autonomy in establishing long term objectives suggested that learners are not capable of setting objectives nor do they have the essential background knowledge. They also stated that setting long term objectives is a professional issue in an institution and the learners may not have enough knowledge on the subjects that they have not learnt enough.

22 (31.9%) instructors stated that students should be *partly* involved in decisions related to establishing long-term objectives of a course. Of the participants who supported the negotiation between the teachers and the learners in establishing long term objectives suggested that no matter how little knowledge may the learners have the collaboration should be maintained between the learners and teachers so that an effective learning environment takes place.

A relatively higher percentage (37.7%) was observed for the support of learner autonomy in establishing long term objectives. Of the participants strongly supporting learner autonomy stated that if the students were in the setting objectives process they would feel they were an important part of the course, thus would have a higher motivation for language learning. The reasons generally attributed to positive feelings and motivation for students if they are involved in the establishing long term goals of a course of study.

4.2.2. Decisions on Course Content

In the questionnaire, the second question was about the instructors' opinions about learner autonomy in deciding course content in terms of topics and tasks. We tried to learn what the instructors' opinions and reasons about learner autonomy in deciding the course content. Table 4.5. presents the findings for learner involvement in decisions of course content.

Table. 4.5. Teachers' opinions on learner involvement in the course content decisions

Item	Type	Not at all		Little		Partly		Much		Very much	
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Course	Topics	0	0	20	29	17	24.6	16	23.2	16	23.2
Content	Tasks	0	0	30	43.5	19	27.5	15	21.7	5	7.2

Table 4.6. Decisions on Topics

Item	Type	Not at all		Little		Partly		Much		Very much	
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Course	Topics	0	0	20	29	17	24.6	16	23.2	16	23.2
Content											

None of the participants of the study stated that the learners should not at all participate in deciding the topics of the course. As we can see from the table above, 20 (29%) instructors responded "little" showing resistance against learner autonomy in deciding topic contents of the course. of the respondents who expressed resistance against learner autonomy mostly stated that the decisions of topics of the course cannot be left to students as they are not capable of choosing the most suitable topics related to the course and the topics are generally pre-determined by the textbooks they followed. They also stated that even if they could choose topics, out of the book

contents, it was generally impossible to accomplish as they had a heavy load of subjects to fulfil throughout the term.

Seventeen (24.6) instructors suggested that students should collaboratively participate in deciding on topics of the course. The instructors stated that students should be taken into consideration while deciding some of the topics of the course. They also stated that because of the individual differences every topic cannot be suitable for every student but they were cautious that every difference could not take place in the course content.

Of the participants 16 (23.2%) instructors responded *much* and 16 (23.2%) instructors responded *very much* for this question making a total of 46.4% strong support for the learner autonomy in deciding topics of the course. The instructors stated that it was essential for student motivation as they know their areas of interest. They also suggested that if the topics were chosen according to the interests of the students the class hours would be more interesting.

Table 4.7. Decisions on Tasks

Item	Type	Not at all		Little		Partly		Much		Very much	
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Course	Tasks	0	0	30	43.5	19	27.5	15	21.7	5	7.2
Content											

In contrast to the views of the participants on learner autonomy in deciding the topics of the course, the participants showed a strong resistance to the learner autonomy in deciding the tasks of the course with a rate of 43.5% (n=30). The reasons varied but the most general one was that the learners did not have the pedagogical knowledge the teachers had, so they could not choose the best tasks for learning as their teachers could.

27.5% (n= 19) of the participants answered partly for the learner autonomy in deciding tasks of a course. Nearly the same amount of the instructors answered partly for task deciding as for the topic deciding. The instructors suggested a negotiation but it should not be an unlimited choice of tasks. The teacher should provide enough variety of tasks and the students would choose the ones that suited them most.

28.9% (n= 20) of the participants declared strong support for the learner autonomy in deciding tasks of a course. They suggested that if the students decide the tasks they prefer this helps increase the motivation of the students and makes the lessons more enjoyable. One of the respondents stated that learners would learn better if they did the tasks they wanted.

This part of the questionnaire was about learner autonomy in selecting materials for the course. Results of the study in terms of material selection are as in Table 4.8.

4.2.3. Selecting Materials

Table 4.8. Selecting Materials

Item	Type	Not at all		Little		Partly		Much		Very much	
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Selecting materials	Textbooks	15	21.7	20	29	23	33.3	5	7.2	6	8.7
	Audio-visual materials	6	8.7	19	27.5	33	47.8	5	7.2	6	8.7
	Realia	10	14.5	14	20.3	23	33.3	8	11.6	14	20.3

4.2.3.1. Selecting Textbooks

Table 4.9. Selecting Textbooks

Item	Type	Not at all		Little		Partly		Much		Very much	
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Selecting Materials	Textbooks	15	21.7	20	29	23	33.3	5	7.2	6	8.7

For selecting materials, half of the participants in the study expressed a strong resistance to learner autonomy with a cumulative 50.7% (n=35). They stated that the students shouldn't directly choose the textbook materials as this needed professionals. One of the respondents stated that after a number of textbooks were chosen for the course, the learners would partly participate in deciding which textbook to be followed.

Of the participants 33.3% (n=23) responded *partly* for learner autonomy in selecting textbook materials. The instructors stated that when the textbooks that were interesting the students would be more interested in the lessons; therefore lessons would be more prolific.

11 (15.9%) of the participants expressed strong support for learner autonomy in selecting materials of the course. This relatively low support for learner autonomy for textbooks was due to the fact that the textbooks are traditionally selected by the administrations of the institutions beforehand. The participants who expressed support for learner autonomy stated that since the students would use the textbooks they should have a strong say in deciding textbooks of the course.

4.2.3.2. Selecting Audio-visual Aids

Table 4.10. Selecting Audio-visual Aids

Item	Type	Not at all		Little		Partly		Much		Very much	
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Selecting Materials	Audio-visual materials	6	8.7	19	27.5	33	47.8	5	7.2	6	8.7

25 (36.2%) of the participants expressed resistance to learner autonomy in selecting audio-visual aids. The reasons were generally similar to the reasons stated in selecting textbooks. They generally stated that selecting audio-visual materials should be the school administrators' job.

Nearly half of the participants (n=33; 47.8%) stated that there should be a negotiation between the teachers and the students in terms of selecting audio-visual materials of the course. They stated that the students would choose among the materials chosen for the course.

Only 11 (15.9%) of the participants expressed strong support for learner autonomy in selecting audio-visual materials of the course. They argued by increasing learner autonomy the motivation would increase thus make the language lessons more efficient. The use of decided audio-visual materials would make the language lessons more colourful as stated by the students.

4.2.3.3. Selecting Realia

Table 4.11. Selecting Realia

Item	Type	Not at all		Little		Partly		Much		Very much	
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Selecting Materials	Realia	10	14.5	14	20.3	23	33.3	8	11.6	14	20.3

Twenty-four (34.8%) of the participants expressed resistance to learner autonomy in selecting realia to be used in language classes. The reasons for the resistance were related to the difficulty of choosing and using realia in language classes.

