

**PORTFOLIO UNVEILED: ATTITUDES OF ADMINISTRATORS,
TEACHERS, STUDENTS AND PARENTS TOWARDS THE USE OF
LANGUAGE PORTFOLIOS IN A PRIVATE PRIMARY SCHOOL
CONTEXT**



Alev KESMEN

JUNE 2018

**PORTFOLIO UNVEILED: ATTITUDES OF ADMINISTRATORS,
TEACHERS, STUDENTS AND PARENTS TOWARDS THE USE OF
LANGUAGE PORTFOLIOS IN A PRIVATE PRIMARY SCHOOL
CONTEXT**

**A THESIS SUBMITTED TO THE
GRADUATE SCHOOL OF EDUCATIONAL SCIENCES**

**OF
BAHÇEŞEHİR UNIVERSITY**

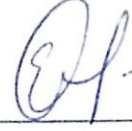
BY

Alev KESMEN

**IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR
THE DEGREE OF MASTERS OF ARTS
IN THE DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING**

JUNE 2018

Approval of the Graduate School of Educational Sciences



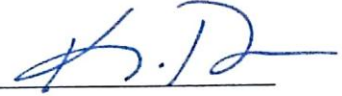
Asst. Prof. Dr. Enisa MEDE
Director

I certify that this thesis satisfies all the requirements as a thesis for the degree of Master of Arts.



Asst. Prof. Dr. Hatime ÇİFTÇİ
Coordinator

This is to certify that we have read this thesis and that in our opinion it is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a thesis for the degree of Master of Arts.



Asst. Prof. Dr. Kenan DİKİLİTAŞ
Supervisor

Examining Committee Members

Asst. Prof. Dr. Kenan DİKİLİTAŞ (BAU, ELT)
Asst. Prof. Dr. Enisa MEDE (BAU, ELT)
Asst. Prof. Dr. Aynur YÜREKLİ (İUE, ELT)



I hereby declare that all the information in this document has been obtained and presented in accordance with academic rules and ethical conduct. I also declare that, as required by these rules and conduct, I have fully cited and referenced all material and results that are not original to this work.

Name, Last Name: Alev KESMEN

Signature :



ABSTRACT

PORTFOLIO UNVEILED: ATTITUDES OF ADMINISTRATORS, TEACHERS, STUDENTS AND PARENTS TOWARDS THE USE OF LANGUAGE PORTFOLIOS IN A PRIVATE PRIMARY SCHOOL CONTEXT

Kesmen, Alev

Master's Thesis, Master's Program in English Language Education

Supervisor: Asst. Prof. Dr. Kenan DİKİLİTAŞ

June 2018, 163 pages

Finding ways and means towards increasing the quality of English language teaching has recently been one of the most important subject matters in Turkey. Therefore, portfolios have become one of the most popular tools of alternative assessment as they suggest lots of benefits both to the learners and to the teachers. This qualitative research study aimed at (1) exploring the attitudes and experiences of the stakeholders' (students, instructors, administrators, parents) towards the use of LPs as an alternative form of assessment in a private K-12 primary school in EFL context; (2) and to explore the applicability and practicability of LP in young learners' classes by revealing the benefits and possible challenges that might be confronted during its implementation phase. Semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions, e-mail interviews, and field-notes were used as data collection tools in the process.

This study mainly focused on thirty-six 3rd grade EFL students' attitudes and experiences to explore ways in which benefits and challenges of keeping a language portfolio (LP) are similar or different in a private k-12 school context in the western part of Turkey.

The results of this particular research study are believed to provide a kind feedback for educators which should guide them in taking necessary action for further practice of the portfolio process.

Keywords: Young Learners, Language Portfolio, Benefits, Challenges, Private Primary School, EFL



ÖZ

MASKESİZ PORTFOLYO: ÖZEL BİR İLKÖĞRETİM OKULUNDA DİL PORTFOLYOLARININ KULLANIMINA YÖNELİK YÖNETİCİ, ÖĞRETMEN, ÖĞRENCİ VE VELİ TUTUMU

Kesmen, Alev

Yüksek Lisans, İngiliz Dili ve Eğitimi Yüksek Lisans Programı

Tez Yöneticisi: Dr. Öğr. Üyesi Kenan DİKİLİTAŞ

Haziran 2018, 163 sayfa

İngilizce dil eğitiminin kalitesini artırmanın yolları ve araçlarını bulmak son zamanlarda Türkiye'de en önemli konulardan biri olmuştur. Bu nedenle, portfolyolar hem öğrencilere hem de öğretmenlere birçok fayda sunduğundan, alternatif değerlendirme en popüler araçlarından biri haline gelmiştir. Bu nitel araştırma çalışması, (1) paydaşların (öğrenciler, öğretmenler, yöneticiler, ebeveynler) yabancı dil olarak İngilizce (EFL) bağlamında özel bir k-12 ilkokulunda alternatif bir değerlendirme biçimi olarak dil portfolyolarının kullanımına yönelik tutum ve deneyimleri ile; (2) uygulama aşaması sırasında karşılaşılabilecek yararları ve olası zorlukları ortaya çıkararak, dil portfolyolarının genç öğrencilerin sınıflarında uygulanabilirliğini araştırmayı amaçlamıştır. Veri toplama aracı olarak yarı yapılandırılmış görüşmeler, odak grup görüşmeleri, e-posta görüşmeleri ve alan notları kullanılmıştır.

Bu çalışma temel olarak otuz altı 3. Sınıf İngilizce yabancı dil öğrencisinin, bir dil portföyü gerçekleştirmenin yarar ve zorluklarının, Türkiye'nin batı kesimindeki özel bir ilkokulunda ne ölçüde benzer veya farklı olduğunu araştırmaya yönelik tutum ve deneyimlerine odaklanmıştır.

Bu özel araştırma çalışmasının sonuçlarının, öğretmenler tarafından, portfolyo sürecinin ileride daha iyi bir şekilde uygulanması için gerekli önlemlerin alınmasına yönelik onlara rehberlik etmesinde bir tür geribildirim sağlayacağına inanılmaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Genç Öğrenciler, Dil Portfolyosu, Yararlar, Zorluklar, Özel İlköğretim Okulu, Yabancı Dil Olarak İngilizce





To my one and only daughter

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First of all, I would like to express my deepest gratitude to my supervisor Assist. Prof. Dr. Kenan DİKİLİTAŞ, for his invaluable support, academic advice, guidance, never ending encouragement and understanding throughout the process. I would also like to thank my master course teachers for sharing their expertise and knowledge, and for their support in my studies.

Secondly, I would like to state my gratefulness to all the teachers, and to the school administration together with the dearest students and their parents for their valuable contribution, support and constructive help throughout the implementation of the study. I am eternally grateful to the entire 3rd grade students for their enthusiasm, creativity, and efforts on behalf of the portfolio studies.

Thirdly, I would also like to thank the precious committee members, Asst. Prof. Dr. Enisa MEDE and Asst. Prof. Dr. Aynur YÜREKLİ who took time out of their busy schedule to sit on my thesis committee. Specially, I wish to show my gratitude to Asst. Prof. Dr. Wayne TROTMAN for his patience and valuable effort during the editing of my thesis.

At last but not least, I wish to thank my parents and my daughter to whom I dedicate my thesis. I would like to express my special appreciation to them for their support and patience throughout the writing process of this study. Even at times when I was hopeless they kept encouraging me. Finally, I would like to thank you for taking your time to read this particular study.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ETHICAL CONDUCT.....	iii
ABSTRACT.....	iv
ÖZ.....	vi
DEDICATION.....	viii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	ix
TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	x
LIST OF TABLES.....	xiv
LIST OF FIGURES.....	xv
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS.....	xvi
Chapter 1: Introduction.....	1
1.1 Background of the Study.....	1
1.2 Statement of the Problem.....	5
1.3 Purpose of the Study.....	6
1.4 Research Questions.....	6
1.5 Significance of the Study.....	7
1.6 Definitions.....	8
Chapter 2: Literature Review.....	10
2.1 Characteristics of Young Learners (YL).....	10
2.1.1 Language Skills of the YLs.....	11
2.1.2 Assessment of Young Language Learners.....	12
2.2 Learner Autonomy and Culture.....	13
2.2.1 Definition of Learner Autonomy.....	13
2.2.2 Characteristics of Autonomous Learners.....	14
2.2.3 Culture of Learning.....	15
2.2.4 Learner Autonomy and Culture.....	15
2.3 Assessment Types.....	16
2.3.1 Summative Assessment.....	17
2.3.2 Formative Assessment.....	17
2.3.3 Portfolios as an Alternative Method of Assessment.....	18
2.4 Current English Teaching Curriculum in Turkey.....	19

2.5	Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL).....	20
2.6	Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) and European Language Portfolios (ELP).....	21
2.6.1	Components of ELP.....	23
2.6.1.1	Language Passport.....	23
2.6.1.2	Language Biography.....	23
2.6.1.3	Language Dossier.....	23
2.6.2	ELP in Turkey.....	24
2.7	Portfolios.....	25
2.7.1	Definitions of Portfolios.....	25
2.7.2	Purposes of Portfolio Assessment.....	26
2.7.3	Types of Portfolios.....	27
2.7.4	Contents of Portfolios.....	27
2.8	Benefits of Portfolio Assessment.....	30
2.9	Challenges of Portfolio Assessment.....	32
2.10	Studies of Portfolio Assessment in Language Learning/Teaching.....	36
Chapter 3:	Methodology.....	39
3.1	Research Design.....	39
3.2	Setting and Participants.....	40
3.2.1	Setting.....	40
3.2.2	Participants.....	43
3.2.2.1	Students as Participants.....	43
3.2.2.2	Parents as Participants.....	44
3.2.2.3	Administrators as Participants.....	44
3.2.2.4	Teachers as Participants.....	45
3.2.2.5	The Role of the Researcher in the study.....	46
3.3	Procedures.....	47
3.3.1	Data Collection Instruments.....	47
3.3.1.1	Semi-structured Interviews with the Students.....	47
3.3.1.2	Focus Group Discussions with the Students.....	48
3.3.1.3	E-mail Interviews with the Parents.....	48

3.3.1.4	Semi-structured Interviews with the Administrators.....	49
3.3.1.5	Semi-structured Interviews with the English Teachers.....	49
3.3.1.6	Field Notes of the Researcher as the Teacher.....	50
3.3.2	Data Collection Procedures.....	50
3.3.2.1	Preparations during the LP Process.....	54
3.3.2.2	On the LP Exhibition Day.....	54
3.3.2.3	After the LP Process.....	54
3.3.3	Data Analysis Procedures.....	58
3.3.4	Trustworthiness.....	60
3.4	Limitations.....	62
Chapter 4:	Findings.....	64
4.1	Conceptualizing Language Portfolios from the Stakeholders' Points of View.....	64
4.2	Reaping the Benefits of Using LPs in a Private K-12 Primary School.....	71
4.2.1	Fostering Learner Autonomy, Self-assessment and Language-Development.....	71
4.2.2	Developing Awareness and Social Skills of the Learners.....	78
4.2.2.1	Enhancing Presentation Skills and Self-confidence.....	78
4.2.2.2	Increasing Sense of Responsibility.....	81
4.2.2.3	Increasing Motivation and Concentration.....	84
4.2.2.4	Managing Stress.....	86
4.2.3	Creating Opportunity for Teacher-Parent-Student Dialogue..	88
4.3	Experiencing Challenges in Using Language Portfolios in Private K-12 Primary Schools.....	91
4.3.1	Existence of Different Designs and Perceptions of LPs.....	92

4.3.2	Causing Time-Consuming Workload for the Teachers.....	96
4.3.3	Difficulty in Establishing Validity and Reliability.....	99
4.3.4	Foreign Language Anxiety (FLA) among YLs.....	102
Chapter 5:	Discussion and Conclusions.....	108
5.1	Discussion of Findings for Research Questions.....	108
5.2	Conclusions.....	115
5.3	Recommendations.....	120
REFERENCES	122
APPENDICES	134
A.	Participant Interview Schedule.....	134
B.	Semi-Structured Interview Questions for Students.....	135
C.	Sample Student Interview.....	136
D.	Focus Group Discussion Open-Ended Questions for Students.....	137
E.	Parents Approval Page.....	138
F.	Parents Portfolio Evaluation Sample.....	139
G.	Administrators Portfolio Evaluation Questions.....	140
H.	Administrators Portfolio Evaluation Sample.....	141
I.	Teachers Portfolio Evaluation Questions.....	144
J.	Teachers Portfolio Evaluation Sample.....	143
K.	Field-Note Template.....	144
L.	Site Ethical Approval Letter.....	145
M.	Participant Information Sheet.....	146
N.	Students' Portfolio Project Samples.....	149
O.	Pictures from Portfolio Exhibition Day.....	157
P.	Participant Information Sheet.....	159
R.	Curriculum Vitae.....	162

LIST OF TABLES

TABLES

Table 1 Demographic Profile of the Students.....	44
Table 2 Demographic Profiles of the English Teachers Taking Part in the LP.....	46
Table 3 Research Timeline.....	51
Table 4 Portfolio Project Application Process Table.....	52
Table 5 Coding Process Sample.....	60



LIST OF FIGURES

FIGURES

Figure 1 Figure Showing Contents of a Portfolio.....	28
Figure 2 Participants Conceptualizing LPs.....	64
Figure 3 Figure showing the benefits of using LPs in private primary schools.....	70
Figure 4 Figure Showing the Language Difference Between the Two Drafts.....	72
Figure 5 Student Sample Studies Showing Difference between Drafts.....	74
Figure 6 Figure Showing the Challenges Faced throughout the Process.....	92

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CEF	Common European Framework
CEFR	Common European Framework of References
CLIL	Content and Language Integrated Learning
CLT	Communicative Language Teaching
CoE	Council of Europe
EFL	English as a Foreign Language
ELP	European Language Portfolio
ELT	English Language Teaching
ESL	English as a Second Language
EU	European Union
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
FLA	Foreign Language Anxiety
LP	Language Portfolio
MoNE	Ministry of National Education
SSI	Semi-Structured Interview
YL	Young Learner
YLL	Young Language Learner

Chapter 1

Introduction

This chapter provides readers with a brief description of the background of the study which continues with the statement of problem, purpose of the study, research questions and significance of the study, successively.

1.1. Background of the Study

“Our students are like seeds we’ve planted. We water them, we give them fertilizer, we make sure they have the right amount of sunlight, but at some point you just have to sit back and watch them grow” (Wees, 2011). Scharle and Szabo (2000) stated that even though teachers are able to support their learners with rich information in language teaching, first of all it is the learners’ duty to admit that learning relies on shouldering responsibility for their own learning (as cited in Yilmaz, 2010).

In traditional educational contexts in which teacher-led English language instruction is the most important one, learners are often regarded as passive recipients of new information and may not be able to build up the skills which are necessary for learning how to evaluate and control their own progress. Therefore, it turns out to be improbable for learners to become autonomous and responsible language learners (Yilmaz, 2010). According to Benson (2001), *learner autonomy* as a concept arose from a lecture on language learning by the late 1960s as an adult education movement in Europe and North America. In 1971, the Council of Europe’s Modern Languages Project, with the transition from teacher-centeredness to learner-centeredness in the language teaching context (Benson, 2007) contributed to the idea of learner autonomy to draw a great deal of attention. According to this new perspective, learners are expected to be responsible for planning and monitoring their own learning (Benson, 2001). When learners get involved in the process of learning, they have the opportunity to handle and choose the knowledge they would need;

otherwise the learner would be bound to be controlled externally (Yılmaz, 2010). When it comes to the roles of teachers, they serve as the source of assistance for raising awareness of learning styles and methodologies (Lamb, 2003), and strengthening learning engagement (Nunan, 1997).

As to the development of learner autonomy in Turkey, we can say that relevant research studies in the local context have demonstrated that traditional teaching methods (Balcikanli, 2010) were mainly used in the Turkish educational system where most of the time teachers managed and assessed the learning process (Sert, 2006, p. 181). Therefore, learners were not expected to take responsibility for their own learning and evaluating themselves (Karabiyik, 2008). Two main reasons are regarded as the basic handicaps for learner autonomy: the first reason was because of the behaviorist structure of the Turkish educational system where the ministry had a firm control over the curriculum, choice of resources, staff distribution, and time allocated for instruction (Uygun, 2008 as cited in Ozturk, 2011); the second was the general knowledge and experience of teachers on learning (Erdoğan, 2003). According to Thavenius (1999) in order to help learners become autonomous, the teacher needed to be autonomous; however, the teacher cannot become autonomous before s/he has experienced the process with their learners for a considerable period of time.

Multiple-choice questions, gap-filling and comprehension questions were regarded as effective tools in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) setting in accordance with the traditional assessment techniques. Nevertheless, traditional assessment techniques have started to be inconsistent with the recent EFL teaching methods which stimulate student learning, raise student motivation and contribute towards a clear understanding of student achievement. Traditional techniques, which failed to assess the student progress in accordance with the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) principles, turned out to be insufficient to evaluate multiple dimensions of language learning (Burnaz, 2011). Together with the change from behaviorism to constructivism in education which has been experienced for the

last couple of decades, assessment techniques have also altered in accordance with the needs of students and teachers (Atikol, 2008)

The 2006 curriculum reform by the Ministry of National Education (MoNE) revised the English curriculum including learner autonomy as one of the essential aims of teaching. To this aim, English teachers are advised to integrate activities such as projects which encourage independent learning to increase students' awareness of their learning styles and methods, to provide students with the opportunity to design materials for classroom use, to provide the development of students' skills, and to foster peer and group work in a classroom setting (MoNE, 2006). As a consequence, teachers have started to integrate alternative assessment methods in their classes. Language teachers have started to include more communicative and constructivist approaches in education in EFL and ESL (English as a Second Language) settings (Krashen, 1982). At this point, *portfolio* use has showed up as a sound alternative assessment method involving communicative methods. It is a good example of constant informal assessment providing learners with information about their progress (Brown, 2001). Students' in-class work or project based studies have been evaluated in a more stress-free environment.

As an alternative self-assessment tool in language learning, the portfolio includes all documents learners produce and develop inside and outside the class such as written work, drawings, audio or video tapes, reflection, student self-assessment. Therefore, a portfolio may be defined as a purposeful collection of student work showing the student's growth, and accomplishments in one or more areas (Brown, 2004).

Portfolios have become one of the most popular tools of alternative assessment as they suggest lots of benefits both to learners and teachers. As an alternative, the portfolio suggests a systematic and reliable evaluation for language learners. A set of reasons for portfolio use and assessment have been suggested to be considered before applying a portfolio-keeping process:

- liability to program or curriculum effectiveness,
- assessing student progress and accomplishment,
- identifying students' needs,
- supporting reflective practice at the school and classroom settings,
- creating opportunity for student-teacher dialogue
- supporting teachers' professional development,
- developing awareness and social skills
- assisting students become better learners,
- encouraging student's self-assessment
- motivating student performance. (Weigle, 2002, p. 212)

According to Pollari (2000), in order for students to become effective and successful learners, developing awareness and social skills, understanding students' needs, assisting students become better learners and motivating students' performance may be regarded as some of the main key features of the portfolio-keeping process (as cited in Ok, 2014). The portfolio assessment process helps students' gain self-confidence and independence aside from merely gaining information and knowledge (Atikol, 2008). Students monitor their own progress and take responsibility for their own learning through portfolios as it is "a purposeful collection of student work that exhibits the student's efforts, progress, and achievements in one or more areas" (Paulson & Meyer, 1991, p. 60).

Considering all these benefits of the portfolio, we can say that one of the most significant features of portfolio assessment may be that it encourages learner autonomy and raises student motivation since students are completely engaged in the learning process. Banfi (2003) has highlighted how, as portfolios are flexible in nature, they are regarded as ideal tools for fostering learner autonomy (p. 34). Through the portfolio, learners also increase their awareness enabling them to be more active participants rather than simply passive listeners (Burnaz, 2011).

This research study attempts to explore ways in which the above mentioned benefits of keeping a language portfolio (LP) are similar or different in a private K-12 school context in the western part of Turkey. This study mainly focuses on the 3rd grade EFL students' attitudes and perceptions towards the benefits and the challenges of keeping a portfolio.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Finding ways and means towards increasing the quality of English language teaching has recently been one of the most important subject matters in Turkey. Therefore, with the intent of providing learners with the opportunity to learn through authentic materials, alternative assessment tools are sought. Till the 1980s, teachers, parents, and students lacked an understanding of portfolio assessment. Hence, it was not being utilized to the subject of children's achievement and performance in school (Grace, 1992). After understanding the importance of using LPs in EFL contexts, state and private schools began to use them in their classes. However, though the purpose and the principles of an LP are clearly defined by the Council of Europe (CoE), it's understood from this particular study that the perception regarding the implementation of an LP has varied according to each individual taking part in the process.

It is significant only if assessment demonstrates an understanding of learning in performance over time (American Association for Higher Education, 1991). LPs in this sense are meant to assess learners' language development during the process by intending to increase learner autonomy and self-confidence (CoE, 2004). However, this study revealed that the understanding of the LP carried out in the school of research turned out to be a context-specific institutional portfolio where implementation of the LP was mainly focused on exhibiting the end-products to the parents at the end of the process rather than giving importance to the learning process of the learners or their progress over time. As a result of that, learners became more dependent, which lowered their self-esteem, contrary to what is intended by an LP.

As portfolios are individual and learner-centered tools for learning and assessment, there is not only one standard or pattern for them. In line with their aims, purposes and contexts, every student or teacher may create an LP (Yancey 1992, p. 108). However, although there is a great deal of theoretical approach suggesting the implementation of portfolios in EFL classes (Nunes, 2004), there are not many empirical studies of the results of portfolio assessment, of the reactions of, and impact on learners, teachers, parents and administrators in the assessment context (as cited in Sezgin, 2007, p.151). In this sense, this qualitative study tries to explore all stakeholders' attitudes especially in a private EFL primary school setting since their experiences and guidance would determine the effectiveness of the process.

1.3 Purpose of the Study

The aim of this study was (1) to explore the attitudes of the stakeholders' (students, teachers, administrators, parents) towards the effectiveness of LPs as an alternative form of assessment in a private K-12 primary school in EFL context; (2) and to explore the applicability and practicability of LP in young learners' (YL) classes by revealing the benefits and possible challenges that might be confronted during its implementation phase.

1.4 Research Questions

This study sought answers to the following research question:

1. What are stakeholders' (students, teachers, administrators, parents) attitudes towards the use of LPs in a private k-12 primary school context?

Accordingly, this present study has intended to find answers to the following sub- questions:

SQ 1: How do the students, instructors, administrators and parents conceptualize an LP in a private k-12 primary school in EFL context?

SQ 2: What are the benefits of portfolio use in a private k-12 primary school context?

SQ 3: What are the challenges of portfolio use in a private k-12 primary school context?

1.5 Significance of the Study

LPs are mainly used to show the language progress of every individual student over time. A student's achievement, progress, abilities, necessities, strengths, and weaknesses should depend on the full range of that learner's improvement, as documented by the data in the portfolio, and on the teacher's understanding of curriculum and stages of improvement. Through the guidance of the portfolio, teachers, parents and administrators may analyze concrete examples of the learner's work, instead of trying to review the student's progress in the theory (Çağatay, 2015). However, this particular study aimed to reflect especially the "young learners' perspective" towards the use of LPs in a primary context besides the attitudes of parents, teachers and administrators. Concerning learner-centeredness and autonomous learning, a large amount of research has been conducted with teenagers and adults; however, the field of young language learners has scarcely been investigated (Leeck, 2012).

Nowadays, portfolio assessment as a method has been popular in the field of ELT. Yet, the research studies performed on this subject are limited in number and variety. This study is unique in the literature in the sense that it is the first pure qualitative research study conducted especially in a private primary school context exploring the attitudes and views of all the stakeholders including English language teachers, administrators, students, and parents. It could be a beneficial example of the studies conducted in EFL setting together with studies in other fields. In this study, the benefits and challenges of portfolio assessment are researched from the perspectives of all the above mentioned stakeholders. The findings acquired might

form a base for the evaluation and assessment process used in primary schools as well as giving advice for language teachers intending to implement portfolio assessment in their classes.

In other words, the results of this particular research study are believed to provide a kind of feedback for educators which should guide them in taking necessary action for further practice of the portfolio process.

1.6 Definitions

Below are the definitions of some of the terms and phrases used throughout the study.

Phenomenological Research: A phenomenological study is “a qualitative approach that describes the meaning of the lived experiences for individuals about a concept or the phenomenon” (Creswell, 2007, p. 51).

Learner Autonomy: The term, learner autonomy was first introduced by Henri Holec in 1981 as he defined language learners as the ones who are able to “take charge of their own learning” (p.3). According to Little (1991), it is a “capacity for detachment, critical reflection, decision-making, and independent action” (p. 4).

Purposeful Sampling: In this sampling method, researchers intentionally choose individuals or sites to learn and have an idea about the subject matter. The researcher intends to develop a detailed understanding which may provide useful information, help individuals learn more about the subject matter, and give voice to silenced people (Cresswell, 2005).

Language Portfolio: Portfolios, helping the teachers assess their students through a broadened time-frame, have been purposeful collections of the students’

work. Since portfolios help students establish metacognitive awareness during the process, they are viewed as an effective means of assessment (Gordon, 2007).

Qualitative Research: This research method focuses on participants of the study

‘at a given point in time’ and ‘in a particular context’. The process in a setting is much more significant than numerical outcomes (Heigham & Croker, 2009).

Young Learners: According to Pinter (2015) the age range of young learners in literature are defined between 5-13 years.

Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL): CLIL is a particular purpose bilingual program where target language is both the tool and the target of learning.

Target Language: It is a language other than one's native language that is being learned.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

This chapter provides an overview of portfolios and their core features as well as the existing literature on portfolio language assessment.

2.1 Characteristics of Young Learners (YL)

English as a *lingua franca* (Solak & Bayar, 2015), or a most widely used language has not just turned out to be the common language all around the world but it has additionally turned out to be one of the inseparable parts of primary education in EFL teaching contexts. Today there is an increasing tendency to acquaint English with YLs (Enever, Moon & Raman, 2009) beginning from the early age through formal instruction, which is another territory of study (Er, 2014).

According to Chomsky, it ought to be remembered that children between 5 and 10 are as yet gaining the structures of their mother tongue (as cited in Bronwyn, 2003, p.2), meaning that they strive for understanding two different structures at the same time. In the first, they try to develop their native language while in the second they try to acquire the second language (as cited in Bronwyn, 2003). Mounter (2016) has argued about her part in the classroom and wondered if the education system would support and challenge YLs who are creative, evaluative, and reflective and have the skills to explore for themselves, to comprehend their surroundings and design their own particular learning process. Therefore, trying to introduce English to children needs re-examination of the aims of language instruction and teaching approaches which are suitable to YLs (Lefever, 2007). In order for language teachers to raise children's awareness and aid them to become autonomous learners, they should provide them with enough guidance (Kemp, 2010). Thereby, linguistic as well as social and cognitive developments of learners need to be considered (Williams, 1998). Though there are different labels for describing YLs in literature, according to Pinter (2015) in most contexts the age ranges between 5-13 years.

Concerning the learner-centeredness and autonomous learning, a large amount of research has been conducted among teenagers and adults; however, young language learners' autonomy has scarcely been investigated (Leeck, 2012).

2.1.1 Language skills of the YLs. YLs are not similar to the other groups of learners. For this reason, the components that influence their learning process are extremely noteworthy. As of late, interest for learning English has expanded, particularly for the YLs. In the 21st century, we are more mindful of the way that learning English is an unquestionable requirement and it can be satisfied best in early adolescence. Consequently, there is a developing interest for the methodologies for young language learners. YLs' age, level, needs, desires and learning styles should be contemplated in today's education. Otherwise, learning cannot truly take place (Etiz, 2014). Phillips (2000) has shown that YLs are viewed as learners from the early years of primary education (five or six years of age) to eleven or twelve years old. As they are quite different in nature, learning a foreign language is distinguished from learning the first language.

Foreign language learning is unequivocally identified with how much time a student is being exposed to that language. The more learners are being subjected to target language, the more they speed up their foreign language learning process. Brumfit, Moon and Tongue (1991) suggest a list of YLs' qualities that will be a key for teachers to build up a decent working relationship:

- Teachers have an incredible chance to satisfy their expectations in school since YLs are toward the start of their school life.
- YLs are more separated than grown-ups and new to the similarity imposed across cultural groupings by the school.
- YLs do not have inhibitions which older children convey to class.
- They are sharp and eager students.
- Learning can be connected with YL's improvement of thoughts since it is near their underlying background of formal education.

- YLs require physical development and movement and stimulation for their thinking.

As for Krashen's Critical Period Hypothesis, as their brains are equipped for using the instruments helping first language acquisition, young children can effectively learn a second language before pubescence (Krashen, 1982). In this regard, the hypothesis guarantees that if native-like capability in a second language is the objective, the learning takes advantage of an early start which clarifies why YLs are more fruitful than grown-ups in foreign language learning (Cameron, 2001). Therefore, activities for YLs need to include movement and senses because YLs have a tendency to get and utilize the new language in any setting more than adults. To trigger YLs enthusiasm for English, activities appealing to five senses and emotions should be incorporated into the learning environment.

2.1.2 Assessment of young language learners. With regards to the evaluation of young language learners, there are numerous unexplored issues remaining and little research has been led on it (Stoynoff, 2012). Information on methods to be used in the process of assessing young language learners' foreign language improvement in real teaching contexts is relatively rare (Brumen, Cagran & Rixon, 2009). The reasons for assessing learners arise from the need to find out how much they have learned during or at the end of a lesson (Chou, 2014). "Young language learners are notoriously poor test takers" (Katz, as cited in Shaaban, 2007, p.1) and assessing them at such a young age could give false results. Traditional paper and pencil tests cannot compete with the diversity of activities and tasks realized in the language classrooms anymore (Shaaban, 2007). Besides, YLs get anxious as a result of these testing procedures as it affects their self-esteem and language learning (Cojocnean, 2012). For that reason, a cautious evaluation of language students' needs is crucial and necessary before the instructor settles on a choice as to whether the child is prepared to deal with a task or not (Gordon, 2007).

Hasselgreen (2005) centers upon children as young language learners in a European context and gives details about how ELPs are used in young language learners' assessment. She tries to make clear the fact that the language levels of YLs cannot be understood by testing. Therefore, portfolios are needed as alternative means of assessment. There is no a specific way of assessing YLs' language skills. However, at the end of each term, YLs are assessed by descriptive comments. The teacher chooses one of the three grades for overall performance of the YL. These three grades are: (a) needs improvement; (b) meets expectations; and (c) above expectations. In the 2nd and 3rd grades, teachers assess mostly through oral activities like dialogues or role plays or interaction in the classroom.

2.2. Learner Autonomy and Culture

2.2.1. Definition of learner autonomy. Autonomy has been considered a vague term to define. In the relevant literature many different words and equivalences have been utilized to define autonomy such as *independence* (Sheerin, 1991), *language awareness* (Lier, 1996), *self-direction* (Candy, 1991), and so on. Regardless of these distinctive words, there has been a wide understanding in the general focuses in each definition. According to Little (1991), it is a "capacity for detachment, critical reflection, decision-making, and independent action" (p. 4).

There have been a consistently expanding number of articles and books on autonomy, which works inside a social setting. Autonomy is not an all or nothing concept (Jiménez Raya, Lamb & Vieira, 2015) rather, it is a continuum on which one can be less or more autonomous (Swaine, 2012). Swaine (2012) defines autonomy as a condition where a person's beliefs, purposes, attachments, wants, and interests are rationally assessed (p.108). "The ability to take charge of one's own learning" (Holec, 1981, p. 3) is one of the most commonly used definitions in literature. Holec has additionally stressed that learner autonomy is required to take responsibility for all aspects of learning such as setting the objectives, determining the content and improvement, choosing methods and techniques to be used, managing acquisition

procedure, and evaluating what has been acquired. There have been numerous devices helping students to improve self-sufficiency such as self reports, diaries, evaluation sheets, checklists, performance tests, posters, learning logs, projects, tasks, rubrics, and portfolios. In spite of the fact that each tool above is useful for enhancing autonomy, portfolios are a standout amongst the most helpful ones since they allow the students to utilize different tools inside. In other words, portfolios might comprise of self-assessment, checklists, projects, diaries, rubrics and so on. As of late, the Council of Europe (CoE), has offered the ELP as a tool for developing autonomy. The CoE giving much importance to modern languages, has been dealing with the issue of language. Considering the significance of portfolios in language learning, it has built up the ELP as another instrument for learning. The logic behind ELP is additionally expressed in Common European Framework (CEF, 2001) as:

A further intensification of language learning and teaching in member countries is necessary in the interest of greater mobility, more effective international communication combined with respect for identity and cultural diversity, better access to information, more intensive personal interaction, improved working relations and a deeper mutual understanding. To achieve these aims language learning is necessarily a life-long task to be promoted and facilitated throughout educational systems, from pre-school to adult education. (p. 30)

Taking our basis from the aims and philosophy of CEF, we may presume that ELP takes its underlying foundations from the standards of learner autonomy and self-assessment in the language learning process. It is intended to make the language learning process more straightforward to students, build up their ability for reflection and self-assessment to make them more autonomous.

