

E-Portfolio Assessment in Language Learning: Exploring Students' Perceptions and the Development of Self- Assessment Skills in EFL Classroom

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Abstract

This research investigates how e-portfolio assessment is perceived by students and how it helps them develop self-assessment abilities in the EFL classroom. The research adopted qualitative descriptive case research method for an in-depth exploration of students' perceptions and development of self-assessment skill regarding e-portfolio assessment in EFL classroom at STAI Al-Gazali Bone. Data were gathered using a semi-structured interview consisting ten questions to measure the Students' Perceptions of the benefits and challenges of using e-portfolio assessment in the EFL classroom. The findings of this research reveal that e-portfolio assessment has a significant impact on students' learning experiences in the EFL classroom, particularly in enhancing self-assessment, motivation, and engagement. Students generally expressed positive perceptions toward the use of e-portfolio, citing its flexibility, ease of access, and ability to accommodate a variety of task formats (text, audio, video) as major benefits. Another important finding is the development of self-assessment skills. Students engaged in reflective activities, such as reviewing their progress, comparing their work with peers, and analyzing feedback. Despite the benefits, students also reported several challenges. Technical issues such as unstable internet connections and unclear instructions were common obstacles. In summary, while e portfolio assessment offers meaningful advantages for language learning and reflective practice, its effectiveness depends on how it is implemented, the support provided by lecturers, and the technological readiness of both students and the institution.

Keywords: E-portfolio assessment; Self-assessment; Students' perception; EFL classroom

INTRODUCTION

In recent years, the need for more authentic and student-centered assessment methods in language learning has become increasingly urgent. Conventional assessments, which primarily focus on grammar rules and memorization, often fail to capture the complexity of students' actual language abilities, particularly their communicative competence. Brown (2004) argues that traditional tests lack authenticity and do not adequately assess integrated language skills, calling for assessment practices that better reflect real-world language use. As education shifts toward learner-centered paradigms, alternative assessments such as e-portfolio have gained attention as more reflective and practical tools for language evaluation.

E-portfolio assessment is a method of digitally collecting, evaluating, and showcasing students' work over time. It aligns with contemporary educational

theories that emphasize active learning, autonomy, and formative feedback. Studies by Ngui et al., (2020) and Aghazadeh & Soleimani (2020) have highlighted the benefits of e-portfolio in improving student engagement, self-reflection, and individualized learning experiences. Furthermore, Pourdana and Tavassoli (2022) demonstrated that e-portfolio support diverse learning styles and allow flexible access to feedback, making them a valuable tool in modern language classrooms. Syairofi and Waluyo (2024) emphasized the effectiveness of e-portfolio in promoting student participation and monitoring learning progress.

However, most of the existing research tends to focus on the technical aspects or implementation models of e-portfolio use. Few studies thoroughly investigate students' perceptions and the development of self-assessment skills through e-portfolio in EFL settings. This gap is critical because learners' attitudes, motivations, and self-regulatory behaviors directly influence the success of such innovative assessments. Understanding how students perceive and engage with e-portfolio can provide meaningful insights for improving language instruction and assessment design.

Therefore, the objective of this research is to explore students' perceptions of e-portfolio assessment and investigate how it contributes to the development of self-assessment skills in the EFL classroom at STAI Al-Gazali Bone.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The integration of technology in education has transformed traditional approaches to assessment and learning, with e-portfolio emerging as a widely adopted innovation. An e-portfolio is generally defined as a purposeful digital collection of artifacts that demonstrate a learner's achievements, progress, and reflections over time (Lorenzo & Ittelson, 2005; Barrett, 2007). Beyond functioning as a repository of students' works, e-portfolio are designed to foster active engagement in the learning process by enabling learners to document their progress, reflect on outcomes, and receive feedback (Ring & Foti, 2003). Scholars further classify e-portfolio according to their purposes: learning-oriented, assessment-oriented, or employment-oriented (Abrami & Barrett, 2005). This classification highlights the versatility of e-portfolio, while simultaneously situating them as both pedagogical and evaluative tools in higher education.