Twenty-three (33.3%) participants stated that there should be a negotiation between the teachers and the students in terms of selecting realia for the course. The reasons generally attributed to the issue of raising motivation.

Twenty-two (31.9%) of the participants expressed strong support for learner autonomy in selecting realia for the course. The reasons were related to motivation as well as maintaining the feeling of being involved by the side of learners in language classes since motivation and being involved are two of the most important necessities of successful language learning environments. As Nunan (1997) suggests that learners can be given a greater sense of ownership and control over their learning by being encouraged to bring their own authentic data into the classroom.

Table 4.2.4. Decisions on Time, Place and Pace of the Lesson

This question in the questionnaire investigated the teachers' views on learner autonomy in deciding the time, place, and pace of the lesson. As can be seen in the table below, time and place were regarded as administrative issues by most of the

participants. There was a stronger support for learner autonomy in deciding the pace of the lesson though. The table below presents the results of the study on learner involvement in decisions on the time, place and pace of the lesson.

Table 4.12. Teachers’ opinions on learner involvement in decisions on time, place and pace of the lesson

Item	Type	Not at all		Little		Partly		Much		Very much	
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Decisions	Time	12	17.4	27	39.1	25	36.2	5	7.2	0	0
	Place	17	24.6	24	34.8	23	33.3	5	7.2	0	0
	Pace	0	0	17	24.6	26	37	26	37.7	0	0

4.2.4.1. Decisions on Time of the Lesson

Table 4.13. Decisions on Time of the Lesson

Item	Type	Not at all		Little		Partly		Much		Very much	
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Decisions	Time	12	17.4	27	39.1	25	36.2	5	7.2	0	0

Thirty nine (56.5%) participants stated their resistance to learner autonomy in decisions related to time by answering *not at all* (n=12; 17.4%) and *little* (n=27; 39.1%). The general reasons stated by the instructors were about the disciplinary problems that might arise when the students were involved in decisions related to the

time of the lessons. It would be impossible to reach a consensus about the time as different opinions could arise.

Twenty-five (36.2%) participants responded *partly* for learner involvement in decisions on time of the lesson. The participants all referred to the time of the lesson not to the amount of the lesson most probably it is an administrative issue. They stated that the evening classes would want to start earlier to have some time after the classes. They also stated that the students who had sleeping problems may want to come to the class a bit later which would help the students have a positive attitude towards the language classes.

Of the 5 (7.2%) participants who stated strong support for learner autonomy in deciding the time of the lesson suggested that this would increase the participation and motivation of the learners.

Table 4.14. Decisions on Place of the Lesson

Item	Type	Not at all		Little		Partly		Much		Very much	
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Decisions	Place	17	24.6	24	34.8	23	33.3	5	7.2	0	0

More than half of the instructors (n=41;59,4%) expressed their resistance to learner autonomy in deciding the place of the course. The reasons of the instructors generally focused on the facts that it was impossible to decide or change the place of the course as it was an administrative issue to decide and the students would abuse their autonomy. They stated that it was both impossible and ineffective to have a lesson out of their regular classes.

Twenty-three (33.3%) instructors responded partly on the learner autonomy in deciding the place of the course. of the reasons stated in the questionnaire, one is that

sometimes it would be possible to have lessons in the garden when it was the summertime.

Only 5 (7.2%) of the instructors expressed support for the learner autonomy in deciding the place of the course. The support for learner autonomy in deciding the place of the course was as low as the support for the learner autonomy in deciding the time of the course. The reasons were similar to the reasons stated for time of the course.

Table 4.15. Decisions on Pace of the Lesson

Item	Type	Not at all		Little		Partly		Much		Very much	
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Decisions	Pace	0	0	17	24.6	26	37	26	37.7	0	0

For this question in the question in the questionnaire, the instructors mostly supported the autonomy in deciding the pace of the questionnaire. We can say that the instructors were more positive for this item than the first two. Only 17 (24.6%) instructors had negative opinions on learner autonomy in deciding the pace of the course.

Twenty-six (37.7%) instructors stated that there should be a negotiation in deciding the pace of the course. The instructors stated in the questionnaire that as the learners were the major elements of the courses they should be asked about this issue.

And 26 (37.7%) of the instructors expressed strong support for the learner autonomy in deciding the pace of the course. The support for learner autonomy in deciding the pace of the course was expressed by the reasons that they were already doing this by setting the pace hand in hand with the students. When students cannot catch up with the pace, the education of EFL would be meaningless.

4.2.5. Decisions on the Choice of Learning Tasks

The fifth question in the questionnaire asked the teachers to state their opinions about learner involvement in decisions on the choice of learning tasks. Table 4.16 presents the results related to this question.

Table 4.16. Decisions on the Choice of Learning Tasks

Item	Not at all		Little		Partly		Much		Very much	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Choice of Learning Tasks	6	8.7	20	29	27	39.1	10	14.5	6	8.7

Results revealed that 26 (37.7%) instructors responded *not at all* and *little* showing resistance to learner autonomy in deciding learning tasks stating that the learners were not capable of choosing the learning tasks. They also stated that the tasks the students choose may not help the learning process as the ones the teacher decides or chooses.

A relatively high number of instructors (n=27; 39.1%) stated that it is a negotiable issue. The students may be asked to choose learning tasks out of some pre-planned learning tasks. The instructors also suggested that it would raise the level of motivation when preference was taken into consideration.

16 (23.3%) instructors responded *much* and *very much* for learner autonomy in choosing learning tasks. The reasons mostly referred to the motivation issue and feeling of responsibility, which the students would have when they were given the chance to choose learning tasks in a course. They also stated they their views were important because they would perform the learning tasks.

4.2.6. Decisions on Methodology of the lesson

In this part of the questionnaire the instructors were asked to their opinions on learner involvement in decisions related to methodological issues including individual/pair/group work, use of materials, type of classroom activities, and type of homework activities. The table below presents the results of the opinions of teachers for methodological issues.

Teachers were asked to state their opinions on learner involvement in decisions related to methodological issues including individual/pair/group work, use of materials, type of classroom activities, and type of homework activities in the sixth question of the questionnaire. Overall results revealed that the majority of the teachers either expressed negotiation with learners by answering *partly* or supported learner involvement by answering *much* or *very much* in methodological subjects.

