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## **PORTFOLIO ASSESSMENT IN COOPERATION WITH TEACHERS AND STUDENTS IN ENGLISH LESSONS**

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### Abstract

Assessment has gained much importance lately and there are many types of portfolios used in English Language Teaching and Learning. This study takes place in a college and it shows the types of portfolios which are used by learners, learners' attitudes toward using portfolio, the relationship between portfolio and learners' self-confidence, the skills that the learners prefer while preparing their portfolio.

*Keywords:* Portfolio, Assessment

### 1. Introduction

“Do you know English? and Can you speak English?” are the common questions that people encounter in any time or place. When there is a universal event or news, just the people who know English can understand it or if one wants to use Internet, he will definitely come across English. You want to go abroad but you do not know English, then sorry but it will be very difficult for you. Thus, speaking English and communicating in English may be the most important thing in the world nowadays. People should know English to be able to travel, get a job, be a universal person, communicate with the people who live in different countries and share the knowledge that they have. As this is very crucial, parents are very sensitive to their children and they want them to learn or acquire the language.

How do people learn English? Do they really communicate? Is it easy to learn a language for them? Are the techniques used while learning a language important? These may be the most crucial questions for the people learning or trying to learn a language. Moreover, it is a well-known fact that teaching and learning a language is a process in which both the learners and the teachers should be self-denying. Thus, teachers of English have many responsibilities while following the process.

How can learners understand that they learn English? The answer is easy; the learners can understand it when they use it. Thus, while thinking this process, one of the most important things is the assessment of the language. There are lots of techniques for assessing the level of the students. Most of them are traditional ones like exams, tests, quizzes but there are many new-born, authentic techniques, too. Among all types of alternative assessments, portfolio has become a popular technique, currently. Portfolios show students' progress and success in many field of the language. When one looks at a portfolio, he definitely sees the efforts of the students and the student will see the process and achievement in the language (Paulson & Paulson, 1991). Paul S. George stated the purposes of using portfolios as; encouraging self-directed learning, enlarging the view of what is learned, fostering learning about learning, demonstrating progress toward identified outcomes, creating an intersection for instruction and assessment, providing a way for students to value themselves as learners, offering opportunities for peer-supported growth (George, 1995).

Moreover there are many kinds of portfolios that can be used in language teaching. One of them as Kan stated in his paper, process portfolio which gives the process of the student and it shows how the students improve in a specific area of learning. Show case portfolio is

another type of portfolio and it can be used for summative evaluation of the students. In show case portfolio, students put their best works (Kan, 2007). Assessment portfolio is another type and it is widely used in the colleges for assessment. In assessment portfolio, students put all of their works such as; writing and speaking tasks, brainstorming activities, mind maps, dialogs, stories, in short everything that they did in class or at home. Then the teachers give marks for each task and at the end of the year students can see both their process and the marks they had.

Neimon said ‘The main goals of portfolio assessment are ; encouraging learners to become more autonomous, take the control of their learning, make decisions, participate in the evaluation of their own work and solve the problem they may face individually.’ (Neimon, 1999). Moreover, according to Espstein (2005) portfolio assessment transform the role the teacher away from generating comparative rankings of achievement and toward improving student achievement through evaluation, feedback and self-reflection.

### **1.1. The Problem**

There are many types of assessment used in English Language Teaching but it is a question whether the techniques are well-developed or not. The main aim of this study is to figure out the effects of using portfolio in 4th grades English classes and the opinions of the teachers and the students.

### **1.2. Assumptions**

All the participants who take part in the research are the 4th grade students attending TED Kayseri College. The students have been using portfolio assessment system. Thus, the questionnaire done by them is very appropriate for their level.

### **1.3. Limitations**

In TED Kayseri College, portfolio assessment is used in 4th, 5th, 6th, 7th and 8th grades. However in this study, just the 4th grades are taken part in the research. The whole school may be included to the research.

## **2. Methodology**

### **2.1. Participants**

The participants of this research are 113 4th grade students of TED Kayseri College. The students have been using portfolio as an evaluation system systematically. They start using portfolios when they are attending to 1st grades at the college and this goes on to the graduation from the school. At the end of the year, they give marks for their portfolio, then the teacher gives feedback and they compare the marks and the feedback and make deduction for their process.

### **2.2. Settings**

This study is carried out in TED Kayseri College. Ted Kayseri College is one of the oldest colleges, which gives much importance to English learning and teaching. Students start to the college at the age of 5. All of the students attending to the college have 10 hours English in a week. In each grades, there are 3 teachers. One of them has main course lessons, one has skills. Moreover, native speakers have one hour lesson with each class. All of the students have been using the portfolios an assessment system and the teachers have seminar about using portfolio.

### **2.3. Data Collection and Analysis**

The participants of the study are given a questionnaire. In the questionnaire there are 3 parts. Part A has 8 statements of general attitudes of students to using portfolio, Part B has 5 statements and each one is about a type of portfolio so students find their own type and Part C has 12 statements which are about the skills. Thus, there are 25 statements about using portfolio. Moreover, it was analyzed using SPSS. First, the data was examined in terms of the averages of the questionnaire items and it was calculated with the help of frequency. Thus, the aim is to see students' attitudes for using portfolio.