2.2.2 Characteristics of autonomous learners. A few specialists in the literature have concentrated on various qualities of autonomous learners. For instance, Dickinson (2004) has declared that autonomous learners are the individuals

who know about what is happening in their classes. They work cooperatively with the educator to choose their own particular learning targets. She concludes that autonomous learners can utilize appropriate learning methods deliberately, and also assess their efforts. In addition, they can solve problems caused by educational background, social standards and related knowledge (as cited in Yılmaz, 2010). Chan (2004) provides details regarding the consequences of a poll study which uncovered learners' views of the qualities of autonomous learners. According to the reports of the participants, an autonomous learner is said to be decisive, self-motivated, interested and curious about learning, open to improvement, willing, and patient. Considering the characteristics that autonomous learners have, one might say that cultivating autonomy in schools ought to be a coveted objective.

2.2.3 Culture of learning. Jin and Cortazzi (1996) describe *culture of learning* as being one of the determining factors in learners' responses to innovations in the educational system. They additionally express that culture of learning has an impact on the instructing and learning process in spite of the fact that instructors and students do not know about its impact. Children start to associate into the culture of learning in their primary school years, which continuously affects secondary and university learning. Values and policies of the schools shape the culture of learning. It is also highlighted that every school makes its own unique culture where their management policies are shaped by these values (Prosser, 1999). Prosser's claim infers that each school forces an alternate culture of learning on students, which decides their attitudes and learning practices.

2.2.4 Learner autonomy and culture. The literature has been discussing whether the cultural background of learners poses an obstacle in promoting learner autonomy. Some researchers claim that learner autonomy is proper for all students, paying little respect to their culture (Littlewood, 1999; Pierson, 1996) while others argue that student's self-efficacy is a Western educational pattern unsuited to Eastern settings (Pennycook, 1997). Over the span of this debate, those questioning the universality of learner autonomy construct their perspectives with respect to certain

social characteristics of Asian students, who are for the most part portrayed as having strong orientations towards the acceptance of power, authority, and reliance (Littlewood, 1999).

The Asian culture of learning is believed to impact students' classroom participation patterns. Students are regarded as non-participative, less questioning, mostly relying on the teacher, and having lack of autonomy in learning practices (Gieve & Clark, 2005). Besides, researchers who are suspicious about these cultural stereotypes recommend that these qualities that Asian students show may be ascribed to the structural elements of the educational system itself rather than social variables (Pierson, 1996). Hence, students originating from common social backgrounds may show diverse learning practices due to the culture of learning they are used to. There is no observational proof demonstrating the connection between students' perceptions of autonomy and their culture of learning.

2.3 Assessment Types

One of the most vital stages of learning and teaching, both for teachers and students, is assessment, which is a way of getting information (Hanna & Dettmer, 2004). Teachers are reliant on the after-effect of the assessment while figuring out what, when, where, and how to teach. Generally, educators have a tendency to evaluate learners' accomplishment which offers data to them about what students have accomplished in the lessons and the term *achievement* typically relies upon the students' development from the grades taken from school tests. Besides, the evaluations are just the results of studies carried out inside the classroom. In any case, students should be evaluated inside and outside the classroom other than their classroom learning. The extent to which students play out their learning in their real lives is essential (Koyuncu, 2006). There are three concepts fundamental to any sort of discussion on assessment: validity, reliability, and feasibility. This study is going to focus more on validity and reliability. To start with the *validity*, it is the primary concept concerning the CEFR. To have validity, a test or assessment method must

show what is really assessed or what ought to be assessed, and that the data picked up is speaking to the capability of the concerned student/user precisely. In other words, the assessment instrument you use must give the sort of information that you want to get (Gordon, 2007). *Reliability* is a specialized term essentially demonstrating the degree of a similar rank order of a student/user after a replication method of the same assessment. In the event that a student taking a test at various times with no arrangement gets different marks, at that point, that assessment apparatus cannot be reliable (CEFR, 2001). The history of assessing, learning, and teaching a language goes far back in time and requires different strategies. However, since recently, there has been an increase in the number of YLs, assessing them is a relatively recent concept (McKay, 2006). Therefore, we experience the diverse sorts of assessment. According to the functions, assessment can be separated into *summative* and *formative*.

2.3.1 Summative assessment. Summative assessment takes place after learning has been finished and provides data and feedback summing up the learning and the teaching process. Learners take high-stakes summative assessments commonly towards the end of a set point amid or towards the end of the semester to evaluate what they have learned. Grades are typically a result of summative assessment: they show whether the learner has a satisfactory level of knowledge-gain (Ciel, 2000). Grades are the only criteria in summative assessment to assess student success. Specifically, this assessment type is completely numerical. The final mark or grade indicates how successful a student has been during that semester (Atkins et al., 1993). Reliability is vital in summative assessment as teachers make use of grades to classify students and compare and contrast them with each other. Exams, quizzes, term papers, performances, teacher assessments are among the types of summative assessment (Hanna & Dettmer, 2004).

2.3.2 Formative assessment. Right at the time of learning, formative assessment provides feedback and data amid the teaching process. An essential focal point of formative assessment is to specify areas that may require change. In this

assessment type, grades are not the primary focus and they are not used as a tool to assess students' learning progress (Hanna & Dettmer, 2004). One of the most widely recognized formative assessment methods is classroom assessment. The reason for this strategy is to enhance the quality of student learning and it ought not to be evaluative or include grading them. Verbal or written encouragement, corrections, comments on essay plans, the marking of drafts, project assignments, reflections, in-class activities, learner feedback and self-assessment, and portfolio tasks are some examples of formative assessment techniques. Formative assessment takes place when students get feedback from their teachers so as to help their learning process, or when they can take part in a comparable, self-reflective process (Ciel, 2000).

Implementing formative assessment techniques takes more time compared to summative assessment as the teachers need to assess each student individually. In any case, there are some approaches to make them simpler to apply in the classes like empowering the students for peer and self-evaluation, utilizing checklist or rubrics (Koyuncu, 2006). Formative assessment is more process-oriented while summative assessment is more product-oriented, focusing on the final product. In summative assessment, students cannot make any revisions on their projects when completed. If students are permitted to make corrections, the assessment turns out to be formative in which learners have a chance for self-development (Hanna & Dettmer, 2004).

2.3.3 Portfolios as an alternative method of assessment. Professionals such as photographers, artists and architects have been using portfolios to keep their works from the very beginning with the aim of showing them to others. The motivation of teachers by these files can be traced back to late 1980's. The utilization of portfolios in education as an evaluation instrument began with language art classes in primary schools and afterwards extended to higher levels of education (Genesee & Upshur, 1996). When there was a need for assessing language performance, a shift from traditional to alternative assessment methods was realized. As a result of this need, language LPs gained their popularity. However, portfolios may vary in their

purposes, and thus exist in different sorts shaped by these purposes. Being a type of individual assessment, portfolios endeavor to reflect immediate and individual student performance (Oguz, 2003). With the help of this research study, the applicability of the LP will also be discussed as an alternative assessment method in Turkish educational context as an exact shift from the traditional to alternative assessment methods could not be realized in the curriculum.

2.4 Current English Teaching Curriculum in Turkey

Due to the necessity for various further developments in the language policy in Turkey, the 1997 educational program has been upgraded. This was mainly because of Turkey's persistent endeavors to join the EU. The MoNE has embraced some variations to be applied at various levels of education so as to be in line with the ELT standards set by the EU. The MoNE gave the current ELT educational curriculum its last frame in 2008. The length of compulsory primary education was expanded to 8 years. Like primary schools, followed by the change in the schooling system that occurred in 2005, the span of all secondary level schools was expanded to four years. In addition, with a specific end goal to accomplish European standardization in ELT in a wide range of schools, the MoNE terminated the one-year intensive English program that used to be done in Anatolian schools (MoNE, 2008).

As of now, English is a compulsory subject in both primary and secondary levels of education in Turkey. English is offered as of 2nd grade in state schools. The MoNE requires at least two hours of English education for the primary grades. However, the English lesson hours may be flexible in private schools. Most private schools tend to increase the number of lessons allocated to English teaching, as they take the advantage of this flexibility. According to ELT standards, there are two components of curriculum and the syllabi: the first component provides the foundation of English, covering the primary level English teaching, and the second covers the secondary level English instruction. Based on the present curriculum, the lessons are planned around various topics and skills to be acquired. This curriculum

is functionally designed to give the students a chance to take charge of their own learning and continue their process of learning based on their own individual styles and preferences. In most Turkish schools where English lessons are given as a separated in the curriculum, MoNE has offered a cross curricular model in language teaching. In this model, English is taught through content which helps learners integrating all subjects allowing them to inquire and merge experience with knowledge (MoNE, 2008).

A current significant development in the ELT curriculum is about assessment methods proposing the use of performance-based assessment in English classes. This is accomplished through the act of *portfolio assessment*. Instead of the regular sit-down *paper and pencil tests* which cause anxiety among students, portfolios are believed to be more authentic and agreeable to the standards of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT). Portfolio assessment centers on archiving the student progress. It additionally focuses on what students know and what they can do as opposed to what they do not know or cannot do. Contrary to standardized tests, students are assessed on what they may integrate and produce. As per the MoNE, in spite of the fact that there is no single definition of portfolio assessment, the fundamental objective is to assemble proof about how students are integrating, handling, and finishing real life tasks in a specific area. Parents have started to be part of the assessment process in the Turkish education system through portfolio assessment as this assessment system enables the teacher and the parent to examine and review students' improvement in practice rather than in theory. The MoNE uncovers that assessment strategies must be in accordance with the teaching methods. Thus, the recommended assessment tools are altogether taken from the ELP (MoNE, 2008).

2.5 Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL)

CLIL is a particular purpose bilingual program where target language is both the tool and the target of learning. The learner thus mainly acquires the target

language (TL) while using it for studying, but the language can also be studied; thus the focus is mainly on meaning but also on form. The student subsequently gains the TL while utilizing it for studying. Therefore, the emphasis is basically on meaning rather than on form. According to the definition by Marsh et al. (2010), the CLIL:

is a dual-focused teaching and learning approach in which the main language of schooling and an additional language or two are used for promoting both content mastery and language acquisition to pre-defined levels. (p. 1)

CLIL displays the importance of constructivism which is the current trend in education focusing mainly on the social cooperation between the students, learning through discussions on meaning (Cook, 1997 as cited in Wewer, 2014) and shared development of information. It accordingly pictures the student as an active rather than a passive language learner.

2.6 Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) and European Language Portfolios (ELP)

Abbreviated as CEF or CEFR is the guideline formed by the CoE as the primary piece of the project “Language Learning for European Citizenship” in the vicinity of 1989 and 1996. In November 2001, a European Union Council Resolution suggested utilizing the CEFR to form systems of validation of language capability. CEFR is a source document intending to put standards to be targeted at various stages of learning including the language syllabi, curriculum guidelines, examinations, textbooks, etc. across Europe. It gives a bright definition of teaching and learning aims and methods and the required tools for assessment of proficiency [...] (CoE, 2001) which would lead to individual development.

The English Language Portfolio, abbreviated as ELP, is portrayed by the CoE as a document where learners of a language- either at or outside school- can record and reflect on their language learning and cultural experiences. The ELP was created

and guided by the Language Policy Division of the Council of Europe, Strasbourg, from 1998 until 2000. The adaptation of ELP goes back to the twentieth Session of the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education of the Council of Europe, Cracow, Poland, 15-17 October 2000. At this meeting, the Ministers of Education of all the member States of the Council of Europe suggested that governments, with regards to their education policy, promote the introduction of an ELP which gives importance to personal documentation and improvement (Servi, 2010).

The ELP is a collection of a wide range of language competence acquired both formally and informally. The ELP is the property of the student and as announced by Scharer (2000) the aims of the ELP are expressed as:

- The developing of shared comprehension and respect among citizens in Europe;
- The insurance and advancement of linguistic and cultural diversity;
- The improvement of learner responsibility and learner autonomy;
- The promotion of long lasting language;
- The clear and straightforward portrayal of skills and capabilities to encourage mobility and self-improvement. (p. 4)

Distinctive ELP forms were outlined by various countries. ELPs were first organized in Switzerland, Germany, and France in the mid-nineties (Schneider & Lenz, 2003). Between 1998 and 2000, more than fifteen Council of Europe member states piloted distinctive models. In 2001, the European Year of Languages, the ELP was incorporated throughout Europe. The age of the ELP owner is a significant issue to be thought about. Three kinds of ELPs were produced: for young students aged between 10-12 years, for the students who are at the phase of obligatory schooling (11-15/16 years) and for the young and the adult (15/16 and over) (Schneider & Lenz, 2003). Different types of ELPs have been produced and approved, as well. The ELP can be utilized by all ages, so there are different kinds of portfolio at schools

and at different levels proper for each age and level group in light of same beliefs of the CoE (Meister, 2005).

2.6.1 Components of ELP. The ELP consists of three parts: language passport, language biography, and dossier.

2.6.1.1 Language passport. Language passport is the area which outlines the person's capability in various languages at any given point in time. The overview is characterized by the skills and the common reference levels in the Common European Framework (CEF, 2001) Formal qualifications are kept and language competencies and noteworthy language and intercultural learning experiences are portrayed. These incorporate self-assessment, teacher assessment and assessment carried out by educational institutions (CoE, 2004).

2.6.1.2 Language biography. This enables the learner's involvement in planning, reflecting upon and assessing his or her learning process and progress. It encourages the learner to express what s/he can do in each language and to involve information on linguistic and cultural experiences gained in and outside their language classes. It is organized to promote plurilingualism, i.e. the development of competencies in a number of languages. The language biography consists of checklists based on the self-assessment grid. The checklists give a chance to learners to identify both what they know and what they need to know (CoE, 2004).

2.6.1.3 Language dossier. The dossier is the part in which the learners can keep materials which show their accomplishments or experiences in the *Language Passport* or *Biography*. Learners may include letters, project works, memoranda, brief reports, and audio or video cassettes which demonstrate their proficiency in the language in the ELP (CoE, 2004). This offers the students the opportunity to choose relevant learning documents of their own learning and display their current language skill or experiences through authentic personal documentation (Kohonen & Westhoff, 2003).

2.6.2 ELP in Turkey. The ELP is a recently presented learning instrument in Turkey. The approval of the ELP Turkish model was affirmed in 2003 by the Validation Committee of ELP (Demirel, 2005). An ELP project began in Turkey in 2001 under the auspices of Ministry of Education. It was reported that the project was projected to be piloted first in the primary schools, Anatolian High Schools and High School with one year English teaching program. At first, 20 state schools and 4 private schools in Ankara and Antalya piloted ELP. The number of cities conducting ELP projects had increased to thirty by 2004. It was projected to expand all around Turkey in 2005 and later (Ceylan, 2006). The ELP is utilized by a language school and some private language courses in addition to the pilot projects. In 2004, European Validity Committee approved TÖMER's application to use the ELP. Thus, the ELP in Turkey was used by a language school, TÖMER for the first time in adult education. One study related to the ELP at university level took place in the preparatory school at Mugla University in 2005 (Ceylan, 2006).

So as to form a junior ELP model for children aged 5-9 and 10-14 in Turkey, the second ELP commission was organized. 15 primary schools applied and piloted the ELP model. Bilfen Schools developed an ELP Model for learners aged from 10-14 in Turkey, and the validation committee approved this model in 2006. The same institution presented another model, which was designed for YLs in primary education aged 5-9, for approval and it was accepted by the CoE in 2007 (Egel, 2009). Different studies have revealed that it is appropriate for primary schools to apply ELP in the first place. Between October 1998 and May 2000, Slovenia became one of the nations piloting the ELP in primary schools. In relation to this, Troha (2000) expressed that one of the most important gain of this piloting in his country was that *portfolio thinking* started to begin at the primary school level among the YLs and their teachers". This study is significant in emphasizing the importance of integrating LPs in primary school context more as it would be beneficial for learners and the country to utilize more ELP's in their primary schools.

2.7 Portfolios

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

2.7.1 Definition of portfolios. Photographers, architects or artists were the first to use a portfolio for their works of art with the aim of showing their skills and achievement to future artists. It has for some time been a standard type of assessment in these visual fields. These experts utilized portfolios both as a proof of their best practice and to demonstrate the progression of their abilities throughout the years (Gonzalez, 2008). Portfolio, as an alternative assessment method, has been applied to general teaching and language teaching since the beginning of 1990's (Darker & Wolfe-Quintero 1997). Portfolios, helping the teachers assess their students through a broadened timeframe, turned out to be purposeful collections of the students' work. Since portfolios help students establish metacognitive awareness during the process, they are viewed as an effective means of assessment (Gordon, 2007).

Despite the fact that definitions of *portfolio* and *portfolio assessment* are exceptionally extraordinary in number, they contain a few words and expressions commonly used such as “purposeful collection”, “progress over time”, “achievement”, “development”, “student growth” and “process of learning” (Atikol, 2008). Portfolio assessment has the capability of indicating student learning progress over time. One more intricate meaning of portfolio is given by Wolf and Siu-Runyan (1996): “A portfolio is a selective collection of student work and records of progress gathered across diverse contexts over time, framed by reflection and enriched through collaboration, that has as its aim the advancement of student learning” (p.31). As understood from the definition, portfolio contexts can range from kindergartens to universities, from individual classrooms to school wide level, from ESL to EFL contexts.

Portfolios are often deemed an authentic form of assessment (Brumen, Cagran & Rixon, 2009) and alternative form of assessment (Anastasiadou, 2013) as they are process-based, formative, and analytical. According to Potter (1999), what encourages YLs for motivation and responsibility is to attract their attention in the process of discovering their necessity areas for improvement and establishing their personal goals. Portfolios (should) go in line with the curriculum objectives by providing information about the learning process of the students together with the sources for learner improvement (Barabouti, 2012). It shows learning and growth over an extended period of time. A portfolio may involve items like anecdotal records, checklist or inventory, rating scales, questions and requests, and screening tests (Grace, 1992). Additionally, guidelines for selecting content, criteria for evaluation, learner participation in choosing content, and proof of student self-reflection are other recommended components of a portfolio (O'Malley & Pierce, 1996).

2.7.2 Purposes of portfolio assessment. Portfolio purposes may vary just like assessment methods in general. Demonstrating student growth over time, promoting students' abilities, or evaluating student learning within a specific area may be the purposes of a portfolio (Meador, 2017). The purposes of portfolios can determine the structure, content, and process of portfolios. Portfolio contents may be determined by teacher or an outside assessor, or by the students themselves. Portfolio application place can also be controlled by the assessor. It may be an instructional atmosphere such as a classroom, or the context can be let free and students may prepare their portfolios at home. Having various options for portfolio assessment has given way to different, overlapping definitions of portfolios themselves (Oguz, 2003).

Herman, Graff, Myohanen, Nelkin and Baylin (1996, p. 26) provide a list of purposes of portfolio assessment. It includes:

- accountability,
- promoting self-assessment,
- figuring out students' needs,

- encouraging teacher efficacy,
 - encouraging student efficacy,
 - motivating student performance,
 - parent involvement (i.e. enhancing student-parent-teacher dialogue).
- (as cited in Weigle, 2002)

As is seen in the list, the purposes and the results address many parties. Students, parents, teachers, administrators, program developers, and curriculum designers are informed. Different kinds of portfolios are used so as to achieve these purposes. That is to say, the aim of the teacher and other assessors determines the kind of portfolio to be used (Atikol, 2008).

2.7.3 Types of portfolios. First of all, as Tierney et al. (1991) claimed portfolios can be in different designs and forms. Portfolios in the literature have been classified in various forms by many researchers due to the diversity of usage purposes in education. These categorizations were generally made with the aim in mind, but the content of the portfolio and who created the content is an important determinant in the classification of the portfolio (Cokcaliskan, 2014). According to Epstein (2008), portfolios are divided into two groups as *process oriented* and *product oriented*. As the name suggests, process oriented portfolios give details about the development of a learner. All the drafts, reflection notes and self-assessment scheme of the learner are included in process oriented portfolios. It demonstrates the students' progress over time. On the other hand, product oriented portfolios consist of a student's best works. The aim of this form of portfolio is to show the products of the learner as a summary of the whole language learning period.

2.7.4 Contents of portfolios. A portfolio may contain anything that is written or produced by the learner. However, the ingredients of portfolio are not selected randomly. In the process of selecting each draft to be included in the portfolio, the outcomes of the education program are taken into careful consideration by the

teacher as each draft has a purpose to achieve the objectives of the curriculum. At the very beginning of the process, the teacher may give a letter to the students informing them about the aims and objectives of the portfolio. Next, a cover letter and a table of contents may be included. Providing learners with a list of activities together with helpful clues about how to apply them and skills involved in them would be useful. Then, rubrics for each skill and assessment plan both for the student and the teacher are added. The students could individualize their portfolios by drawing a picture about themselves or by including a photograph which reveals their emotions about that portfolio or the language class they have. In contrast to the common belief, the portfolio need not necessarily be in a file folder. “Student portfolios can be a conventional file folder, a small cardboard box, a section of a file drawer, or some other such receptacle” (Genesee & Upshur 1999, p. 101).

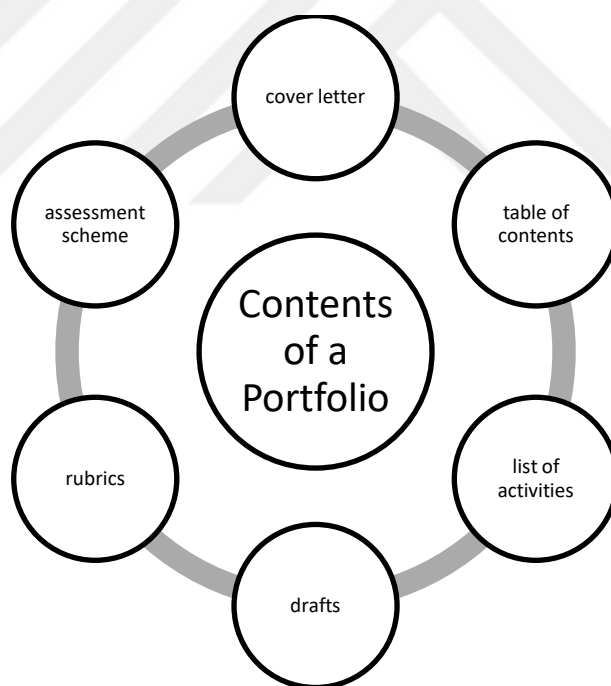


Figure 1. A figure showing the contents of a portfolio. Taken from: Chatel (2001).

Portfolios may include various evidence of student performance in different skills. The end-products need not be presented in writing only. Samples of portfolio may involve videos, audio tapes, classroom tests, quizzes, photographs, realia, three

dimensional model, as well. Students can also do role playing activities, dialog acting out, dramatization or oral presentations in the class and teachers may take down necessary notes in the light of the related rubrics (Weigle, 2002). Teachers may record student performance for peer and self-assessment in some other time. Peer assessment is useful as it encourages student development in using the language in a more competitive environment in the classroom.

A list of guidelines for teachers to emphasize the key aspects of a portfolio is suggested by Paulson, et al. (1991) as follows:

- Developing a portfolio provides the student with an opportunity to learn about learning. Thus, the end product should include information demonstrating that a student has engaged in self-reflection.
- The portfolio should be prepared by the student. Students must be free to choose the pieces to include in the portfolio. Portfolio assessment helps students learn to evaluate their own work as learners.
- The portfolio should be regarded as a study and process separate and different from the student's cumulative folder [...].
- The portfolio must reveal explicitly or implicitly the student's activities [...].
- The purpose of a portfolio may change in the course of time. [...] At the end of the year, the portfolio may include materials that the student is willing to make public.
- A portfolio may have a variety of purposes [...]. A student's personal goals and interests are shown in his or her selection of materials, however, information included may reflect the interests of teachers, or parents, as well. The most common purpose of a portfolio is revealing progress on the aims represented in the instructional program.
- The portfolio should include information showing growth. There are many ways to show learner development. The most common one is by including a

series of examples of actual school performance that exhibiting how the student's skills have developed. [...].

- Finally, [...] students need models of portfolios are necessary for students to develop skills and reflect upon portfolios.

Teachers are encouraged to reflect on the eight aspects of the portfolio above for the success of it. In this particular study, it will be discussed that to what extent all the list of guidelines are included in the private primary school context.

2.8 Benefits of Portfolio Assessment

Everyone, whether a teacher or a student, benefits from portfolio assessment in different ways directly or indirectly. Every country having various language backgrounds, educational systems and structures, diverse political, social, and educational needs as a primary concern utilize language portfolios. For some people, it is used to encourage plurilingualism, for others it is used to raise learners' intercultural awareness or to engage learners in planning and assessing their own language (Little, 2001).

Portfolios are “authentic assessments” (Seitz & Bartholomew, 2008) with flexible instruments, adaptable to the curriculum, class, and terms of the activities (Cirneanu, Chirita & Cirneanu, 2009). As for O'Malley and Pierce (1996), at the classroom level, portfolios can focus on both the process and product of learning. Therefore, portfolios draw a detailed picture of the student development with the help of a variety of tests and tasks. Teachers may develop their own teaching materials, ways, or plans for further instruction through this source of information (Barabouti, 2012). Portfolios can be used formatively since portfolio products serve as proof of student progress over time (Birgin, 2008).

Teachers are regarded as both observers and participants of the process providing feedback and advice for the students where and when necessary. In this

sense, portfolios give way to the combining of assessment and instruction (Valeri-Gold et al., 1993). Learners gain *responsibility* for self-assessment and for their learning as a result of which they develop their learner autonomy and self-assessment. Student's strengths and weaknesses are easily identified through this assessment method. Portfolios are said to give reasonable reviewing and knowledge into students' performance by unveiling the processes of learning as opposed to the traditional assessment methods (Mueller, 2016).

Developing awareness and social skills of the learners are among the benefits of LPs. Students participate in portfolio assessment process from the very beginning to the end. In student focused classrooms, students have more responsibility regarding their own particular learning processes (Nunan, 1997). Moreover, portfolios provide learners with the opportunity to improve their independence in learning. Accordingly, the students slowly depend less on their teachers in their learning and self-evaluation process (Ferris & Hedgcock, 1998).

Portfolio may advance self-directed learning, as well. Through portfolio process, students become aware of their own strengths and weaknesses and how they improved over time. In this way, students' self-image is improved by the portfolio assessment and caused them to be more conscious learners. Portfolio process helps students learn how to work collaboratively as they may share experiences and information with their friends about the tasks to be completed (Atikol, 2008).

LPs *motivate* students intrinsically because they find it fun (Nováková & Davidová, 2003). Students see themselves only as their sole competitors rather than others in the classroom. Students turn into experts of their own learning and they have boundless flexibility to pick and apply their learning styles in their portfolios (Atikol, 2008). It establishes communication among students by giving them a chance to exchange during the process.

Another benefit that is gained through portfolio assessment is *parent involvement* in the process which increases dialogue between parents, teachers and students (Kim & Yazdian, 2014). Parents become more interested in the process as they witness concrete proof of their kids' learning process. By interacting with their peers, teachers, and parents for their learning, students keep the attention of their parents in the process of learning (Seitz & Bartholomew, 2008) as well as encouraging students to take part in the assessment process in an active way and establishing an effective communication with their teacher and parents.

2.9 Challenges of Portfolio Assessment

Portfolio assessment is regarded as a challenging process as well as promising for all educational contexts. The challenges of portfolios can be examined under four main headings: diversity of portfolios, workload for the teachers, reliability and validity issues, and foreign language anxiety among YLs.

Designing a portfolio can vary from one class to another, from one school to another or even from one country to another. There are various kinds of portfolio designs nearly as many as the teachers who apply it (Lenski & Verbruggen, 2010). In any case, this does not imply that portfolio assessment gives a perpetual flexibility to the instructors. There are a few points to be considered before starting to plan a portfolio. The content must be thought profoundly by considering the curriculum and objectives of it as well as the purposes of assessment. Each draft must be picked and arranged with incredible care. In the wake of choosing about the general rules of the drafts to be incorporated, it is better for an instructor to reach an agreement with the students about a definitive type of the drafts. Providing students with an autonomous, free and creative environment of learning are among the primary aims of portfolio assessment (Atikol, 2008). The purpose and assessment criteria of portfolio should be clear; otherwise, the portfolio can be only an incidental gathering of works that cannot mirror students' development or accomplishment precisely. Therefore, the

purpose and assessment criteria of portfolios ought to be clarified neatly and plainly (Birgin & Baki, 2007).

One of the challenges faced during the process is that LPs require extra effort and time of the students and teachers as they are not related to the curriculum or difficult to get through the course book (Little, 2007). Little and Perclová, (2001) assert that teachers give a lot of time for negotiation and discussion with the learners as portfolio is an ongoing process. According to Ripley (2012) another problem with LPs is that if Ministry of Education or school administration does not provide materials for the teachers, it will require a long time and effort for the educators to set up their own materials (as cited in Haghighi, 2013). This is a significant challenge according to the study as the LPs are not related to the curriculum and thus causing a lot of time and effort by the teachers in the preparation process.

Portfolio checking and assessment can also take a lot of time and effort of the teachers (Kim & Yazdian, 2014). The workload for teachers tends to be increased because of the portfolio assessment. Eliciting, collecting, assessing and scoring portfolios require a lot of time and effort (Gottlieb, 2000 as cited in Oğuz, 2003). According to Türkkorur (2005) “Continuous interaction between teacher and students during the portfolio development process requires teachers to spend more time and dedication to supporting this process” (p. 44). Portfolios also let the students review their works with the help of the feedback they had from their teachers. For a teacher to provide students with the feedback, s/he should spend most of her/his time to help them (Weigle, 2002). This effort almost doubles for the teachers if portfolios have to be done together with traditional assessment and grading, as revealed in the study. This may especially be very tiresome for teachers with crowded classes as the assessment time may not be quick and easy (Cirneanu, Chirita & Cirneanu, 2009). Dinçman’s (2002) study indicated that majority of the instructors taking part in her study agreed that portfolio assessment increased their workload, and this time demand of portfolios, according to the researcher, might be a reason for their not grading portfolios at all (as cited in Oğuz, 2003). However, as

teachers begin to establish a classroom environment in which students feel independent and responsible for assessing their own progress using portfolios, the complaints about time management sharply decreases. Therefore, it is suggested to use checklists, rubrics and digital portfolio form to reduce time for the assessment of it (Birgin & Baki, 2007).

Foreign language anxiety can be accepted as one of the most important challenge and an important topic at issue in the EFL research context; however, there is still not common agreement on its causes and effects. Adult EFL learners' language anxiety has been the main focus by the researches, while children have taken less attention in the research context (Aydin et al., 2017). Lately, the negative impact of language anxiety on student learning has been revealed in a number of studies (Awan et al., 2010). Çelebi (2006), for example, especially gave importance to foreign language education policies in Turkey by highlighting that the problems in foreign language teaching in Turkey were because of the problems in the teaching of the mother tongue. The materials and course books used in foreign language teaching did not agree to the Turkish culture, way of thought and learning styles (Solak, 2015). MacIntyre and Gardner (1991) indentified three types of anxiety: trait anxiety (a personality trait), state anxiety (anemotional state), and situation specific anxiety (anxiety in a well-defined situation); foreign language anxiety refers to the third type (as cited in Chen & Lui, 2013). Students regard speaking in the foreign language as the most anxiety-producing area compared to reading, writing or listening (Krashen, Terrell & Omaggio, 1991). Leary (1998) revealed that the fear of speaking in a foreign language may be arisen from a diversity of psychological constructs including speech anxiety, shyness, stage fright, embarrassment, communication fear, self-confidence, and social anxiety (Young, 1990). Self-confidence can be identified with speaking and language anxiety. According to the study conducted by Aydin and Zengin (2008), the exams and negative assessment were the reasons for anxiety. Additionally, this study also disclosed that other reasons for the anxiety in foreign language learning were teacher behaviors, parents' over expectations, different learning styles and language levels. After exploring FLA among children, Chan and

Wu (2004) came to a conclusion that they mostly suffered from fear of negative evaluation. According to the study, parental expectations and personality were among the important variables causing FLA. However, it is highlighted that teachers are not aware of FLA among children and keep on correcting student mistakes in front of others which could be an important reason triggering anxiety (Lui & Chen, 2013).