Table 4.17. Teachers’ Opinions on Learner Involvement in Decisions on Methodology of the Lesson

Item	Type	Not at all		Little		Partly		Much		Very much	
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Decisions on Methodology of the lesson	Individual/Pair/Group Work	4	5.8	13	18.9	22	31.9	25	36.2	5	7.2
	Use of Materials	9	13	13	18.9	16	23.2	25	36.2	6	8.7
	Type of Classroom Activities	4	5.8	18	26.1	20	29	15	21.7	12	17.4
	Type of Homework Activities	4	5.8	18	26.1	18	26.1	13	18.8	16	23.2

4.2.6.1. Decisions on Individual/Pair/Group Work

Table 4.18. Decisions on Individual/Pair/Group Work

Item	Type	Not at all		Little		Partly		Much		Very much	
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Decisions on Methodology of the lesson	Individual/Pair/Group Work	4	5.8	13	18.9	22	31.9	25	36.2	5	7.2

For this part of questionnaire, 17 (24.6%) of the instructors expressed resistance to learner autonomy in deciding individual/pair/group work of the course. Of the reasons stated for resistance generally was about which decision should be taken for these activities as different students might have different opinions on individual/pair/group work. They suggested that each student might have different preference so there wouldn't be a consensus on the decision. They also stated that the students might not have enough knowledge in deciding the type of the work. There would be confusion if the type of work not suitable for the activities was chosen.

Twenty-two (31.9%) of the instructors responded partly for this question. The reasons focused on the balance of the decisions. They argued if they were in the position of making decisions they would be more interested in the type of work they were doing.

Most of the instructors (n=30; 43.4%) expressed much and very much for this question in the questionnaire. They generally stated that if their views were taken into consideration, the lessons and works in the course would appeal to their taste and they would participate and learn more efficiently. Some instructors also suggested that the decision should be made by the students after a while, not at the beginning of the course, since the teacher would know which decision would be the most efficient for the class.

4.2.6.2. Decisions on Use of Materials

Table 4.19. Decisions on Use of Materials

Item	Type	Not at all		Little		Partly		Much		Very much	
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Decisions on Methodology of the lesson	Use of Materials	9	13	13	18.9	16	23.2	25	36.2	6	8.7

For this part of the question twenty-two (31.9%) of the instructors responded not at all and little. The reasons were; this decision needs professional knowledge so involving the students in this decision is impossible as they are not capable of deciding, and the students are not experienced enough to judge the material.

Sixteen (23.2%) of the instructors responded partly for this part. The instructors suggested that the instructors still decide but students may sometimes be asked on this issue to make them feel as active participants of the course.

Thirty one (44.9%) of the participants expressed strong support for learner autonomy in deciding the use of the material of the course. They suggested by involving the students in deciding the use of material the lessons would be much more efficient and fruitful by increasing the motivation of the learners.

Table 4.2.6.3. Decisions on Type of Classroom Activities

Table 4.20. Decisions on Type of Classroom Activities

Item	Type	Not at all		Little		Partly		Much		Very much	
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Decisions on Methodology of the lesson	Type of Classroom Activities	4	5.8	18	26.1	20	29	15	21.7	12	17.4

Twenty-two (26.1%) of the instructors expressed resistance to learner autonomy by responding not at all and little to this question. The reasons were generally about the inadequate knowledge of the learners as for the other questions. They argued that the students would not know the best classroom activity to be able to learn.

Twenty (29%) of the participants argued that there should be a negotiation for the decision on the type of the classroom activities. They argued that sometimes the suggestions from the students would come out the most beneficial for learning.

For this part of the sixth question in the questionnaire most of the participants (n=27; 39.1%) expressed strong support for learner autonomy in deciding the type of the classroom activities. They argued that motivation would be higher if the type of the classroom activities were according to the students' preferences. They also argued that enjoyable lessons would come out if the decision was a product of students' styles, strategies and preferences.

4.2.6.4. Decisions on Type of Homework Activities

Table 4.21. Decisions on Type of Homework Activities

Item	Type	Not at all		Little		Partly		Much		Very much	
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Decisions on Methodology of the lesson	Type of Homework Activities	4	5.8	18	26.1	18	26.1	13	18.8	16	23.2

Twenty-two (26.1%) of the instructors expressed resistance to learner autonomy by responding not at all and little. They argued that if the decisions were taken by the learners there would be no homework activities as the students generally don't like homework activities. They also stated that homework is an inseparable part of the course since it strengthens the learning process so the decisions on this issue should be left to the learners.

Eighteen (26.1%) of the participants argued that there should be a negotiation for the decision on the type of homework activities. They stated that the decision of the existence or the quantity of homework shouldn't be left to the students but the type should be negotiated with the learners.

Twenty-nine (41.9%) of the participants responded much and very much for this item in the sixth question in the questionnaire. They argued that this would increase the efficiency because the students wouldn't do the type of homework that didn't stimulate their interests and styles. By doing this, higher levels of motivation could be established. One of the instructors stated that some of the students didn't do the reading exercises homework s/he gave but all the students did the homework exercise which was grammar and vocabulary mixed.

4.2.7. Decisions on Classroom Management

Seventh question in the questionnaire asked the instructors to state their opinions on learner involvement in deciding classroom management. There were three items including position of desks, seating of students and discipline matters. Table 4.22. shows the results of these three items.

Table 4.22. Teachers' Opinions on Learner Involvement in Decisions on Classroom Management

Item	Type	Not at all		Little		Partly		Much		Very much	
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Decisions on Classroom Management	Position of Desks	4	5.8	23	33.3	14	20.3	22	31.9	6	8.7
	Seating of Students	7	10.1	19	27.5	7	10.1	30	43.5	6	8.7
	Discipline Matters	9	13	19	27.5	20	29.0	5	7.2	16	23.2

4.2.7.1. Decisions on Position of Desks

Table 4.23. Decisions on Position of Desks

Item	Type	Not at all		Little		Partly		Much		Very much	
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Decisions on Classroom Management	Position of Desks	4	5.8	23	33.3	14	20.3	22	31.9	6	8.7

Twenty-seven (39.1%) of the instructors expressed their resistant views on the learner autonomy in deciding the positions of desks. They stated that this would lead to confusion in the class and there would be students abusing this autonomy especially during the exams. Some of the instructors stated that there was no need to learner autonomy because the students were already deciding where to sit and there would be no need to change the positions of desks as it was impossible to change in some classes.

Fourteen (20.3%) of the instructors stated there would be a negotiation between the teachers and the learners to decide the position of the desks. They argued that for some activities during the class hour the positions would be changed. Some stated that it would help but it was impossible though.

Twenty-eight (40.6%) of the instructors suggested there should be a greater learner autonomy for decisions on position of desks. All the reasons attributed to the relaxation of the students if they had the autonomy to decide the positions of desks. They argued that there would be a relaxing atmosphere and would be more practical. Two of the instructors stated that the girls generally had to sit in front desks, but they would want to sit somewhere else in a different design of desks in the classroom. For some activities, such as pair work, students may need to sit face to face.

4.2.7.2. Decisions on Seating of Students

Table 4.24. Decisions on Seating of Students

Item	Type	Not at all		Little		Partly		Much		Very much	
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Decisions on Classroom Management	Seating of Students	7	10.1	19	27.5	7	10.1	30	43.5	6	8.7

Twenty-seven (39.1%) of the instructors resisted to learner autonomy on decisions on seating of students by responding *not at all* and *little*. They argued that it would be meaningless to leave the decision to the students would lead to some problem in some cases and exams. They also stated that if the decision was left to the students it would be difficult to change the partners for different exercises.

