ECML Project C5 IMPEL
**ELP implementation support**


# IMPEL GLOSSARY


*A glossary of European Language Portfolio (ELP) implementation terminology*


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# Alphabetical glossary

The compilers of this glossary have steered a careful path between a 'dictionary' and a 'teachers' guide'. The following glossary is ELP-specific, and some words capable of an everyday meaning have been defined solely in the ELP context. Entries below are calculated to clarify concepts related to the ELP, and should help to dispel any misunderstandings of terminology that might be encountered in the process of acquiring familiarity with its aims and implementation requirements, whether through background reading or training programmes.

The *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, teaching, assessment* (CEFR) and other publications by the Council of Europe have been used as a basis for many definitions.

**Ability to learn**

The ability to observe and participate in new experiences and to incorporate new knowledge into existing knowledge, modifying the latter where necessary. It may involve varying degrees and combinations of aspects of social and communicative competence and linguistic knowledge.


**Achievement**

What has been learned in a course of instruction.
Achievement can be recorded in a variety of ways, but in particular, when using the ELP, as levels of the Common European Framework of Reference, i.e. A1 to C2.


**Acquisition**

The unconscious learning process that occurs when language is used in real situations, as opposed to formal learning (e.g. in the classroom).


**Action-oriented approach**

This approach views users and learners of a language primarily as 'social agents', i.e. members of society who have tasks (not exclusively language-related) to accomplish in a given set of circumstances, in a specific environment and within a particular field of action.


**Approach**

A way of tackling language teaching, e.g. through grammar and translation or through communicative tasks.


**Appropriacy**

The use of the right word or register in a situation, e.g. familiar terms between friends or formal terms between business associates.


**Assessment**

The measuring of a student's performance in a course according to the aims and objectives of that course. (see 'achievement' above)

**Autonomy**

A capacity for detachment, critical reflection, decision-making and independent action, e.g. the learner using own strategies, such as paraphrasing, to get around a lack of specific vocabulary.


**Biography (Portfolio)**

This might contain: a record of language courses, self-directed learning, formative self-assessment, visits and exchanges undertaken, literary and other written texts read in a non-native language, spoken and audio-visual texts listened to or watched, a 'language learning diary', setting down the results of self-observation or reflection on experience.


**'Bottom-up'**

A familiar term referring to both learning and management styles. Where it applies to learning, it denotes an exploration and discovery approach in which the learner arrives autonomously at knowledge and understanding and then interacts with the teacher to confirm and consolidate these. It can also denote an implementation process in which teachers are the driving force in innovation, rather than inspectors or advisers. (cf. 'top down' q.v.)


**Common Reference Levels**

A commonly agreed ascending scale of levels, identified by standardised codes (e.g. B2, C1…) for proficiency in a range of linguistic skills, e.g. listening, spoken interaction or writing.


**Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR)**

The Common European Framework of Reference provides a common basis for the creation of language syllabuses, curriculum guidelines, examinations, textbooks, etc. across Europe. It describes in a comprehensive way what language learners have to learn to do in order to use a language for communication and what knowledge and skills they have to develop so as to be able to act effectively. The description also covers the cultural context in which language is set. Through its Global Scale and the Self-assessment grid, it also defines levels of proficiency which allow learners' progress to be measured at each stage of learning and on a life-long basis. These two features are central to assessment for the European Language Portfolio (ELP).

**Competence**

The sum of knowledge, skills and characteristics that allow a person to perform actions.

Grammatical competence = knowledge of/and ability to use the grammatical resources of a language.

Language competence = a combination of:

− *Linguistic competence*: includes lexical, phonological, syntactical knowledge and skills and other dimensions of language as a system.

− *Sociolinguistic competence*: refers to the sociocultural conditions of language use

− *Pragmatic competence:* concerned with the functional use of linguistic resources, the mastery of discourse, cohesion, coherence, the identification of text types and forms, and such intentional devices as irony and parody.


**Communicative awareness**

Sensitivity to language and language use, involving knowledge and understanding of the principles according to which languages are organised and used.


**Communicative approach**

Teaching approach where negotiation for meaning is critical. Collaborative learning and peer interaction are important.


**Communicative tasks**

Acts of communication with one or more interlocutors which are generally undertaken by a language user in pursuance of his or her needs in a given situation as opposed to tasks where the sole purpose is that of introducing / reinforcing language forms.


**Context**

The context of implementation includes the circumstances and conditions which influence the decisions and actions taken during the process.