Literature has been discussing the matter of *validity and reliability* in portfolio assessment (Amyot, 2014). As Hamp-Lyons (1996) suggests, the variability of projects, tasks, assignments and procedures inside a single portfolio assessment makes it hard to build up firm criteria or scoring standards (as cited in Oğuz, 2003). According to Moya and O'Malley (1994), qualitative nature of portfolios makes it difficult to form validity and reliability of portfolios. So as to establish *reliability* in portfolio assessment, it is significant to ensure standardization and support objectivity in the rating and grading process. As for *validity*, it is tied in with deciding how sufficiently portfolios represent students' works, their improvement and abilities, and if portfolio purposes and the choices match to the ones specified by the raters (Brown & Hudson, 1998 as cited in Oğuz, 2013). Therefore, training the instructors is significant to engage them into the portfolio process as well as to provide the instructors with required information for guiding the students in portfolio assessment (Oğuz, 2013).

A study conducted by Gussie and Wright (1999) to evaluate the effectiveness of portfolio assessment programs in K-8 school districts in New Jersey, USA highlighted the significance of valid and reliable portfolio assessment, and professional training. The study compared the opinions of 262 teachers and 109 administrators concerning their beliefs about the use of portfolio assessment and actual practices in their districts. Even though teachers and administrators articulated positive views concerning portfolio implementation for staff, students and parents, actual practices were not found to be as expected. As also revealed in this particular research study, the reasons for this mismatch were based on unclearly specified

portfolio contents, poorly identified scoring rubrics, and inadequate training and support for the staff. Facing such challenges is not an easy task and requires extraordinary commitment from portfolio practitioners. As it is the case in the study, Moya and O'Malley (1994) express the necessity for different judges, cautious planning, appropriate training of raters and triangulation of aims and subjective sources of data for achieving validity and reliability in portfolio assessment.

2.10 Studies on Portfolio Assessment in Language Learning/Teaching

As an applicable and valuable assessment tool, portfolio assessment has attained increasing popularity (Nowacki, 2013). Therefore, in literature, there is a wide range of studies done on portfolio assessment in education, in general. However, as the focus in this particular study is on language portfolios, a selective review of the studies that have primarily focused on assessment of language portfolios will be provided.

To start with, Shelton (1995), a quantitative study was conducted in the United States to create, implement, and evaluate a portfolio assessment system in a 3rd grade classroom, and to show to students, parents, and teachers the advantages of portfolios in instruction and evaluation. Aims, standards, goals, and objectives for record keeping and evaluation of portfolio assessment were designed. According to the findings of the data, students, parents, and teachers have gained a greater awareness and understanding of portfolio assessment as well as an increased knowledge by the students of the writing process.

A study conducted by Bushman and Schnitker (1995) included a survey of 31 professional educators to understand their knowledge and attitudes towards the use of portfolios as an assessment tool. As a result of the study, 52 percent of the respondents stated that they had not got adequate training in portfolio use, 88 percent favored the use of portfolios, and most respondents specified some practical problems with portfolio use including inadequate training and time management. The

findings of the study revealed that teachers regard portfolios as an effective means of addressing students' progress, strengths, and weaknesses where increased training is needed, though.

Koyuncu (2006) carried out a research in a private school with the sixth grade students to investigate the effect of the ELP, which the Council of Europe put forward as an alternative language learning and assessment tool, on learner autonomy. Throughout the study, the students' attitudes towards the use of the ELP in the lessons, and their participation to the lessons were observed. During the study, the students' in class activities, their attitudes towards the method, and observing their participation in the lessons were used as data collection tools. At the end of the study, students were interviewed in order to understand whether there was any change in their becoming autonomous or not. The analysis of the data showed that the ELP was effective in helping students to be autonomous.

Atikol (2008) conducted an MA research to discover the attitudes and views of in-service English language teachers regarding the assessment and evaluation of YLs (7th graders) towards portfolio assessment. The case study lasted for 16 weeks. The diary was used as the data collection tool for the case study. According to the findings of the research study, English language teachers used portfolio assessment as an alternative assessment method in their classes to some extent though they did not have enough knowledge of how to implement it. Lack of time was regarded as a challenge of portfolio assessment according to them. It revealed the advantages and challenges both for the teacher and the students during the implementation process of portfolio assessment in YLs. Obviously, the benefits of portfolio assessment outweigh the challenges of it.

According to the study conducted by Sünbül (2011), the views of primary school teachers, 5th grade students, and their parents were examined regarding portfolio implementation. In this context, it was attempted to describe the challenges they faced and how they managed to overcome those challenges. The study was

implemented in primary schools in 2009-2010 academic year. 415 teachers and 464 students were randomly selected in the schools. Surveys were prepared in line with the purpose. The data was analyzed using qualitative and quantitative research techniques. The data revealed that teachers, students, and parents believed that portfolios were necessary. However, we can say that all three stakeholders faced various difficulties during the process. It has been understood that assessing portfolios was the most difficult part for teachers.

Finally, Özdemir (2017) conducted a research study to explore if keeping a language portfolio contributed to YLs' ability to self-assess and to their process of autonomous learning. The study was carried out over a 16-week-period during the 2015-2016 spring term at a primary state school. 58 YLs from two 3rd grades took part in the study. The researcher was the teacher of two 3rd grade classes and these two classes were picked through convenience sampling. Two classes were randomly assigned as control and experimental groups. The learners' language portfolios, teacher researcher's field notes, learner interviews and learner-teacher discussions were used as data collection tools. The data demonstrated that portfolio affected learners positively as they became more aware of their learning process and slowly began learning how to manage this process. It may be concluded that language portfolio contributed to student autonomy.

This chapter reviewed the literature on the characteristics of YLs, assessment types, LPs and the ELPs. Portfolios in general were important tools to develop learner autonomy and help the students to manage their own learning process. Though there were a lot of benefits of implementing LPs, there were also some challenges which should not be disregarded for the success of an LP. The next chapter focuses on methodology, which covers participants, instruments, procedures in collecting data and data analysis used in the study.

Chapter 3

Methodology

In this chapter, the methodology followed, and the methods used in collecting data are discussed. This section offers detailed information about the research design, the participants, the instruments and the data collection procedures together with the methods of data analysis.

3.1 Research Design

This study followed a phenomenological research design. A phenomenological study is “a qualitative approach that describes the meaning of the lived experiences for individuals about a concept or the phenomenon” (Creswell, 2007, p. 51). The present study benefited from descriptive phenomenology which referred to the personal experience of the participants by providing a description or interpretation of the meanings of phenomena experienced (Diaz, 2015).

This particular research method was especially chosen as the study was dependent on each participant’s interpretation of language portfolio implementation in a private primary school. With the help of this research design, the researcher was able to explore experiences and sensory perceptions of the researched phenomenon, and the formation of understanding based on these experiences and perceptions. Therefore, so as to gain an in-depth knowledge of the phenomenon, this research strategy was based on both the researcher’s own and the participants’ own experiences and sensory perceptions acquired during the research process. As it is described by the joining of particular criteria met by the participants at the time of selection (Diaz, 2015), purposeful sampling method was used in this study.

In-depth interview is the most convenient data collection method for a phenomenological research. As stated by Marshall and Rossman (2010) the phenomenological interview should be open or semi-structured (as cited in Diaz,

2015), which was also followed in this study. Some of the skills are taken into consideration during the interviews such as paraphrasing, clarification, summarizing, reflection of feelings, self-revelation, and empathetic listening (Vergne, 2009, as cited in Diaz, 2015).

Creswell (2013) describes the following steps to elaborate phenomenological analysis. According to him, in a research study, the researcher gives a detailed description about his/her personal experience with the intent of study so as to portray personal appraisals and prejudgments so that those will not influence the analyzing process. Then the researcher goes on with the “horizontalization” of data which means that researchers are in the process of listing every related quotes of the research topic. After that the researcher categorizes the related topics according to their meanings by describing and including “ad verbatim” quotations. Then the structural description is written. At last, based on the textual and structural analysis, the researcher keeps on determining the essence of the phenomenon according to the common repeated elements by the participants.

3.2 Setting and Participants

3.2.1 Setting. This study was conducted in a private K-12 school in the western part of Turkey because of its convenience for the researcher. This study was applied especially in this school as being the own teaching environment of the researcher to collect information about the learning process of her own students. The participant students were all 3rd grade students. The principles of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment (CEFR) are taken into consideration in this particular institution since this design focuses on language use in an authentic communicative environment by encouraging students to carry their learning into real-life practice so as to help their language fluency and proficiency development (CoE, 2001).

As the educational system in Turkey requires, it is the *forward design* curriculum adapted in the institution of research. Forward design means planning a curriculum moving from input, to process, and from process to output, each one dependent on what preceded it. From this point of view, curriculum development takes its basis from input when decisions about content and syllabus are made. In the methodology stage, it focuses on how teaching is carried out, and in the final-stage, it is the output- learning outcomes of the learners measuring their ability to use the language as a result of the period of instruction (Richards, 2013).

In the institution, being the subject matter of the research study, a specific language teaching methodology is not followed; instead an eclectic mix of instructional techniques has been adopted taking the needs of learners into consideration in order for them to experience the language as a means of communication, not as a topic of study. But mostly, Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) type lessons are designed as part of a bilingual education programme. It includes content, communication, cognition and culture, together with the elements of all four language skills. The course books and materials selected in the institution are mainly based on inquiry-based learning approach maximizing student involvement encouraging collaboration and team work. Students are intended to play active roles in their own learning, and teachers facilitate this learning by guiding them to ask questions, seek information and find answers. This way, teachers aim to improve learners' communication and thinking skills. Each pair of units in the course book focuses on a particular curricular theme. The themes are built around school subjects such as social studies, sciences, the arts and mathematics. The themes are open-ended encouraging student participation and involvement. Authentic sources are selected as classroom materials and teaching tools so as to show English as it is used in real life.

The aims in a particular language lesson in the institution are to increase students' knowledge of subject content, to develop students' knowledge of content-related lexis, to improve all four language skills within a content-based context and

to prepare materials and tools suitable to the needs of the learners. All activities are suitable to be adapted for different levels and mixed-ability groups. There are three different English lessons (Inquiry ‘8 hours’, Science & Math ‘3 hours, and Literacy ‘3 hours’) with a total of 14 hours in a week for 3rd graders.

The assessment type applied in the institution is mainly through the application of weekly quizzes, homework assignments and projects supported by teacher observation and evaluation (e.g. end-of-semester tests, weekly quizzes and two online exams in each semester). Apart from the written assessment, there is an alternative assessment tool known as the language *portfolio* for YLs at the end of the school year to exhibit student's English language development to their parents. The stages of implementing the LP in the institution of research are demonstrated in detail below:

There were a total of 132 3rd grade students in the school for the 2016-2017 academic year. That year was the 5th year of portfolio implementation in the institution. The portfolio included products from each lesson in different exhibition areas. The purposes and the contents of that year’s portfolio were determined by the school administration. During determining the purposes and contents of the portfolio, the administration did not consult students, or parents. At the very beginning of the preparation phase, the students were orally informed by their English teachers about the LP to be realized during the year. Students were asked to prepare projects at the end of each unit in a given time period either at home or school. The topic and the details of each project to be prepared by the students were determined by their English teachers.

The LP implemented that year was a mixture of a thematic and showcase portfolio. It was regarded as a thematic portfolio since it was prepared to reflect students’ cognitive and affective skills and their views about the particular units covered in the term. It was also a showcase portfolio because a limited number of products including only students’ best works were chosen to be exhibited and to

serve a particular purpose. Showcase portfolios generally intend to show end-of-year/semester accomplishments. Therefore, these types of portfolio are not suitable to be assessed and graded (Birgin & Baki, 2007).

There was not any particular assessment criteria followed for assessing the skills of the learners. Followed by the delivery of each project by the learner, a focus group discussion was realized where students had the opportunity to evaluate each other's work by exchanging opinions. If teachers did not like the quality of the projects, students were asked to prepare them again according to the criteria determined by the teachers.

In the exhibition phase of the end-products through the end of the school year, the best products of the learners to be exhibited were chosen by the English teachers. According to the schedule, students came with their parents to the exhibition area to present their end-products. Every student had ten minutes to complete their turn as they had to visit other stations prepared for other lessons. Students were not assessed or given any grades as a result of the LP process.

3.2.2 Participants. This research study benefitted from a *purposeful sampling* method because in this particular method, researchers intentionally choose individuals or sites to learn and have an idea about the subject matter. The researcher intended to develop a detailed understanding which may provide useful information, help individuals learn more about the subject matter, and give voice to silenced people (Cresswell, 2005).

3.2.2.1 Students as participants. There were six 3rd grade classes with a total of 132 students in the institution. For the research study, six students from each class (n=36) were purposefully selected from the sample population to be interviewed as the researcher believed that they would be suitable representatives for the central phenomenon. The participants were sharing the same learning environment with similar characteristics and backgrounds. Sixteen male and twenty female students,

whose ages ranged from nine to ten participated in the research study. The students amongst the voluntary group were selected evenly from each class according to their language levels and participation in the classes to gain a deeper insight into their experience with implementing portfolios. Three strong and three average students in English language from each class were purposefully selected as representatives of the 3rd graders. Their participation in English lessons, language use capability and grades from the exams were taken as a basis in the selection process.

Table 1

Demographic Profiles of the Students (n=36)

Students	Age	Sex	Grade	English	English
				Speaking Level	Listening Level
Student (n=36)	9-10	M=16	3	B1=6	B1=6
		F=20		A2=12	A2=30
				A1=18	

**Students' speaking and listening English levels were assessed by the TOEFL Primary Junior exam (2017) carried out through the end of the year.*

3.2.2.2 Parents as participants. Finally, thoughts, insights and observations of the parents of the participant 36 students were also included in the study. After the portfolio process, the parents were provided with an information sheet explaining the details of the process together with a consent form with the aim of taking both the willingness of the parents and students to participate in this research study.

3.2.2.3 Administrators as participants. Five administrators including two school counselors, the Head of English Department, the Deputy-principal responsible from the 3rd and 4th graders and the Principle of the school participated in this research study. They had 10-25 years of teaching experience. They did not teach lessons that time or implement the portfolios themselves, but they were responsible for the organization, and participated in preparing and checking the syllabi and the

exams for the classes. They participated in the LP process indirectly by observing the students and managing the procedure. They were interviewed once at the end of October in 2017 right after the implementation of the portfolio to elicit their thoughts, insights and observations throughout the process.

3.2.2.4 Teachers as participants. This study benefitted from the views of the five English teachers who participated in this study. They were all 3rd grade level teachers, three of whom were females of Turkish origin, while two of whom were natives of English language. Their experience in language teaching ranged from 3 to 15 years. They were all working full time in the school. As the research was about the perceptions of portfolio use, the participants were teachers who were currently making use of portfolio work in their classes. Below you may find the demographic profiles of the English teachers.

Table 2

Demographic Profiles of the English Teachers Taking Part in the LP (n=5)

Teachers	Age	Sex	Origin	Graduation	Teaching Exp.	Portfolio Exp.	Teaching Area
Teacher 1	41	F	Australian	BA from Social Sciences	5	1 st	Literacy
Teacher 2	36	F	Romanian	BA from English Literature	12	4 th	Literacy
Teacher 3	35	F	Turkish	BA from Teaching	15	3 rd	Science & Math
Teacher 4	33	F	Turkish	BA from English Literature	3	1 st	Inquiry
Teacher 5	32	F	Turkish	MA from Language Teaching	9	1 st	Inquiry

**The teachers are listed according to their ages; from the oldest to the youngest.*

3.2.2.5 The role of the researcher in the study. As the teacher of the 3rd grade students participating in the study as well, the researcher was able to have the opportunity to organize and observe every detail and step of the study. During the process, the researcher kept field notes of the portfolio implementation regularly as she was teaching inquiry lessons to the three 3rd grade classes out of six. I had eight hours of inquiry lessons with them in a week, where basic grammar points necessary for that level are provided. As for the remaining three 3rd grade classes, the researcher arranged regular meetings with their inquiry teacher following every assigned project to understand the course of the process. On the other hand, during the data collection process and implementation of the study, the researcher tried to remain objective by not interfering in the process of forming the participants'

perceptions about the study in order for her to get reliable and objective results as well as answers to the research questions of the study.

3.3 Procedures

This research study benefited from pure qualitative research design method. To show the results of the study, field notes by the researcher throughout the process and at the end of the process; semi-structured and focus group discussions with the participant students; semi-structured interviews with their teachers and administrators together with e-mail interviews with their parents were used as data collection tools.

The researcher performed semi-structured face to face interviews with each participant student, teacher and administrator separately according to their availability to obtain their opinions and attitudes towards portfolio implementation in private K-12 primary schools. Each interview was voice-recorded separately in order for the researcher to be able to analyze the data in detail to help her find the relevant themes out of each interview. The parents of the participant students were interviewed through e-mail as they were out of the reach of the researcher.

3.3.1 Data collection instruments

3.3.1.1 *Semi-structured interviews with the students.* As a data collection instrument, semi-structured interviews were carried out by the researcher to be able to obtain qualitative data about students' perceptions and attitudes towards the use of portfolios as an assessment tool. After the selection process, the students were given an empty schedule for interviews and asked to write their names in the spaces considering their free time (see Appendix A). According to the schedule, the students were interviewed one by one in the meeting room. The questions used in the interview were designed by the researcher with a view to finding answers to the research question of the study (see Appendix B). The questions were prepared

and asked in Turkish with the purpose of encouraging students to answer the questions fully because their level of English and their vocabulary knowledge would not be sufficient to let them speak and express their opinions clearly. As the concentration span of the YLs (Shin, 2007) was shorter compared to adults, each interview lasted eight to ten minutes. Interviews with the students were audio-recorded with the help of a voice recording application in a mobile phone and transcribed for data analysis (see Appendix C for the sample of a transcribed data).

3.3.1.2 Focus group discussions with the participant students. During the process, classroom-based focus group discussions were realized followed by each project to gain overall feedback from the students regarding their products. Besides, a follow up focus group discussion was held with the participant students only at the end of the LP process to obtain their attitudes and ideas on portfolio process. The researcher as moderator conducted the discussions with the participant students as a group in the most appropriate time according to their schedule. The discussion lasted about twenty minutes. Participant students were asked questions in an interactive setting and were encouraged to discuss their thoughts freely with their peers. At the end of the process, the researcher asked a general question (see Appendix D) to start the discussion and did not intervene in the discussion later except for when students started talking off topic. Structurally, it was planned by the researcher to be discussed openly and freely in order for them to generate ideas which would provide a wealth of information about the subject matter. With the help of a voice recording application in a mobile phone, each discussion was voice-recorded for data analysis.

3.3.1.3 E-mail interviews with the parents. Parents of the participant students participated in the study with their opinions, reflections, and observations of the process. Because of the limited time span for face to face interviews as most of the parents were actively working in different places and at different working hours, the researcher decided to carry out e-mail interviewing. This gave the participants more time to think about the process in detail and write their reflections in a more comfortable setting. Following the portfolio process, the parents were provided with

a consent form explaining the purpose of the study, giving the details of the process, and providing some options for them with the aim of taking both the willingness of the parents and students to participate in this research study (see Appendix E). The researcher tried to provide convenience to the parents by giving them options to fill the form either in computer environment and sign it electronically or print and complete it. They also had an option either to send the form back to the researcher with their kids or to scan the form and e-mail it. The participants were given two weeks to complete the form. Some of the participants returned the form fully filled immediately after receiving the e-mail, some of them returned it in ten days, and some of them asked for extra time to fill it. The questions were prepared in Turkish, in their mother tongue, and they were asked to fill the form in Turkish, as well (see Appendix F). The complete data was received in November 2017 and filed for data analysis.

3.3.1.4 Semi-structured interviews with the administrators. Semi-structured interviews were held with the administration at the end of the year followed by the portfolio implementation so as to gain their insights and observation throughout the process. They were interviewed once at the end of October, 2017. The interviews were designed semi-structurally according to the availability of the participants. The researcher aimed to ask similar questions to those asked to the other participants taking part in the research study believing that this would help come up with some common themes during the data analyzing process. The questions were prepared both in Turkish and in English (see Appendix G). The administrators were free to choose the language they felt comfortable in giving the interview. The interviews lasted fifteen to twenty minutes (see Appendix H for a sample transcription).

3.3.1.5 Semi-structured interviews with the English teachers. Semi-structured interviews with the participant English teachers were realized in this research study in July right after the LP implementation with the purpose of receiving their perceptions and insights of experiencing the LP process. Participant teachers were currently making use of LPs in their classes. The interviews, ranged from fifteen to

twenty minutes, were designed semi-structurally according to the availability of the teachers. The questions were prepared both in Turkish and in English (see Appendix I). Participants were free to give the interviews with the language they preferred. Interviews with the participant teachers were done in their L1. The interviews with the teachers were audio-recorded and transcribed for data analysis (see Appendix J for a sample transcription).

3.3.1.6 Field notes of the researcher as the teacher. Both as the researcher and the English teacher of the students, the researcher had the opportunity to organize and observe every detail and step of the study with her field notes. She taught inquiry lessons to the 3rd grade students for eight hours in a week. Students were assigned a project at the end of each particular unit covered in class. The projects were either carried out in class or assigned as homework during the weekends based on the time and effort to be given to each project. During the process, the researcher kept field notes of the portfolio implementation regularly (see Appendix K). Most of the time, she kept the field notes on site at the moment while students were working on their projects, while sometimes she wrote her notes right after the class hour at my first convenient time when she could not find the opportunity to write them during the lesson. At the end of the portfolio implementation, the researcher used the data from the field notes for analysis.

3.3.2 Data collection procedures. Before conducting the study, the researcher first asked for and received ethical approval from the administrators of the institution (see Appendix L) to conduct the study and all the ethical rules were taken into consideration. The study was permitted to be conducted with the 3rd grade students. In this research study, the analysis was based on the data obtained from three different sources: (1) semi-structured in-depth interviews with the stakeholders, (2) focus group discussions with the students, (3) teacher's field notes. The researcher took part in this study both as a participant and an observer.

Table 3

Research Timeline

Months	Research Activity
September, 2016	Getting permission from the administrators of the school to be able to conduct the research at the institution
October, 2016	Taking the consent of my teacher partner to help me during the process voluntarily
October, 2016	Before study, observing the classes to gain more insight about the potential students to participate in the study
October, 2016- November, 2017	Data collection process (observations, interviews with teachers, students, parents and administrators; collecting the samples of the student's work)
November 2017	Transcription of the interviews and early analysis of the data
December, 2017- February, 2018	Analyzing the data for relevant themes
February-April 2018	Searching and writing the literature review
May 2018	Finalizing the study

There were six 3rd grade classes in total for the 2016-2017 academic year in the school. The researcher as the teacher of the project was teaching three 3rd grade classes. Her teacher partner (Teacher 5) was teaching the rest three 3rd grade classes. As she intended to search for common views and attitudes of all the 3rd grade students, the researcher asked for her teacher partner if she was willing to participate in this research study as a volunteer by keeping field notes of her classes during the implementation of each project in class. After taking her oral approval first, the researcher provided her with an information sheet explaining the purpose and the details of the study and a consent form indicating that by signing the form, she accepts to take part in the study voluntarily (see Appendix M). The researcher had

regular meetings with her following each assigned project so as to understand the course of the process. The students were not informed about the portfolio project at the very beginning thinking that some students might get stressed during the projects and consequently could not be as productive as their peers. Another reason was that the researcher intended to see their progress and their sense of responsibility without being affected by the external sources. The last important reason was that the content, aim, and purposes of the LP were not determined. Right after the completion of the first month of the fall semester, the researcher got acquainted with all the students. The research study was carried out throughout one academic year in 2016-2017. The project lasted for nine months, and the details of each project are explained below:

Table 4

Portfolio Project Application Process Table

Project Topic	Month(s)	Grammar Purpose	Speaking aim	Target Vocabulary	Project Output	Place of Application
1-How are animals different from one another?	Sept. & Oct.	1-Subject-object pronouns 2- Adverbs of frequency	Describing an animal	Animal groups & Parts of animals	Animal picture cards (see Appendix N for the samples)	During the weekend/At home
2-How are things different now from long ago?	Nov. & Dec. & Jan.	Simple Past Regular & Irregular Verbs	Describing your day	Communication & transportation	Writing a letter to a friend	Sometimes during the weekends at home/at school
3- How do people get along?	December	Can & May	Talking about ability/possibility	Following rules	Rules Poster	During the lesson time at school

Table 5 (cont.d)

Project Topic	Month(s)	Grammar Purpose	Speaking aim	Target Vocabulary	Project Output	Place of Application
4- Why should we take care of the Earth?	January	Propositions of place	Clean or polluted? Describing a situation	Reduce-Reuse-Recycle	Hand-made Flowers from reused materials	During the weekend at home
5- How does music makes feel	February	Adverbs of Time	Describing music and emotions	Feelings	Music Poster	During the lesson time at school
6-How do people make music?	March	Comparative & Superlative adjectives	Describing instruments	Instruments	Comparative Superlative Poster	During the weekend at home
7- How do we make art?	April *Two projects in this month.	Quantifiers	Describing Art	Shapes & Materials	1-Art Picture about summer 2- Fish & Butterfly from shapes	1-During the lesson time at school 2-During the weekend at home.

Each topic was tried to be covered in one month and at the end of each topic, students were expected to prepare a project either at home or at school including the grammar points and vocabulary covered during the month. When the project was projected to be lasting more than one lesson hour, the teacher assigned the project as weekend homework. For home projects, they were especially asked to prepare their project on their own without the help of their parents. Following each project, the researcher had regular meetings with her teacher partner in order to check out the

finished projects together with her notes concerning the implementation of the projects.

3.3.2.1 Preparations during the LP process. In the second semester, the administration decided to choose a theme for that year's portfolio to be realized by 3rd grade students. Though the theme was chosen in the second semester, teachers started collecting products of students at the end of each unit starting from the very beginning of the year in case the LP process needs them. Administrators decided LP to be a thematic one. The theme was agreed on "Natural Park: Protect Our Nature". In relation to this theme, *Hand-made Flowers Project from Reused Materials (Project No.4)* and *The Fish and Butterfly from Shapes Project of the students (Project No.7)* were chosen to be included on the portfolio exhibition day. The area to be used during the portfolio day was prepared with the help of teachers and students (for pictures of the day see Appendix O). To create a sense of natural atmosphere, background forest music was prepared to be playing during the day in order for the students and their parents to feel as if they were in a natural park.

3.3.2.2 On the LP exhibition day. The time for each student was projected as ten minutes on the LP exhibition day. The portfolio consisted of two stages. The first stage was the problem solving stage and the second stage was the production stage. The first stage was covered by *Teacher 3, 4, and 5*. As there were six 3rd grade classes, each teacher was responsible from two classes. They met the students and parents for about five minutes. In this stage, students were expected to use the language and grammar points covered during the year. The second stage was covered by *Teacher 1 and Teacher 2* in about five minutes. In this stage, students were expected to produce something from the used materials and they were expected to use the language at the same time (for detailed portfolio day application plan pls. see Appendix P).

3.3.2.3 After the LP process. After the LP exhibition day, the researcher came together with her teacher partner for exchanging ideas over the notes taken during the observations. They decided to choose six students in total from each class out of the

sample population to be interviewed. The researcher mentioned the purpose of the study to the students indicating that their participation was voluntary and assuring them that under no circumstances would their answers have any positive or negative impact on their grade in the course. The students amongst the voluntary group were selected evenly from each class according to their language levels and participation in the classes. Three strong and three average students were purposefully selected from the volunteers, as the researcher believed that they would be good representatives for the central phenomenon. Their participation in English lessons, language use capability and grades from the exams were taken as a basis in the selection process. After the selection process, the students were given an empty schedule for interviews and asked to write their names in the spaces considering their free time. According to the schedule the students were interviewed one by one in the meeting room. In order to prevent any potential language barriers from disrupting the implementation of the interview, the questions were asked in Turkish. The data was collected through semi-structured way to uncover rich descriptive data on the personal experiences of the participants. As the concentration span of the YLs was short, the interviews were conducted with the participants in *May 2017* at school environment ranging from 5 to 8 minutes. Throughout the process of the interviews, probes and follow-up questions were added as required in order to get more details and clarification.

In July, 2017, when the school year ended, semi-structured interviews were carried out with the teachers participating in the portfolio implementation. The researcher provided them with an information sheet explaining the purpose and the details of the study and a consent form indicating that by signing the form, they accept to take part in the study voluntarily. Interviews were arranged according to the availability of both parties. Participant teachers were currently making use of portfolio work in their classes. The interviews, ranged from fifteen to twenty minutes, were designed semi-structurally according to the availability of the teachers. The questions were designed both in Turkish and in English. Participants were free to give the interviews with the language they preferred. Interviews with the

participant teachers were done in their L1. The researcher had the opportunity to meet each participant only once for interviewing. Throughout the process of the interviews, probes and follow-up questions were added as required in order to get more details and clarification. Specific questions were also included as the interviews progressed in response to emerging themes. After being sure that no further themes or new information emerged to add to the understanding of the phenomenon, the researcher finalized collecting data right after the saturation of the data.

In October, 2017, after 5 months, when the school year started, the researcher arranged a focus group discussion with the participant students to gain knowledge of the participants' attitudes and ideas on portfolio process. As a moderator, the researcher conducted the interview with the participant students as a group in the most appropriate time according to their schedule. The discussion lasted about twenty minutes. Participant students were asked questions in an interactive setting and were encouraged to discuss their thoughts freely with other participants. Structurally it was planned by the researcher to be discussed openly and freely in order for them to generate ideas which would provide a wealth of information about the subject matter.

Through the end of *October, 2017*, semi-structured interviews were realized with the administrators in order to obtain their insights and observation throughout the process. They were provided with an empty schedule for interviewing and asked to write their names at the most appropriate time according to their availability. According to the schedule they were interviewed in their offices. They were interviewed once semi-structurally. The researcher aimed to ask questions alike to those asked to the other participants taking part in the research study believing that this would help the researcher to come up with some common themes during that data analyzing process. The questions were prepared both in Turkish and in English. The administrators were free to choose the language they felt comfortable to give the interview. In this way, the researcher tried to encourage participants to answer the questions fully and voicing their opinions without feeling under the pressure of

English language. Throughout the process of the interviews, probes and follow-up questions were added as required in order to get more details and clarification. Specific questions were also included as the interviews progressed in response to emerging themes. After being sure that no further themes or new information came out to add to the understanding of the phenomenon, the researcher ended collecting data right after the saturation of the data. The interviews lasted fifteen to twenty minutes.

In November, 2017, e-mail interviewing was done with the parents of the participant students with their opinions, reflections, and observations of the process. As face to face interviewing was not possible at that moment due to the limited time span for face to face interviews as most of the parents were actively working in different places and at different working hours. One advantage for e-mail interviewing was that they had the opportunity to go over the questions in detail and write their reflections in a more comfortable setting. Attached to e-mail, a consent form was sent to the parents explaining the purpose of the study, giving the details of the process, and providing some options for them with the aim of taking both the willingness of the parents and students to participate in this research study. The participant parents were given options to fill in / out the form either in computer environment and sign it electronically or print the form out and complete it. They also had the option either to send the form back to the researcher with their kids or to scan the form and e-mail it. Two weeks were given to them to fully fill in the form. Some of the participants gave the form back filled neatly immediately after receiving the e-mail, some of them returned it in ten days, and some of them asked for extra time to complete it. The questions were prepared in Turkish, in their mother tongue, and they were asked to fill the form in Turkish, as well. The data was completely received in November and was filed for data analysis. The researcher conducted a thematic analysis so as to analyze the data. After all the interviews were complete, the interview transcripts were coded to reveal meaningful themes.

