RECONSIDERATIONS ON THE EFFECTS E-PORTFOLIOS ON EFL STUDENTS' SPEAKING ACHIEVEMENT

Phung Thanh Loan[*1]; Dang Tan Tin[2]

[1]Petro Vietnam University; [2]Ho Chi Minh City University of Technology and Education

Abstract: Emerging in the EFL classroom since the last decades, e-portfolios have been appreciated and preferred as a promising teaching, learning, and assessing tool. Various studies have been carried out to investigate the impacts of e-portfolios in English language education. The current research aims at examining the effects of e-portfolio on EFL students' speaking achievement. A quasi-experimental design was conducted with thirty undergraduate Vietnamese EFL students in two groups over a fifteen-week semester. The data collected from students' speaking pre-test and post-test scores illustrated the marginal effects of speaking e-portfolios on students' achievement. This result suggested various underlying reasons, including insufficient intervention time, students' low proficiency, and weaknesses in the speaking e-portfolio design. Several recommendations on incorporating e-portfolios into the English training program in a university context were put forwards, such as considering the speaking e-portfolio workload, e-portfolio task types, and developing students' sense of control over their e-portfolios by involving them in the assessment design process.

Keywords: E-portfolio, speaking skills, higher education, quasi-experimental design

1. Introduction

Information technology, particularly web-based platforms, has been making dramatic changes in human lives by flatting the world and bringing people from distant territories closer in a cyber space for numerous diverse performances. In the field of education, technological tools such as social network, social media, and interactive web have been supporting multi-dimensional interactions among learners and teachers "through both synchronous and asynchronous channels", thus opening "new avenues" for learning and teaching to be undertaken regardless of spatio-temporal confinement of traditional classrooms (Aliweh, 2011) This inevitable influence of information technology appears to well match with the current pedagogical landscape where constructivist teaching practice is being embraced in tandem with behaviorist (Alawdat, 2013).

In the prime time of behaviorism, learning typically occurred through one-way transmission of knowledge from teachers to learners, and was then accessed via traditional exams. When the pendulum has swung to the constructivist end, learning has been regarded as an individualized and active process nourished through learners' cognitive and social development within supportive community of teachers, peers and parents (Alawdat, 2013; Özdemir-Çağatay, 2012). Accordingly, training learners to build up self-monitoring, self-reflecting and self-evaluating skills becomes essential to help them maximize learning efficiency and reach the highest potential within their Zone of Proximal Development (Vygotsky, 1980; Yurdabakan, 2011). Among different learning and assessing models applied, portfolios introduced to education field in the early nineties seemed to fit the contemporary pedagogical scenario (Grant, 2010).

---

[*] Email: loanpt@pvu.edu.vn

They are purposeful collections of students' works, exhibiting their efforts, progress, and achievement. These collections include students' participation in selecting content, the criteria for selection, the criteria for judging merit, and evidence of students' reflection on their learning (Paulson, PasrI, & Meyer, 1991). With this structure, portfolios are believed to be beneficial to autonomous learning and academic development (Tran, 2011).

Under such far-reaching influence of information technology, e-portfolios have been created as an indispensable alternative to its original paper version. Learners' work is now stored on portable drives, virtual spaces, or clouds instead of folders of paper (Aliweh, 2011). Since its creation, e-portfolios have become appealing to English language pedagogical attempts and research worldwide (Aliweh, 2011; Cepik & Yastibas, 2013; Gray, 2008; Stefani, Mason, & Pegler, 2007). In a recent paper which is part of a larger study, Phung and Dang (2016) employed speaking e-portfolios (speaking e-portfolios) to foster learner autonomy and the learning of speaking skills of non-English majored students at PetroVietnam University. The findings, however, were confined to provide significant support for the hypothesis that speaking e-portfolio could promote various aspects of learner autonomy development. As a consecutive step, this paper sets out to report the impact of speaking e-portfolios on those students' achievement in learning speaking skills.

The study addresses the following question:

What are the impacts of speaking e-portfolios on students' speaking achievement?

To establish a theoretical conceptualization for the current study, the following part discusses the key features of e-portfolios in detail, using the recent literature on the nature of speaking e-portfolios and language e-portfolio employment.