#### 2.4. Objectives and Research Questions

This study explores the effects of portfolio assessment on English classes. Moreover, the study will find out the answers to these questions;

- Is there any relationship between portfolio assessment and learning a language?
- Do the students like using portfolio assessment?
- Does the portfolio assessment make the students autonomous learners?
- Do the teachers think that it is a good technique to assess the students?

### 3. Data analysis and discussion

Data was collected from students who are attending 4 grades in Ted Kayseri College for this study. Moreover, it was analyzed using SPSS. First, the data was examined in terms of the averages of the questionnaire items and it was calculated with the help of frequency. Thus, the aim is to see students' attitudes towards using portfolio. Moreover, students mark the items as either agree or disagree.

Table 1. *Students' attitudes towards using portfolio*

Question Code	Agree		Disagree		Descriptive Statistics		
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Mean	Std. Deviation	Variance
A1	110	97,3	3	2,7	1,02655	0,161476	0,026
A2	109	96,5	4	3,5	1,0354	0,185607	0,034
A3	105	92,9	8	7,1	1,0708	0,257627	0,066
A4	98	86,7	15	13,3	1,13274	0,340809	0,116
A5	110	97,3	3	2,7	1,02655	0,161476	0,026
A6	43	38,1	70	61,9	1,38053	0,48768	0,238
A7	96	85	17	15	1,15044	0,359097	0,129
A8	19	16,8	94	83,2	1,16814	0,375658	0,141
OVERALL RESULTS for PART A					1,2367	0,10743	0,012

In this table, Part A is taken into consideration and it shows general attitudes of the students and it has got 8 items. The results indicate that students are positive towards using portfolio and they think it improves their English (m=1,2367) but the items will be evaluated by one by below. A1: I improve my English by preparing portfolio. 110 students out of 113 agree with this item so their attitude is very positive (97,3%). A5: I am mostly glad to the studies that I did. Nearly all the students agree with this item so it can be said that students are happy with the things they did(97,3). A2: Effort and time that I spend while preparing are

worth. 109 students out of 113 students agree with the item so students' attitude is positive (96,5%). A3 : My English is improving by applying the works of portfolio. 105 students agreeing with the item thinks that English can be improved by using portfolio (92,9%). A4: Portfolio is a good assessment method. 98 students agree with the statement. Thus, it shows that portfolio assessment can be used as a method for assessment systematically. A7: Preparing a portfolio makes the thing that I learned be permanent. 96 students agree with this item (85%). A6: I come across many difficulties while preparing the portfolio. 43 students out of 113 agree with this statement (38.1%) and 70 of them disagree (61.9%). Thus, it can be said from this result that some of the students have difficulties and problems while preparing their portfolios and it shows that it isn't very easy. A8: Preparing a portfolio has more negative sides than positive one. 19 students agree and 94 students disagree with this statement so most of them think that portfolio has more positive sides.

In Part B, there are 5 statements and each one belongs to 3 different types of portfolio. B1, B2, B3 are related to assessment portfolio but B4 is related to display portfolio and B5 is related to working portfolio. The main aim is to find the type of portfolio that the students use in their school. In the table 2, it is seen that there are frequencies of the items.

Table 2. *Types of portfolio*

Question Code	Agree		Disagree	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
B1	85	75,2	28	24,8
B2	39	34,5	74	65,5
B3	78	69,0	35	31,0
B4	18	15,9	95	84,1
B5	17	15,0	96	85,0

B1: I follow my improvement from my portfolio. 85 students agree with the item and they think they can see their improvement. B3: I put all of my studies into my portfolio. 78 students say that they put all of their studies into their portfolios. B2: All of my studies that I put into my portfolio are evaluated by the teacher. This item is about assessment portfolio but the students don't know that the teacher gives mark to all of their studies so they marked it as disagree. In the table above, B4: I put the best studies I did in my portfolio. Most of the students disagree that they put just the best studies that they did because it is vividly seen that they put all of the studies. B5: My teacher selects my studies that I will put into my portfolio.' 96 students disagree because students put the items they want. The teacher gives this responsibility to the students.

Table 3. *Descriptive statistics of portfolio types*

TYPES	Descriptive Statistics		
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Variance
Assessment Portfolio	1,4041	0,2614	0,0684
Display Portfolio	1,8407	0,3676	0,1351
Working Portfolio	1,8496	0,3591	0,1290

As seen in Table 3 that assessment portfolio is used by the students (m=1,4041); however display and working portfolios are not used because their means are nearly. They disagree with the statements about these portfolio types.

Table 4. *Assessment portfolio*

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1,00	21	18,6	18,6	18,6
	1,33	51	45,1	45,1	63,7
	1,67	37	32,7	32,7	96,5
	2,00	4	3,5	3,5	100,0
	Total	113	100,0	100,0	

In Table 4, it can be understood that 72 students agree on using assessment but 41 students cannot divide the types of the portfolios. One of the reasons for this is that students do not recognize that the teacher gives marks all of their studies. Thus, they might be disagreed on the second item. Moreover, these 3 statements are directly about assessment portfolio.