3.3.3 Data analysis procedures. This research study lasted for one academic year. As this study benefited from phenomenological research design, data analysis here is characterized by the following procedures: *epokhé*, which meant specifying common meanings and essences, and textual and structural analysis of the data (Moustakas, 1994 as cited in Diaz, 2015). Through textual analysis, we intend to describe what is expressed by the participants while through structural analysis, we intend to interpret how that is expressed by the participants. In the process of interpretation of the findings both types of analysis are vital. However, structural analysis has a significant place as a main part of the scaffolding of phenomenology since it leads us towards common essences and meanings (Diaz, 2015). An *inductive approach* was used in analyzing the data. Some important ways or principles about the use of a general inductive approach are described below:

1. The analysis is realized as a result of reading and interpreting the raw data many times. Though the results are affected by the assessment objectives or questions planned by the researcher, the findings came out from the analysis of the raw data.
2. First of all, the raw data is analyzed, out of which categories developed as a model or framework. This model consists of key themes specified by the evaluator during the coding process.
3. Evaluators interpret, code and evaluate the raw data. Evaluators' inferences and experiences form the findings as they conduct the study and take part in the data analyses process. For the sake of having useful findings, the evaluators must decide on the important points to be evaluated in the data.
4. As various evaluators may interpret the raw data, different findings may come out.
5. The trustworthiness of findings gained from the interpretation of the inductive analysis may be evaluated using similar methods to the ones used with other types of qualitative analysis (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 240).

All interviews with each participant were audio-recorded for accuracy and transcribed verbatim to facilitate subsequent data analysis, and pseudonyms of participants were used to protect confidentiality. The researcher conducted a thematic analysis so as to analyze the data. After all the interviews were complete, the interview transcripts were coded to reveal meaningful themes. Significant themes have emerged as a result of the thorough and systematic reading and coding of the transcripts. Segments of interview text were coded with an intention to analyze each segment in detail to reveal relevant themes. Coding the segments also helped documenting the relationship between the themes and identifying the ones that were significant to the participants. Similarities and differences of participant remarks were investigated, as well (Elliott & Gillie, 1998). The coding process went from open coding to axial coding which resulted in selective coding in the end. Below you may find the detailed process of data analysis:

As the first step, the transcripts were read carefully, making notations in the margins, before entering them into the computer. As reading the transcripts in detail, the researcher realized similar utterances given by the participants. She highlighted one color for each category which was similar to one another. Examples of color coding can be seen in Table 6 below. The researcher entered the info into the MS Office Word Document, and wrote memos for each of the documents. These memos were derived from her field notes, and any thoughts she has had about the respondent since the date of the interview. After that, the researcher started doing some *free coding*, which consisted of creating broad labels and coding interview text to these new codes for further review. As the next stage, she examined these preliminary codes so as to identify connections and develop pattern codes. Then, she determined basic themes by examining group of comments made by respondents and memos made by the researchers. She coded specific passages from each interview to one or more codes in addition to those defined as preliminary ones before. Then, reports of all data were printed out that were specified as specific codes, and read carefully in detail. Some coded passages that did not obviously seem to fit the code well were omitted, which turned out to be a sort of reliability check. Some passages disregarded

before that seemed to fit these specific codes well were re-added. More connections between the codes were searched to find something more to link them to become a theme. All the observation and field notes were re-read as well to assist the researcher in thematic development. Predominant themes which served as answers to the research questions came out of the data. They are placed in the chart accordingly when all the coding process was finalized.

Table 5
Coding Process Sample

	Dil portfolyo hk. Ne düşünüyorum?	Amacı neydi?	Neler hissettim?	Neden böyle hissettim?	Kazanımlarım	Proje ödevi hk.	Proje ödevini kimle yapıyorun?	Veli Portfolyo hk.	Proje ödevi hk.
STUDENT 1	Çok güzeldi. Çok güzel bir çalışmadı. İngilizce konuşabildim.	Öğrenme ve öğrendiklerimizi tekrar amacıyla	İyi hissettim ama başta heyecanlıydım.	Hata yapmaktan korktum.	İngilizce konuşabildiğim için iyi hissettim.	Proje ödevi yapmayı çok sevmiyorum. Olursa da evde hazırlamaktan hoşlanıyorum, çünkü okulda dikkatim dağınıyor.	Kendim.	Yaş gruplarına göre beklentim bu anlamda çok fazla olduğunu düşünüyorum. Bu da öğrenciyi seni geliyor.	Ödev çok fazla olduğu için tüm derslerden genel anlamda biraz soran ve doğal olarak gerekli zamanı ayıramıyor.
STUDENT 2	Güzel bir his veriyordu.	Bütün yıl yaptığımız şeyleri, öğrendiğimizi şeyleri annemize babamıza göstermek için yaptık portfolyoyu. Ve annemiz babamız yanımızda. Çalışmalarımızı göstermek için.	Güzel. İyi hissettim kendimi. Başta heyecanlıyım işim ama sonrasında heyecanım geçti.	Ailem izleyeceği için.	Yaptığımız şeyleri sergiledik, yaptığımız konuların tekrarıydı.	Proje ödevlerini evde yapmayı seviyorum.	Annem bazen yardım ediyor.	Öğrencinin bilgisini geliştirmeye çalıştığını düşünüyorum.	Azırmaya teşvik amacı açısından çok faydalı olduğunu düşünüyorum. Bazan yardım alıyorduk yerlerde.
STUDENT 3	Portfolyo güzel bir şey ama benim annem biraz gereksiz buluyor. "Bogzu boşuna" falan diyor.	Bençe anlamlarına bizi bakıyor [1], görüyor yani biz şunları öğrendik diyebiliyoruz.	Öncesinde çok heyecanlıydım. Böyle içimde heyecan çıkmıştı. Sonrasında da çok mutlu oldum hoşuma gitti.	Mutlu yspicam diye konuşmaktan korkmakt.	Herkese gösteriyor yaptıklarımızı. Mutlu hissediyorum konuşabildiğim için.	Proje ödevi hazırlamayı seviyorum.	Genelde evde kendim. Ama en son annem bakıyor.	Benim için çocuğum ve öğrenmesini istiyordum. Ama en son annem bakıyor. Gözlemlediğim zaman dilimdir. Verilen cevabın doğruluğu ikinci plandadır.	Proje ödevlerine karşı istekli. Ancak gereken özeni göstermiyor. Öğrenmek, pekiştirmek ve eğlenmekten ziyade sonucu cabuk ve kolay yoldan almaya çalışıyor.

3.3.4 Trustworthiness. Participant corroboration and agreement between coders are popular methods used during the process of validation in a phenomenological study (Creswell, 2013). Presenting and discussing the data analysis by the researcher and the research participants validate that participants uttered the essences and meanings directly or indirectly. Agreement between coders is important, though complicated. Various people or external researchers may take part in the encoding data process willingly. They basically strive for finding

correspondence between the relevant themes and the categories that came out as a result of the data analysis. Finally, all coders come together to compare their analysis and, if needed, based on the common agreement, the categories can be reconsidered or reorganized so as to validate the information gained (Diaz, 2015).

In the light of the information above, in the present study, during the implementation process, an audio recorder for accuracy in the study was used. During the data collection process and implementation of the study, the researcher tried to remain objective by not interfering in the process of forming the participants' perceptions about the study in order for her to get reliable and objective results as well as answers to the research questions of the study. At the time of collecting data from the interviews, two teacher colleagues conducted interviews with the students of the teacher-researcher while she conducted interviews with the students that she was not teaching at the moment to increase reliability and prevent data from being biased. After collecting the data, for determining the credibility of findings and interpretations (Lincoln & Guba, 1985), the researcher realized member checking for participant validation. Member checking was important to enhance the accuracy, credibility and validity of the data obtained during a research interview (Barbour, 2001 as cited in Harper & Cole, 2012). The researcher returned the raw data to participants to check for accuracy and resonance with their experiences. She shared all of the findings with the participants, and let them "to critically analyze the findings and have their comment on them" (Creswell, 2007). Right after the member checking, to establish the inter-coder reliability, she asked two of her colleagues as outside coders to check the raw data for the themes. The outside coders analyzed data independently and then they met with coders separately to discuss codes. There were no significant discrepancies. They discussed differences in how they had labeled the data, and revised coding accordingly. Any small differences with the coding were negotiated and resolved to create one set of themes. As a final step, the researcher e-mailed the final themes to all participants for a final review. They were asked to examine these themes and reflect on the accuracy.

3.4 Limitations

This study was limited to the 3rd grade students in a private K-12 school in the western part of Turkey. One of the most important limitations during the data collection process was when the researcher was trying to get data from the students. The interviews were mostly carried out in their lunch breaks, which may have affected the findings in a way, as lunch breaks are the only time for students to have fun and relax. Some of them may have rushed in giving answers to go out to spend time with their friends. For some of them the interview time was too long that they were distracted.

Another limitation was that the teacher had three different classes in the research study but since the lesson times were different for each class, they were exposed to the application at different times; some of them before lunch, some of them after lunch, and some of them in the last lessons, which may have affected the results in a way. Thus, it would create more reliable results if applied at the same time and under the same conditions for each class.

Another limitation was experienced during the focus group discussions with the students because the participant students were all from different classes. Trying to put them together in the same classroom was tiresome for the researcher as some of students were not always available or willing to participate which may have affected the reliability of the data gained. Additionally, some students were dominant compared to the rest. They always wanted to talk first and most which caused silent students withdraw more and just listen instead of sharing their opinions and experiences. Apart from those above, these dominant characters tended to speak off-topic most of the time which undermined the process.

Another limitation was faced during the project preparation phase with the students since time allocated for the projects was not enough to be completed at school, most of the projects were assigned as homework. Therefore, it was not clear

whether the project was the sole product of the student or the students took help from their parents while preparing it. In this sense, the degree of parent manipulation on home assessment could not be understood by the assessor.

E –mail interviewing with the parents brought along another limitation as it was not a face to face interview where the researcher could direct the interview by asking follow up questions. In addition to that, it was very difficult to reach the parents via e-mails. Therefore, turnabout from some of the parents took too long, or some of them gave very short answers which were not enough for the reliable data analysis.

In this chapter, setting, participants, instruments, data collection procedure and data analysis procedure were discussed in detail. The following chapter reveals data analysis procedures, and the findings in relation to certain categories in more detail. The possible reasons for the results are also mentioned.

Chapter 4

Findings

In this chapter, selected participants' comments from the answers given to the interview questions are classified and interpreted. In line with the literature, the data has been analyzed and classified into three main strands: *conceptualizing portfolios from the stakeholders' points of view, reaping benefits of, and experiencing challenges in using language portfolios in a private K-12 primary school*. Extracts from the stakeholders' statements provide evidence for these emerging themes. Quotes presented throughout the findings section use pseudonyms to protect the identity of participants¹.

4.1 Conceptualizing Language Portfolios from the Stakeholders' Points of View

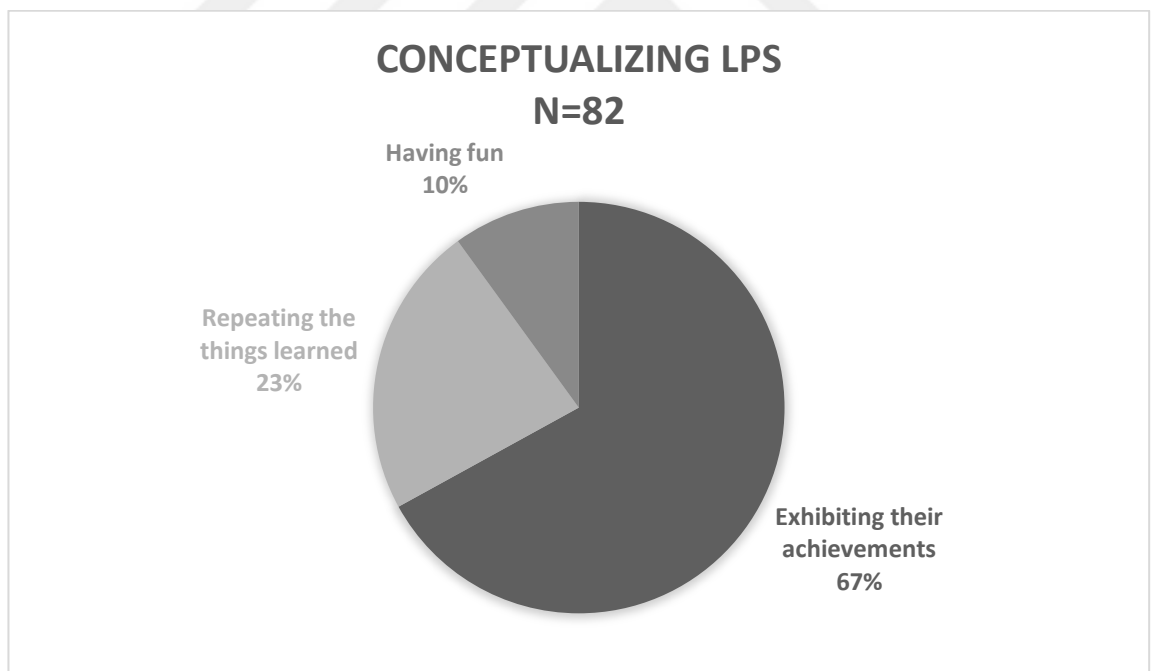


Figure 2. Participants conceptualizing LPs (N=82).

¹ Students' numbers given as pseudonyms matches to the numbers given to their parents. Eg. Student 1 – Parent 1

Data gathered from interviews, observations and field notes show that administrators as well as teachers, parents, and students perceive language portfolios in a variety of ways. According to the data collected, we can say that almost all the students stated language portfolios were designed *to show their parents what they learnt and achieved* during the year. “The reason why we took part in the language portfolio was to show our parents what we’ve learned throughout the year” (SSI, Student 2)”. Similarly; Student 4, 5, 12, 14, 34 and 35 stated that LP was used to exhibit their achievements to their parents. Another student went a little bit further stressing that the success of portfolio meant just for getting appreciation from her parents:

It was a wonderful experience for me, and for my parents. I can say, for the first time in my life I feel, that I deserve their love. With this portfolio project, our parents had a chance to witness how successful we were and how much we succeeded. (FGD, Student 21)

For some students, portfolio was a chance to bring their parents to school to see their work as Student 11 revealed that LPs were implemented “to show our parents what we have done... because they do not come to the school often. Because of that, we participated in such a project so that our parents could proudly see our achievements” (SSI). Similarly, Parent 11 supported the above mentioned statement by seeing the LP “as a chance to use the knowledge gained during the year fluently and to see how far he has progressed”. This view is supported with the remarks of Parent 3 as “... the subjects they [students] have been working through during the period are exhibited in concrete terms. It gives me an idea about my child's interest and participation in the lesson”. For Parent 7, portfolio’s aim was to “allow them [students] to exhibit what they have learned by expressing themselves freely in front of their parents”. As for Parent 12, portfolios are necessary in the long term “because it is useful to know what the student is doing year after year and what steps s/he is going through”. In this way, “... we are able to determine how our students' knowledge and skills have improved” (Parent 14). As seen from the parents’

remarks, they see portfolio process as an opportunity to witness the language learning progress of their kids besides having information about what students did at school.

Teachers and administrators participating in the research process also supported these views by claiming that through language portfolios, students are able to exhibit their achievements to their parents so that their parents are aware of the multifaceted development of the learner:

It [language portfolio] shows the development of their [students] learning stages. [...] I think using portfolio is very beneficial for the students in relation to the language development and linguistic skills. It also shows to their parents what the student has learned throughout the year. I think it is a good way of revising and what the students are capable of doing. (Teacher 1)

For Teacher 3, for example, the portfolio “was useful in terms of process evaluation. [...] It [language portfolio] allows them [students] to show their families what they have learned throughout the year in a wider range of time”. According to Administrator 2, portfolios were the means for demonstrating the accomplishments of the learners to their parents and teachers:

The educational process actually has three main chains. They are the parents, students and teachers. Portfolio exhibition days play a very important role in bringing these three chains together. [...] Throughout the year, students have a lot of achievements from all courses. Of course, there is a need for an environment where they can exhibit these achievements. Portfolios also serve as a good reason to exhibit these achievements. (Administrator 2)

In addition to the above mentioned statements regarding the perception of the LPs, some students believed that it was to *practice* and *repeat* what they have learned throughout the whole year. Student 23 mentioned that they took part in the portfolio to remember what they did during the school year. For Student 2, it was very

enjoyable to be able to reap the fruits of what they did as she said “I think this was a very exciting process seeing that all our efforts were worth it because I was very happy in the end” (SSI). Likewise; Student 1,13, 20, 29 and 34 expressed similar things about their perceptions regarding LPs, as well.

Parents’ comments were in a way supporting the above mentioned statements of the students as they stated that the LPs gave students a chance to repeat and practice what they have learned. Parent 17 thought that portfolio was helpful in the sense that students may have a chance to put all their studies in a folder where they are able to check them again and again which was very fruitful as well as “enabling students to use their accumulated knowledge and repeat it within the year” (Parent 30) because this way “they have a chance to reinforce what they have learned and the way they use their imagination” (Parent 6). “It ensures that our children work more systematically and efficiently. By learning the methods of studying, it becomes possible for them to reach to the result sooner and faster. [...] It also helps a lot to repeat and study regularly” (Parent 29). From the answers given by the parents, it is understood that the parents find portfolios effective in the regular and systematic work of their children. It is understood that through portfolio studies, students are closer to learning by experiencing.

Similarly, administrators and teachers highlighted the importance of the repetition and revision of the student works which were completed during the process. According to their views, teachers may make use of this process, as well by having the opportunity to compare the development of the learners. “The portfolio is actually a process. I think it is important for the kids to see that process. In another sense, they [student] repeat what they have learned” (Administrator 3). Besides “content-integrated authentic language use in portfolios provides teachers with an opportunity to assess the process in a more natural way” (Teacher 5). Teacher 1 emphasized the importance of students’ needs in the portfolio process as follows:

It [portfolio] ... shows what the student has learned throughout the year. I think it is a good way of revising and what the students are capable of doing. You [as a teacher] can always analyze students' needs. [...] Personally, portfolio is very beneficial. Why is it beneficial? You are capable of conducting assessments according to every student's needs. (Teacher 1)

In addition to the reasons above, a few students regarded LPs as a chance just to have *fun*. "I know that the aim was actually to show our elders what we've done and learned during the school year. But if you ask me it was just to have fun and make us happy. (SSI, Student 15). For Student 6, the main purpose was to have fun "About it [the portfolio process] I can say that it was just for fun (laughing)" (SSI). For some students portfolio did not teach them anything. They just had fun together with their family as proved in the remarks below:

To be honest, I did not learn anything from it (the process). But I can say that I had the chance to show what I've learned by enjoying myself. I was happy because I was able to do what I was supposed to do [...] to make my parents and myself happy. (FGD, Student 7)

Some parents supported the students on their views regarding the targeted aim of the language was to have fun and enjoy themselves. "The aim of the language portfolio was to make my daughter share the opportunity to show what she has learned and thus to make her happy" (Parent 12). Likewise, Parent 21 stressed that the aim of language portfolio was to show what they have learned and understood during the whole year by having fun and enjoying themselves. This view is strongly supported by the Teacher 5 with the following statement:

It is fun and creative. I think it must be the first concern for a primary school language teacher to feed the needs of students to imagine, create and have fun which will improve their critical thinking skills in that language. (SSI)

Apart from the overall perceptions regarding the concept of the LPs, it was very important that care should be taken not to go beyond the targeted purpose of portfolios which was actually implemented for exhibiting the achievements of the students, as some of the stakeholders stated below:

It is actually proportionate to how, how often and for what purpose you realize portfolio process. So, I do not think it's useful to have a portfolio made just for a show-off to the parents. However, the LP is important in the sense that it makes the learning visible, and concrete. [...] It's a celebration actually. The child needs to have a desire to learn, to celebrate what they have learned, what they have done, and so on. (Administrator 1)

Going even further, some of them claimed that the purpose of the portfolios in private schools was nothing more than showing-off as Teacher 2 claimed below:

To be honest, I think that it is a show-off for the parents or something that students memorize and tell in front of their parents, or like something to impress the parents. I think it has been done for just that purpose. (Teacher 2)

Similarly, Administrator 3 and Administrator 5 revealed the fact that LPs in Turkey are not implemented related to its targeted purpose as follows:

If the LP is implemented in the way it should be done, it is effective. [...] Our portfolio, unfortunately, is not thoroughly applied in Turkish contexts, but if it is done in the way it is supposed to be, it is beneficial because students see their own learning process. So if the students choose the products they created in their learning process on their own, it is true. However, in Turkey, they are the teachers who decide what to include in students' portfolio. That's why I don't see it as a real portfolio because, as teachers, we always try to choose the most beautiful. (Administrator 3)

I think it would be useful if it is done in accordance with the intended purpose. But I do not think it is useful because learners have to present their products only in a given time period to prove their parents the worth of their works. (Administrator 5)

It is clear from the findings above that culture effect was quite important in implementing the portfolios in the way they were supposed to be because though implementation of an LP is perceived differently by each participant, it is significant to have a common purpose and a natural setting for the success of a good portfolio.

4.2 Reaping the Benefits of Using LPs in a Private K-12 Primary School

According to the data obtained from participant interviews, observations and field notes, four main themes have emerged: *fostering learner autonomy, self-assessment and language-development, developing awareness and social skills of the learners, and creating opportunity for teacher-parent-student dialogue.*

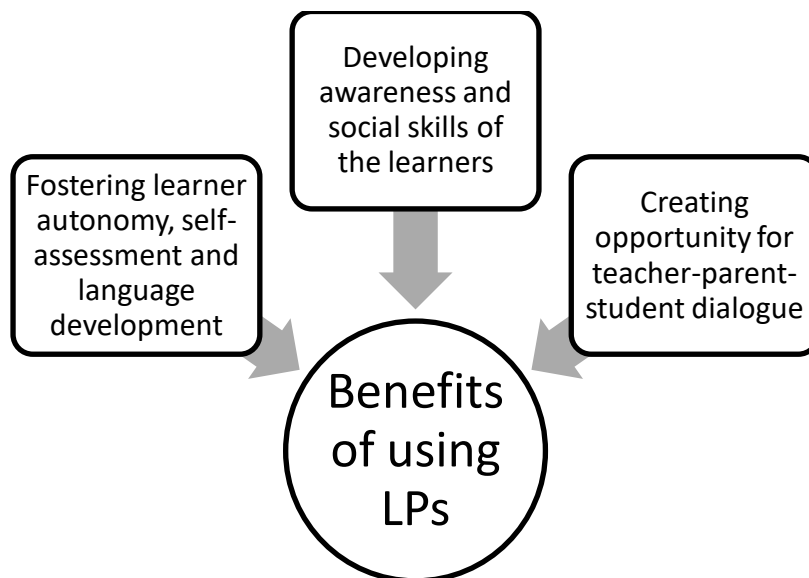


Figure 3. Figure showing the benefits of using LPs in private primary schools

4.2.1 Fostering learner autonomy, self-assessment and language-development. As part of the research study, below you may find students' views about project assignments and the factors or experiences that have influenced their views of preparing projects within the context of language portfolios. Most of the students participating in the study stated that they liked preparing project homework as it gave them the opportunity to repeat what they have learned at school besides motivating them to create something on their own. "Whether at home or at school, I like preparing project homework. It helps me reinforce what is being taught in the classroom" (SSI, Student 5). Similarly; Student 2, 3, 10, and 21 conveyed that "preparing project homework ... was very motivating" (FGD).

As weeks passed, the researcher realized signs of increased participation and motivation among students since they started asking several questions about the tasks in portfolios. Below is an example of such an observation:

Teacher 4's field-notes from the 6th week

Compared to the previous weeks, I can openly say that students work more eagerly today. Their enthusiasm increased a lot. Especially, Student 3 is studying very carefully at the moment. From time to time, they are asking questions about the parts they need help. Obviously, very motivated class.

Some students, however, preferred preparing projects at home thinking that they have an opportunity to practice what they have learned at school, as well. "I like preparing project homework. In this way, I have the chance to practice at home. It motivates me seeing that I am better at using the language" (SSI, Student 14). Similarly, Parent 14 expressed her ideas about her son's preparing projects as "I think that the project assignments are useful for practicing what they have learnt and for following their personal development".

Either at home or at school, preparing project assignments contributed to the autonomy and language development of the learners. In the example below, you may find the language level difference between the first and the second draft of the first project of Student 14 about describing animals:



1st Project- First Draft by Student 14

1st Project- Second Draft by Student 14

Figure 4. The figure showing the language difference between the two drafts of Student 14.

As seen in the examples above, there is a great difference in language development of Student 14 between two drafts since he enriched his vocabulary and grammar skills.

On the other hand, some students specified that they also liked preparing projects thinking that projects contributed a lot to their self-development but they highlighted that they especially preferred home projects because at school there were many factors preventing them from concentrating on what they were doing such as noisy students, lack of time or personal issues. “I like doing project homework. But if I had a chance, I would prefer doing it at home because at school I cannot

concentrate” (SSI, Student 1), and “... I can spare more time for it” (SSI, Student 28). As for some students, they have intrinsic motivation about language use, and Student 35 is one of them as she expressed her love towards English and project homework as follows:

I enjoy project homework very much because I like English very much. I also love singing in English and I even had a project about it and I enjoyed it very much. [...] I usually make it at home. Sometimes I have to get support from my family about the idea. [...] I cannot really complete projects at school because during activities, my friends get a bit loud. So it is better to be at home. We have plenty of time this way (laughs). (SSI, Student 35)

Student 35’s motivation and love towards languages and projects are noted down in a field note as follows:

Teacher 4’s field notes from the 18th week

Today, we are going on our fifth Project on “How does music make us feel?” They seem to take a lot of fun from what they are doing obviously. Imagining that being a popular singer and drawing themselves on the stage made them happy. [...] Student 35 also prepared a show for her peers and acted it out in front of the classroom. They seemed very motivated.

About being an autonomous learner, Student 10 expressed her experiences about working alone while preparing projects which helped her become more autonomous in her learning process, “I prefer being on my own on a project as I can work however I want to. I can decide everything and anything and this way I can see what can or cannot achieve in the project. I see the difference between what I knew and what I learned [...]. I improved my English as I learned how to assess myself because I was not aware of my language grammar mistakes before portfolio. (SSI) This view is supported from her parents’ side, as well, “She completes the projects

above mentioned claim, below you may find a few more statements from the stakeholders:

Contrary to the traditional system, through portfolio, students have given an opportunity to be at the center of their learning process. They have started thinking, deciding, judging, and also reflecting their ideas and feelings. The teacher is in the center of the learning process in the traditional system, where s/he decides everything. I am totally supporting the use of portfolio system in primary schools only if it is done properly. (Teacher 5)

The grades I got from the exams were not the sign of my improvement much. I, especially, did not know the topics I was not good at. Portfolio study, however, is a sign showing how much and how well I improved myself since it is the evaluation of the whole semester. (FGD, Student 21)

I liked working in a group throughout the process. I tried to do my best in the process of preparing this portfolio. I enjoy all of my works, since they are mine. They are my own productions and creations. Honestly, I am very proud of myself. (FGD, Student 3)

On the other hand, some students believed that they could learn more by doing group work, as it contributed to the development of team work and communication skills towards the way to become autonomous:

Project assignments show what we have learnt. It is very helpful in that sense. I like doing it with friends at school collaboratively. We can suggest different ideas and find a common solution to a problem. (FGD, Student 27)

Parent 27 shares similar ideas and comments about Student 27's experiences while doing project assignments, "She does project assignments with responsibility. Sometimes she gets help from us on some issues, about the parts she finds difficult.

She enjoys group work very much thinking that she has got a chance to exchange ideas and opinions”. Similarly, Student 11’s remarks also revealed that team work contributed to the dialogue between the students: “Project assignments are nice, educational, and necessary. Group study is the best because I like creating something as a team. This improves my communication skill, as well. I learn more from my friends’ comments on my ideas or suggestions” (SSI).

Administrator 2 uttered his experiences and observations about project assignments, “According to my observations, what students like most is the products they create out of the group work. The group work they did during this entire portfolio encouraged and motivated them a lot” (SSI). Teacher 3 disclosed similar views regarding the fact that group work motivated students while preparing projects, “I think that group projects are very motivating for students. They are evaluating themselves in a more objective way. They are pleased to create a product as a group. They find their own faults and benefit from being autonomous learners” (SSI). Teacher 5, however, claimed that compared to group projects, home projects were much more affective as students could manage their own time:

To foster the collaboration, we complete the short tasks in the classroom in group activities. However, home projects are much more effective. Students do not have time limit at home and they have more materials to use. However, at school, we decide on what to do, share ideas and this way, students contribute to their friends’ projects. When they have finished, the students bring their projects to school and present them to their classmates. (SSI)

In general, students find preparing project homework very enjoyable and challenging only if they like the topic they are working on because apart from traditional paper homework where they are supposed to complete the parts they are required for, they create their own piece of work which is full of effort and creativity. They feel proud of what they have done in the end because “preparing projects is

very challenging and fun. Even though we give very much effort while preparing projects, it is very fruitful to have a chance to apply what we have learned” (SSI, Student 15). Similarly, Parent 15 expressed his opinion about the process and shared his observation while his daughter was engaged in preparing project assignments, “She usually does project assignments on her own. This way, she has a chance to practice what she has learned at school. The most important thing for her is to enjoy the activity. It can provide motivation for her in this way”. It is clear from the remarks, “if the project assignments are fun and interesting”, (SSI, Student 34) they are willing to do it. Student 12 also highlighted that enjoyable projects were motivating her a lot as she “cannot wait for the next project” (SSI). Teacher 5’s remarks also revealed that making the subject fun and enjoyable kept the students’ motivation awake all the time as in the observation note below showed:

Teacher 5’s field-notes from the 10th week

We are working on “Writing a letter to a friend” project. They don’t know the person they are writing their letters to. This makes the project more challenging and myserious. They are looking forward to having a letter back from their pen friend because they are asking a lot of questions about when they are going to get a reply. They seem impatient.

Teachers have also highlighted that making learning fun and interesting motivates students in the process of learning and preparing projects, “Students find preparing projects interesting only if it is fun and creative. [...] I think it must be the first concern for a primary school language teacher to feed the needs of students to imagine, create and have fun which will improve their critical thinking skills in that language” (Teacher 5).

4.2.2 Developing awareness and social skills of the learners

4.2.2.1 Enhancing presentation skills and self-confidence. Teachers play an important role in helping students learn and experience public speaking. That is why presentation skills need to be fostered from a young age, and right through our students' school careers so as to be sure that they gain a skill that will be very fruitful for them throughout their lives. Therefore, according to the views of the stakeholders, language portfolios could help the learners improve their public speaking and presentation skills which results in raising self-worth and self-confidence. At the end of the process, we can claim that "students gain' would be self-confidence. Some students are very confident and some can perform quite well on that day. [...] The students can gain a lot including self-confidence and feeling comfortable performing in front of their parents and other peers" (SSI, Teacher 1). The change in Student 1's self confidence level is obvious from his remarks: "Before the portfolio process, I did not think I could come out and express myself to my parents and teachers in English. It is very reassuring to see that this is no longer impossible" (SSI, after portfolio exhibition day). Similar experience is shared by Student 3, as well:

I have always found speaking English challenging, especially in front of other people. I felt very nervous every time that I needed to speak in front of others. I should admit that I felt nervous at the very beginning but seeing that I can speak with only minor faults in English, I felt very comfortable. This made me believe that I could use English well. I wanted to show everyone how well I can speak English. (FGD, after portfolio exhibition day)

Teacher 4's observation notes from the portfolio exhibition day about the Student 3 proved that she has gained confidence during the process.

Teacher 4's observations from the portfolio exhibition day

Student 3 had always been shy in using English comfortably at school environment. Portfolio process was effortful and tiring for everyone. However, she was amazing during the portfolio exhibition day. Though they [students] knew what they were going to say. Seeing her so self confident in using English made me think that portfolio is a success in helping learners gain self-confidence.

We can understand from the data above that portfolios helped students become more aware of their strengths and weaknesses and behave accordingly. Being more aware contributed to their self-confidence in a positive way.

Student 23 disclosed her feelings regarding how much she became aware of her potential in using the language:

It was proud to be able to exhibit the work I have done all year and to be able to express myself in English. We have been working on the portfolio products for a whole year. It is inspiring to finally see myself succeed. (SSI)

Student 23's views are supported by her parent as she stated, "I can just say that her self-confidence has improved a lot as she exhibited the works of her own" (Parent 23). Parent 3 was surprised by his child's confidence in speaking "I cannot believe that they could use the language so professionally, let me say... Actually, how many times we tried to encourage her talk in English at home. [...] Seeing that finally she can do it with self-confidence means everything to us". As for Administrator 2, due to the positive atmosphere created helped students overcome their English speaking stress:

I have observed that the sense of self-confidence felt by the student during the portfolio and the feeling of expressing themselves to their family gave them

[students] more courage. There was a positive atmosphere in the emotional sense both from the side of the student and the teacher and the family. (SSI)

According to Administrator 3, LPs are “especially useful for children who are more introverted. They learn to build eye contact. It also helps them to speak in public. I think it gives the child confidence” (SSI). The stages of gaining self confidence have been observed by Administrator 1 as follows:

First of all, the kid sees what s/he knows and does not know. Secondly, the process is embodied. Students benefit from personal development, self-confidence, improved presentation skills, and expressing opinion ... I have experienced a lot. I witnessed a very introverted child speak with an incredible self-confidence in front of their parents. (SSI)

This progress of students has been revealed in the observation notes taken during the process by Teacher 5 as in the example:

Teacher 5’s observations regarding the students’ self confidence followed by the process

Most of the students were willing and responsible throughout the year before the portfolio day. On the portfolio day, students were amazed to see that their little art pieces turned into a masterpiece when brought together. They were able to use the language and more importantly, they were confident and happy doing that.