Only seven (10.1) of the participants suggested the decision should be negotiated between the teachers and learners. They argued that learner autonomy on this issue should be but limited; the last decision should belong to the teachers. They also suggested that if the students had a say in this issue they would feel more comfortable.

A large number of instructors (n=36; 52.2%) expressed strong support for learner autonomy in deciding the seating of the students. They stated that there was no room for the teachers to decide the seating of the learners. It is not a subject to be negotiated as the students sit in places where they feel the most comfortable. Students should sit wherever they want. They also argued that the teachers could not know whether the students can hear or see from the back or feel well in the front seats.

4.2.7.3. Decisions on Discipline Matters

Table 4.25. Decisions on Discipline Matters

Item	Type	Not at all		Little		Partly		Much		Very much	
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Decisions on Classroom Management	Discipline Matters	9	13	19	27.5	20	29.0	5	7.2	16	23.2

The results revealed that 28 (40.6%) instructors expressed their resistance to learner autonomy by responding not at all or little for this item in this question. They argued that this might be abused as the students use this autonomy for their benefits and could cause chaos in the classrooms. Some stated that it would be impossible to apply and meaningless to try.

Twenty (29%) of the instructors stated that it was an issue that could be negotiated. They warned that there had to be some general rules but some others can be negotiated; for example, whether latecomers could be invited to the class, whether code-switching is punished by reading a paragraph at home as homework could be decided in negotiation with the students.

Twenty-one (30.4%) of the participants expressed strong support for learner autonomy for decisions on discipline matters. The instructors also stated that the students at university level are aware of everything and it is acceptable to negotiate the matters. They suggested that there should be some general rules which cannot be negotiated of course. Some stated that if they decide the discipline matters they know better what is right or wrong.

4.2.8. Decisions on Record-keeping

This question in the questionnaire asked the instructors to state their opinions on learner involvement in decisions on record-keeping. It had three sub items as ‘of work done’, ‘of marks gained’, and ‘attendance’. The results for this question are presented in the table below.

Table 4.26. Decisions on Record-keeping

Item	Type	Not at all		Little		Partly		Much		Very much	
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Decisions on Record-keeping	Work Done	10	14.5	20	29	14	20.3	21	30.4	4	5.8
	Marks Gained	16	23.2	14	20.3	19	27.5	10	14.5	10	14.5
	Attendance	13	18.8	24	34.8	10	14.5	18	26.1	4	5.8

4.2.8.1. Decisions on Record-keeping of Work Done

Table 4.27. Decisions on Record-keeping of Work Done

Item	Type	Not at all		Little		Partly		Much		Very much	
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Decisions on Record-keeping	Work Done	10	14.5	20	29	14	20.3	21	30.4	4	5.8

Thirty (43.5%) of the instructors resisted to learner autonomy on decisions on record keeping of work done. When we look at the results the instructors mostly resisted the learner autonomy on decisions on record keeping of work done. The instructors generally stated that the learners cannot be as responsible as teachers and shouldn't be either. They also argued that they couldn't trust the learners on this aspect of the course.

Fourteen (20.3%) of the instructors responded partly for this part of the question, stating that it could be negotiated. They argued that to improve the feeling of responsibility, the decisions of record keeping should be negotiated between the teachers and the students. They stated that half of the records can be kept by the students and the others by the teachers. To improve the efficiency of record keeping students could be said that the records would be collected at the end of the terms.

Twenty-five (36.2%) of teachers responded *much* and *very much* for this question with. The reasons were generally about improving the feeling of responsibility. They suggested that the more they supported the feeling of responsibility the more students would be motivated for the lessons. They also argued that the students could see their improvements over time themselves.

4.2.8.2. Decisions on Record-keeping of Marks Gained

Table 4.28. Decisions on Record-keeping of Marks Gained

Item	Type	Not at all		Little		Partly		Much		Very much	
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Decisions on Record-keeping	Marks Gained	16	23.2	14	20.3	19	27.5	10	14.5	10	14.5

Again as in the first item in this question the instructors resisted to learner autonomy in deciding the record-keeping of marks gained. 39 (56.5%) of the instructors responded not at all and partly for this question. They argued that this can't be the responsibility of the learners, it is the responsibility of only the teachers to keep records of marks gained. And they stated that there was no reason why the record-keeping should be negotiated with the students and it would be impossible to make a decision when it is an open subject to be negotiated.

Twenty (29%) of the instructors responded partly for this item in the question. They argued that except for the official documents such as quizzes, mid-term exams and final exams, the learners should and could decide or determine some other type of gradable exams such as class presentations, diary keeping ...etc., to get grades. They argued this would improve the motivation in the class.

Ten (14.5%) of the instructors responded *much* and *very much* for this item. But they were also cautious as this was an administrative matter to be decided on. They suggested to improve the motivation and responsibility apart from the teachers they should keep the records of their marks. This would help them see where they were and where they had been at the beginning of the course.

4.2.8.3. Decisions on Record-keeping of Attendance

Table 4.29. Decisions on Record-keeping of Attendance

Item	Type	Not at all		Little		Partly		Much		Very much	
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Decisions on Record-keeping	Attendance	13	18.8	24	34.8	10	14.5	18	26.1	4	5.8

Forty eight (69.6%) of the instructors responded not at all and little for the learner autonomy in deciding the record-keeping of attendance. The most remarkable reason, of all the reasons stated for the resistance to learner autonomy on this issue, is that the teachers do not trust the students on this issue. They also stated that studying a foreign language is different from studying law. It is not a subject that can be learnt at home or by reading alone only. They also suggested that it was an administration matter.

Ten (14.5%) of the participants responded partly for this question. They stated this would increase self esteem and responsibility. Besides, they would know how much they attended and how much they didn't.

Eleven (15.9%) of the instructors showed strong support for learner autonomy in deciding the record-keeping of attendance. They argued that when we trusted them we would see how responsible they would be. They also stated that if they are old enough they must know their own responsibilities; on the contrary, they would come to the classes only for the sake attendance.

For this part of questionnaire, we can say that there is a general mistrust towards learners in terms of record keeping. When we look from the humanistic point of view, as Benson (2001) suggests the teachers should suggest the learners to record

their own progress to improve the feeling of responsibility and self-reflection capacity.