In Part C, skills are taken into consideration; the improvement in the skills, the skills that the students like most and the skills that the students think they affect their self-confidence. Thus, this part is divided into 3. C-I shows the improvement in the skills as shown in Table 5.

Table 5. *Improvement in the skills*

Question	Agree		Disagree		Descriptive Statistics		
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Mean	Std. Deviation	Variance
C1	64	56,6	49	43,4	1,4336	0,4978	0,2478
C2	96	85	17	15	1,1504	0,3591	0,1290
C3	99	87,6	14	12,4	1,1239	0,3309	0,1095
C4	100	88,5	13	11,5	1,1150	0,3205	0,1027
<b>OVERALL RESULTS for PART_C-I</b>					1,2058	0,2656	0,0706

C1: I think my listening skill is improved. C2: I think my speaking skill is improved. C3: I think my reading skill is improved and C4: I think my writing skill is improved. The table above shows that most of the students don't think that their listening skill is improved ( $m=1,4336$ ). However, nearly all of the students think that their speaking, reading and writing skills are improved by using portfolio.

Table 6. *The results of the analysis for Part C*

Question	Agree		Disagree		Descriptive Statistics		
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Mean	Std. Deviation	Variance
C5	36	31,9	77	68,1	1,6814	0,4680	0,2190
C6	69	61,1	44	38,9	1,3894	0,4898	0,2399
C7	48	42,5	65	57,5	1,5752	0,4965	0,2465
C8	49	43,4	64	56,6	1,5664	0,4978	0,2478
<b>OVERALL RESULTS for PART_C_II</b>					1,5531	0,2554	0,0652

The items C5, C6, C7, C8 show the skills that the students like most. C5: I like doing listening activities most while preparing my potfolio.C6: I like doing speaking activities most while preparing my portfolio. C7: I like doing reading activities most while preparing my potfolio.C8: I like doing writing activities most while preparing my portfolio. Moreover, it is understood from the table above that students like speaking activities most because 69 of them agree with item C6. The other items show that students don't like the other activities. The overall mean is 1,5531 , so it cannot be said that students do not either like or dislike the activities.

Table 7. *The results of the analysis for Part C*

Question	Agree		Disagree		Descriptive Statistics		
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Mean	Std. Deviation	Variance
<b>C9</b>	75	66,4	37	32,7	1,3304	0,4725	0,2232
<b>C10</b>	94	83,2	18	15,9	1,1607	0,3689	0,1361
<b>C11</b>	91	80,5	21	18,6	1,1875	0,3921	0,1537
<b>C12</b>	92	81,4	20	17,7	1,1786	0,3847	0,1480
<b>OVERALL RESULTS for PART_C-III</b>					1,2162	0,2986	0,0892

The items C9, C10, C11, C12 show the skills that the students think they affect their self-confidence.C9: 'Portfolio studies increase my self-confidence in terms of listening skill.' C10: 'Portfolio studies increase my self-confidence in terms of speaking skill.' C11: 'Portfolio studies increase my self-confidence in terms of reading skill.'C12: 'Portfolio studies increase my self-confidence in terms of writing skill.' When one looks at the table 7, it is very vivid that most of the students think that portfolio increases their self-confidence in terms of all the skills (m=1,2162).

#### 4. Limitation

The current study is done with the young learner students. Thus, the students cannot understand the questionnaire although the questionnaire is in their native language. One of the reasons of this can be they do not know the marking system of the college. Additionally, just one grade is taken into consideration but the whole school can be included in the study.

#### 5. Conclusion

This study aimed to find out the effects of portfolio assessment on English classes. In order to reach this aim, students were given a questionnaire. The items in the questionnaire are all about the portfolio and the students agree or disagree on the statements. Some of them are the items about general attitudes of the students towards using portfolio, some of them are put in the questionnaire to find the type of the portfolio that the students have been using and the others are aimed to find the skills that the students like or thought that they have improved by using the portfolio.

When the questionnaire is examined by the help of SPSS, it is seen that the students are very eager to use the portfolio as a general attitude. Moreover, the students specified the type of the portfolio that they have been using as assessment portfolio because they put all of their work in their portfolio and the teacher gives marks to their each work. However, many

students do not know that the teacher gives marks to the each work so they disagree on the item about assessment portfolio. The reason for this might be that they see the marks at the end of the term. To prevent this confusion, the teacher should show the marks immediately after giving them. Moreover, the students think that they follow their process from their portfolio. After they notified the type of the portfolio, the students said their ideas about the skills. Nearly all of them think that their speaking, writing and reading skills are improved by the help of the portfolio. However, some of the students think that the listening activities are not improved and the reason of this probably is that they did not do many listening activities. Moreover, the students like speaking activities and they think their self-confidence in speaking, reading and writing skill increase.

To sum up, the findings of the study shows that students are glad to use portfolio as an assessment system and for a future work, teachers can be included in this study. Moreover, a case study which investigates the effects of using a portfolio can be done.

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