Context in language use can mean either (a) the text in which a spoken or written item is embedded or (b) the dimensions of the communicative situation (e.g. social) in which discourse is produced or understood.

Refers to events and situational factors (physical and others), both internal and external to a person, in which acts of communication are embedded.

## Descriptor

A brief statement in which the characteristics of performance at a given level/skill are defined.

## Desired Outcome

See: goals and objectives

## Dialect

Local or regional variant of an official national language, often characterised by phonological, lexical and even grammatical differences from the latter.

## Discrete item

In testing, an item that focuses on a single point of knowledge.

## Dissemination

The spreading or giving out of news, information, ideas, products etc. to a lot of people. In the context of the ELP, it can occur at more than one stage in a project, e.g. drawing initial attention to the existence of a pilot project; later spreading advice and training information as part of wider implementation; later still, making others aware of successes achieved as a result of implementation.

## Dossier

A collection of samples or examples of language use either in a real (e.g. work) or simulated (e.g. classroom) context.

## Domain

The broad sectors of occupational, educational or social life in which people operate.

## ELP

'European Language Portfolio. A document in three parts (Language Passport, Language Biography and Language Dossier) in which an individual may voluntarily record his or her linguistic achievements (including intercultural competence) to date. It has both a 'reporting' and a 'pedagogic' function, which is to say that it provides not only evidence of achievement, but also key information about the learning characteristics and preferred learning style of the user.

The reporting function addresses the concern of the Council of Europe to promote individual mobility.

The pedagogic function is of value to the teacher, by indicating approaches most likely to be effective with the user in question and to the learner, by raising his or her awareness of what is happening in the learning process. It addresses the Council of Europe's concern to foster the development of learner autonomy and to promote lifelong learning.

### ELP contact person

A person at a national level with whom the Council of Europe interacts with regard to the development and implementation of ELPs.

### ELP developer

Any person or group that is in the process of designing and producing an ELP model.

### Error

A simplified or distorted version of target language production, due either to interference by the learner's mother tongue or to the misapplication of already taught patterns.

### Evaluation

The retrospective analysis of an educational process or of a stage therein, in order to determine how well it has achieved stated aims and objectives. Assessment of learners' achievements is part, but not the whole, of evaluation. The results of evaluation will become the basis of future course planning. It often includes non-quantifiable information from questionnaires and consultations.

### Formative assessment

An ongoing process of gathering information on the extent of learning, on strengths and weaknesses, which the teacher can feed back into their course planning and the actual feedback they give learners.

**Function**

What people do by means of language, e.g. 'Enquire about the well-being of others', 'Seek confirmation of one's understanding of what has been said'.


**Functional exponents**

Words used to express a particular function. (e.g. Can you tell me…? When seeking information.)


**Functional language**

Refers to the different functions, e.g. the uses of language.


**Goals**

Goals usually describe desired general outcomes related to visions and values (e.g. plurilingualism, self-reliant, interculturally competent citizens).


**Impact**

The intended or real effect of an ELP on both the process and outcomes of language learning (e.g. innovative and stimulating classroom practice and/or significant improvement in learning achievements)


**Implementation**

The process whereby an ELP is brought into systematic use by learners. It can be a complex process, incorporating planning, securing resources, promotion of the ELP concept among target teachers, learners and others, dissemination of advice and information, monitoring and evaluation.

The European Ministers of Education recommend that the governments of member states, in harmony with their education policies, create conditions favourable for the implementation and wide use of the ELP according to the Principles and Guidelines laid down by the Education Committee. Successful implementation depends on clear goals, commitment, effective structures and support, and a sustained effort.


**Implementer**

Any person directly (e.g. teacher) or indirectly (e.g. adviser) carrying responsibilities or preparing to take responsibilities for planning, monitoring and reporting of ELP implementation projects on an operational level.

**Integrated skills**

Refer to the combination of at least two skills, e.g. listening and writing for note taking.

**Intercultural learning**

Acquiring knowledge and understanding of people whose cultures are different from one's own.

**Knowledge**

There are multiple areas of knowledge. i.e. declarative knowledge (savoir) is understood as knowledge resulting from experience (empirical knowledge) and from more formal learning (academic knowledge).

Sociocultural knowledge is knowledge of the society and culture of the community or communities in which a language is spoken.