Based on the remarks obtained from the participants, we can say that LPs were quite important in the sense that they contributed a lot to the self–confidence and speaking skills of the learners. They became aware of their potentials in language use. They learned how to manage their fear of speaking.

4.2.2.2 Increasing sense of responsibility. LPs help learners take increasing responsibility for their own learning by encouraging them to be able to give reflection, self-evaluation, and action planning as a process for lifelong learning. Participants' responses from the interviews support the importance of language portfolios in increasing the sense of responsibility. As for Student 13, the process raised her awareness towards completing homework in general:

In the past, I used to do homework for just the sake of doing it or because of exams. This process gave us more responsibility and forced us to give more importance and attention to our assignments. (SSI)

According to Student 16, in order to gain responsibility in learning, there must be a particular purpose to follow:

It varies, honestly. I think each particular assignment has a purpose: to practice, to repeat and to be responsible. [...] That's for sure what homework is for. Especially, in English classes, projects may be useful to practice what we have done at school. Personally, completing an assigned homework and project in time gives me a sense of pleasure to be able to reach my personal goals and to show my parents and my teachers how responsible I am. (SSI)

Student 16's views regarding this issue is supported by the remarks of Administrator 3 as she said:

We all know that there are reasons to give homework or project assignments to students. Mainly it is to help students get prepared for exams and tests or to reinforce what is being taught in the classroom. Parents use the opportunity to actively engage in their child's education. It also enables students to learn fundamental skills such as time management, organization, task completion, as well as responsibility. May be the most important of all is that students

learn how to produce a work of their own without or with little assistance of a teacher. (SSI)

Some students (1, 12, 13, 14, 16, 18, 20, 23, 27, 28, 29, 31 and 34) on the other hand, admitted that they started to like preparing project homework instead of doing other traditional way of paper homework. They highlighted that preparing projects gave them more freedom and responsibility besides enhancing their thinking skills. “Actually, projects- not homework because I do not see project as homework- are very important (laughs) because when we complete an assigned project, I can think better and faster” (SSI, Student 31).

When it becomes a matter of choice between paper or project homework, obviously students choose project homework as they claim that they learn something at the end of it as Student 23 highlighted below:

If you ask me what do I think of homework? I do not like it, at all. However, I am fine with project homework. Only if I like the topic, and it is challenging. I am aware that I learn something from it. (SSI)

As for some students, compared to traditional paper homework, project homework encouraged them to feel freer and more responsible in their own learning.

I always enjoyed preparing projects. However, this portfolio process encouraged me more to become better than before. Projects are taking a lot of time and effort. Yes. But compared to the traditional paper homework which only allows us to fill in the blanks or circle the correct answer, I prefer preparing projects as they give me more freedom and responsibility. (SSI, Student 28)

Student 28’s progress in using the language and in her self-confidence is noted down by the remarks of Teacher 4.

Teacher 4's field-notes from the 19th week

Student 28 is very enthusiastic today about the project. I like her concentration while preparing projects. Actually, she does not like doing homework. She always forgets doing her homework or does it quickly or carelessly. It is nice to see her progress both in using the language efficiently and in her self-confidence.

Parents also stressed that through LPs, students gained self-confidence and sense of responsibility towards the tasks assigned for them. “Students think carefully and in detail” (Parent 20). Similarly, another parent also stated, “If the teacher likes the work the child has done, it surely will increase the confidence and responsibility in the child” (Parent 25). Parent 31 believed that portfolios did not contribute to the learning process much; however, they could only benefit from self-confidence and responsibility by saying, “I think it is more than just self-confidence. It may not contribute to the school success, but it surely makes the student confident and responsible”. In line with this statement, Parent 23 thought the process “helped the children work more systematically and efficiently. By being aware of their learning styles, it is faster and shorter to reach their aims”. Parent 32, on the other hand, expressed his pleasure for seeing his son more responsible throughout the process, “He is studying regularly. He finds his own faults. He can find his mistakes and fix them. Most importantly, we do not follow his assignments anymore. I can say that they are absolutely more responsible than before”.

It may be implied from the parents’ responses that language portfolios are effective in the process of regular and systematic work of their children. It is also understood that through portfolio studies, students’ learning span is shortened contributing to their experience of learning.

4.2.2.3 Increasing motivation and concentration. According to evidence gained from the students' remarks, it became obvious that a sense of positive motivation had developed in many of the students. From the interviews, proof of a positive shift in some learner attitude regarding the study of English is viewed by many of the students in their responses as shown in the following excerpts, "Compared to the beginning of the semester, my communication skills have improved. I can speak better now, and now I enjoy communicating with my classmates in English" (FGD, Student 4).

Some students having poor English speaking skills also stated that they were more motivated and had improved their speaking skills after the LP process, "To be honest, I never thought my English speaking skills were good... and I could not actually achieve in my exams, either, and I couldn't talk smoothly... I thought I was not good enough, but after portfolio I started enjoying it [speaking English]" (FGD, Student 13, after portfolio process).

Similarly, Student 18 became aware of his language capability and ways to improve it by saying "[...] I should create ways to improve my English. Maybe (thinks for a second) ... I should try to practice speaking English at every opportunity" (FGD, after the portfolio process). She is motivated to find her own solutions to seek conversation outside the class. Here you may find more examples of Student 29 and Student 1 of disclosing increased motivation to study more after the process: "Generally, I do not study English outside school ... but now I am more aware that I need to study more. I mean I need to try practice every day and improve my vocabulary" (FGD, Student 29).

Understanding and speaking English ... It was very difficult for me. Maybe I am getting better and better in speaking and using it (English)... but I should keep this motivation alive. I thought I had no confidence, but my English is getting better. (FGD, Student 1)

Intrinsic motivation is a key element to keep on supporting motivation and finding situations and ways to foster it. As seen in the examples above, students realize their effort and the necessity of maintaining it on their own. This following student has also provided intrinsic motivation for her learning process as she stated “I cannot use perfect English. [...] I want to speak English well but I know I should study more. So I will try more” (FGD, Student 21). This student is aware of the problematic areas about her learning process; however, she is not discouraged, instead, she is determined to put more effort into studying which is a sign for increased motivation. For another student, there is a proof of a change in attitude towards English as she said “I can speak English better than before. Now, I like it (speaking English) more. I think my English speaking ability has also improved to some extent because now, I enjoy speaking English with my peers” (FGD, Student 35). This learner’s response is an evidence of a change in attitude. She eventually changes her view about speaking English to a more positive one at the end of the process.

Students’ above mentioned views are supported by the responses taken from the administrators and teachers during the interviews. “If it is a well prepared portfolio ... the child experiences his/her own learning process. So if the student already takes his/her own responsibility, s/he will already learn something out of it” (SSI, Administrator 3).

According to Administrator 5, as portfolio process is more concrete, it helps students gain a conscious awareness by giving them the opportunity to apply them in their daily lives which also contributes to the increase in their motivation:

It [LP] creates a conscious awareness and offers a more concrete chance to see what they have done over the course of the time. In fact, they do not go into abstract thought in the primary school, so they do little more things in the air. Having the opportunity to transfer what they have learned into their daily lives, their motivation increases. (SSI)

As implied from the remarks of the participants, being motivated was the key to keep the enthusiasm alive. The change in motivation positively among the students was observed by Teacher 4 as in the example:

Teacher 4's field-notes from the 20th week

Indeed, they started to devote more time to projects and lessons. They are studying more. They perceive the instructions more quickly and accurately. They are motivated to learn more.

Parents' remarks have also backed up the evidence that students were motivated to learn and study more followed by the LP process, "I see a great development both in his confidence and in his use of language. He built his own motivation to complete the projects even though he had so much homework from other lessons. This is an amazing progress for us" (Parent 1). Parent 21 highlighted that her sense of responsibility and self-motivation improved about her homework, "She started to do her homework on time. At least, she does give more importance to her homework". These answers from parents indicated that the students had progressed as a result of the LP process, and increased their self-motivation. However, whether the shift in motivation is intrinsically or extrinsically is not clear from the findings. Yet, there are signs that the use of portfolios does foster motivation in especially lower level students.

4.2.2.4 Managing stress. Stress or anxiety is defined as an emotional state in which feelings of weakness are experienced when preparing for a perceived danger. (Ellis, 1994, as cited in Aydın & Zengin, 2008) As for language anxiety, it is indicated that individual differences, such as beliefs, attitudes, expectations, motivation levels, and affective states are reasons with significant effects on the foreign language learning process (Aydın & Zengin, 2008). Foreign language anxiety has both positive and negative effects when learning foreign languages. In a study conducted by Kleinmann (1977), it was understood that students with high

levels of anxiety use more difficult grammar structures in speaking and writing skills. In other words, high level anxiety may have a beneficial effect in terms of grammatical use in reproductive skills (as cited in Aydın & Zengin, 2008). On the portfolio exhibition day, for example, almost all the students highlighted that they felt very anxious at the very beginning. However, through the end of the process, they were able to manage their stress successfully. In the following, you may find some excerpts from the students who stated that they had a high level of anxiety on that day and managed to control their anxiety and use the language effectively: “I was very nervous before, but later, I got very happy seeing that everything went smoothly” (SSI, Student 3). Similarly, Student 27 stressed that she felt anxious at the very beginning not knowing what would happen but by the end of the portfolio her anxiousness went away, “At the very beginning, I did not know what would happen there so I felt quite anxious. However, seeing that I was quite well during speaking, I felt confident again and my anxiousness disappeared.” This was supported by the field note taken right after the portfolio day.

Teacher 4’s field-notes from the portfolio exhibition day

Student 27 was actually one of the weak students in speaking English, but on the portfolio day I was quite impressed about the motivation and self confidence she showed in front of her teachers and parents. She almost made no mistakes while speaking, at all.

Teacher 3’s remarks after the portfolio exhibition day were similar, as well: “At first, the children could not express themselves, but afterwards they opened up. In fact, even the students who we thought were not successful in speaking languages managed to show an incredible performance” (SSI).

Administrator 4 disclosed that students learned to manage their nervousness right in front of their parents: “The LP helped students to manage their nervousness

before, during and after the process. They were able to speak English in front of their parents”. Parents witnessing their kids’ successful management on anxiousness put their remarks on the issue as, “I could not believe my eyes... He was so confident, so skilful while using the language” (Parent 24). Likewise, Parent 30 stated that they were surprised to see how their little one looked so confident and strong: “We always had problems in speaking English. My husband and I always tried to make her use the language even at home, but it never worked on her. I did not know how well she became in speaking the language until portfolio day”. Parent 18 shared her experience honestly that she broke into tears at the end of the portfolio exhibition as she succeeded in speaking so well, “We had gone through a tough process during the portfolio because she did not like English that much, and any homework related to that. However, on the portfolio exhibition day, she was amazing. I could not understand how she managed to do it so well”.

As understood from the remarks above, some students feeling stressed at the very beginning of the process managed to control their stress successfully through the end of the process which made them happy and self confident at the end of the process. Though the reasons behind this relief are not clear, it may be implied from their remarks that when everything went smoothly and in the way that was expected from them, they were able to feel relaxed.

4.2.3 Creating opportunity for teacher-parent-student dialogue. Data collected from interviews, observations and field notes demonstrated that a large number of teachers, parents, and students thought using LPs in primary schools helped to enhance dialogue between teachers, parents and students. Karadağ and Öney (2006) have suggested in their study that it is known that portfolio provides students with the opportunity to learn by experiencing the main aim of their studies and to construct their own learning. According to the data, students think that they can learn permanently while they are studying their files: “Through portfolio [...] I have the chance to practice at home. It motivates me seeing that I am better in using the language” (SSI, Student 14). Student 4 also highlighted the importance of LPs in

remembering and practicing what they have learned. “While preparing projects, I realized that I have learned a lot besides having a lot of fun” (SSI, Student 4). Similarly, Parent 4 supported these statements by stating “I examine the information inside every project. When we read the children's product files, we refresh our information. [...] Therefore, I want my child to check what they put in his portfolio files”. According to these remarks, we can conclude that parents contributed to the evaluation process.

Responses from parents who focused on following the learning stages of their kids are as follows: “We learn what they’ve learned and follow what they could not learn [...]” (Parent 34). “I can more easily see where his language level is compared to his friends” (Parent 30).

It is clear from the findings that the parents think that the LP is beneficial to learn the academic level of their children so that they can play accordingly to increase their success.

Students also stressed the importance of establishing dialogue with their teachers and parents during the process. “The LP gave us (parents and students) the opportunity to work together, exchange ideas and build communication. [...] My parents sometimes helped me during the projects. They guided me rather than correcting” (SSI, Student 7). In relation to the above mentioned statement, Student 20 focused on the importance of portfolios and the necessity of assistance and guidance from their parents.

Similarly, parents underlined the importance of guidance, motivation and support given to their kids during the process. Parent 17 underlined that their support given for their kids was important for their learning and gaining autonomy, “I ask him to check and correct the work that he does sloppily. I do correct if there are mistakes. I try to help if there is a need for help. [...] I suggest him that he needs to work more regularly so that he will improve himself gradually”. Likewise, Parent 31

expressed that she helped her when there was a need to, “I check her homework regularly. When I see anything missing, I inform her about them and ask her to correct”.

As understood from the responses, some parents examine the portfolio studies and give feedback to their children about the missing points. While evaluating portfolios, parents guide their children to create awareness about the tasks and projects students are going through.

Participant teachers stated that they needed to have especially the support of the parents during the LP process. In this sense, LPs create an opportunity for regular dialogue between teachers, parents and students because grades student get from their lessons are the only measure of kids’ progress. “As our education system offers, traditional paper based assessment type gives us only information about a particular student to some extent. There may be some variables affecting student progress at the moment” (Teacher 5). However, what parents needed was a proof showing how successful their kids were. In this sense, “the LP demonstrates parents that paper based tests are not the only way to evaluate a learner” (Teacher 3). “Enhancing dialogue between teachers, parents and students, parents are informed about their children’s grades. Besides, they manage to start dialogue with their children regarding their progress; the topics they learned, and, if any, reasons for specific problems” (Administrator 3). “It is necessary to be aware of the problems they face so that we can find a way to solve them” (Parent 12). For Parent 17, it was also...

...an important study in order to realize the potential of the student in terms of the teacher. As for the parents, they have a chance to see their kids from a different perspective and to watch them on an academic platform while using a more academic language.

According to Parent 3, for example, the LP is a great chance “to observe the best communication between the student and the teacher. The correctness of the

answers given is the least important at the moment as speaking English without stress is much more important”. In this way, parents could “have an idea about how their kids’ knowledge and skills have improved. Also, teachers have a chance to recognize their kids’ needs and guide them accordingly” (Parent 10).

All in all, we can say that portfolio use in the private K-12 primary schools may contribute to strengthen the communication between the students and the teachers allowing students to see their missing, encouraging them to learn, helping them take responsibility for their own learning and giving them the ability to assess themselves. Teachers have the opportunity to get to know their students better while parents gain a sense of responsibility to deal more with their kids.

4.3 Experiencing Challenges in Using Language Portfolios in Private k-12 Primary Schools

This section includes the results of interviews, observations and field notes with parents, students, teachers and administrators who formed the sample. Answers given by stakeholders were categorized and coded. According to the findings, *existence of different designs and perceptions of an LP, causing time-consuming workload for the teachers, difficulty in establishing validity and reliability, and foreign language anxiety among YLs* are among the challenges in using language portfolios in primary schools. Below you may find Figure 5 for the themes to get an overall view about this section.

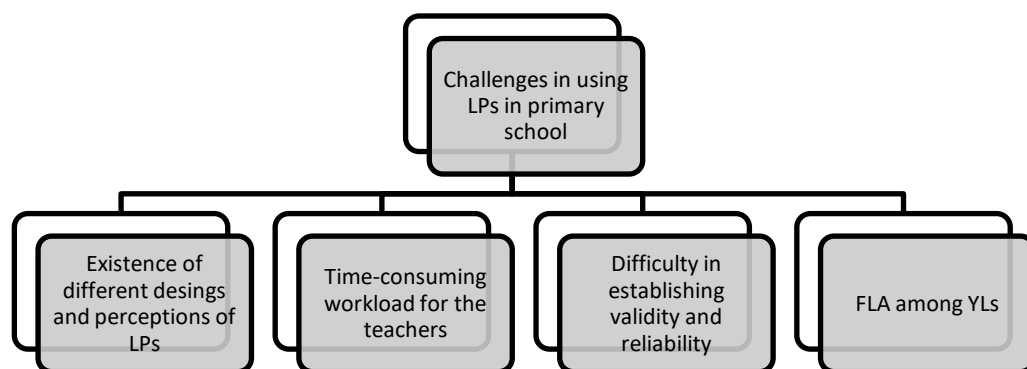


Figure 6. Figure showing the challenges faced throughout the process.

4.3.1 Existence of different designs and perceptions of LPs. Using LPs both in state and private schools have become popular day by day. Therefore, more and more teachers began to use LPs in their classrooms. However, some stakeholders are confused by the existence of different designs, types and uses of portfolios which turned out to be a challenge throughout the process. Actually, LPs may be formed in many different designs and purposes because...

It depends on what you mean by LPs. Every single person's portfolio perception may be different. You will get different answers from different persons about applying portfolios [...] It is the same for a language portfolio. The important thing here is how clearly you explain it, what you expect from the child, and how well you define your purpose" (Administrator 1). "I think that the situation is different for each student and the practice is different for each school. (Parent 12)

As clearly stated by Administrator 1 and Parent 12, the content as well as the aims and the purposes have to be clear to the learners and carefully taken into consideration. Therefore, "the portfolio process requires a sound planning taking students' abilities and needs into consideration besides its efficiency in assessment" (Teacher 5). Otherwise, they turn out to be meaningless for students as "some

students may not understand what they are expected to do” (Teacher 1) as a result of which they may be less motivated during the process. This view is also supported by Parent 31 as she said, “In my opinion, when the process is not clearly defined or the student does not exactly know what to do; as a result, they are not motivated enough”. According to Parent 12, lack of motivation is also caused by students’ negative perspectives towards homework as she stated “She is generally reluctant while preparing project homework. There is no motivation to prepare it. Since the project homework is also ‘homework’ for her. She does not want to do it”. According to Parent 26, however, portfolios are like set up scenarios as she does not think “he understood the purpose of the portfolio. For me, it could be in a freer environment where the teacher is not very active”.

Freedom of choice while preparing projects is quite important for a language portfolio to be sound and meaningful for learners. “It is even more important that they [students] choose what they want among many products developed during the year and express themselves on their own terms” (Administrator 2). The importance of this issue is emphasized by the parents and the students, as well. “... generally we have to complete project assignments ... in the way the teachers require from us” (Student 20). “I think it is unnecessary to do project homework because I have to do it in the way that I do not want to do” (Student 26). As findings indicated, if something is imposed upon learners, even those who like languages a lot may be demotivated. “I like to prepare something in English but I like to be free about the subject. I wish we could have chosen it ourselves” (Student 23). Similarly, Student 8 highlighted the same point as she stated “it is fun to do project homework, but I wish we were free to do whatever we wanted to ...”. It’s obvious from the data that providing an independent, full of freedom and creative atmosphere of learning for the students is a key to the success of an LP. The reason of this situation is clearly stated by the Administrator 3 as she said:

We cannot let students free about their choice because of the education system here in Turkey. The system is a vicious cycle. [...] Everyone is at a

race, both in state and private schools. Lots of private schools have been open lately and they are all at a race struggling to be the best. [...] What students have to reflect here in Turkey is unfortunately the things they have to memorize. [...] We are always striving for grades. We even try to learn for getting better grades. The children do not even aware what they are learning. (SSI)

Administrator 3 also added that most of the things students learned were above their level. Therefore, they could not see students' learning process because the teachers imposed on the child whatever they wanted to show to the parents. In order to support this remark, some students disclosed that because of the difficulty of language learned at school, they needed their parents' help for completing their assignments. "Project assignments are a bit above my English level. So I can only manage to do it with help" (Student 29). His parents being aware of their kid's language level were surprised at his speaking performance on the exhibition day: "He was a little poor at speaking skills as he came here from state school but he could speak well in the portfolio. I think it is a bit of a memorization ..." (Parent 29). Parents claimed that their kids could speak English so fluently only if they memorized it. From the findings, it became clearer that parents were aware of their kid's potential in language use. They knew about their strengths and weaknesses, and the importance of self-creation of the products.

Administrator 1 underlined the importance of student's own creation for the success of portfolios as she stated "it is not very meaningful for the child to hang on the wall something that s/he does not actually do on his/her own and talk about it for minutes. That deviates portfolio from its targeted aim". The above mentioned issue was also highlighted by Administrator 5 with a suggested solution, as well:

Actually, it [portfolio exhibition] should be done more spontaneously because while the child is creating his/her own products, s/he must be truly creative and authentic. The goal should focus on what a child can reflect on his/her

learning process, without always expecting a good end-product. It should not turn into a visual show. It must be a presentation of products that children can actually do on his/her own.

Similarly, Administrator 4 disclosed the importance of a free environment and freedom of choice for the success of an LP.

In my opinion, it is nice to exhibit what they [students] do, but that format may be a little bit different. It [portfolio exhibition format] can be a little bit freer for kids. Pushing the kids to something they do not have control of may be discouraging because it is so structured. ... The child should go and tell whichever corner s/he wants to start first. S/he can show what s/he wants to. I think it would be better this way. (SSI)

According to remarks of the participants, it may be implied that *impressing parents* was behind the persistent intention of a perfect portfolio at all.

To be honest, I do not have a very good opinion about LPs. I mean at least not in the way it has been done right now by most schools. For example, it is a show off for the parents or something that students memorize and tell in front of their parents, or like something to impress the parents. I think it has been done for just that purpose. (Teacher 2)

In a similar way, Administrator 5 emphasized that the purpose of portfolios turned out to be just to fascinate parents as she said, "I think it would be useful if LPs are done in accordance with the real purpose. As it was made for the purpose of just fascinating the parents, it is not effective". Obviously this seemed to be one of the most important issues to focus on for the sake of a good LP. However, responses from the participants regarding the possible solution to the above mentioned issue have varied:

I think the way it is been done should be changed. Instead of having kids memorize and learn the scenario by heart, we should have them display their work. They should be able to give information about what they did and how they did it. We should have them display their work to their parents willingly and freely without any constrain. Because that is the aim of portfolio to show their parents what they know and what they did, not just to show off a set up scenario. (Teacher 2)

According to Teacher 2, being well informed about the process was the key. This view was encouraged by the Administrator 1 as she stressed, “In order to be able to do all of these things in the right way, we need to raise consciousness. Searching for answers to what and how to do is very important. Without knowing the intention and the purpose of implementing a portfolio, you just do it for the sake of just doing”. Administrator 3, however, was a little bit more pessimistic about the process as she emphasized “... something more fundamental is needed for change. It is a cultural problem. You are entering a vicious cycle and turning around in that vicious cycle. You realize you are doing it wrong ... but you have to do what is asked from you”. Findings have revealed that the culture effect on the success and implementation of the LP was an important matter to be dealt with to eliminate the possible challenges on the way.

4.3.2 Causing time-consuming workload for the teachers. According to the findings, especially teachers and administrators believed that LPs needed extra effort that was not related to the curriculum. “From the teachers’ point of view, it involved lots of preparation as well as being time-consuming and tiring” (Teacher 2). Similarly, Teacher 3 underlined the increased workload for the teachers during the process as she said “the workload in portfolio preparation is actually more of a teacher, but the children do not have to do extra work because they are already presenting what they have produced within the year”. It is obvious from the teachers’ remarks that it took a long time for the teachers to prepare their own materials which required more time and effort because with the start of the process continuous

feedback and follow up was necessary for each student for the success of an LP. According to Administrator 3, the teachers in Turkey did not want to spend time for assessment which might naturally result in not grading the portfolios at all.

...when you assign a project for the portfolio, you need to have a rubric informing students about the steps they should be following. Teachers should guide them step by step and give feedback. Which teacher is doing this? They do not want to do this, either. (SSI)

The data showed that the effort given to the process by the teachers nearly doubled as portfolios needed to be done in addition to traditional testing and grading. Since classes with a large number of students may not be assessed quickly and easily, this could be very tiring for teachers. Teacher 5's field notes regarding the whole process from the teachers' side revealed that portfolio process tended to increase the workload for teachers which caused demotivation and lack of performance.

During the preparation period, it was more intense and tiring for the teachers. The students were nervous about presenting their products to their parents. Teachers, at the end of the day, got extremely tired and the performance of the teachers were relatively reduced. (SSI)

A solution to this problem was offered by Teacher 3 as she stated "I think portfolios should be implemented by reduced teacher workload ... since the biggest burden comes on the shoulders of the teachers especially during the portfolio preparation phase and on the portfolio exhibition day. [...] A great deal of things are expected from them [both teachers and the learners] by the administration, and even by the parents. However, I think that we can get much more productive results only if we can decrease this expectation". Administrator 3 has claimed that the process gets tiresome for the students, as well since they have too many tasks to complete in a limited time which ends up with student demotivation and unwillingness:

The biggest problem is that [time] because we give the 1st grade child what the 4th grade child needs to know. The 1st grade child needs to know certain things that year but when we give more than what they need to take, it turns into an overload. Some children are able to cope with that, but some children feel bored and reluctant, on the contrary. As a result of that most of our children do not want to come to school because the school means a lot of tasks and homework for them.

The responses from parents regarding the above mentioned issue revealed that the assignments given to students from every lesson were a lot in number and sometimes higher than their level. Student 18 reflected her experience as follows, “I do not like project assignments. I do not usually like any homework. I feel my English is not so good. It takes too much of my time”. Her parent’s observation regarding their kid’s responsibility towards her assignments supports the data came from the student. “We generally do not have much difficulty, but sometimes it is a little bit difficult to study because there are areas of research that are slightly above the level of the student” (Parent 18). In these cases, the parents undertook the responsibility of the assignments, which caused students not reflect on their performances and not achieve the purpose of their work as seen below:

The children are excited to prepare their project assignments on weekends. But something is shadowing this study. The long project preparation period for the child who is striving among the weekly and weekend assignments is weakening the excitement and importance of the project. In the end, as parents, we may have to take the responsibility of their assignments. (Parent 17)

The data above is supported with the data gained from Parent 19 as she said he was not willing to do assignments as he could not find free time for himself:

I cannot say that he is very excited when preparing the project homework. ... he only thinks to complete his assignments quickly because he sees the weekends as the only time he can devote to himself. For this reason, he is also not willing to spend much time and effort on tasks. (Parent 19)

According to Parent 4, the workload generated from the assignments forced students to find their own easier ways to complete the tasks they were supposed to do as he highlighted "... he is willing to do project assignments, but I do not think he does it neatly enough. He strives to find the easiest and quickest way to finish it rather than enjoying the learning process, and having fun while engaging in the project" (Parent 4). Therefore, the complaints about time management may decrease sharply only if we create a learning environment where students feel independent and responsible for completing their tasks on their own and assessing their own progress using portfolios.

4.3.3 Difficulty in establishing validity and reliability. Based on interview data, portfolio assessment would be vulnerable to validity and reliability due to the difficulty of building validity and reliability of portfolios on their qualitative nature. Teacher 2 strongly highlighted that assessing portfolios either by parents or by the teachers would not be as objective as standardized tests.

Well, portfolios are not standardized tests, they are not standardized examinations. [...] When you assess them through an exam, you know exactly what you are looking for and you know that there are points that you are following to see that if the kid is successful or not. (SSI)

When asked in detail whether a standardized test was the only way to assess YLs, Teacher 2 also revealed that as long as one considers reliability issues, students might be assessed anyway. However, according to her, as for reliability, standardized tests gave more believable results.

... I think test are more standardized, they are far more objective compared to portfolios. Portfolio presentation means a single performance. You cannot assess a child or a teacher through a single performance like ten minutes performance in the portfolio but if you apply different tests throughout the year, it could be more objective or more realistic I guess. But of course it depends on the objectives and the format of the assessment. (Teacher 2)

As it was obvious from the data that deciding on the format of a portfolio as well as setting the objectives and assessment criteria beforehand were key to the reliability of a language portfolio. It was also obvious from the teacher's remarks that she was focusing more on the end-products rather than process which demonstrated that teachers should be more informed about the purposes of implementing portfolios. The reasons for the unreliability of the portfolio assessment were provided in detail through the remarks of Administrator 2 as follows:

... in many schools today, portfolios are not applied neatly. Abroad, in no way are the parents involved in this process [completing project assignments]. To be honest, we give project assignments. Normally, students have to complete that assignment. But unfortunately, if the family does not make any contribution, there arises a huge difference between the project homework done by the child and the project homework done with the support of the parents. [...] We need rubrics and certain assessment criteria for reliable measurement.

On the basis of this data, we can infer that projects completed at home may not give valid results according to the portfolio assessment criteria. This claim was supported by Teacher 3 as she underlined "They [students] like making projects. But if they make the project at home you cannot see the process. I mean you cannot see the level of contribution given from the parents' side. As a result, it turns into something that the parents are more supportive of rather than the learner himself/herself". Parents' responses regarding this issue revealed that students in

need of support in the process of completing the project assignments were especially the ones who were not motivated about the topic as stated by Parent 8, “When a specific topic is asked, she is obviously bored. She does not want to do it. So sometimes we need to help her to complete it”; or, whose English level were not enough to complete a task as Parent 29 disclosed “Project assignment is a big problem for us because my daughter’s English level is below average. Thus, we have to do preliminary study beforehand. For this reason, we often have to help”; or, who cannot manage to complete the tasks due to the heavy workload as Parent 26 stated “As he is overloaded with other homework assignments on weekdays, he loses enthusiasm for the project assignments which need to be given more time on the weekends. As a result, as parents, we end up with completing them instead”. The most important reason for this situation is seen in the education policy in Turkey according to Administrator 3 as she emphasized “Perhaps this [giving responsibility to the learner] is missing in the education system in Turkey. We do not put any responsibility on the child. Everything is either done by the teacher or by the parents. It is the same in every other issue. The teacher directs the student in how to prepare something, and the student studies or memorizes everything accordingly”. The reliability and validity issues could be solved only if we could provide teachers with the necessary training regarding the importance of the process and give more freedom to the kids in preparing and completing their tasks as Teacher 2 highlighted as follows:

I think the way it has been done should be changed. We should inform the teachers and give the necessary training in advance. Instead of having kids memorize and learn the scenario by heart, we should have them display their work. They should be able to give information about what they did and how they did it. We should have them display their work to their parents willingly and freely without any constrain because that is the aim of portfolio to show their parents what they know and what they did, not just to show off a set up scenario.

As the findings revealed, so as to achieve validity and reliability in portfolio assessment, it is necessary for careful planning in advance, to have multiple judges for triangulation issues, and to provide teachers or the relevant raters with proper training about portfolio assessment procedure.

4.3.4 Foreign language anxiety (FLA) among YLs. As a result of the findings gained through interviews, observations and field notes, it is revealed that during the portfolio preparation and exhibition processes, almost all the students implied that they had suffered from speaking anxiety in foreign language and thus got overstressed. According to the data collected, teacher behaviors, parents' over expectations, the setting, different learning styles and levels of English among students were a number of reasons for the anxiety in foreign language learning.

According to the findings, one of main reasons of speaking anxiety in foreign language among students was their parents' over expectations, or perfectionism. Administrator 5's remarks revealed that lack of information about what was going on at school raised parents' expectations and curiosity levels to learn more about their kids.