4.2.9. Decisions on Homework Tasks

This question in the questionnaire asked the teachers to state their opinions on learner autonomy in deciding the homework tasks in terms of ‘quantity’, ‘type’ and ‘frequency’. Overall results are presented in table 4.2.9. below:

Table 4.30. Teachers’ Opinions on Learner Involvement in Decisions on Homework Tasks

Item	Type	Not at all		Little		Partly		Much		Very much	
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Decisions on Homework Tasks	Quantity of Homework Tasks	17	24.6	4	58	38	55.1	10	14.5	0	0
	Type of Homework Tasks	12	17.4	14	20.3	27	39.1	10	14.5	6	8.7
	Frequency of Homework Tasks	12	17.4	28	40.6	24	34.8	5	7.2	0	0

4.2.9.1. Decisions on Quantity of Homework Tasks

Table 4.31. Decisions on Quantity of Homework Tasks

Item	Type	Not at all		Little		Partly		Much		Very much	
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Quantity of Homework Tasks		17	24.6	4	58	38	55.1	10	14.5	0	0

Twenty-one (30.4%) of the participants stated their resistance to learner autonomy in deciding the quantity of homework tasks. They argued that the learners shouldn't decide and wouldn't know how much homework is necessary and enough because they don't have the pedagogical capacity to decide. They stated the learners always have a tendency to do less work after school, and if this decision were left to them they wouldn't do anything out of class.

Thirty eight (55.1%) instructors answered *partly* for this item. They suggested that it would be better for the teachers to ask the students how much homework they could do after school and this would lead to better results. But the teachers should be cautious as the students tend to have less homework to do.

Only ten (14.5%) instructors responded *much* for this item in the questionnaire showing strong support for learner autonomy in deciding the quantity of homework tasks. They stated that the students were the ones who would know how much homework they could do. So the quantity should be decided by them. But the instructors were also cautious about the last decision in case of an abuse of the decision.

4.2.9.2. Decisions on Type of Homework Tasks

Table 4.32. Decisions on Type of Homework Tasks

Item	Type	Not at all		Little		Partly		Much		Very much	
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Decisions on Homework Tasks	Type of Homework Tasks	12	17.4	14	20.3	27	39.1	10	14.5	6	8.7

Twenty-six (37.7%) instructors responded *not at all* and *little* to this item in the questionnaire. The main reason was that the learners had little knowledge on what type of homework would be suitable for some purposes. They also argued that it would be abused because students would choose the types that would be the easiest for them and which might not help them improve their language learning processes.

Twenty-seven (39.1%) of the instructors suggested there should be a negotiation between the learners and the teachers on the decisions on the type of homework to be done after school. They stated that it would be more realistic to let the students choose among the types of homework that suited them most. Some instructors argued that when the students were left to choose the type of assignments they performed better.

Sixteen (23.2%) instructors responded much and very much for this item in this question. The reasons were generally the motivation. They argued it would improve the intrinsic motivation and the students would be more comfortable with homework if the decisions are made by them. They generally referred to their experiences in their teaching careers. They stated they got better results when the students did the type of homework that suited their interests most.

4.2.9.3. Decisions on Frequency of Homework Tasks

Table 4.33. Decisions on Frequency of Homework Tasks

Item	Type	Not at all		Little		Partly		Much		Very much	
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Decisions on Homework Tasks	Frequency of Homework Tasks	12	17.4	28	40.6	24	34.8	5	7.2	0	0

Forty (58%) instructors responded not at all and little for this question. We can see that there is a very strong resistance to learner autonomy in deciding the frequency of homework tasks. They argued that there would be little or no homework when the decision is left to the students. They also argued that the teachers are the capable and professional people who can decide how frequent the students would have homework by looking at the improvements and necessities of students.

Twenty-four (34.8%) of the participants responded partly for this question. They stated that there should be homework but the frequency can be arranged according to the levels and capacities of the students. They argued that overloading and giving very frequent homework can have negative effects on learning process.

Only 5 (7.2%) instructors responded much for this question in the questionnaire. This result shows that there is a great and negative opinion on learner autonomy in deciding the frequency of homework. The instructors who gave support to learner autonomy in deciding the frequency of homework stated that it was the student who would do homework and it should be student who would decide how often the homework was assigned. They also argued that the students would be more motivated when they feel comfortable with the frequency and the load of homework.

4.2.10. Decisions on What is to be Learned from Materials

The tenth question in the questionnaire investigated instructors' opinions on learner involvement in deciding what is to be learned from the materials. The question had three items including 'texts', 'Audio-visual aids (AVA)' and 'realia'. More teachers showed resistance to learner autonomy when compared to the other responses for all of these items. Table 4.2.10. presents the results of the tenth question.

Table 4.34. Teachers' Opinions on Learner Involvement in Decisions on What is to be Learned from Materials

Item	Type	Not at all		Little		Partly		Much		Very much	
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Decisions on What is to be Learned from Materials	What is to Be Learned from Texts	14	20.3	17	24.6	27	39.1	11	15.9	0	0
	What is to Be Learned from AVA	19	27.5	12	17.4	33	47.8	5	7.2	0	0
	What is to Be Learned from Realia	14	20.3	15	21.7	33	47.8	7	10.1	0	0

4.2.10.1. Decisions on What is to Be Learned from Texts

Table 4.35. Decisions on What is to Be Learned from Texts

Item	Type	Not at all		Little		Partly		Much		Very much	
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Decisions on What is to be Learned from Materials	What is to Be Learned from Texts	14	20.3	17	24.6	27	39.1	11	15.9	0	0

Thirty one (44.9%) of the participants in this study stated their resistance to learner autonomy *not at all* and *little*. They argued that this is a professional matter to be decided on couldn't be left to learners who lack the background knowledge. They also argued that it would be impossible as they had to follow a curriculum.

Twenty-seven (39.1%) of the participants responded partly for this item in this question. The instructors suggested that under some kind of control students would be free to choose topics, texts, exercises to be completed in and out of the class. They argued this would increase motivation and the learners would be more comfortable.

Eleven (15.9%) of the participants stated that there should be learner autonomy in deciding what to be learned from texts. The reasons generally referred to the issue of motivation. They argued the learners would be more motivated if they had autonomy in deciding what is to be learned from texts.

4.2.10.2. Decisions on What is to Be Learned from AVA

Table 4.36. Decisions on What is to Be Learned from AVA

Item	Type	Not at all		Little		Partly		Much		Very much	
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Decisions on What is to be Learned from Materials	What is to Be Learned from AVA	19	27.5	12	17.4	33	47.8	5	7.2	0	0

Thirty one (44.9%) of the instructors responded *not at all* and *little* resisting to learner autonomy in deciding what is to be learned from AVA. The reasons were nearly the same as the ones recorded for the first item in this question. They argued that the learners lack the professional knowledge to decide what to be learned from AVA.

Thirty three (47.8%) of the instructors responded *partly* for this item in this question. They stated that under the control or guidance of the teacher, the students could make decisions. This would make students feel more comfortable and interested in the course.

Only five (7.2%) of the participants stated they strongly supported learner autonomy in deciding what is to be learned from AVA. Of these participants one instructor stated that the learners would feel more involved if they had a say on the issues. This would lead to higher levels of motivation on the part of learners.