**Language**

Autochthonous = the original language spoken in a particular region / area

Dominant = pertaining to the majority of people of a particular country

Foreign = external, different from the spoken language of a particular nation

Migrant = pertaining to people who have arrived in a foreign nation

Minority = pertaining to only a part of the population of a particular country

National = pertaining to a particular nation

Official = chosen by the government to represent the whole nation

Regional = pertaining to a particular region / area

Second = pertaining to a particular nation, but not the first and not chosen as official

**Language activity**

The exercise of one's communicative language competence in a specific domain in processing (receptively and/or productively) one or more texts/utterances in order to carry out a task.

**Language Biography**

This second section of the ELP facilitates the learner's involvement in planning, reflecting upon and assessing his or her learning process and progress.

It provides scope for recording at greater length than in the Language Passport various experiences that have been influential in the user's learning, both in the formal learning of languages and in unstructured and informal encounters with foreign languages and cultures.

**Language Passport**

This initial section of the ELP provides an overview of the individual's proficiency in different languages at a given point in time. It is the key record of current proficiency and qualifications, related wherever possible to levels of the CEFR.

**Learning (language)**

The different conscious processes (e.g. through course attendance or self-tuition) adopted by the learner to acquire and develop competence in a language. (see 'acquisition', above)

**L1**

First language known and spoken by a person.

**L2**

Second language known and spoken by a person.

**L3 / Lx**

Third and/or further foreign language which is not identical with the L2. The L2 and the experience of learning a first foreign language seems to play a specific role in a learner's language repertoire in being a kind of model for subsequent foreign language learning. Plurilingual individuals tend to have varying degrees of competencies in their various foreign languages so that there is justification for labelling the languages differently and not all as "L2".

**L1 interference**

The erroneous use of L1 features, in constructing a foreign language, that do not belong to that language, e.g. in L1, a speaker says 'I am thirsty', whereas in L2, a native speaker would say, 'I have thirst.'

**Metacognitive**

Pertaining to guided reflection about learning.


**Mistake**

Occurs in performance when a user/learner (as might be the case with a native speaker) does not bring his or her competences properly into action. Compare this with 'error' in which although the language produced is incorrect, it is based on a logical process.


**Monitoring**

The checking of a process, action or product.  In the context of the ELP it can span the entire life history of a project, from initial implementation to the various evaluative measures taken to check its effectiveness in practice.

The European Ministers of Education recommend that the governments of member states, in harmony with their education policies, monitor the dissemination and impact of the ELP and report their findings to the Council of Europe regularly, and at least once every three years.

Various tools can prove useful during the monitoring process
   a) conference notes
   b) portfolio notes
   c) teacher journals
   d) checklists
   e) rating scales
   f) student journals
   g) student anecdotal records
   h) student profiles
   i) classroom log books
   j) questionnaires

Questionnaires should also be used for both qualitative and quantitative research for the purpose of future dissemination.


**Motivation**

The desire or incentive a learner has to learn a foreign language, resulting in a greater or lesser effort to do so.


**Multilingualism**

The coexistence of different languages in a given society.

**Objectives**

Usually describe desired measurable outcomes, e.g. (all learners kept an ELP, all learners know how to use it effectively, teachers support their learners in using the ELP productively, etc.)


**Pilot projects**

Over the past years versions of the ELP have been piloted in many member states of the Council of Europe. Pilot projects have been undertaken at all educational levels.


**Pluriculturalism**

The ability of an individual to interact in different cultural milieux. This ability may imply both <u>knowledge</u> of likely differences in customs and values in a range of communities and the <u>empathy</u> required to respect and place value on beliefs and practices other than one's own.

The ELP is a tool to promote plurilingualism and pluriculturalism and it is designed to take account of *all* of the learner's language and intercultural learning, whether it takes place inside or outside formal educational contexts.


**Plurilingualism**

The ability of an individual to interact in different languages, c.f. Pluriculturalism.

The Language Policy Division of the Council of Europe published the main version of the 'Guide for the development of language education policies in Europe' at the beginning of 2007.

A central principle of the document is that policies should be based on plurilingualism as a value and a competence.

The concept of plurilingualism is defined simply as the potential and/or the ability to use several languages to varying levels of proficiency and for different purposes; and more precisely (CEFR, p168):

"Plurilingual and pluricultural competence refers to the ability to use languages for the purposes of communication and to take part in intercultural interaction, where a person viewed as a social agent has proficiency, of varying degrees, in several languages and experience of several cultural cultures. This is not seen as the superimposition or juxtaposition of distinct competences, but rather as the existence of a complex or even composite experience the user may draw on."