2. Literature review

Education e-portfolios

Educational e-portfolios are generally defined as "digital collections" of students' school work over time. These artifacts can be in different formats such as audio, video, graphics, and texts. Different from traditional paper portfolios which are maintained as hard copy", e-portfolios are normally "stored electronically" in "a web-based format", or on other "digital storage device" like CD-ROM" (Barrette, 2000, p.15; Lankes, 1995, as cited Grant, 2010, p.20). Compared to paper-based portfolios, e-portfolios are superior for language teaching and learning because they stipulate minimal storage space, and are flexible enough for students' ongoing revision, modification, and reflection on already submitted tasks. In addition, they are accessible for not only teachers, but classmates as well. With this supportive environment, e-portfolio assignment is conductive to learning enhancement even when students have stepped out of the classroom walls because e-portfolios will not leave them on their own devices (Phung & Dang, 2016).

Types of e-portfolios

Similar to paper portfolio, e-portfolios are created with a predetermined purpose which identifies the nature of students' artifacts collected. Depending on particular purposes, e-portfolios are classified into two major types, namely product and process portfolios. Product portfolios, also called 'display' or 'showcase' portfolios (Rolheiser, Rolheiser-Bennett, Bower, & Stevahn, 2000), aim to follow students' work, foster their self-evaluation ability (Yurdabakan, 2011), and exhibit their best work during a language course (Rolheiser *et al.*, 2000). Process

portfolios, or growth portfolios, requires students to constantly contribute and modify their work, thus allowing them to keep track of their improvement (Moya & O'Malley, 1994; Rolheiser et al., 2000). This type of portfolio is also a measure well suited for formative assessment which can provide periodical data about students' performance, their improvement race or learning barriers for teachers to make timely modification on coming lesson plans. Besides, there is also combined purpose of portfolios where both process and product approaches are intertwined to connect teaching with learning and assessment, and engage students to the assessing process (Cole, Ryan, Kick, & Mathies, 2000; as cited in Özdemir-Çağatay, 2012).

Impacts of e-portfolios in language education

From a pedagogical standpoint, e-portfolios appear to be a highly compatible choice for today English teaching and learning practice. However, empirical evidence from recent research on impact of e-portfolios revealed a fairly mixed picture. Take, for example, Kocoglu's descriptive study (2008, as cited in Aliweh, 2011) which examined Turkish EFL student teachers' perceptions toward e-portfolios. Qualitative results of the study revealed some divergence in the participants' opinions towards the intervention. With a different approach, Aliweh's (2011) experimental study compared the effects of e-portfolios and paper portfolios on college students' EFL writing skills and learner autonomy development. The ANCOVA test on students' ratings on Writing Competence Scale and Learner Autonomy Scale illustrated that e-portfolio implementation did not yield significant effects on students' writing skills and autonomy. These findings were derived from students' loneliness in individual portfolio development process, incompatible exam-driven teaching, students' technology incompetence, and insufficient intervention time for autonomy growth.

When integrated into EFL speaking class, e-portfolios appeared to bring about more parallel effects. Hsu, Wang, and Comac's experiment with audio blog gained positive results to confirm supportive roles of e-portfolios in developing students' speaking skill (Hsu, Wang, & Comac, 2008). These results also match with Huang and Hung's (2010, as cited in Alawdat, 2013; p. 343) experimental study in Taiwan which suggested positive impact of e-portfolios on the participants' oral performance as regard to "their language quantity", and "lexical richness". However, the intervention also revealed some problems such as the absence of authentic interactions, and frustration stemming from occasional uploading failure. Overlapping findings can also be found in Cepik and Yatibas's study which illustrated students' positive attitude towards speaking e-portfolio development process in that it was conductive to students' improved speaking skills in terms of grammar, pronunciation, and vocabulary, as well as greater participants' self-awareness of their learning (Cepik & Yastibas, 2013). Qualitative results collected from the cover letters and interviews also show evidence of students' affective achievement manifested in their dampened anxiety level and greater confidence. These aforementioned studies furnished preliminary support for the suggestion that speaking e-portfolios could enhance students' learning of EFL speaking skills worldwide. In Vietnam, however, e-portfolios in general and speaking e-portfolios in particular has not gained sufficient attention from practitioners and researchers.

As an attempt to dig into the effects of speaking e-portfolio on speaking achievement of non-English majored students at PetroVietnam University, this paper constructed speaking e-portfolios as a combined version of product and process portfolios to facilitate students' learning

and foster learner autonomy development. On the one hand, speaking e-portfolios manifest themselves as product portfolios in which students' best videotaped speech, peer-reflection, and self-reflection bundled together were included in each entry. On the other hand, they are similar to process portfolios which take students' improvement into account for assessment decisions. In the hope of examining the effect of speaking e-portfolio intervention on students' achievement, the study seeks to understand the impact that EFL speaking e-portfolios have on students' speaking achievement.