A substantial body of research underscores the benefits of e-portfolio use in EFL contexts (Liando et al., 2024, 2023, 2022). Several studies have shown that e-portfolio enhance reflection, self-assessment, and learner autonomy by encouraging students to monitor their growth and identify areas for improvement (Hartnell-Young & Morriss, 2008; Chau, 2012). The digital format also promotes better organization of learning materials and fosters the development of digital literacy skills critical for academic and professional life (Lorenzo & Ittelson, 2005). Additionally, e-portfolio allow for multimodal expression of language skills students can combine written texts, audio recordings, and video presentations thus offering a more authentic representation of their language competence (López & Llorente, 2017). These studies collectively suggest that e-portfolio support not only linguistic development but also broader 21st-century competencies.

Despite these advantages, the literature also documents significant challenges in the implementation of e-portfolio. Technical issues, such as unstable internet connections or difficulty navigating platforms, are recurrent obstacles (Jafari & Kaufman, 2006). Students also report that constructing an e-portfolio is time-consuming and sometimes frustrating, which can undermine motivation (Hartnell-Young & Morriss, 2008). Moreover, some learners fail to recognize the educational purpose of e-portfolio, perceiving them as an additional burden rather than a tool for self-improvement (Santos, 2010). Concerns about fairness and subjectivity in assessment further complicate students' acceptance of e-portfolio (Lorenzo & Ittelson, 2005). Taken together, these findings highlight that while e-portfolio hold promise, their effectiveness depends largely on careful implementation, institutional support, and clear communication of learning objectives.\

Another important dimension in this line of research relates to students' perceptions. Perceptions shape how learners engage with the tool and ultimately determine its success in supporting learning outcomes. Studies report that many students view e-portfolio positively, noting increased engagement, enhanced collaboration with peers, and opportunities for self-directed learning (Yancey, 2009; López & Llorente, 2017). However, perceptions are not universally positive; reluctance often emerges when students feel overburdened, face technical difficulties, or are uncertain about how their work will be evaluated. This duality suggests that perception is both an enabler and a barrier to the effective adoption of e-portfolio in EFL classrooms.

Closely tied to students' perceptions is the development of self-assessment skills, a crucial outcome in learner-centered pedagogy. Self-assessment involves learners' ability to reflect critically on their performance, identify strengths and weaknesses, and take responsibility for their progress (Andrade & Valtcheva, 2009). Research demonstrates that e-portfolio provide opportunities for learners to engage in metacognitive practices such as setting goals, monitoring their progress, and revising their work based on feedback (Zimmerman, 2000; Yancey, 2009). For instance, Sulistyo et al. (2020) found that portfolio assessment improved EFL learners' writing performance by fostering self-regulation and reflective practices. Similarly, Pourdana and Tavassoli (2022) emphasize that e-portfolio allow for continuous adaptation to students' needs, further strengthening their role as tools for formative assessment.

The literature on e-portfolio in language education consistently highlights three central themes: (1) their potential to foster reflection, autonomy, and multimodal language development; (2) the importance of students' perceptions in shaping their effectiveness; and (3) their role in cultivating self-assessment and self-regulated learning. Collectively, these findings establish e-portfolio as a promising alternative to conventional assessment methods, particularly in EFL contexts where authentic language use and learner independence are critical.

Although existing researches affirm the pedagogical benefits of e-portfolio, several limitations remain. First, much of the research has emphasized the technical features or broad pedagogical advantages, while relatively fewer studies have examined students' subjective experiences in depth. Second, challenges such as technical barriers, unclear assessment criteria, and workload issues have not been fully resolved in practice. Finally, while the literature acknowledges that e-portfolio

promote self-assessment, there is limited empirical exploration of how students actually develop these skills in the course of using e-portfolio, particularly in under-researched contexts such as smaller institutions in Indonesia.

This research seeks to address these gaps by focusing specifically on students' perceptions of e-portfolio use and examining the extent to which e-portfolio contribute to the development of self-assessment skills in the EFL classroom. By doing so, it not only confirms the pedagogical value of e-portfolio but also extends current understanding of their role in fostering reflective and autonomous learners within the Indonesian higher education context.