Parents are not really aware of what is going on at school because the student cannot tell the work done here [in primary school] like [the students do] in the secondary school. Therefore, we implement portfolios to end the curiosity of the parents to show, or in a way to try to prove them, what studies done by the students during the year. So it is nice to show what they did but not in a kind of restrictive and repressive way. The kids should enjoy it [the portfolio process]. They should not put them under stress. (SSI, Administrator 5)

Based on the data above, we can conclude that if the feeling of curiosity is unsatisfied from the parents' side, it can create pressure on children, because;

[...] if the aim is just to make a show off the parents, the anxiety level increases among the students who are already under stress. Then, the kid starts to think 'I must prove my mom that I can do well'. This time s/he does not evaluate himself/herself, instead, s/he does something to satisfy others. The student actually feels like s/he is tested. (Administrator 5)

The above mention statement is supported with the remarks of the Student 5 after the portfolio exhibition day as she said "Through portfolio, I had a chance to show my mother and father how well I learned English". Similarly, Student 35 disclosed that she had proved her parents how she improved as she stated "I could use English well. I wanted to show my parents how well I can speak English". Obviously, what students understand from the portfolio process is to impress their parents about their learning stages. However, the situation varies if the expectations do not coincide as Administrator 1 stated "If the expectation of the parents is very different from that of a child, the child can get more stressed. At that time, there can be a very reactive parent who is angry with the kid's stressed situation which puts the student under more stress". Likewise, Administrator 4 believed that portfolio applications here in Turkey put the students under more stress, "I think it is something that increases learner anxiety. Sometimes some children, of course, cannot cope with this anxiety, and sometimes the parents themselves may increase student's anxiety, as well". This became clearer with the remarks given by Student 33 as she disclosed "My mother said to me after the portfolio exhibition day 'You waited too long to talk, you could not do it'. As understood from the parent's remarks, over expectations affected the kid's self confidence negatively. However, not only verbal negative evaluation may put students under stress, body language and mimics used may pass the same message to the kid. Below you may find evidence from the exhibition day based on the observations gained from Teacher 4:

Teacher 4's on site experience from the exhibition day

We were having an interactive speaking with Student 19. I asked a question to him. He waited for some time to give an answer. During this time, his father, thinking that his son was late for the answer, started to stare at him, moving his body closer to his face expecting a quick answer. Feeling over-stressed, the kid forgot what to say.

This is also approved by Teacher 2 as she said "... some of the kids get blocked, they cannot speak and parents may think that they do not know anything, and then kids are extremely stressed. However, the reactions for feeling over-stressed may vary from student to the student as Administrator 4 revealed that when students were anxious "they could start crying. Sometimes they may not want to come in [to the exhibition area]. Some students may choose to stop communication, not making a sound, or withdrawing. In that case, I think that it is necessary not to push the kid more". As Student 1 stated he was afraid of speaking in front of his parents and his teachers fearing from making mistakes, "At the very beginning I was very nervous because everyone was watching me. My teacher was there, my parents were there, my friends were there. It was so crowded around. I was scared to make mistakes I should not make".

As the findings demonstrated, parents were one of the reasons of anxiety among students. However, teachers, unconsciously, may trigger the stress among the students through some unwanted behaviors as Administrator 1 stressed "The teacher is sometimes doing the same thing, maybe unwillingly. Similarly, Administrator 3 expressed that the more the students are pushed the more they withdraw, "Unfortunately, we tend to push the kids to do what they are supposed to do, but this is a disadvantage as the kid withdraws more refusing to speak at all". Student 5's experience regarding this issue is reflected in the data as follows "I felt very nervous because my teacher, my mom and my dad were just standing beside me. My mom

was recording my video at the moment, and I was wondering if they really liked it or not” (SSI). Another student stated that because of his low level of English, he was not comfortable and confident in using the language which made him anxious “I knew that I was not good at speaking English. That is why, during the portfolio process, my teachers and parents guided me, actually helped me correct my works. Thus, on exhibition day I felt scared and anxious, not knowing how to express myself because I was on my own” (SSI, Student 9). The psychological reason behind this feeling is clearly defined by Administrator 5 as “If there is an activity that the student has done without much mastery, he may experience uneasiness. S/he may think ‘Obviously, I could not learn this topic well, it seems that I won’t be able to do it’. Because of his/her personality, the anxiety level may double up” (SSI). Teacher 5 also shared her remarks based on her experiences in a similar situation.

Teacher 5’s field notes after the exhibition day

Students, experiencing family pressure and a very high expectation of success from their parents’ side, felt under pressure and anxious. The parents unfortunately showed their oppressive attitude.

According to Teacher 2, there were some ways to overcome speaking anxiety properly by stressing the importance of setting the objectives beforehand and students getting prepared on their own:

I think the kids should prepare themselves for the portfolios from the beginning of the year and in the end they will have something ready and they can display it, exhibit it, explain it and show it to their parents. I mean we do not have to only focus on portfolio towards the end of the year because if they prepare something from the beginning, if they have a file of their own, it will be less stressful for them. (SSI)

The data also brought out its own solutions to the above mentioned issue. Administrator 2 underlined that “The role of the teacher and the family is significant in removing the anxiety barrier” (SSI). First of all, as Administrator 3 highlighted below, the teachers and parents would accept the fact that speaking a foreign language requires having a talent.

Speaking a foreign language is a talent. However, we, as Turkish community, think that all children are the same. Parents think their kid is the best, but it is not. I wish people could agree that there is a difference between people, between teachers, and between our characters, and that parents accepting this reality could behave accordingly. This is a process. Everyone is an individual. S/he has to develop his/her own learning stages. (SSI)

According to Administrator 5, the setting and the atmosphere of portfolio exhibition may be another reason for causing anxiety among students:

Portfolio presented in a formal and serious environment makes the students uneasy. A more spontaneous and more common field can be done in the form of an exhibition. Stations could be set up and products made by everyone could be displayed. Perhaps there could be a teacher at the beginning of each station for guidance. The child could express himself/herself in a more spontaneous environment. (SSI)

Based on the findings above, we can conclude that it would help students minimize their anxiety level if the portfolio exhibition was realized spontaneously in a more comfortable setting since “making presentations of students in succession can cause confusion. There must be a certain time interval between presentations of students. It can be done in a more natural and relaxed environment” (Parent 15) because “it increases anxiety level of students to be presenting in a crowded environment and in such a short time” (Parent 8). As for Administrator 4, “... it

[portfolio presentation] could be optional, too. The student may do whatever s/he wants to do. I think it will be less stressful for them if it is left free”.

All in all, we can say that this study disclosed that there were many important challenges faced during the implementation process as well as some benefits on the way. It was obvious from the findings that all the stakeholders perceived LPs in different ways. The goals and purposes were not set beforehand which impeded the process. Another problem on the way was the low reliability of grading because no assessment criteria were used in the process. Moreover, the necessity for portfolio assessment put too much burden on teachers' shoulders. Therefore they needed extra time for reviewing and giving feedback on students' works which resulted in teacher burnout and demotivation during the process. Another important challenge was FLA among YLs. Some important reasons for the anxiety in foreign language speaking such as teacher behaviors, parents' over expectations, different learning styles, language levels and settings. Therefore, it was significant to consider these issues at the very beginning of the process for the success of the LP.

Chapter 5

Discussion and Conclusions

This chapter demonstrates conclusions about this particular study and shows some implications for teachers as well as guiding future researchers for further research.

5.1 Discussion of Findings for Research Questions

The findings revealed three major themes with a number of sub-themes that conceptually support them as follows. The first theme is *conceptualizing portfolios from the stakeholders' points of view*, which gives details about the perception of language portfolio based on the remarks of the participants. *Demonstrating achievements* to parents, *practicing* and *repeating* the things learned throughout the whole year, and *having fun* are among the sub-themes emerged from the data. Second theme is *reaping benefits of language portfolios* which brought out sub-themes of *fostering learner autonomy*, *self-assessment* and *language-development*; *developing awareness and social skills of the learners*, and *creating opportunity for teacher-parent-student dialogue*. The final theme is experiencing challenges in using LPs. According to the data, *existence of different designs and perceptions of portfolios*, *time-consuming workload for the teachers*, *difficulty in establishing validity and reliability*, and *foreign language anxiety among YLs* are among challenges in using LPs in private K-12 primary schools. Based on the themes that emerged, we can discuss the following issues:

In the light of the data collected from the participants, almost all the students perceived an LP as a means to show their parents or teachers what they learnt and achieved during the year. Similarly, parents regarded portfolio process as an opportunity to experience the language learning progress of their kids besides. As for the teachers and administrators participating in the research study, students were able to exhibit their achievements to their parents through LPs so that they were informed about the multifaceted development of their kids. According to Brown (2004), it is a

method of measuring the learner's ability, knowledge, or performance in a given period. The data has made it clear that exhibiting their achievements to the parents was the main concern of the students.

Besides the main conceptualizing about the LP above, some students (1, 2, 13, 20, 22, 23, 29, 34) believed that the LPs were used to practice and repeat what students have learned throughout the whole year, which was supported by some of the parents' remarks (6, 17, 29, 30) as well, since they found portfolios efficient in the regular and systematic work of their children. It may be implied from the data that via portfolio studies, students were experiencing the learning process themselves by revising their work which contributed to the development of their learning stages. Learners gain responsibility for their learning so it enhances learner autonomy and self-assessment (Butler & Lee, 2010).

In addition to the perceptions above, a few students (6, 7, 15) and their parents (15, 21) claimed that the aim of the language portfolio was just to have fun and enjoy the process which would motivate the learners to engage in the activities. YLs' span of attention or concentration is considerably less than that of an adult (Harmer, 2007). Therefore, they need activities which are exciting and foster their curiosity. They feel the need to be involved in something active to be motivated. As obvious from the data, critical thinking skills of the learners in L2 would develop through imagining, creating and having fun because YLs believes that the LP is enjoyable, which motivates the learners (Nováková & Davidová, 2003). As it is implied from the findings above, the LP is perceived differently by each participant. This may be resulted from having no training about the implementation at all or being not informed about the aims and purposes of an LP from the very beginning of the process.

As for the benefits of implementing LPs in a private K-12 school setting according to the data obtained from participant interviews, observations and field notes, LPs contributed to the increase of learner autonomy, self-assessment and

language-development, awareness rising and improvement of social skills of the learners, and creating opportunity for teacher-parent-student dialogue.

Most of the students participating in the study expressed that they enjoyed preparing tasks and project homework as it gave them the opportunity to repeat what they have learned at school besides contributing to their self-development as well as motivating them to create something on their own. However, some chose home projects rather than school projects as there were many factors preventing them from concentrating on what they were doing such as noisy students, lack of time or personal issues. For some students, however, project homework was very enjoyable and challenging only if they liked the topic as they created their own piece of work which is full of effort and creativity. Making learning fun and interesting motivated students in the process of learning and preparing projects. Motivation is believed to be one of the main reasons for learning a language in a successful way (Elsner, 2010). We can imply from the data that students needed to have an interest in the topic, concentration and enough time to complete their tasks on time with motivation.

Learner self-evaluation was another benefit gained from the data as learners started to find and correct their mistakes by evaluating their own work in a more objective way. Findings showed that learners began to see their teachers only as facilitators in the process as learners became more autonomous and aware about the language they were using since they could figure out their strengths and weaknesses on their own. In the same line with the results of this study, Kohonen (1999)'s study revealed the fact that YLs in a Finnish school became more responsible and reflective learners than they were before (as cited in Atikol, 2008). Similarly, Seitz and Bartholomew (2008) highlighted that portfolios give way to independent learning.

As is clear from the findings that LPs helped learners develop awareness and social skills. According to the views of the stakeholders, LPs helped learners

improve their public speaking and presentation skills which results in raising self-worth and self-confidence. It may be implied that LPs may especially be useful for those who are introverted having fear from public speaking. Findings also revealed the importance of LPs in increasing the sense of responsibility in the learners as they took responsibility for their own learning in the process of giving reflection, self-evaluation, and action planning. Wenden (1991) expresses that autonomous learners are eager to take on responsibility and they have confidence in their ability as learners by arguing *attitudes* towards learner autonomy may vary due to the lack of meta-cognitive knowledge (as cited in Yılmaz, 2010). When learners are not aware of their mental processes, they may suffer from lack of motivation and self-confidence for taking responsibility. These three components all had an effect one another as, for instance, awareness of how languages are acquired may give way to a positive or negative attitude towards learning it and this might enable or disable a specific learning management skill (Yılmaz, 2010).

Based on the student data, it is clear that a sense of positive motivation had developed in the students. The use of portfolios fostered motivation in especially lower level students. However, it was not clear from the data whether motivation is gained intrinsically or extrinsically. Even so, student motivation was found to be increased in terms of participation and homework return. For example, Moltzen (1996) conducted a study with gifted students and revealed that motivation was nurtured through portfolio assessment (as cited in Atikol, 2008). Similarly, Wang and Liao (2008) reached the same findings of higher motivation and satisfaction among the students with vocational school students (as cited in Atikol, 2008).

FLA was a significant matter among YLs. However, some students were successful in controlling their stress which made them happy and self-confident at the end of the process. As understood from the findings that individual differences, such as beliefs, attitudes, expectations, motivation levels, and affective states may be the reasons with significant effects on the foreign language learning process (Aydin & Zengin, 2008).

At last but not least, we can imply from the findings that using LPs in private k-12 primary schools created an opportunity for teacher, parent and student dialogue allowing learners to be aware of their own learning process, and help them take responsibility for their own learning by providing them with the ability to assess themselves. It also helps teachers get to know their students better. It encourages parents build a sense of responsibility towards their kid, as well as providing various benefits for the student, the teacher and the parents. According to Stevenson & Baker (1987), parents more involved in school activities are more likely to have children performing well in school, and a research study conducted by the U.S Department of Education (1994) demonstrated that the family support given to the child during the process was more important to student success than family income or education (as cited in Shelton, 1995). Therefore, parents' role during the process actually was to guide their children to create awareness about the tasks and projects students are going through by checking their studies and giving feedback (Kutlu et al., 2008). However, it has been observed that the parents did not participate adequately in the evaluation process during the portfolio application because the responsibility area was not clear enough to them. Therefore, it may be implied that the purpose and guidelines must be made clear to parents at the very beginning of the process.

Apart from the benefits of using an LP in private K-12 primary schools, there are some challenges faced according to the findings including the *existence of different designs and perceptions of an LP, placing a time consuming workload on the teachers, difficulty in establishing validity and reliability, and foreign language anxiety among YLs.*

The findings revealed that because of the lack of enough explanation and guidelines about the purposes of implementing an LP in the institution, students and parents had different perceptions regarding an LP. Even though that is true in the sense that portfolios may exist in various designs and purposes, yet, the contents together with the aims and the purposes need to be clear to the learners. As results also indicated, teachers were the ones deciding on the subject and the content of a project, and choosing the best work of a student for the portfolio folder. Students

were not free to choose their works and when students were forced to do something that they do not want to, they were demotivated to complete a task. However, in the process of deciding on the purposes of portfolios, it was significant for the teachers to consult their colleagues, students, parents and school administrators (Birgin & Baki, 2007). Enabling students to develop their self-image since learners participate in the decision making processes of the content of their own files motivate them (Lynch & Struewing as cited in Smith, Brewer & Heffner, 2003). Therefore, the findings demonstrated that the purpose and the concept of the LP have shifted from process-oriented to product-oriented one with the purpose of showing-off the visitors. Akalın and Zengin (2007) conducted a research about the perceptions of people on foreign language learning in Turkey. They revealed that there were two main problems in foreign language teaching in Turkey. The first was the lack of realistic objectives and the second one was to spend much time on end-products rather than other language skills.

Another challenge coming out of the findings was that LPs needed a lot of preparations beforehand resulting in causing lack of time and placing heavy workload on the teachers. According to the remarks of participants, it was because of the fact that LPs needed extra effort from the teachers' side that was not related to the curriculum. The data revealed that the time and effort necessary for the process almost doubled as they were supposed to be done in addition to traditional testing and grading. In crowded classrooms where assessment could not be done quickly and easily, this was very tiring for the teachers. Kızıldağ (2009) conducted a study regarding the problems that primary public school teachers faced [...] and as a result, it was claimed that ELT teachers were negatively affected by crowded classrooms and the heavy workload [...]. As a result, having lack of time and energy, teachers ended up with not grading the LPs at all.

According to the findings, the situation was almost the same for the students who strove in the weekly and weekend assignments which were lowering the excitement and importance of the projects or tasks to be completed for the LP. A

great deal of homework, [...] and the time spent on homework loses its effectiveness (Cooper, et.al., 2006). Eventually, parents had to take the responsibility of their students' assignments which damaged the reliability of the process. According to the research study conducted by Cooper, Lindsay, and Nye (2000), it is demonstrated that those students whose parents did their homework could not actually do well academically [...]. This can be accepted as another challenge because teachers cannot understand whether the student completed the task alone or it is their parents who completed it. On the basis of this data, we can infer that projects completed at home may not give valid results according to the portfolio assessment criteria.

According to the findings, speaking anxiety in foreign language was one of the most important challenges faced during the process as a result of which students got overstressed. Even though some students (2, 3, 8, 10, 26, 27, 28, and 34) managed to control their stress only if everything went smoothly, others (1, 5, 9, 33, 35, 36) had difficulty in managing the level of their stress which resulted in speaking anxiety. In the light of these we can say that there were some causes behind and according to the findings, teacher behaviors, parents' over expectations, setting and the atmosphere, different learning styles and language levels of the learners may be accepted as the reasons for the anxiety in foreign language speaking among YLs. The importance of speaking anxiety in foreign language was emphasized by Chen and Wu (2004) that in order to ensure the success of English education in primary school, foreign language anxiety was an important matter which should not be disregarded. Students' remarks showed that portfolio process firstly meant to impress their parents about their learning stages. It may be because of their parents' over expectations that students were afraid of speaking in front of their parents and teachers fearing making mistakes (Awan, Azher, Anwar & Naz, 2010). Findings also demonstrated that teachers, unconsciously, could give way to raise stress among students through some unwanted behaviors because parents' expectations were so high that teachers tried too hard to make the portfolio a success. It may be implied from the findings that portfolio applications in Turkey put the students under more stress rather than giving them more confidence in speaking. Yılmaz (2007) revealed that some teachers

taking part in the study stated that because of Turkish society's patriarchal structure, which depends on parental and teacher authority, students were not given the opportunity to speak freely [...] (which) makes students passive learners and lacking in initiative, not expressive of opinions, and dependent.

5.2 Conclusions

Based on the findings gained as a result of this particular research study, it became obvious that the LP implemented in the institution of research was not a real LP targeted by the CoE. It was more likely to be a *context-specific institutional portfolio* where guidelines and procedures were set by the institution itself. Therefore, below you may find some valuable recommendations to be considered for the success of portfolio implementations in the future:

To start with, contrary to the statements of the students (2, 4, 5, 11, 12, 14, 34 and 35) teachers (1, 3) and administrators (2 and 3), implementing an LP cannot be just to impress parents, or the visitors. Authorities which undertake to produce an LP should “develop a language portfolio in conformity with the aims and the principles of CEFR” (CoE, 2004, p. 5). It should foster learner autonomy and language development. The aims, purposes and contents of the LPs must be clear to the teachers, learners, and to the parents.

Another significant point to be remembered is that an LP “is a tool to promote learner autonomy” (CoE, 2004, p. 3). However, as students (8, 20 and 23) complained, and administrators (2 and 3) strongly highlighted, learners were not free to choose while preparing their portfolio folder during the process. Instead, teachers were choosing the topics of the projects to be prepared by the learners and the products to be exhibited on the portfolio day. Therefore, freedom of choice while preparing projects is significant for an LP to be beneficial and meaningful to the learners. That is to say, providing an independent, full of freedom and creative learning atmosphere for students where they can study freely and willingly to become autonomous learners is a must for the success of an LP because an LP “is the

property of the learner” (CoE, 2004, p. 3) not the teachers. Therefore, teachers should act only as facilitators during the process not as the producers of student products. The LPs should be student centered and the teachers’ roles should not go beyond facilitating, and guiding only (De fina, 1997).

It is clear there was no particular assessment criteria used to compare the products produced during and at the end of the process by the learners; however, the purpose of a language portfolio is mainly to assess the language development of a learner because an LP should “encourage learner self-assessment and the recording of assessment by the teachers” (CoE, 2004, p.4). Even though there were not a particular assessment criteria followed by the institution of research, teachers tried to evaluate students’ works through peer-assessment in FGDs. The teacher-researcher’s field-notes demonstrated that besides fostering autonomous learning, learning awareness, reflection and self-assessment skills, LP could also provide learners with an opportunity improve collaboration skills, increasing interaction among their peers. Therefore, it is necessary for the teachers who are going to use portfolios in their classes should determine the criteria according to the studies they have done and evaluate the studies according to these criteria (McMillian, 1997) because exams alone are not enough to assess learners’ language skills diversely. For a successful assessment process, self/peer assessment sheets, checklists, projects, diaries and rubrics may be used (as cited in Sünbül, 2011).

Another problem faced during the LP process was the lack of parental support because parents were used to the traditional grading system. Findings have shown that parents could not support their children in the sense of feedback as a result of which they could not participate adequately in the evaluation process during the portfolio application. Actually, in this process, parents are supposed to give feedback to their child about their language development and inform them about their work (Kutlu et al., 2008). Moreover, the school administration should give information to the parents and students during the process of implementing portfolio and organize the meetings for parents regularly at least once a month to discuss and view their child's portfolio with the teacher because parent involvement in the process increases

dialogue between parents, teachers and students (Kim & Yazdian, 2014) as well as motivating students to take part in the process.

Findings also revealed how LPs were vulnerable to validity and reliability issues because it was difficult to establish these due to the qualitative nature of the portfolio assessment. The reliability and validity issues could only be solved if we could provide teachers with the necessary training regarding the importance of the process and give more freedom to the kids in preparing and completing their tasks. That is to say, being able to manage the possible limitations or disadvantages of portfolios, teachers taking part in the portfolios should be educated before, aided and supported in the portfolio application process by experts. It is necessary to create a safe and confidential environment as a condition for honest reflections (Harland, 2005). Therefore, deciding on the format of a portfolio as well as setting the objectives and assessment criteria beforehand is the key for establishing reliability and validity of an LP.

Time issue was regarded as another challenge for teachers (2, 3 and 5) in the preparation and assessment process of portfolio application. Therefore, the workload on the teachers' side may be decreased only if we create a learning environment where students feel independent and responsible for completing their tasks on their own and assessing their own progress using portfolios. Using checklists, rubrics and e-portfolio form may be used to reduce time for the assessment (Birgin, 2006). Among these suggestions, e-portfolios may be the most beneficial because using e-portfolios has a number of advantages. To start with, it is easy to follow student progress and to determine their skills and abilities. It helps the users to encourage individual and group based monitoring and assessment. It gives the users the opportunity to store everything in one place that is easy to access anytime and anywhere by reducing the risk of loss or damage. Finally, it reduces unnecessary paperwork which saves time and energy (Lorenzo & Ittelson, 2005).

Apart from time issues, teachers claimed that they also got stressed since the institution and the parents expected too much from them. According to them,

teachers are the ones to blame for any negative thing happening to the child academically. However, it was revealed that if there was no external pressure, the teachers would be more comfortable. Therefore, it is recommended that the education system and curriculum need to be reconsidered so as to solve the problem. Not only the teachers but also all of the parties taking part in the assessment process should get information and training on how to plan, implement and interpret portfolios just for the sake of student development (O'Malley & Pierce, 1992) in real terms free from personal or institutional benefit.

According to the findings, LPs presented in a formal and serious environment make students uncomfortable. Instead of making the kids memorize their roles by heart restricted to limited time, a more spontaneous and more common area should be designed in the form of an exhibition hall where stations may be formed and products may be exhibited freely. Teacher's role at this stage should be just guiding those in need. This way, the child can express himself/herself in a more spontaneous environment. Therefore, it is significant to have a stress free environment and a natural setting for the success of a good portfolio, or else students are discouraged to speak. In relation to this, Öz, Demirezen and Pourfeiz (2015) investigated the willingness to communicate of EFL learners. They found that more opportunities should be given to EFL learners to communicate in a stress free classroom environments.

Unless language portfolios are implemented in a natural setting or without social pressure, students get stressed. When students get stressed, their self-esteem decreases and having low confidence in speaking discourages students from participating in the process willingly. It has been revealed that anxiety formed a reason that had a significant influence on the foreign language learning process (Pertidou & Williams, 2007). Hence, if the portfolio exhibition is realized spontaneously in a more comfortable setting, it will help students lower their speaking anxiety level. Therefore, all the reasons causing anxiety for children should be eliminated. In order to eliminate social pressure, the feeling of curiosity should be satisfied from the parents' side by the teachers in order not to cause any pressure on

children. For this, the school administrators should inform parents during the process of implementing LP and organize the meetings for parents regularly, where parents should be well informed about the significance of the LPs for the language and self development of kids.

Students' language learning levels, their cognitive development as well as their individual needs are all different at all. In the light of this, parents, teachers and administrators should be aware the fact that "ELP models could cater for the needs of the learners according to the age, learning purpose and context and background" (CoE, 2004, p. 4). Therefore, in order to eliminate different language levels challenge obtained as a result of the study, differentiating in portfolio is significant. Implementers of LPs should keep in mind the following guidelines about diversity of typical of language learning in childhood:

- Some kids do not have an idea about the existence of languages other than their L1 while others are already bi-or plurilingual.
- The foreign language learned at school should not be limited to the classroom environment.
- Plurilingual and intercultural awareness should be developed first.
- The most important thing is establishing motivation for language learning.
- According to the cognitive and emotional development of children, the methods and tasks are revised.
- General pedagogic concerns such as learning to learn are important.
- Achievements should not be reported beyond the school and home context. (Schneider & Lenz, 2001, p 35)

Therefore, it is significant to consider the above mentioned points at the very beginning of the process for the sake of a successful LP.

5.3 Recommendations

Considering the findings and the feedback of the participant teachers, administrators, students and their parents given through semi-structured interviews about implementing an LP in a private K-12 school context, some suggestions for further research are presented in this section.

The present study was conducted with 3rd grade (n=36) students in an EFL setting at a private K-12 primary school in the western part of Turkey. Therefore, the findings of the study can be a guide to those who are interested in portfolio implementation with 9-10 years of age; however, this study cannot be generalized for all levels and all EFL learners. For this reason, a further research can be conducted including more participants and at different levels to understand the effect of LP with learners at different levels of English. Gender effect may also be investigated on the perception of an LP.

Attitudes of teachers, parents, administrators and students towards the implementation and perception of LPs can also be explored in other private primary schools in Turkey and the correlation between the cities can be investigated accordingly.

The findings have revealed that teachers and parents needed to be more aware about the LP process. Therefore, teachers should be informed about LPs through in-service trainings. Later, students and their parents could be involved in the process, as well. In the light of this, a research study can be conducted informing the future implementers about how to inform the participants well about the process, and the ways to establish reliability in implementing LPs.

In relation to this, a research study can also be conducted to fill the gap in literature on the applicability of portfolio studies based on the curriculum in Turkey. Ways to adapt the Turkish curriculum so as to implement an LP could be investigated.

According to the data obtained as a result of the interviews with the participants, for some reason students get over-stressed and experienced an increased level of foreign language anxiety at the end of the process. Though findings partially revealed that the fear of speaking in a foreign language might be arisen from a diversity of psychological constructs including speech anxiety, shyness, stage fright, embarrassment, communication fear, self-confidence, and social anxiety, perfectionism and external pressure, a more detailed research can be conducted so as to understand the psychological reasons behind the speaking anxiety among YLs.

As a result of the findings, it became clear that the students had positive attitudes towards implementing LPs which increased collaboration among YLs. Thus, the effect of LP use on collaboration can also be investigated.

As the availability of time was an issue in the process of understanding whether the LP implementation had developed learner autonomy as targeted, a longitudinal research may be suggested for longer classroom discussions and for weekly interviews in terms of the usefulness of the LP for fostering autonomous learning as well as understanding the long-term effects of portfolio keeping on learners' collaboration, goal setting, and general academic achievement in EFL context.

REFERENCES

- Akalın, S. & Zengin, B. (2007). Türkiye’de halkın yabancı dil ile ilgili algıları. (The Attitude of People towards Foreign Language in Turkey). *Journal of Language and Linguistics Studies*, 3(1), 181-200.
- Anastasiadou, A. (2013). Self-assessment: Its impact on students’ ability to monitor their learning process in the English classroom and develop compensatory strategies. *Research Papers in Language Teaching and Learning*, 4(1), 177-197 ISSN: 1792-1244 Retrieved from <http://rpltl.eap.gr>
- American Association for Higher Education. (1991). *Nine principles of good practice for assessing student learning*. Sterling, VA: Stylus.
- Atkins, M., J. Beattie & W.B. Dockrell (1993). *Assessment issues in higher education*, Newcastle upon Tyne, Employment Department Group.
- Atikol, R. (2008). *In service teachers’ opinions of assessment and evaluation of young learners: Portfolio assessment as an alternative* (Master’s thesis). Çanakkale Onsekiz Mart University.
- Awan, R.-u.-N. Azher, M., Anwar, M. N., & Naz, A. (2010). An investigation of foreign language classroom anxiety and its relationship with students’ achievement. *Journal of College Teaching & Learning*, 7(11), 33-40.
- Aydın S., Harputlu, L., Celik, S.S., & Guzel, S. (2017). Age, gender, grade effect on foreign language anxiety among children. DOI: 10.15639/teflinjournal.v28i2/133-154.
- Aydın, S. & Zengin, B. (2008). Yabancı dil eğitiminde kaygı: bir literatür özeti. [The Anxiety in Foreign Language Education: A literature review]. *The Journal of Language and Linguistic Studies*, 4(1), 81-94.
- Balcikanli, C. (2010). Learner autonomy in language learning: Student teachers’ beliefs. *Australian Journal of Teacher Education* 35, 90-103.
- Banfi, C. S. (2003). Portfolios: Integrating Advanced Language, Academic, and Professional Skills. *ELT Journal*, 57(1), 34-42.
- Benson, P. (2001). *Teaching and researching autonomy in language learning*. Essex: Pearson Educated Limited.
- Benson, P. (2009). Making sense of autonomy in language learning. In R. Pemberton, S. Toogood and A. Barfield (eds.) *Maintaining control: Autonomy and language learning*, 18-26, Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press.

- Brumen, M., Cagran, B., & Rixon, S. (2009). Comparative assessment of young learners' foreign language competence in three Eastern European countries. *Routledge Educational Studies*, 35(3), 269–295.
- Barabouti, M. (2012). The Writing portfolio: An alternative assessment tool with young learners of English. *Research Papers in Language Teaching and Learning*, 3(1), 123-145. ISSN: 1792-1244. Retrieved from <http://rpltl.eap.gr>
- Birgin, O. (2008). Alternatif bir degerlendirme yöntemi olarak portfolyo degerlendirme uygulamasına iliskin öğrenci görüşleri. *Türk Eğitim Bilimleri Dergisi*, 6(1), 1-24.
- Birgin, O., & Baki, A. (2007). The use of portfolio to assess student's performance. *Journal of Turkish Science Education*, 4(2).
- Brown, H. D. (2004). *Language assessment: principles and classroom practices*. U.S.A: Pearson Education.
- Bronwyn, C. (2003). Working with young English language learners: Some considerations. ERIC Digest.
- Brumen, M., Cagran, B. & Rixon, S. (2009). Comparative assessment of young learners' foreign language competence in three Eastern European countries. *Routledge Educational Studies*, 35(3), 269-295.
- Brumfit, C. & Moon, J., & Tongue, R. (Eds) (1991). *Teaching English to children from practice to principle*. London: Harper Collins Publishers.
- Burnaz, Y.E. (2011). *Perceptions of EFL learners towards portfolios as a method of alternative assessment: A case study at a Turkish state university* (Master's thesis). Middle East Technical University.
- Bushman, L., & Schnitker, B. (1995). *Teacher attitudes on portfolio assessment, implementation and practicability*. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED388661)
- Butler, G. Y., & Lee, J. (2010). The effects of self-assessment among young learners of English. *Language Testing* DOI: 10.1177/0265532209346370
- Cameron, L. (2001). *Teaching languages to young learners*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Castillo, J.J. (2009). *Types of non-probability sampling*. Nairobi: University of Nairobi.
- Ceylan, M. (2006). *European language portfolio as a self-directed learning tool*

(Master's thesis). Bilkent University.