4.2.10.3. Decisions on What is to Be Learned from Realia

Table 4.37. Decisions on What is to Be Learned from Realia

Item	Type	Not at all		Little		Partly		Much		Very much	
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Decisions on What is to be Learned from Materials	What is to Be Learned from Realia	14	20.3	15	21.7	33	47.8	7	10.1	0	0

29 (42%) of the instructors responded *not at all* and *little*. The reasons were not very different from the reasons given for the other items of this question. They argued that as the learners were not as qualified and professionals as the teachers their decisions wouldn't be as effective and efficient as the decisions made by the teachers.

33 (47.8%) of the participants responded *partly* for this item in this question. The instructors argued that in some cases the decisions of students might be asked under observation of teachers. It improves learner motivation.

7 (10.1%) of the instructors responded *much* and *very much* for this question. They argued that it not only improves motivation but also helps students feel involved in the lesson. As Benson (2001) suggested the learners should be referred for their needs and interests in terms of the materials of the course.

4.2.11. Encouraging Learners to Find Their Own Explanations to Classroom Tasks

Eleventh question in the questionnaire asked the instructors to state their opinions on encouragement of learners to find their own explanations to classroom tasks. The instructors mostly preferred *much* and *very much* for their answers. Table 4.38. presents the results for this question.

Table 4.38. Teachers’ Opinions on Encouraging Learners to Find His/Her Own Explanations to Classroom Tasks

Item	Type	Not at all		Little		Partly		Much		Very much	
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Encouraging Learners to Find Their Own Explanations to Classroom Tasks		4	5.8	6	8.7	9	13	24	34.8	26	37.7

A total of 10 instructors (14.5%) responded *not at all* and *little* for this question. Only one of the participants stated the reason as encouraging the learners was not necessary.

Nine (13%) of the participants responded *partly* for this question. They argued that sometimes the learners should be supported to find their own explanations to classroom tasks. They suggested it would help improve the quality of learning

As we can see from the table, a total of fifty (72.4) instructors supported to provide the students opportunities to state their views on classroom tasks so that they could have effective roles in directing their own learning process. This also helps them take responsibility in their own learning process.

4.2.12. Encouraging Learners to Find out about Learning Procedures by Themselves

The twelfth question in the questionnaire asked the instructors to state their views on encouragement of learners to find out about learning procedures by themselves. As for the previous question the majority of instructors responded *much* and *very much* for this question. Results for this question are presented in the table below.

Table 4.39. Encouraging Learners to Find out about Learning Procedures by Themselves

Item	Type	Not at all		Little		Partly		Much		Very much	
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Encouraging Learners to Find out about Learning Procedures by Themselves		1	1.4	6	8.7	3	4.2	31	44.9	28	40.6

Seven (10.1%) of the participants stated their negative opinions on encouraging learners to find learning procedures by themselves. They argued that encouraging them might be useful but the students always need their help. They also suggested if the students had enough motivation the teachers didn't have to help or encourage them.

Three (4.2%) of the participants responded *partly* for this question. They argued that under the guidance of teacher, the students should be supported. They suggested this kind of learning is more useful and effective.

Fifty nine (85.4%) of the instructors gave strong support to encourage learners to find out about learning procedures themselves. The instructors argued that this was

what effective language learning should be. They also argued that when they learn learning procedures by themselves they feel more involved in the process.

4.2.13. Encouraging Learners to Assess Themselves Rather Than to be Tested

The last question in the questionnaire investigated the instructors' opinions on learner encouragement to assess themselves 'weekly', 'monthly' and 'annually'. The table below reveals the results for this question.

Table 4.2.13. Teachers' opinions on encouraging learners to assess themselves rather than to be tested.

Table 4.40. Encouraging Learners to Assess Themselves Rather Than to be Tested

Item	Type	Not at all		Little		Partly		Much		Very much	
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Encouraging Learners to Assess Themselves	Weekly	6	8.7	21	30.4	13	18.8	8	11.6	21	30.4
	Monthly	2	2.9	11	15.9	22	31.9	17	24.6	17	24.6
	Annually	2	2.9	12	17.4	20	29	18	26.1	17	24.6

4.2.13.1. Encouraging Learners to Assess Themselves Weekly

Table 4.41. Encouraging Learners to Assess Themselves Weekly

Item	Type	Not at all		Little		Partly		Much		Very much	
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Encouraging Learners to Assess Themselves	Weekly	6	8.7	21	30.4	13	18.8	8	11.6	21	30.4

Twenty-seven (39.1%) instructors responded not at all and little for this question resisting to encouraging learners to assess themselves weekly. They stated that this could be impossible to carry out as the students wouldn't be objective. Some of the instructors stated that assessing needs pedagogical education and students don't have this quality.

Thirteen (18.8%) instructors responded partly for this item of the question. Some instructors suggested that some kind of assessments could be done under the guidance and this would motivate the students. Some pop-up quizzes could be assessed by the students weekly.

Twenty-nine (32%) instructors supported encouraging learners to assess themselves weekly. They argued that students must be taught how to assess themselves first. Otherwise, there would be problems with the objectivity of assessments. They also stated that the students would see their weaknesses from the first place.

4.2.13.2. Encouraging Learners to Assess Themselves Monthly

Table 4.42. Encouraging Learners to Assess Themselves Monthly

Item	Type	Not at all		Little		Partly		Much		Very much	
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Encouraging Learners to Assess Themselves	Monthly	2	2.9	11	15.9	22	31.9	17	24.6	17	24.6

Thirteen (18.8%) instructors responded *not at all* and *little* for this question. The reasons of the instructors were nearly as the same as the ones stated for the first item in this question. The general objection point was the lack of pedagogical education and the problem of objectivity.

Twenty-two (31.9%) of the instructors stated that learners should be encouraged partly to assess themselves monthly. The instructors stated that the monthly assessment by the learner was necessary as it would enable them to see their progress and this would stimulate them for a better learning process.

Thirty four (49.2%) of the instructors responded *much* and *very much* for this question. They argued this would motivate them to be better as they would know where they were and where they should be. When they see their weaknesses and strengths themselves they would be more advantageous in the learning process.

4.2.13.3. Encouraging Learners to Assess Themselves Annually

Table 4.43. Encouraging Learners to Assess Themselves Annually

Item	Type	Not at all		Little		Partly		Much		Very much	
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Encouraging Learners to Assess Themselves	Annually	2	2.9	12	17.4	20	29	18	26.1	17	24.6

Fourteen (20.3%) instructors responded *not at all* and *little* for learner autonomy in assessing themselves annually. They stated it wouldn't be objective and more problems would arise since no student would want to fail. They also stated that it wouldn't be applied as it was impossible to have efficient results.

Twenty (29%) instructors responded partly for this question. The participants stated that some types of assessment, such as a small part of a midterm exam, could be done by learners. They were also cautious that it wouldn't be too much as too much assessment by the students would have negative effects.

Thirty five (50.7%) participants responded *much* and *very much* for this question. They argued that the assessment by learners themselves annually would increase the intrinsic motivation, but it had to be under the control of teachers. Some of the instructors stated that annual assessment would enable learners to be aware of their long-term objectives.