3. Methods

3.1. Participants

The participants of the study were thirty engineering freshmen taking English Speaking-Listening 2 - a course intended for non-English majored students whose current level of English proficiency is elementary at a university in the South of Vietnam. They were selected from the same cohort of students on the basis of their English placement test results. These two classes were equivalent to two groups, the experimental group (EG), and the control group (CG). At the time of the study, they had equal class time with three sessions of 90 minutes every week for each group.

Platform and development process of speaking e-portfolios

The speaking e-portfolio platform was developed for the course on the basis of a regular learning management system. The assignment was technically designed to allow each student to film or record his/her speeches directly and post them to his/her own thread which functions as his/her portfolio. Each posting of students' speech can be followed by multiple reply postings which make room for recorded peer-reflection speech and self-reflection notes. Specific requirements and procedures of the assignment are described below.

i. One entry in students' speaking e-portfolio contained one weekly speaking assignment. The assignment requires students to submit a 1:30-to-2-minute filmed speech on the given topic. Students were also required to post peer-reflections on the assigned classmate's speech, and their self-reflection on their own speech.

ii. After every three assignments, there was a conference in which students worked in pairs, looked back at their assignments, and shared comments on their own performance, their progress, the problems, and plans for improving their speaking skills. Students were required to write the reflection notes for the conference session. Those reflections gave the teacher insights about how she could support her students with their assignments as well as how she should adjust her teaching in order to facilitate students' learning of speaking skills such as providing extra pronunciation, intonation, and/or fluency practice, and so on.

At the beginning of the course, the teacher introduced the speaking homework assignment agenda to both groups, including the self-reflection and peer-reflection guidelines. Both groups of students had identical speaking homework assignments which are monologues on the topics identical with the lessons presented by the coursebook New English File: Pre-Intermediate (Oxenden, Latham-Koenig, & Seligson, 2004). The first assignment required students to describe a painting (File 1C). For the second assignment, students used the given

pictures to retell the story of Hannah and Jamie (File 2C) (Oxenden *et al.*, 2004) . Assignments 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 were designed with IELTS Speaking Part 2 format in which asked students to present their individual speech on a given topics, namely 'Describe a city or country you would like to visit' (File 3C), 'Describe the last party you went to' (Practical English: Restaurant problems), 'Describe your favourite game or sport' (File 5D), 'Describe an important decision that you made' (File 6C), 'Describe your favourite animal' (Practical English: At the pharmacy) (Oxenden *et al.*, 2004).

The difference between them was in the way they submitted and reflected on their speeches. To be more specific, EG students submitted their speaking assignments onto the class website (speaking e-portfolio). Whereas, CG students performed their assignments by simply delivering their speech in the following class session, then getting immediate peer-reflection, and self-reflecting on their speech.

Instrument development and data collection procedure

The pre-test of this study was the final exam of the preceded speaking course. The course was served as a prerequisite of the current course. The post-test was the final exam of the current speaking course. There were two main parts in each of those tests. In the pre-test, the first part includes general questions about students' personal information such as their name, age, hometown, family, favourite genres of music, favourite TV channel, etc. The second part has topic-focused questions such as giving directions, jobs, daily routines, festivals and holidays, ability, past events, house and furniture. Students could receive prompts from the teacher if they had difficulties answering the questions.

In the post-test, the first part includes general questions on familiar topics such as 'What are you going to do tonight?', 'How many portions of fruit and vegetables do you eat per day?', 'What sport would you like playing?', 'What might you do this weekend?', 'What should you do if you have problem sleeping?', 'What would you do if you could speak perfect English?', etc. Students listened and answered each question. There was no preparation time for this part.