- Ciel Language Support Network (2000). Assessment and independent language learning. Available at <http://www.llas.ac.uk/resources/goodpractice.aspx?resourceid=1407>
- Cirneanu, N., Chirita, M. & Cirneanu, A. (2009). Portfolio-learners' performance complementary assessment instrument. *Buletin Ştiinţific*, 2(28).
- Chan, D. Y. C., & Wu, G. C. (2004). A study of foreign language anxiety of EFL elementary school students in Taipei county. *Journal of National Taipei Teachers College*, 17(2), 287-320.
- Chatel, R. G. (2001). Portfolio development: Some considerations. http://www.sjc.edu/faculty_pages/rchatel/rchatel/
- Chou, M-h. (2014). Assessing English vocabulary and enhancing young English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners' motivation through games, songs, and stories, *Routledge Education*, 42(3), 284-297, DOI: 10.1080/03004279.2012.680899 Retrieved from <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/03004279.2012.680899>
- Cojocnean, D. (2012). Perspectives on assessing young learners' English language competence in Romania. *Academia Science Journal Psychologica Series*. ISSN: 2285-8083.
- Cooper, H., Robinson, J.C., & Patall, E.A. (2006). Does homework improve academic achievement? A synthesis of research, 1987-2003. *Review of Educational Research*, 76, 1-62.
- Cooper, H., Lindsay, J. J., & Nye, B. (2000). Resource type: Journal article. Publication Information: *Contemporary Educational Psychology*, 25(4).
- Cortazzi, M., & Jin, L. (1996). Cultures of learning: Language classrooms in China. In H. Coleman (Ed.), *Society and the language classroom*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Council of Europe. (2001). *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, teaching, assessment*. Cambridge, U.K: Press Syndicate of the University of Cambridge.
- Council for Cultural Cooperation Education Committee. (2000). *European Language Portfolio (ELP): principles and guidelines*. Strasbourg: Council of Europe (DGIV/EDU/LANG (2004), 33. Available at www.coe.int/portfolio

- Creswell, J. W. (2005). *Educational research: Planning, conducting, and evaluating quantitative and qualitative research*. Upper Saddle River, N.J: Merrill.
- Creswell, J. W. (2007). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Creswell, J.W. (2013). *Qualitative Inquiry & Research Design: Choosing among Five Approaches*. Los Angeles, CA: Sage.
- Çağatay, S. (2015). Examining EFL students' foreign language speaking anxiety: The case at a Turkish state university. *Procedia: Social and Behavioral Sciences*. Available online at www.sciencedirect.com
- Çelebi, D. (2006). Türkiye'de anadili eğitimi ve yabancı dil öğretimi. (The Mother Tongue and Foreign Language Education in Turkey). Erciyes Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü Dergisi, 21(2), 285-307.
- Çokçalışkan, H. (2014). *Tematik portfolyo uygulamasının eğitimde ölçme ve değerlendirme dersindeki başarı, kalıcılık ve derse yönelik tutum üzerine etkisi* (Master's thesis). Muğla Sıtkı Koçman Üniversitesi.
- Diaz, M.P. (2015). *Phenomenology in educational qualitative research: Philosophy as science or philosophical science? International Journal of Educational Excellence*, 1(2), 101-110.
- Egel, I.P. (2009). The yesterday and today of the European language portfolio in Turkey. *GEMA Online Journal of Language Studies*, 9(1), 1-16.
- Elliott, S. J., & Gillie, J. (1998). Moving experiences: A qualitative analysis of health and migration. *Health & Place*, 4(4), 327-339.
- Elsner, D. (2010). *Englisch in der grundschule unterrichten. Grundlagen, methoden, praxisbeispiele*. München: Oldenbourg Schulbuchverlag GmbH.
- Enever, J., Moon, J. and Raman, U. (2009). Young learner English language policy and implementation: International perspectives. Garnet Education ISBN 978 1 91009 523 4
- Er, S. (2014). Which is the most appropriate strategy for very young language learners? *International J. Soc. Sci. & Education*. 4(4), ISSN: 2223-4934 E and 2227-393X Print
- Erdogan, S. (2003). Learner training via course books and teacher autonomy: A case of need. Retrieved from <http://lc.ust.hk/~ailasc/newsletters/onlinepaper/sultan.htm>

- Epstein, R. M., Siegel, D. J., & Silberman, J. (2008). Self-monitoring in clinical practice: A challenge for medical educators. *Journal of Continuing Education in the Health Professions*, 28(1), 5-13. Available from: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/304744667_Professional_portfolios_used_by_Canadian_occupational_therapists_How_can_they_be_improved
- Etiz, B. (2014). *Role of portfolio technique in young learners' writing skills and their attitudes towards portfolio* (Master's thesis). Çağ University.
- Ferris, D.R., & Hedgcock, J.S. (1998). *Teaching ESL composition: Purpose, process, and practice*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Genesee, F. & Upshur, J. A. (1996). Portfolios and conferences. In J. C. Richards (Ed.), *Classroom-based evaluation in second language education*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Gieve, S., & Clark, R. (2005). The Chinese approach to learning: Cultural trait or situated response? The case of a self-directed learning programme. *System*, 33(2), 261-276.
- Gonzalez, A. J. (2008) Promoting student autonomy through the use of the European Language Portfolio. *Oxford University Press. ELT Journal*, 63(4), October 2009. doi: 10.1093/elt/ccn059
- Gordon, T. (2007). *Teaching young children a second language*. Praeger.
- Grace, C., & Shores, E.F. (1991). The portfolio and its use: developmentally appropriate assessment of young children. ERIC Digest. Assessment of Young Children. Little Rock, AR: Southern Early Childhood Association.
- Grace, C. (1992). The portfolio and its use: Developmentally appropriate assessment of young children. *Eric Digest*. ED351150.
- Gussie, W. F., & Wright, R. (1999). Assessment of the implementation of portfolio assessment in K-8 school districts in New Jersey. ERIC Digest. (Eric Document Reproduction Service No. ED 429 996).
- Haghighi, F.M. (2013). *Investigating teachers' perceptions of the usefulness of portfolio-based language assessment (PBLA) in language instruction for newcomers to Canada (LINC) Programme* (Master's thesis). The University of British Columbia.
- Hamp-Lyons, L., & Condon, W. (2000). *Assessing the portfolio*. New Jersey: Hampton Press.
- Hanna, G. S., & Dettmer, P. A. (2004). *Assessment for effective teaching: Using*

- context-adaptive planning*. Boston, MA: Pearson A&B.
- Harland, T. (2005). Developing a portfolio to promote authentic enquiry in teacher education. *Teaching in Higher Education*, 10(3), 327-337.
- Harmer, Jeremy. (2007). *How to teach English*. 2nd ed. London: Pearson Education Limited, Print.
- Hasselgreen, A. (2005). Assessing the Language of Young Learners. *Edward Arnold Publishers Ltd*.
- Heigham, J. & Croker, R. A. (2009). Qualitative research in applied linguistics. A practical introduction. *Palgrave Macmillan*.
- Holec, H. (1981). *Autonomy and foreign language learning*. Oxford: Pergamon.
- Jiménez Raya, M. and Vieira, F. (2015). Enhancing autonomy in language education. *De Gruyter Mouton*. Vol 9. ISSN 2192-0982
- Demirel, Ö. (2005). Language project of European Council and application in Turkey, *Journal of Education and Social Sciences*, 167, 71-81.
- Karabiyik, A. (2008). The relationship between culture of learning and Turkish university preparatory students' readiness for learner autonomy. MA diss., Bilkent University.
- Kemp, J. (2010). The listening log: Motivating autonomous learning. *ELT Journal*, 64/4; doi:10.1093/elt/ccp099
- Kızıldağ, A. (2009). Teaching English in Turkey: Dialogues with teachers about the challenges in public primary schools. *International Electronic Journal of Elementary Education*, 1(3), June, 2009.
- Kim, Y. and Yazdian, L. S. (2014). Portfolio assessment and quality teaching. *Routledge Theory into Practice*, 53: 220-227 ISSN: 0040-5841 print/1543-0421 online DOI: 10.1080/00405841.2014.916965
- Kohonen, V. & Westhoff, G. (2003). *Enhancing the pedagogical aspects of the European Language Portfolio (ELP)*. Strasbourg: Council of Europe. Retrieved on 17th October 2005 from http://culture2.coe.int/portfolio/documents/studies_kohonen_westhoff.doc
- Koyuncu, S. (2006). *The effect of the European Language Portfolio on learner autonomy for young learners*. Master's Thesis. Adana.
- Krashen, S. (1982). *Principles and practice in second language acquisition*. New

York: Prentice Hall.

- Kutlu, Ö., Doğan C. D., & Karakaya, İ. (2008). *Öğrenci başarısının belirlenmesi performans ve portfolyoya dayalı durum belirleme*. Ankara: Pegem Akademi Yayınları.
- Lamb, T. E. (2003). *Individualising learning: Organising a flexible learning environment*. In *differentiation in the modern languages classroom*, ed. M. Jiménez Raya, and T.E. Lamb, 177-194. Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang.
- Leeck, P. (2012). Some possibilities for implementing and increasing learner autonomy in the English lesson. In Lennon, Paul (eds); *Learner Autonomy in the English Classroom: Empirical Studies and Ideas for Teachers*, 65-94.
- Lefever, S. (2007) English for very young learners. FEKI (The Association of Teachers of English in Iceland).
- Lenski, S, & Verbruggen, F. (2010). Writing instruction and assessment for English language learners K-8. NY: The Guildford Press, 247-251. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.1080/15235882.2012.704482>
- Lincoln, Y.S., & Guba EG. (1985). *Naturalistic inquiry*. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.
- Little, D. (2001). European language portfolio: Strategies for dissemination in the framework of the European Year of Languages 2001. *Coimbra Language Policy Division, Strasbourg*.
- Little, D. (2003) The European Language Portfolio in use: Nine examples. *Language Policy Division, Strasbourg*.
- Little D. (2007). Language learner autonomy: Some fundamental considerations revisited. *Innovation in Language Learning and Teaching*, 1(1), 14-29.
- Little, D., & Perclová, R. (2001). The European Language Portfolio: a guide for teachers and teacher trainers.
- Littlewood, W. (1996). Autonomy: An anatomy and a framework. *System*, 24 (4), 427-435.
- Lorenzo, G., & Ittelson, J. (2005). An overview of E-Portfolios. EDUCAUSE Learning Initiative. Retrieved on November 12, 2015 from <http://net.educause.edu/ir/library/pdf/ELI3001.pdf>
- Lui, H., & Chen, T. (2013). Foreign language anxiety in young learners: How it relates to multiple intelligences, learner attitudes, and perceived competence. *Journal of Language Teaching and Research*, 4(5), 932-938.

- Marsh, D., Mehisto, P., Wolff, D. y Frigols-Martin, M. (2010). *The European framework for CLIL teacher education*, Graz: European Centre for Modern Languages (ECML).
- McKay, P. (2006). *Assessing young language learners*. Cambridge University Press.
- Meador, D. (2017, March 18). What is a portfolio assessment? *The purpose of building a portfolio assessment*. Retrieved from <https://www.thoughtco.com/the-purpose-of-building-a-portfolio-assessment-3194653>
- Meister, M. E. (2005). *The influence of the world of Council of Europe on language teaching in Austria*. Retrieved on 11th February 2006, from <http://www.ecml.at>
- MoNE. (2006). English language curriculum for primary education. Ankara: Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı Talim ve Terbiye Kurulu Başkanlığı.
- MoNE. (2008). *İngilizce öğretmeni özel alan yeterlilikleri*. Retrieved from http://otmg.meb.gov.tr/belgeler/ogretmen_yeterlikleri_kitabi/Ogretmen_Yeterlikleri_Kiabi_ingilizce_Ogretmeni_Ozel_alan_yeterlikleri_ilkOgretim_parca_5.pdf
- Morgan, DL. (1996). Focus groups. *Annu. Rev. Sociol*, 22, 129-52.
- Morgan, DL. (1997). *Focus groups as qualitative research*. (2nd Edition). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Mounter, J. (2016). From the language of learning to the language of educational responsibility. SAGE DOI: 10.1177/0261429415575121
- Mueller, J. (2016). Portfolios: Authentic assessment toolbox. Retrieved from <http://jfmuellet.faculty.noctrl.edu/toolbox/portfolios.htm>
- Moya, S. S., & O'Malley, J. M. (1994). A portfolio assessment model for ESL. *The Learners: Journal of Educational Issues of Language Minority Students*, 13, 13-36.
- Nováková, S., & Davidová, J. (2003). The ELP pilot project in the Czech Republic.
- Nowacki, A.S. (2013). Making the grade in a portfolio-based system: student performance and the student perspective. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 4, 155.
- Nunan, D. (1997). Designing and adapting materials to encourage learner autonomy. In *Autonomy and independence in language learning*, ed. P. Benson, and P. Voller, 192-203. Harlow: Addison Wesley Longman Limited.

- O'Malley, J. M., & Pierce, L.V. (1996). *Authentic assessment for English language: Practical approaches for teachers*. Boston, MA: Addison-Wesley.
- Oğuz, Ş. (2003). *State university preparatory class EFL instructors' attitudes towards assessment methods used at their institutions and portfolios as a method of alternative assessment*. (Master's thesis). Bilkent University.
- Ok, S. (2014). Reflections of ELT students on their progress in language and vocabulary use in portfolio process. *English Language Teaching*, 7(2), 53-62.
- Oz, H., Demirezen, M., & Pourfeiz, J. (n.d.). Willingness to communicate of EFL learners in Turkish context. *Learning and Individual Differences*, 37, 269-275. Retrieved January 11, 2015, from Doi: 10.1016/j.lindif.2014.12.009
- Ozdemir, Ö. (2017). *The effect of language portfolio on young learners' self-assessment and language learning autonomy* (Master's thesis). Akdeniz University.
- Ozturk, I. (Ismail) H. (2011). A conceptual analysis on teacher autonomy. *Electronic Journal of Social Sciences* 10, 35(7), 82-99.
- Paulson, F. L., Paulson P. R., Meyer, C.A. (1991). What makes a portfolio a portfolio. *Educational Leadership* 48(5), 60-63.
- Pennycook, A. (1997). Cultural alternatives and autonomy. In P. Benson & P. Voller (Eds.), *Autonomy and independence in language learning*. London: Longman, 35-53.
- Petridou, A., & Williams, J. (2007). Accounting for aberrant test response patterns using multilevel models. *Journal of Educational Measurement*, 44(3), 227-247.
- Phillips, S. (2000). *Young Learners*. Hong Kong: Oxford University Press.
- Pierson, H. (1996). Learner culture and learner autonomy in the Hong Kong Chinese context. In R. Pemberton (Ed.), *Taking Control: Autonomy in language learning*. Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 49-58.
- Pinter, A. (2015). Reflections on teaching young learners. 24 (1) Retrieved from www.modernenglishteacher.com
- Potter, F. E. (1999). What should I put in my portfolio? Supporting young children's goals and evaluations. *Childhood Education*, 75(4), 210-214. Doi: 10.1080/00094056.1999.10522018

- Prosser, J. (1999). The evolution of school culture research. In J. Prosser (Ed.), *School Culture*. London: Paul Chapman Publishing, 1-14.
- Richards R.C. (2013). Curriculum approaches in language teaching: Forward, central, and design. *RELC Journal*. 44(1), 5-33.
- Seitz, H. & Bartholomew, C. (2008). Powerful portfolios for young children. *Early Childhood Educ J* (2008) 36:63–68 DOI 10.1007/s10643-008-0242-7
- Servi, M. (2010). *The attitudes of EFL instructors towards learner autonomy and European Language Portfolio at Selcuk University* (Master's thesis). Konya.
- Sert, N. (2006). EFL student teachers' learning autonomy. *The Asian EFL Journal*. 4 8(2), 180-201.
- Sezgin, G. (2007). An exploratory study of curricular change in an EFL context. (Unpublished Master's Thesis), Bilkent University.
- Schärer, R. (2000). *Final report: A European Language Portfolio pilot project phase 1998-2000*.
- Shin, J.K. (2007). Developing dynamic units for EFL in FORUM , 2, 2-13.
- Schneider, G., & Lenz, P. (2001). *A guide for developers of European language portfolios*. Strasbourg: Council of Europe. Retrieved August 27, 2009, from www.coe.int/T/DG4/Portfolio/documents_intro/Eguide.pdf.
- Shaaban, K. (2007). Assessment of young learners. *Online English Teaching Forum* Retrieved from <http://exchanges.state.gov/forum/vols/vol39/no4/p16.htm>
- Shelton, D. (1995). *Using portfolios to complement the whole language program in a third grade classroom*. (Master's thesis).
- Shin, K. J. (2007). Ten helpful ideas for teaching English to young language learners. *English Teaching Forum*, 44(2) Retrieved from: <http://exchanges.state.gov/forum/>
- Smith, J., Brewer, D. & Heffner, T. (2003). Using portfolio assessments with young children who are at risk for school failure. *Preventing School Failure*, 48(1).
- Smith, K. (1996). *Assessing and testing young learners: Can we? Should we?* In Entry points: Papers from a symposium of the research, testing, and young learners special interest groups, ed. D. Allen. Kent, England: IATEFL.
- Solak, E. & Bayar, A. (2015). Current challenges in English language learning in

Turkish EFL context. Participatory Educational Research (PER), 2(1),106-115,
Retrieved from: <http://www.partedres.com> ISSN: 2148-6123
<http://dx.doi.org/10.17275/per.15.09.2.1>

- Stiggins, R. (1999). Evaluating classroom assessment training in teacher education programs, educational measurement: Issues and practice, İlkbahar Sayısı, 23-27.
- Stoynoff, S. (2012). Looking backward and forward at classroom-based language assessment. Oxford University Press. *ELT Journal*, 66(4). Special Issue. doi:10.1093/elt/ccs041.
- Sünbül, D. (2011). *Portfolyo uygulamalarına ilişkin öğretmen, öğrenci ve veli görüşlerinin incelenmesi* (Master's thesis). Van: Yüzüncü Yıl University.
- Swaine, L. (2012). The false right to autonomy in education. *Educational Theory*, 62(1).
- Thavenius, C. (1999). Teacher autonomy for learner autonomy. In learner autonomy in language learning: Defining the field and effecting change, ed. S. Cotterall, and D. Crabbe, 159-163. Frankfurt: Peter Lang.
- Troha, A. D. (2000). *The ELP in Slovenia: Our experience and perspectives*. In *Babylonia* 4/2000.
- Wiggins, G. (1989). Teaching to the authentic test, educational leadership, 46(7), 41-47.
- Thanasoulas, D. (2000). What is learner autonomy and how can it be fostered? Available at <http://iteslj.org/Articles/Thanasoulas-Autonomy.html>
- Valerie-Gold, M., Olson, J. R., & Deming, M. P. (1991/1992). Portfolios: Collaborative authentic assessment opportunities for college developmental learners. *Journal of Reading*, 35, 298-304.
- Weigle, S. C. (2002). *Assessing writing*. Cambridge University Press.
- Wees, D. (2011, February 22). Re: The Reflective educator [On time forum comment]. Retrieved from <https://davidwees.com/content/students-are-plants/>
- Wewer, T. (2014). *Assessment of young learners' English proficiency in bilingual content instruction CLIL*. University of Turku.
- Williams, M. (1998). Ten principles for teaching English to young learners. *IATEFL Newsletter* 142, 1998.

Wolf, K., and Siu-Runyan, Y. (1996) Portfolio purposes and possibilities. *Journal of Adolescent and Adult Literacy*, 40, 30-37.

Yancey, K. B. (1992). Portfolios in the writing classroom: A final reflection. In K. B. Yancey (ed.) *Portfolios in the writing classroom: An introduction*. Urbana, Illinois: National Council of Teachers of English, 102-116.

Yilmaz, K. (2007). Learner-centred instruction as a means to realize democratic education: The problems and constraints confronting learner-centred instruction in Turkey. *Studies in Learning, Evaluation, Innovation and Development*, 4(3), 15-28.

Yilmaz, S. (2010). *Exploring learner autonomy through the European Language Portfolio (ELP) in Turkish context* (Master's thesis). Boğaziçi University.

Young, D. J. (1990). An investigation of students' perspectives on anxiety and speaking. *Foreign Language Annals*, 23(6), 539-567.

APPENDICES

A. PARTICIPANT INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

Private K12 SCHOOLS

School name:		Interview Location:	
Interviewer:		Position(s):	
Time	Student Name	Day of Interview	
9:00am			
9:30am			
10:40am			
11:30am			
Noon			
12:30pm			
1:40pm			
2:30pm			
3:40pm			
4:30pm			

B. SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR STUDENTS

1. Portfolyo yapma ile ilgili ne düşünüyorsun?

What's your opinion about taking part in a language portfolio?

2. Sence portfolyonun amacı neydi?

What do you think about the aim of implementing language portfolio?

3. Bu portfolyoyu gerçekleştirmek sana ne kazandırdı?

What were the advantages for implementing an LP?

4. Portfolyo ile ilgili değiştirmek ya da çıkarmak istediğin bir yer var mı?

What could be done or changed for better based on your experience?

5. Portfolyo hazırlık sürecinden biraz bahsedebilir misin?

Can you please talk about the preparation process of the portfolio?

6. Portfolyo günü duygularından bahsedebilir misin?

Can you please talk about your feelings and emotions during portfolio exhibition day?

7. Gelecek yıl olsa, yine portfolyoda yer almak ister misin?

Would you like to participate in a portfolio next year again?

C. SAMPLE STUDENT INTERVIEW

STUDENT 35

T: Portfolyo yapma ile ilgili ne düşünüyorsun?

S: Portfolyo çok eğlenceliydi. Arkadaşlarla, ben yıl boyunca yaptığımız şeyleri sergiledik orda. İngilizce ve türkçe öğretmenlerimizle birlikte çalışmalar yaptık ve çok eğlenceliydi.

T: Portfolyo için proje hazırlarkenki tecrübelerini anlatır mısın?

S: Proje hazırlamaktan çok keyif alıyorum. Çünkü İngilizceyi çok seviyorum. İngilizce şarkı söylemeyi de çok seviyorum hatta bir projemiz onunla ilgiliydi ve çok keyif almıştım.

T: Proje ödevlerini çoğunlukla nerede ve nasıl hazırlıyorsun?

S: Genelde evde hazırlıyorum. Çok fazla zaman harcamam gerekmiyor. Sıkılmadan hazırlıyorum. Fikir konusunda bazen ailemden destek alma şansım olabiliyor.

T: Peki okulda hazırlıyor musunuz?

S: Bazen hazırlıyoruz. Okulda aktivite zamanları biraz gürültü olduğu için ben çok çalışmıyorum. Evde hazırlanmak daha iyi oluyor. Hem zaman da çok (gülüyor).

T: Peki bu portfolyo sana neler kazandırdı? Neler öğrendin?

S: İngilizceyi rahat kullanabildim. Ne kadar iyi İngilizce konuşabildiğimi aileme göstermek istemişim.

T: Sen olsan İngilizce kısmında birşey ekler ya da çıkarır mıydın?

S: Tam olarak eklemek ya da çıkarmak istediğim birşey yok aslında. İngilizce en sevdiğim derslerden biridir çünkü. İngilizce dersinden çok keyif alıyorum o yüzden pek çıkarmak istediğim birşey yok.

T: Peki portfolyo öncesi ve sonrasındaki duygularından bahsedebilir misin?

S: Çok mutlu hissettim. Neler öğrendiğimiz aileme gösterdim. Herkes çok mutlu oldu. Beni izlemeye annem ve babamdan başkaları da gelmişti. Kendimle çok gurur duydum.

T: Neler hissettin peki?

S: Çok heyecanlandım. İlk başta yapamayacağım için çok korktum ama çok güzel geçti. Heyecanım da kalmadı biterken. Daha çok mutluluk ve rahatlama hissettim.

D. FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION OPEN-ENDED QUESTION FOR STUDENTS

1. What do you think about language portfolio you took part in?



E. PARENTS APPROVAL PAGE

Veli Onay Mektubu

Sayın Veliler, Sevgili Anne-Babalar,

Bahçeşehir Üniversitesi, Eğitim Bilimleri Enstitüsü, İngiliz Dili Eğitimi Bölümü öğrencisi olarak bitirme tezi kapsamında "İlkokulda **portfolyo** uygulamasının rolü ve önemi" konulu araştırma projesini eyim. Araştırmanın amacı, ilkokullarda bir ölçme ve değerlendirme aracı olarak **portfolyo** kullanımının öğrencilerimiz üzerindeki etkisini değerlendirmek üzere siz değerli velilerin görüş ve önerilerine başvurmaktır. Bu amaçla, çocuklarımızın ve sizin konu ile ilgili görüşlerinize ihtiyaç duymaktayım.

Katılmasına izin verdiğiniz takdirde, araştırma kapsamında çocuğunuzla yapılacak sözlü görüşme okulda ders saatinde gerçekleştirilecektir. Veli olarak sizlere, bu yazının ekinde bulunan röportaj sorularını içeren belge ise yine e-posta aracılığıyla tarafınıza gönderilecektir. Söz konusu belgeyi, dilerseviz çıktı olarak ya da bilgisayar ortamında doldurarak elden ya da e-posta aracılığıyla tarafıma ulaştırabilirsiniz. Çocuğunuzun cevaplayacağı soruların onun psikolojik gelişimine olumsuz etkisi olmayacağından emin olabilirsiniz. Sizin ve çocuğunuzun kimliği ile tarafınızca verilecek cevap ve yorumlar kesinlikle gizli tutulacak ve bu cevap ve yorumlar sadece bilimsel araştırma amacıyla kullanılacaktır. Bu formu imzaladıktan sonra hem siz hem de çocuğunuz katılımcılıktan ayrılma hakkına sahiptir. Araştırma sonuçlarının özeti, tarafınıza araştırma projesinin bitimini takiben e-posta yoluyla ulaştırılacaktır.

Yapılan sözlü ve yazılı görüşmeler ile bize sağlayacağınız bilgiler, **portfolyo** ilkokullarda kullanımıyla ilgili öğrencilerimizin üzerindeki etkisinin saptanmasına önemli bir katkıda bulunacaktır. Araştırmayla ilgili sorularınızı bana, aşağıdaki e-posta adresini kullanarak ulaştırabilirsiniz.

Saygılarımla,

Alev Kesmen
alev.kesmen@gmail.com.tr

*Bu araştırmaya katılmak konusundaki tercihinizi aşağıdaki seçeneklerden hepisini ya da size uygun gelenleri işaretlemenizi ve bu formu imzalı olarak çocuğunuzla ya da e-posta yoluyla tarafıma en geç **09 Kasım Pazartesi** günü geri göndermenizi önemle rica ederim*

- A) Bu araştırmaya tamamen gönüllü olarak katılıyorum ve çocuğum'nın da katılımcı olmasına izin veriyorum
- B) Araştırma kapsamında kimliğimizin gizli tutulmasını istiyorum
- C) **Portfolyo**da sergilenen ürünlerin ve o gün ailemize ait toplu ya da bireysel alınan görsellerin projede kullanılmasına izin veriyorum
- D) Çalışmayı istediğim zaman yarıda kesip bırakabileceğimi biliyorum ve verdiğim bilgilerin bilimsel amaç olarak kullanılmasını kabul ediyorum

Veli Adı-Soyadı	Tarih	İmza
_____	_____	_____
Araştırmacının Adı-Soyadı	Tarih	İmza
<u>Alev Kesmen</u>	_____	_____

F. PARENTS PORTFOLIO EVALUATION SAMPLE

VELİ PORTFOLYO DEĞERLENDİRME

Proje adı: İlkokulda dil portfolyosu uygulamasının rolü ve önemi

Projeyi araştıran: Alev Kesmen

Proje katılımcısı veli ad-soyadı: _

Tarih: 09.11.2017

İlkokullarda bir ölçme ve değerlendirme aracı olarak İngilizce portfolyo kullanımının öğrencilerimiz üzerindeki etkisini değerlendirmek üzere siz değerli velilerin görüş ve önerilerini alabilmek adına aşağıdaki soruları tam ve eksiksiz doldurmanızı rica ederim. Soruları ek sayfalar kullanarak istediğiniz uzunlukta cevaplayabilirsiniz.

1. İlkokulda uygulanan Dil Portfolyoları hakkında ne düşünüyorsunuz?

Doğru bir uygulama olduğunu düşünüyorum. Derece içinde karandığı bilgi birikimini ~~akıcı~~ bir şekilde kullanma fırsatı olarak görüyorum. Ne derece ilerlediklerini görmemizi de sağlıyor. Aynı zamanda hem materyal olarak, hem de sözlü olarak önemli bir birikim kazanıyor bu sayede. Özyeten gelişimi konusunda da cesaret ve motivasyon kazanıyor.

2. Çocuğunuzun evde haftasonu İngilizce proje ödevlerini hazırlarken yaşadıkları ve yaptıkları ile ilgili gözlemlerinizi anlatınız.

Gök ayrıntılı bir şey istemediği sürece bir istemiyor. Kızım seve seve hazırlıyor. Gerek resim çizerek, gerekse ufak çaplı bir anlatımla hoş zaman geçirirken, dilini de kullanma fırsatı kazanıyor. Bir İngiliz filoloğu olarak dil portfolyosu uygulamasını çok önemli ve yerinde buluyorum. Bu konu ile ilgilenmeniz de takdir ediyorum ve tebrik ediyorum.

Birinci soruda; 3. Sınıf portfolyo uygulaması ile ilgili (varsa) avantaj, dezavantaj, dili kullanımına etkisi, kazanımları, karşılaşılan problemler, geliştirilmesi için tavsiyelerinizden bahsedebilirsiniz.

İkinci soruda; proje ödevi hazırlık sürecindeki duyguları, isteklilik durumu, dili kullanma becerisi, ödevi hazırlarkenki motivasyonu ile ilgili bilgi verebilirsiniz.

Derece sonunda sundukları dil portfolyosu kütümü sevindirerek heyecanlanıyor ve hevesini motive ediyor. Kendisini bu konuda özel, önemli ve ayrıcalıklı hissettiyor. Teşekkürler!)

G. ADMINISTRATORS PORTFOLIO EVALUATION QUESTIONS

Project title: An Exploration of the effects of performing language portfolios on primary school students.

Project researcher: Alev Kesmen

Participant administrator:

Date:

1. What's your opinion about performing language portfolios in primary schools?
2. What do you think is the main aim of applying language portfolios?
3. Do you think language portfolios are necessary for young learners? Why?
4. What are the advantages / disadvantages of the process for the students?
5. How do you get ready for portfolio? Can you please briefly mention about it?
6. What were the problems faced before and during the portfolio process?
7. What can be done to improve the possible problems faced during the portfolio process?
8. What are the parents' attitudes towards the process?
9. What do the students feel about taking part in the process?
10. Compared to written exams, which one do you think is more beneficial for this age group, and why?

H. ADMINISTRATORS PORTFOLIO EVALUATION SAMPLE

Administrator 5

R: Portfolyo yapma ile ilgili ne düşünüyorsunuz?

T: Amacına uygun bir şekilde yapılırsa yararlı olacağını düşünüyorum. Ama çocukların yıl içersinde yapmış olduğu şeyleri afişe etmek ve veliye kanıtlamak amacıyla yapıldığı için faydalı olmadığını düşünüyorum.

R: Peki portfolyoların ilk okullarda yani küçük yaş gruplarında uygulanmasına dair ne düşünüyorsunuz? Gerekli mi sizce?

T: Doğru yapılırsa bence gerekli. Çocuğa da aslında kendine ait bir geri bildirim şansı sağlıyor. Neler yapmışım, ben neler hazırlamışım, neye ne kadar emek sarfetmişim, neyi ne kadar öğrenebilmişim. Bunları görebilmesi adına aslında bir avantaj. Kendine dair bir geri bildirim. Hedeflenen amaçlar doğrultusunda yapılırsa çocuğun kendi öz değerlendirmesini yapabileceği bir şey.

R: Çocuklar için kazanımları ne oluyor sizce böyle bir şeyin?

T: Doğru yapılırsa kendini değerlendirmiş olur aslında. Yıl içersinde yaptıklarını farketmiş olur. Bilinçli bir farkındalık yaratır ve daha somut bir şekilde yıl içersinde yapmış olduklarını görme şansı sunar. Özellikle daha ilk okulda soyut düşünceye geçemedikleri için biraz daha yaptıkları şeyler havada kalıyor. Bu şekilde somutlaştırıp, “aa ben bunları öğrenmişim, bunları kazanmışım, bunlarla ilgili artık fikir sahibiyim” deyip aslında oradan bunu günlük hayatına aktarma şansı verir. Ama doğru yapılmazsa, sadece amaç veliye yönelik yapılanları göstermeyi hedeflerse bu sefer kaygısı olan çocukların kaygısını peek yaptırabilir. Ve çocuk şunu düşünmeye başlar. Ben yaptıklarımı iyi bir şekilde sunmalıyım. Anneme babama kendimi kanıtlamalıyım. Bu sefer yine kendini değerlendirmiş olmaz, başkalarını tatmin etmek adına birşeyler yapmaya başlar. Çocuk aslında sınavda gibi hissediyor kendisini.

R: Peki karşılaşılan problemler neler oluyor bu süreçte?