4.3. Results of the Knowledge on ELP

Table 44. Results of the Knowledge on ELP

Item	Not at all		Little		Partly		Much		Very much	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Knowledge on ELP	8	11.6	23	33.3	18	26.1	20	29	0	0
Knowledge on EL Portfolio	8	11.6	21	30.4	20	29	15	21.7	5	7.2
ELP Promotes LA	15	21.8	6	8.7	1	1.4	42	60.9	5	7.2
Materials to be put in ELP	25	36.2	23	33.3	21	30.4	0	0	0	0

When we look at the results of the ELP knowledge of instructors, we can say that with a percentage of 33.3%, 23 instructors stated that they know little about European Language Portfolio, 18 instructors stated they know little, 20 of them stated that they know much and only 8 of them stated that they knew nothing about European Language Portfolio.

The second item in this survey asked the participants how much they knew about European Language Portfolio. Again with this item the highest percentage was for the answer *little*. 21 (30.4%) of the participants stated that they knew *little* about European Language Portfolio. 20 (29%) of the participants stated they knew partly, 15 (21.7%) of the participants stated they knew much, 8 (11.6%) of the participants stated they knew nothing and 5 (7.2%) of the participants stated they knew very much about European Language Portfolio.

The third item in the survey questioned the instructors' views whether European Language Portfolio would help promote Learner Autonomy. A high number of the participants (n=42; 60.9%) stated that European Language Portfolio would help

promote Learner Autonomy. 15 (21.8%) of the participants stated ELP would not help at all, 6 (8.7%) of the participants stated ELP would help little, 5 (7.2%) of the participants stated ELP would help very much and 1 (1.4%) of the participants stated ELP would partly promote learner autonomy.

The next item in the survey investigated if the students had any materials to be put in a European Language Portfolio to show a record of their competence in English. 25(36.2%) of the participants stated their students didn't have any materials to be put in ELP to show a record of their competence in English. This high number can be explained by the fact that ELP is not implemented in our educational institutions and it is not well known as can be seen from the results in the table above. So, the students don't care about keeping materials to put in European Language Portfolio. Another interesting result that can be deduced from the table is that none of the participants responded *much* and *very much* for this question. Only 23 participants stated that their students have little, and 21 instructors stated *partly* that their students have materials to be put in a European Language Portfolio to show a record of their competence in English.

The last question in this survey asked the instructors how European Language Portfolio could be prepared in class. Since most of the instructors knew nothing or little about European Language Portfolio; this section was answered by only 19 instructors. They suggested that students' work, including homework, projects, diaries, personal language activities could be prepared as a portfolio. Some others stated that beside project assignments, their writing activities, e-mails, presentations could be included in their portfolio. They also suggested that role-plays in the class can be video-recorded.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

5.1. Summary of the Study

Learner autonomy is described as the notion as one of the important approaches that ensures learners to determine their learning goals, content and progression. (Benson, 2001). Although teachers are accepted as a key to promote learner autonomy in classes, the promotion of learner autonomy depends not only the teachers but also the educational policy (Paiva, 2005 cited in Sabancı, 2007). Although it is not very common, there are some EFL contexts in higher education where the autonomy concept is encouraged. European Language Portfolio enhances learner autonomy as the learners have an opportunity to keep records of work, to set the pace of learning ...etc. Since ELP is closely related to learner autonomy, the relationship needs a study.

The purpose of this study was to investigate EFL instructors' attitudes towards learner autonomy and their opinions on the ELP (European Language Portfolio) in the SOFL program at Selcuk University. This study sought to answer the following research question:

1. What do the instructors at SOFL think about learner autonomy?
2. How much do the instructors at SOFL know about ELP?

The data for learner autonomy of the study was collected through a learner autonomy questionnaire which was adapted from the questionnaire developed by Camilleri (1997). The data for European Language Portfolio was collected through a semi-qualitative and semi-quantitative 5-item questionnaire developed by the researcher. In this study both qualitative and quantitative data was collected. To discover the instructors' view on learner autonomy, quantitative data was analyzed by looking into descriptive statistics including frequencies and percentages of each question in the questionnaire. The frequency and percentages were calculated to see the participants' resistance, negotiation and support views on learner autonomy.

Qualitative data of the study for learner autonomy was gathered by the answers stated for each item in the questionnaire and used in the interpretation of quantitative data in the discussion of the results. The questionnaire was given to 83 instructors at SOFL, but only 69 of them completed the questionnaire.

Findings of the study revealed that participants had collaborative and supportive perceptions of learner autonomy.

Participants of the study expressed strong support for learner autonomy in terms of objectives for a course (both short term and long term), course content (both topics and tasks), pace of the course, individual/pair/group work organizations, methodology (use of materials and type of class and homework activities), position of desks and seating of students, encouragement towards learner explanations, learning procedures, and self-assessment of learners.

As for the items which the instructors expressed their views as ‘partly,’ which is interpreted as support for negotiation and collaboration with learners about the course were selection of AVA, pace of the lesson, learning tasks, quantity and type of homework tasks, and things to be learned from AVA, and realia.

As for the items which the instructors expressed resistance to learner autonomy were about the selection of textbooks and realia, time and place of the lesson, record-keeping of work done, marks gained and attendance, discipline matters, frequency of homework tasks, and things to be learned from texts. In these issues the participants stated that learner autonomy is either impossible or unnecessary.

5.2. Pedagogical Implications of the Study

As Cotterall (2000) and Benson (2001) suggested, learners should be given the opportunities to set their own goals and objectives for the learning process both for short-term and long-term periods. The results of the study for learner autonomy in deciding short-term and long-term objectives did not contradict what the literature suggested on this issue. The participants of the study also expressed great support for

learner autonomy in deciding course content, both topics and tasks. They generally stated that the learner involvement in deciding topics and tasks of course would increase learner motivation. However, Brown (2001) suggested that learners should be asked to list the topics on which they would like to work. In terms of results for learner autonomy in deciding the course tasks and topics, the results of this study indicated more support for learner autonomy than the one of Camilleri's (1999) study.

The participants responded negatively on learner autonomy in deciding textbooks and realia of a course whereas they stated there should be collaboration in deciding AVA of the course. The participants responding negatively generally stated that the learners didn't have the professional experience that it required. They stated this was also an administrative matter to be decided on. The participants' responses were not supportive of learner autonomy in terms of deciding time and the place of the lesson, though they expressed support and stated collaboration should take place between learners and teachers when deciding the pace of the lesson. The participants expressing a negative attitude towards learner autonomy argued that it would be exploitable by the learners. When they explained their reasons for learner autonomy in deciding the pace of the lesson, they argued they were already giving opportunity to learner autonomy on this issue.

In deciding learning tasks of a course, the participants stated they were in support of negotiation and collaboration. But it is significant that there was as much resistance as support for learner autonomy. The results also revealed that the participants expressed supportive opinions for learner autonomy on methodological matters. For classroom management the instructors revealed support for learner autonomy in deciding the position of desks and the seating of students. But the participants exhibited resistance to learner autonomy on discipline matters. The participants also showed resistance to learner autonomy in record keeping. But Benson (2001) suggested that students should be encouraged to keep records as it would help them to feel involved in the learning process.