METHOD

This research employed qualitative descriptive case research method which deals with the data collection, analysis, and interpretation of narrative in order to gain insight into a particular phenomenon of interest (Gay, Mills, & Airasian, 2012). This approach allowed for an in-depth exploration of students' perceptions and development of self-assessment skill regarding e portfolio assessment in EFL classroom at STAI Al-Gazali Bone.

The use of a qualitative descriptive approach is supported by Moleong (2005), who states that qualitative research emphasizes descriptive data in the form of written or spoken words and observable behaviors. This aligns with the research's aim to identify and analyze students' perceptions of the benefits and challenges associated with the use of e-portfolio assessment in the EFL classroom, examine the extent to which e-portfolio assessment contributes to the development of students' self-assessment skills in English language learning, and explore the influencing factors of students' engagement and motivation when participating in e-portfolio assessment activities.

Furthermore, the choice of case research design is reinforced by Creswell (2023), who explains that a case research is appropriate for conducting an in-depth investigation of a specific case, such as a program or process. This 17 supports the focus of the current research by Halim Fathul Muin & Hafidah (2021) who demonstrated positive views towards the use of e-portfolio.

The participants in this research were students from Constitutional Law, STAI Al-Gazali Bone who were engaged in using e-portfolio for assessing their language learning progress. The selection of participants was based on purposive sampling, where students were chosen based on their experience with e-portfolio and self-assessment in the classroom setting. The criteria for selecting participants included their willingness to share their experiences and perceptions, as well as their active use of e-portfolio. The researchers took six students from Constitutional Law, STAI Al-Gazali Bone as sample in this research.

Instruments

Data were collected using a semi-structured interview protocol comprising ten open-ended questions. The instrument was designed to explore three main areas:

1. Students' perceptions of the benefits and challenges of using e-portfolios.
2. The contribution of e-portfolios to the development of self-assessment skills.
3. Factors influencing student engagement and motivation in portfolio-based assessment.

The flexibility of semi-structured interviews allowed participants to freely express their experiences while ensuring that all research questions were adequately addressed.

Procedures

The interviews were conducted in a focus group format to encourage discussion and interaction among participants. Each session lasted approximately 45 minutes. Before the interviews, participants were briefed on the research's purpose, assured of confidentiality, and asked to provide informed consent. The interviews were audio-recorded, transcribed verbatim, and checked by participants (member checking) to ensure accuracy.

Data analysis

The data collected through interviews, observations, and document analysis were analyzed using thematic analysis. Thematic analysis was a widely used method for analyzing qualitative data, as it allowed for the identification of recurring themes or patterns across the data. According to Braun & Clarke (2006), the steps involved in thematic analysis included:

1. Familiarization with the data: The researcher read through all interview transcripts, observation notes, and e-portfolio documents to become familiar with the data.
2. Coding the data: Key pieces of information relevant to the research questions were highlighted and assigned codes. These codes represented themes related to students' perceptions of e-portfolio and the development of self-assessment skills.
3. Identifying themes: The researcher grouped similar codes together to form broader themes. For example, themes emerged around the benefits of e-portfolio, challenges students faced in using e-portfolio for self-assessment, and the role of feedback in self-assessment.
4. Interpreting the data: Once the themes were identified, the researcher interpreted the data in relation to the research questions. This interpretation involved linking the themes to existing literature on self-assessment and e-portfolio, providing a deeper understanding of the students' experiences

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The findings of this study revealed several important insights into students' perceptions, self-assessment development, and motivational factors related to the use of e-portfolios in the EFL classroom. Overall, students expressed positive perceptions of e-portfolios, noting their flexibility, accessibility, and convenience. The ability to submit multimodal assignments such as texts, videos, and voice recordings was particularly valued, as it allowed for a richer demonstration of language skills. At the same time, students also acknowledged challenges in implementation. Technical issues such as unstable internet connections and repeated submission failures were common, and unclear instructions sometimes created confusion. A prominent concern raised by participants was the risk of plagiarism, as students worried that their uploaded work could easily be copied by peers.