T: Eğer çok hakim olmadan yapmış olduğu bir etkinlik varsa buna dair tedirginlikler yaşayabilir. Bunu öğrenemedim , yeteri kadar yapamadım gibi düşünebilir. Eğer rahat bir yapısı yoksa, daha çok onda kaygı uyandırabilir.

R: Peki sizce portfolyolar aile öğretmen ve öğrenci üçlemesi ile mi yapılmalıdır? Doğru olan bu mudur? Psikolojik olarak nasıl bir olumlu ya da olumsuz getirisi olabilir çocuk açısından?

I.TEACHERS PORTFOLIO EVALUATION QUESTIONS

Project title: An Exploration of the effects of performing language portfolios on primary school students.

Project researcher: Alev Kesmen

Participant teacher:

Date:

1. What's your opinion about performing language portfolios in primary schools?
2. What do you think is the main aim of applying language portfolios?
3. Do you think language portfolios are necessary for young learners? Why?
4. What are the advantages / disadvantages of the process for the students?
5. How do you get ready for portfolio? Can you please briefly mention about it?
6. What were the problems faced before and during the portfolio process?
7. What can be done to improve the possible problems faced during the portfolio process?
8. What are the parents' attitudes towards the process?
9. What do the students feel about taking part in the process?
10. Compared to written exams, which one do you think is more beneficial for this age group, and why?

J. TEACHERS PORTFOLIO EVALUATION SAMPLE

Teacher 2

R: What do you think about the use of language portfolios in primary schools?

T: To be honest, I don't have a very good opinion about language portfolios. I mean at least not in the way it has been done right now by most schools.

R: For example?

T: For example, it is a show off for the parents or something that students memorize and tell in front of their parents, or like something to impress the parents. I think it's been done for just that purpose.

R: What should be done for this?

T: I think the way it's been done should be changed. Instead of having kids memorize and learn the scenario by heart, we should have them display their work. They should be able to give information about what they did and how they did it. We should have them display their work to their parents willingly and freely without any constrain. Because that is the aim of portfolio to show their parents what they know and what they did, not just to show off a set up scenario. And from a teacher's point of view, it's really hard to do it. It's very stressful because some of the kids get panic, they know they are on the spot and they don't want to speak English in front of their parents.

R: Do you think it is necessary to perform portfolios if it is done in the way it's supposed to be?

T: May be. Because in primary school we don't have grades, we don't have exams, we don't have any kind of assessment. Some of the parents don't know what is going on, what their kids are capable of doing. So it is nice to show what they did but not in this kind of restrictive way. The kids should enjoy it. They should not put them under stress. It shouldn't be like "oh, we are testing them in front of their parents because that puts me under stress as a teacher. Because you have to work with all kinds of students; weak students, strong students. That is stressful for me because I feel like all my teaching skills are assessed by that kid's portfolio. If he can produce something good, I am a good teacher. If he does not, I am not a good teacher and kids know that they are being assessed. So I believe that kids should enjoy doing it.

K. FIELD-NOTE TEMPLATE

Portfolio Project No 1 Field-Note	
Date:	Week:

L. SITE ETHICAL APPROVAL LETTER

Subject: Site Approval Letter

Date:/..../2017

To whom it may concern;

This letter acknowledges that I have received and reviewed a request by Alev Kesmen to conduct a research project entitled “Perfoming Language Portfolios at Primary Schools” at _____ Schools and I approve of this research to be conducted at our institution.

When the researcher receives approval for her research project from the _____ University’s Institution Board, I agree to provide access for the approved research project.

Sincerely,

Name Surname

(Principle)

M. PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

Study Title: An exploration of the effects of performing language portfolios on primary school students.

Researcher: Alex Kesman

Introduction

You are invited to take part in a research study. Before you decide, you need to understand why the research is being done and what it would involve for you. Please take the time to read the following information carefully.

(Part 1 tells you the purpose of the study and what will happen to you if you take part.

Part 2 gives you more detailed information about the conduct of the study)

Please feel free to ask us if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information. Take time to decide whether or not you wish to take part.

PART 1

What is the study about?

It's a thesis. This study aims to explore the experience(s) / attitude(s) of primary school students in private K12 schools towards the application of the language portfolio process in their institution.

Do I have to take part?

It is entirely up to you to decide. I will describe the study and go through this information sheet, which you can keep. If you choose to participate, I will ask you to sign a consent form to confirm that you have agreed to take part. You will be free to withdraw at any time, without giving a reason.

What will happen to me if I take part?

We will invite you for an interview if you are available.

What are the possible disadvantages, side effects, risks, and/or discomforts of taking part in this study?

Rest assured that you will not be obliged to answer all the questions during interviews. If you find any of the questions or topics difficult you have the right not to answer or finish the interview without giving us any reason. Also, everything you say to us will be kept confidential and if any of your words are used in our research they will be anonymised so that nobody may be able to recognise you, unless you wish to keep your real name (you can specify this in the consent form).

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

Expenses and payments

This is a voluntary project.

What will happen when the study ends?

The information you share with us may be used in the writing of written reports (e.g., journal articles) or at conference and seminar talks. However, all information will be anonymised so that nobody may be able to recognise you, unless you want me to use your real name.

Will my taking part be kept confidential?

Yes. We will follow strict ethical and legal practice and all information about you will be handled in confidence. Further details are included in Part 2.

What if there is a problem?

Any complaint about the way you have been dealt with during the study or any possible harm that you might suffer will be addressed. Detailed information is given in Part 2.

This concludes Part 1.

If the information in Part 1 has interested you and you are considering participation, please read the additional information in Part 2 before making any decision.



PART 2

Who is organising and funding the study?

I am the only researcher conducting this study.

What will happen if I don't want to carry on being part of the study?

Participation in this study is entirely voluntary. Refusal to participate will not affect you in any way. If you decide to take part in the study, you will need to sign a consent form, which states that you have given your consent to participate.

If you agree to participate, you may nevertheless withdraw from the study at any time without affecting you in any way.

Who should I contact if I wish to make a complaint?

~~012 500000~~ - alex.hosmer@gmail.com - 506... ..

Will my taking part be kept confidential?

All published data will be anonymised, including all names of organisations and individuals named in the interviews. In reporting on the research findings, we will not reveal the names of any participants or the organisation where you study. At all times, there will be no possibility of you as individual being linked with the data, unless you wish for your real name

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

to be used.

What will happen to the results of the study?

This will be a thesis. An electronic copy of these will be sent to you, if you request it. The research findings may be published in publications and at conferences both in the Turkey and abroad.

What if I want more information about the study?

If you have any questions about any aspect of the study, or your participation in it, not answered by this participant information sheet, please contact:

The researcher:

Alex Kesmen

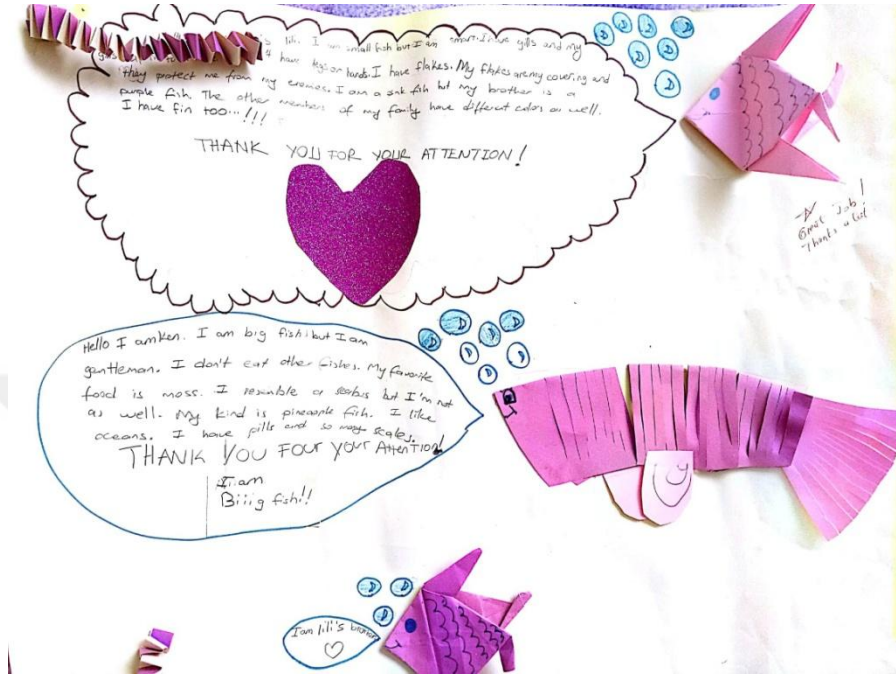
Boğaziçi University
Department of Foreign Language Education,
Faculty of Educational Sciences,
Email: alex.kesmen@gmail.com

Thank you for taking the time to read this Participant Information Sheet.

□

N. STUDENTS' PORTFOLIO PROJECT SAMPLES

Student 15



Student 24

Dear friends,

It was a wonderful week for me

I went to cinema with my family and we watched

"Patron Bebek". The film was comic and amusing.

After the cinema we went to my cousin's house. I played

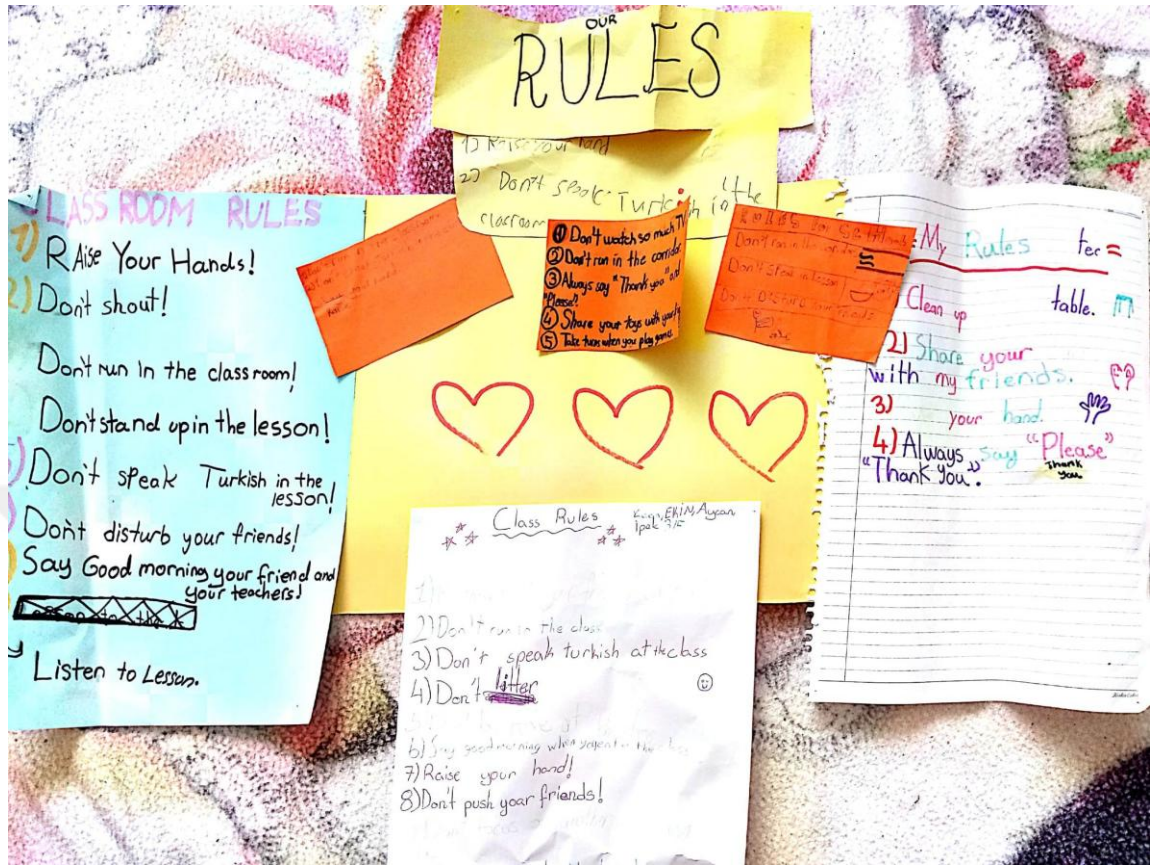
with my cousin and her dog Vit. Then we went to "Kendal Pasir"

we ate cagtebabi and we went to our garden. I climbed

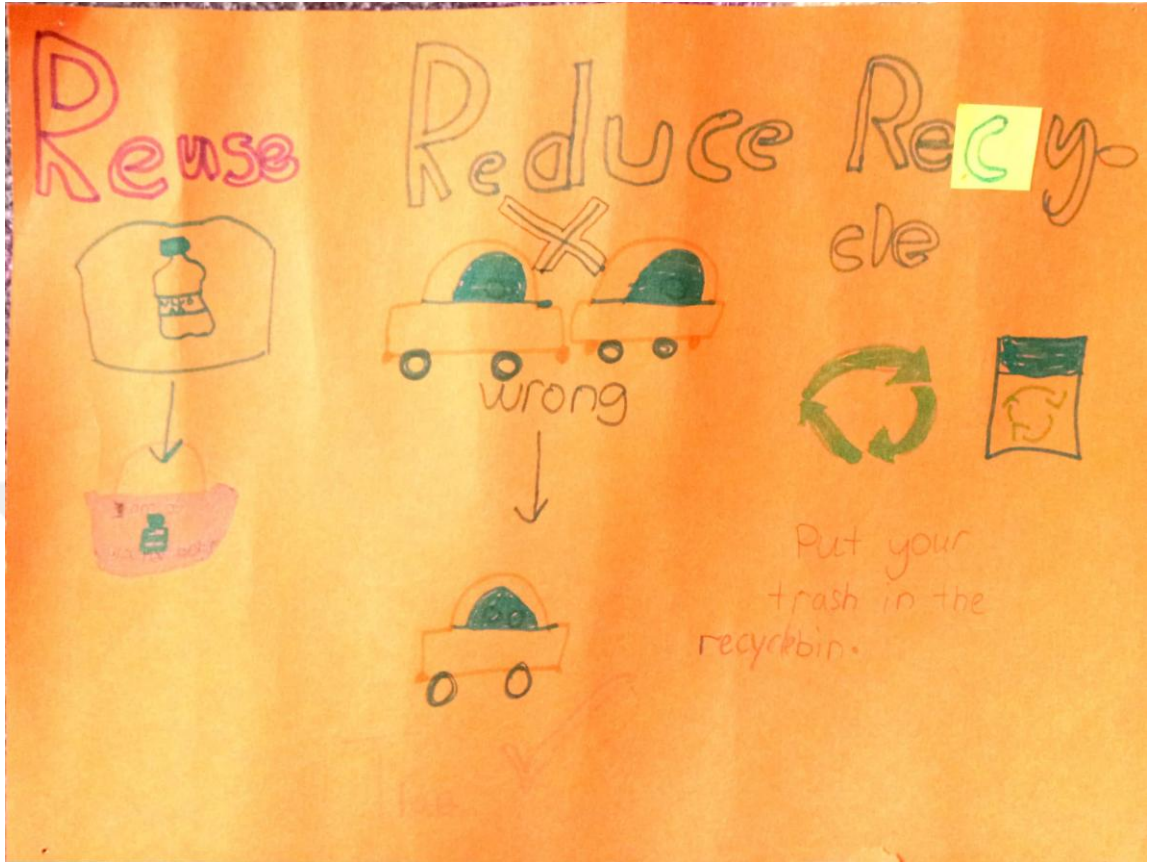
up the tree. My father promised me he will

build a treehouse for me.

Student 28



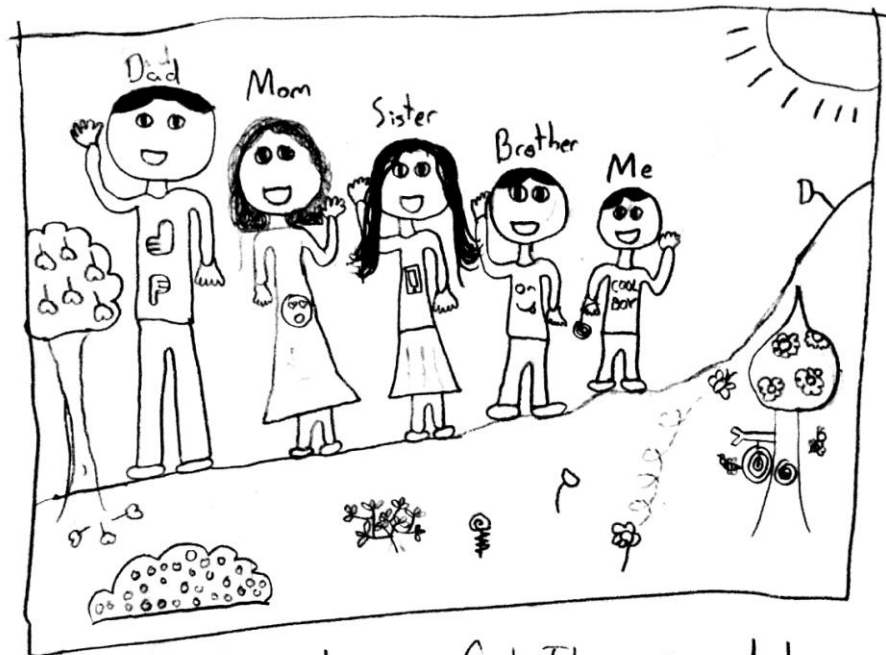
Student 18



Student 21

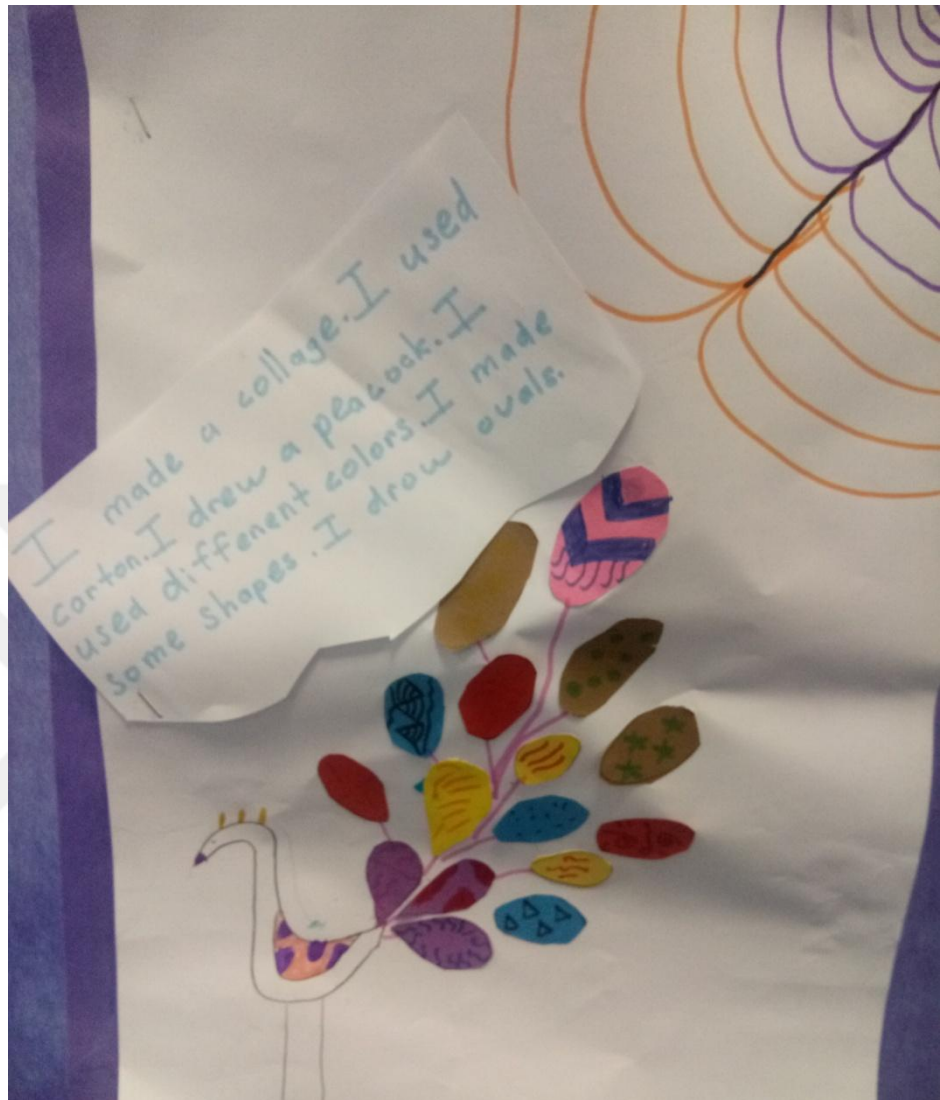


Student 5

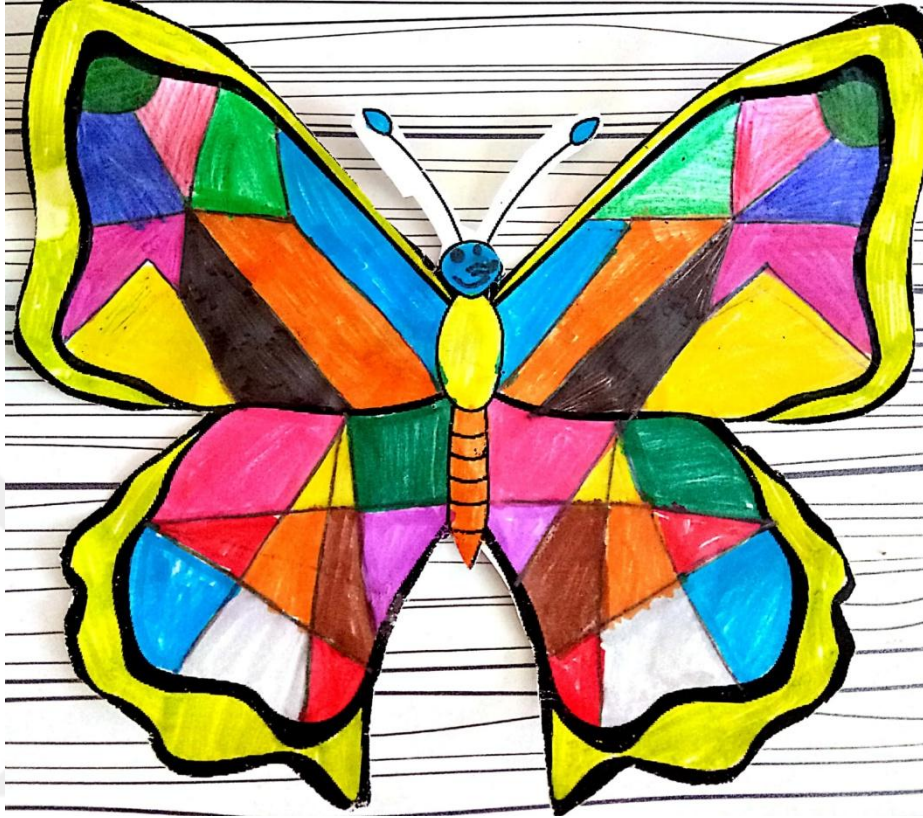


We're 5 peoples in my family. There are my dad, my mom, my older sister, my older brother and me. My dad is bigger than me and he is the biggest and oldest in our family. I'm the smallest and youngest in our family. My mom is shorter than my dad. My sister is taller than my brother. I'm shortest in our family. I love my family. I love the so much.

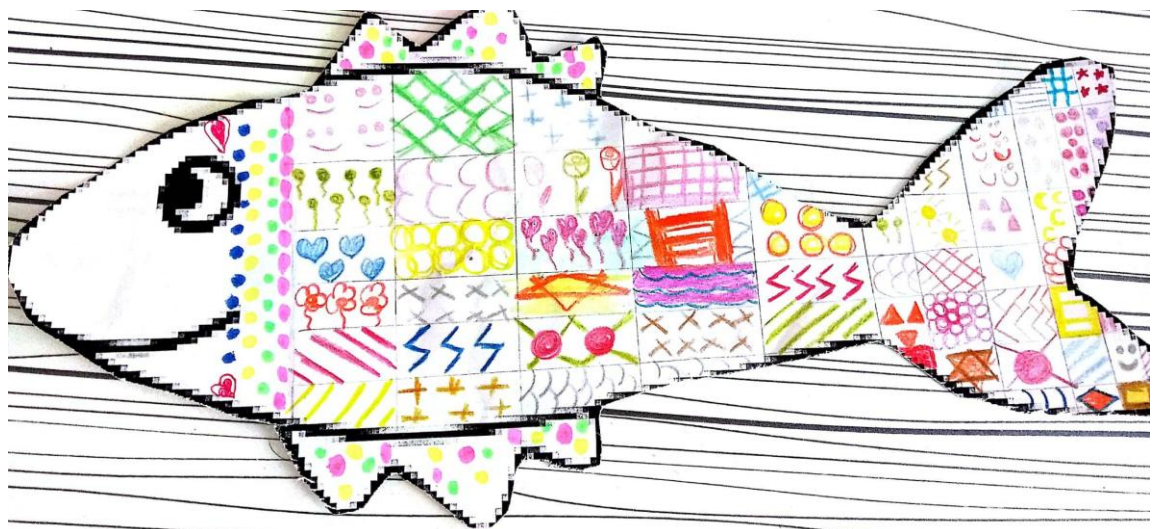
Student 7



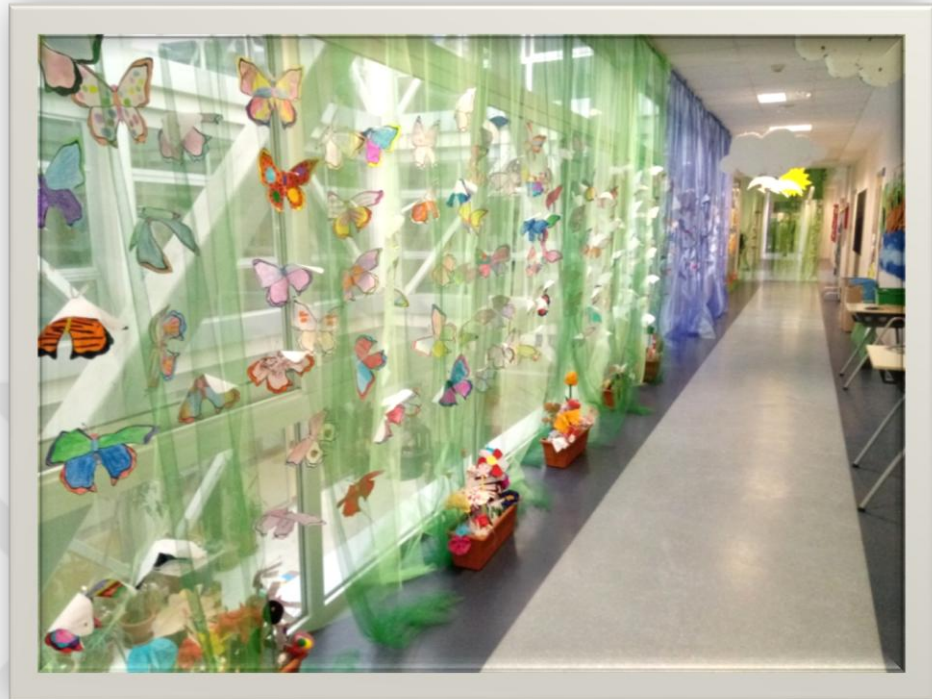
Student 6



Student 10



O. PICTURES FROM PORTFOLIO EXHIBITION DAY





P. PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

3rd Grade Students Portfolio Day Procedure

1. The setting was a natural park.
2. The activity consisted of two stages.
 - 1st stage was projected to be performed with *Teacher 3, Teacher 4* and *Teacher 5* in the first 5 minutes.
 - 2nd stage was projected to be performed with *Teacher 1* and *Teacher 2* in the last 5 minutes.
3. The overall objective was a) to raise awareness for the need for protecting the nature, b) to make students use the language and grammar points covered during the year.

1st stage

The teachers acted like park attendants.

Scenario: The natural park was in a mess. The visitors littered the environment so much that there were no more animals living there. The students were expected to help clean up and bring the animals back.

There was a board displaying land and sea behind the attendants and the ground was in a mess.

Questions

Expected Answers

Can you see any animals here?	(No, there aren't any animals))
Where do you think?	(I don't know/ they ran away/ escaped)
There is something wrong, here. What is that?	(Because there is too much trash)
What did people do?	(They littered the environment)
Were they polite?	(No, they were rude.)
Can you help me clean here?	(Students clean the mess by categorizing and putting them in the right recycling bin)
Here is some paper. Please describe the paper?	(It's man-made / It's made of wood /We can recycle it/)
So can you throw it in the recycle bin?	(The students here is expected to put the trash into the correct bin.)
Which one is organic trash?	(It's a banana peel)

Can we reuse it? (No, we can't.)
So what should we do now? (We should throw it in the organic trash bin)
I see a bottle here. Can you describe it please? (It's man-made. It's made of plastic)
What can we do with this? (We should throw it in the recycle bin)
Where can we recycle them? (We can recycle them in a recycling plant)
Teacher: (Nice, there is no more trash)
Which natural resources do you know? (I know sun, air, land, water, animals are all natural resources)

(Teacher) Please find the sun and stick it on the board)

Is air a liquid, a gas or a solid? (It is a gas)
Can you see it? (No, we can just feel it)
So where is it? (It's everywhere).

(Teacher): We have air, sun, land and water. Let's bring the animals back.

(Students choose randomly from a pile of animals from the box and place them in the right places on the board with the direction of the teacher with the questions below)

- Which animal is this? (Sts were expected to figure out the animal group, *Project No. 1*)
- Can you describe it? Which animal group is it in (mammal/amphibian/bird/fish)?
(Sts were expected to describe the animal, *Project No. 1*)
- What can it do? Can it fly/swim/walk/run? (Sts were expected to talk about ability, *Project No. 3*)
- Where does it live? (Sts were expected to use the correct prepositions of place, , *Project No. 4*)

Can you stick it | next to the tree?
| across from the monkey?
| above/in the birdhouse?
| in the tree?
| in the sea?
| between the animals.?

It is definitely nicer now. Thank you for helping me!

Now, you can go to the recycling part to protect the nature!

2nd stage

Teachers start off with the following: Did you know that recycling helps save the planet from things like global warming and rubbish? That's right, by recycling things such as food packets and old toys, you are reducing the amount that gets put into the rubbish bin. This is a very good thing because rubbish is full of nasty bugs that spread diseases and gases that increase global warming.

But what is recycling? How are things recycled? And what can you do to get more people to recycle?

Expected answers:

Reduce the amount of rubbish you throw away.

Reuse old items to reduce waste.

Recycle anything that can be recycled.

Students were expected to make unique pieces of art by thinking outside of the box. Each friendly recycled art project can be made with materials. Supplied by teachers, or items that are usually thrown away for example: egg cartons, water bottles, juice carton, milk cartons, food wrappers, old shirts, soda bottles, cans, broken jewelry, etc... Can all turn into works of art with a little effort and imagination. The possibilities are endless!

Teacher encouraged students to engage in conversation while the students are making their extraordinary items with recycled items.

Questions asked during the production stage:

- 1) What items will you use? (I will use bottle, tape, scissors and paper).
- 2) What are you going to make? (I will make a car, rocket, castle, robot...)
- 3) Why are you making (A,B, C.....)
- 4) Do you think you have helped our environment today?
- 5) Why do think you have helped our environment?
- 6) What have you learnt today?

R. CURRICULUM VITAE

PERSONAL INFORMATION

Surname, Name: Kesmen, Alev

Nationality: Turkish (T.C.)

Date and Place of Birth: 11 May 1984, Izmir

Marital Status: Single

Phone: +90 506 376 8118

Email: alev.kesmen@gmail.com

EDUCATION

Degree	Institution	Year of Graduation
BA	Anadolu University	2017
BA	Ege University	2006
High School	Aliaga Super High School	2002

WORK EXPERIENCE

Year	Place	Enrollment
2016-(continuing)	Bahçeşehir College	English Teacher
2016 (Second term)	Özel Ege High School	English Teacher
2006-2014	İzmir Metropolitan Municipality	Interpreter

FOREIGN LANGUAGES

Advanced English, Elementary Italian

CERTIFICATES

CELTA Teaching Certificate (Istanbul/TURKEY)

ITI TEFL Certificate (Istanbul/TURKEY)

Developing Mental Skills Seminar Programme	(Izmir/TURKEY)
Training the Trainer Certificate	(Izmir/TURKEY)
Innovation Training Seminar	(Izmir/TURKEY)
Problem Solving Techniques	(Izmir/TURKEY)

HOBBIES

Listening to Music, Reading Books, Riding a Bike