The instructors stated there should be a place for learner autonomy in deciding the quantity and type of homework tasks, but they stated their resistance in terms of frequency of homework. The participants exhibited resistance to learner autonomy in what is to be learned from texts but they supported negotiation or collaboration in terms of AVA and realia. For learner autonomy in terms of *formulating their own explanations, finding own strategies, and self assessment of learners* the instructors exhibited great support for learner autonomy. For self-assessment, Benson stated it would have various positive contributions to learning process. Sancar (2001) suggested encouraging learners to take responsibility for their own learning helps them to be aware of their learning process. As Little (2004) suggested the awareness may help learners set up their learning goals, plan and practice learning activities, select and use appropriate learning strategies, monitor their progress, and actively engage in the learning process. For assessment, Little (2003) suggested that learners would become active in the evaluation of their own progress and this would provide learners to reflect on to what extent they would learn.

For ELP, most of the participants stated that they (68.1%) think ELP will promote learner autonomy. However, they also stated nearly half of the participants knew nothing or little on ELP and European Language Passport. And the answers on how ELP can be prepared in class generally suggested that homework, assignments, projects, diaries of students would be kept.

5.3. Suggestions for Further Studies

This study was conducted with 69 instructors working at Selcuk University, School of Foreign Languages. In further studies, in addition to instructors, both students' and administrators' views on learner autonomy and ELP can be investigated.

This study was only conducted with university level EFL instructors. Primary school and high school EFL teachers can be included in addition to instructors in further studies. This will make a triangulation of data. With the help of this triangulation,

different views on learner autonomy and ELP can be researched and conditions for promotion of learner autonomy can be found.

In further studies, the classroom applications of teachers and instructors can be observed to determine what teachers and instructors can do to promote learner autonomy and ELP applications.

5.4. Conclusion

The study was done to find out what the instructors at School of Foreign Languages think about Learner Autonomy and ELP. Generally, the participants of this study support learner autonomy, results that were also supported through the ELP project. However being ready or only supporting learner autonomy is not enough to promote learner autonomy in its context. Administrational regulations and professional development is necessary to promote learner autonomy. Besides, Lamb (2000) suggests that teachers should also be prepared professionally and psychologically. In-service training may help the instructors to be informed about learner autonomy.

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APPENDIX

APPENDIX A

THE LEARNER AUTONOMY QUESTIONNAIRE

Dear Colleague,

This questionnaire aims to collect data for a study conducted at Selcuk University. The questionnaire is being distributed to the teachers of Selcuk University, School of Foreign Languages to gather information on teachers' perspectives on Learner Autonomy.

Your responses will be confidential. They will only be used in this study and will not be analyzed as individual responses.

Thank you for your contribution in advance.

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Learner Autonomy Questionnaire

Please circle the number of your choice

KEY TO ANSWERS

0 = Not at all	1 = Little	2 = Partly	3 = Much	4 = Very much
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1. How much should the learner be involved in establishing the **objectives** of a course of study?

1a. short-term objectives

0	1	2	3	4
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1b. long-term objectives

0	1	2	3	4
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Please state your reasons: (You can write in Turkish)

1a)

1b)

2. How much should the learner be involved in deciding the **course content**?

2a. topics

0	1	2	3	4
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2b. tasks

0	1	2	3	4
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Please state your reasons: (You can write in Turkish)
2a)
2b)

3. How much should the learner be involved in **selecting materials**?

3a. textbooks

0	1	2	3	4
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3b. audio-visual aids

0	1	2	3	4
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3c. realia

0	1	2	3	4
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Please state your reasons: (You can write in Turkish)

3a)

3b)

3c)

4. How much should the learner be involved in decisions on the **time, place** and **pace** of the lesson?

4a. time

0	1	2	3	4
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4b. place

0	1	2	3	4
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4c. pace

0	1	2	3	4
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Please state your reasons: (You can write in Turkish)

4a)

4b)

4c)

5. How much should the learner be involved in decisions on the choice of **learning tasks**?

0	1	2	3	4
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Please state your reasons: (You can write in Turkish)

6. How much should the learner be involved in decisions on the **methodology** of the lesson?

6a. individual/pair/group work

0	1	2	3	4
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6b. use of materials

0	1	2	3	4
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6c. type of classroom activities

0	1	2	3	4
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6d. type of homework activities

0	1	2	3	4
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Please state your reasons: (You can write in Turkish)

6a)

6b)

6c)

6d)

7. How much should the learner be involved in decisions on **classroom management**?

7a. position of desks

0	1	2	3	4
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7b. seating of students

0	1	2	3	4
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7c. discipline matters

0	1	2	3	4
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Please state your reasons: (You can write in Turkish)

7a)

7b)

7c)

8. How much should the learner be involved in decisions about **record-keeping**?

8a. of work done

0	1	2	3	4
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8b. of marks gained

0	1	2	3	4
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8c. attendance

0	1	2	3	4
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Please state your reasons: (You can write in Turkish)

8a)

8b)

8c)

9. How much should the learner be involved in decisions on **homework tasks**?

9a. quantity

0	1	2	3	4
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9b. type

0	1	2	3	4
---	---	---	---	---

9c. frequency

0	1	2	3	4
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Please state your reasons: (You can write in Turkish)

9a)

9b)

9c)

10. How much should the learner be involved in decisions on **what is to be learned from materials** given by the teacher?

10a. texts

0	1	2	3	4
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10b. audio-visual aids

0	1	2	3	4
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10c. realia

0	1	2	3	4
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Please state your reasons: (You can write in Turkish)

10a)

10b)

10c)

11. How much should the learner be encouraged to find his or her own **explanations** to the classroom tasks?

0	1	2	3	4
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Please state your reasons: (You can write in Turkish)

12. How much should the learner be encouraged to find out **learning procedures** by him or herself?

0	1	2	3	4
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Please state your reasons: (You can write in Turkish)

13. How much should the learner be encouraged to **assess** himself or herself, rather than be tested?

13a. weekly

0	1	2	3	4
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13b. monthly

0	1	2	3	4
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13c. annually

0	1	2	3	4
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Please state your reasons: (You can write in Turkish)

13a)

13b)

13c)

APPENDIX B

ELP KNOWLEDGE QUESTIONNAIRE

0 =	1 =	2 =	3 =	4 =
Not at all	Little	Partly	Much	Very much

1. How much do you know about European Language Passport?

0	1	2	3	4
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2. How much do you know about European Language Portfolio?

0	1	2	3	4
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3. Do you think that European Language Portfolio help promote the Learner Autonomy?

0	1	2	3	4
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4. Do your students have any materials to be put in a European Language Portfolio to show a record of their competence in English?

0	1	2	3	4
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5. How can European Language Portfolio be prepared in class?