In terms of skill development, students reported that e-portfolios played a significant role in enhancing their ability to reflect and self-assess. Many described revisiting their speaking recordings, comparing their assignments with peers, and making revisions based on received feedback. Through these practices, they became more aware of their strengths and weaknesses, and several participants noted increased confidence in evaluating their own English proficiency, particularly in speaking. This indicates that e-portfolios facilitated not only reflective practices but also the cultivation of metacognitive awareness.

Motivational factors were also identified in relation to e-portfolio use. Flexibility in completing assignments, the immediate visibility of scores, and the diversity of task formats were frequently mentioned as motivators that kept students engaged. Peer comparison was also a source of motivation, as students could learn from one another's work. However, the inconsistency of instructor feedback emerged as a limitation, with some students reporting that limited or irregular feedback reduced their enthusiasm for fully engaging with the platform.

The discussion of these findings highlights both their alignment and divergence from prior research. Similar to Barrett (2007) and Lorenzo and Ittelson (2005), this study affirms the practical and learner-centered benefits of e-portfolios. However, unlike studies conducted in Western contexts, this research underscores plagiarism anxiety as a significant factor in the Indonesian setting, demonstrating the need for stronger academic integrity measures. The findings on self-assessment support Zimmerman's (2000) model of self-regulated learning and extend Sulistyo et al. (2020) by showing that reflective practices in e-portfolios can strengthen not only writing but also speaking skills, with voice note tasks emerging as a distinctive tool for repeated practice.

Finally, the results on student motivation align with Deci and Ryan's (1985) self-determination theory, where autonomy, competence, and relatedness underpin engagement. The variety of tasks and immediate feedback enhanced competence, while peer interaction supported relatedness. However, the problem of inconsistent feedback stands in contrast to Hattie and Timperley's (2007) assertion that meaningful feedback is central to learning effectiveness. This suggests that the pedagogical value of e-portfolios cannot be fully realized without sustained instructor involvement. Taken together, these findings indicate that e-portfolios are not only a pedagogical tool but also a motivational driver in EFL classrooms. They advance existing knowledge by highlighting plagiarism concerns, demonstrating the role of multimedia tasks in improving speaking confidence, and stressing the importance of consistent feedback in sustaining engagement, thereby contributing a context-sensitive perspective to the global literature on e-portfolio assessment.

CONCLUSION

This research set out to explore students' perceptions of e-portfolio assessment and its role in developing self-assessment skills in the EFL classroom. The findings show that e-portfolios are generally perceived as flexible, practical, and supportive of reflective learning, while also posing challenges related to technical barriers, unclear instructions, and concerns about academic integrity. More importantly, the research demonstrates that e-portfolios actively foster self-

assessment by encouraging students to reflect on their progress, identify strengths and weaknesses, and revise their work through multimedia tasks such as voice notes and digital submissions. These insights extend current knowledge by highlighting that e-portfolios not only enhance writing and reflective practices, as established in previous literature, but also build confidence in speaking and oral communication, a relatively underexplored dimension in earlier research.

The practical implications of this research are twofold. First, for educators, successful e-portfolio implementation requires structured guidance, consistent feedback, and clear assessment criteria to maximize its benefits. Second, institutions need to address infrastructural limitations and promote digital literacy to reduce technical barriers. When these conditions are met, e-portfolios can transform assessment into a more personalized, learner-centered, and motivating practice in EFL classrooms.

From a theoretical perspective, this research advances the field by situating e-portfolios within the broader discourse on learner autonomy and formative assessment, particularly in the Indonesian higher education context. It highlights the interplay between students' perceptions, self-assessment skills, and motivational factors, thereby offering a more holistic understanding of e-portfolio assessment.

Future research could expand on these findings by examining larger and more diverse populations, investigating long-term impacts of e-portfolio use on language proficiency, or exploring the role of teacher training in enhancing feedback quality. Studies that integrate quantitative and qualitative approaches would also provide a more comprehensive picture of the effectiveness of e-portfolios in EFL education.

In summary, this research provides evidence that e-portfolios are not merely a technological tool but a pedagogical approach capable of reshaping how language learning is assessed, making it more reflective, autonomous, and aligned with the needs of 21st-century learners.

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