**Policy considerations**

Policies specify the intent of the implementers and are intended to guide decisions that need to be made in daily practice

**Portfolio (Language)**

A language Portfolio is a document or an organized collection of documents, in which individual learners can assemble over a period of time, and display in a systematic way, a record of their qualifications, achievements and experiences in language learning, together with samples of work they have themselves produced.

**Productive skills**

Refer to the skills which the learner uses when expressing him- or herself externally, e.g. in writing or speaking.

**Proficiency**

What someone can do / knows in relation to the application of the subject. It represents an external perspective.

**Project description**

An outline of the key components of any ELP implementation project. (see Template)

**Receptive skills**

Refer to the skills which the learner uses when not expressing him- or herself actively, e.g. when reading or listening.

**Qualitative data**

Research results which are more descriptive or anecdotal than statistical. These often characterise research using limited samples

**Quantitative data**

They refer to results from research involving large groups of informants in an interpretation of data using statistics.

**Rubric**

The instructions to candidates / learners before each test or task.

**Self-assessment**

The process by which learners evaluate their own performances, e.g. imagining how well they would cope in a range of real life settings.

**Scales of descriptor**

can be:

User-oriented = describe performances at any given level. They are popularly expressed as 'I can…' statements

Assessor-oriented = provide criteria by which to assess performance. May be third person descriptors, and perhaps using terminology more in keeping with professional understanding of the learning process.

Constructor-oriented = May start from very broad premises, enabling others to build more specific frameworks.

**Scope**

Scope is the extent or limitations of the project described; the sum of all its features expectations and responsibilities

**Skills**

Whereas a learner may understand in principle what to say, he or she may require considerable practice, including correction of error, before having 'skill' or 'competence'.

**Stakeholder (who has an interest + who has an effect on others)**

A person or organisation with an interest in, or influence over, a programme or project. Pupils, parents, employers, politicians etc, may all have such an interest, in addition to teachers.

**Strategy**

A strategy is a long-term plan of action designed to achieve particular goals
(Learner) Any organised, purposeful and regulated line of action chosen by an individual to carry out a task which he or she sets for himself or herself or with which he or she is confronted. E.g. paraphrase intended meaning to get round lack of specific vocabulary: 'Make the situation better.' Instead of, 'Improve the situation'.

(Implementer) Any organised, purposeful and regulated line of action chosen by implementers to secure the adoption and effective use of an ELP whether at national, regional, local or institutional level

**Study skills**

Include the ability to make effective use of the learning opportunities created by teaching situations, e.g. to grasp the intention of the task set, to make rapid and frequent active use of the language learnt, or to be able to use available materials for independent learning.

**Summative assessment**

It sums up attainment at the end of the course with a grade or, where there is sufficient evidence, a CEFR level to which the grade corresponds.

**Task**

Any purposeful action considered by an individual as necessary in order to achieve a given result in the context of a problem to be solved, an obligation to fulfil or an objective to be achieved.

**TBL**

Task-based Learning
An approach which uses a communicative task as the central focus for language teaching and learning.

**Teaching (language)**

Facilitation of the processes of (language) acquisition and learning.

**Template**

A structured, guided form allowing an implementer to input the key components of a project or report.

**Text**

Any sequence or discourse (spoken or written) related to a specific domain and which in the course of carrying out a task becomes the occasion of a language activity, whether as a support or as a goal, as product or process.

**Top-down**

A familiar term referring to both learning and management styles. In learning, it denotes a teacher-led approach in which all knowledge is passed down to pupils who have a somewhat passive role in the process. In a management context it can describe the imposition of, e.g., innovation, by advisers and inspectors rather than its evolution in the classroom. (see also 'bottom-up' q.v.)


**Users**

The European Language Portfolio was intended from the outset for a wide range of users, including:
- Teachers
- Students
- Parents
- School managers
- Employers
- Next schools/teachers
- Textbook writers
- …and any other persons or organisations with an interest in the individual's language and cultural competence


**Validation**

(Validation Committee) Link to "A guide to project management" ECML/CoE
The European Validation Committee is responsible for the accreditation of ELP models.


**Vocabulary**

A number of words and fixed expressions available to the learner, the choice of which is determined by the domain and themes within which the learner needs to operate.


**Whole-school language policy**

A school can promote success in language learning by adopting a coherent and holistic approach to all the languages taught, including the Mother Tongue, demonstrating their relevance to the curriculum as a whole.