The second part of the test includes monologue topics such as 'The last party you went to', 'A game or sport you are interested in', 'Describe your favourite animal', 'Describe an important decision that you made', 'Talk about one of your favourite family member'. There were suggested ideas for each topic. In this part, students received a topic card with the topic and suggested ideas. They could make notes to prepare in one minute, and then had two minutes at most to present their speech on the given topic to ensure the content validity of the tests, two test developers discussed to reach a consensus on the content and format of the tests so that they covered the topics already addressed and had relevant requirements on students' performance which essentially evaluated learning objectives of the course. Face validity of the tests were then checked by another experienced English lecturerto ensure that the test questions were worded in a semantically straightforward way, carefully typed, and clearly printed. On the test dates, individual student was invited to take the oral test. Their speaking performance was recorded for further reference. As required by English Department, students' speaking performance was rated by two scorers using a holistic scoring rubric. The marking scheme for the speaking pre-test has three criteria, namely Interactive communication and oral production, Grammar and Vocabulary,

and Pronunciation. Marking scheme for speaking post-test has five criteria, namely Idea development, Vocabulary, Accuracy, Fluency, and Pronunciation. Any difference between the two sets of criteria is due to the course objectives. Students' speaking performance was assessed and rated on a scale of rounded scores from zero to five. EG and CG students' pre-test and post-test scores were then entered into SPSS for statistical analyses.

Reliability of the scoring

To establish the consistency of the two scorers in the pre-test and post-test, the Kappa measure was used to test the inter-rater reliability of students' speaking scores in the pre-test and post-test. As presented in Table 1, the Kappa values are 0.85, 0.70, 0.80, and 0.87 for EG students' scores in speaking pre-test, CG students' scores in speaking pre-test, EG students' scores in speaking post-test, and CG students' scores in speaking post-test, respectively (p <.0.001), 95% CI (0.504, 0.848). As argued by Landis and Koch (1977), a Kappa value greater than 0.7 is preferred by most statisticians as a good level of agreement. Hence, EG and CG students' scores in these two tests were considered reliable for further analysis.

Table 1. Inter-rater reliability of EG and CG students' scores

Inter-rater reliability			Value	Asymp. Std. Error[a]	Approx. T	Approx. Sig.
for EG's Speaking Pre-test	Measure of Agreement	Kappa	.85	.140	3.718	.000
	N of Valid Cases		15			
for CG's Speaking Pre-test	Measure of Agreement	Kappa	.70	.196	2.711	.007
	N of Valid Cases		15			
for EG's Speaking Post-test	Measure of Agreement	Kappa	.80	.158	3.693	.000
	N of Valid Cases		15			
for CG's Speaking Post-test	Measure of Agreement	Kappa	.87	.122	4.521	.000
	N of Valid Cases		15			

a. Not assuming the null hypothesis.

4. Findings

To understand the impact of speaking e-portfolio on students' achievement in learning speaking skills in the course, EG and CG students' scores in speaking pre-test and post-test were compared. First, an independent sample t-test was conducted on EG and CG students' speaking pre-test scores. This test was to ensure a similar level of speaking skill performance between the two prior to the experiment. As presented in Table 2, the independent sample t-test yielded t (28) = .58, p > .05, illustrating that EG and CG students' speaking scores were not statistically significantly different from each other prior to the intervention (M_{EG}=2.77 and M_{CG}=2.67).

Table 2. Comparison of EG and CG students' speaking pre-test scores

Group	N	Min	Max	Mean	SD	Std. Error Mean
EG Pre-test Scores	15	2.00	3.50	2.77	.50	.13
CG Pre-test Scores	15	2.00	3.00	2.67	.45	.12

Independent Samples Test

	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
	F	Sig.	t	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
								Lower	Upper
Equal variances assumed	.01	.91	.58	28	.57	.10	.17	-.25	.45
Equal variances not assumed			.58	27.75	.57	.10	.17	-.25	.45

Provided with the similar results of students' speaking scores between the two groups in the pre-test, it was eligible to compare their scores in the post-test. A similar independent sample t test on EG and CG's speaking post-test scores was conducted, and it showed that there was no statistically significant difference between EG and CG's speaking post-test scores (t = 1.654, p > .05; M_{EG}=3.23 and M_{CG}=2.90) as presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Comparison of EG and CG students' speaking post-test scores

Group	N	Min	Max	Mean	SD	Std. Error Mean
EG Post-test Scores	15	3.00	4.50	3.23	.50	.13
CG Post-test Scores	15	2.00	4.00	2.90	.60	.16

Independent Samples Test

	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
	F	Sig.	t	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
								Lower	Upper
Equal variances assumed	.09	.77	1.65	28	.11	.33	.20	-.08	.75
Equal variances not assumed			1.65	26.97	.11	.33	.20	-.08	.75

This result led to a conclusion that student's English speaking skill improvement was not different regardless any effect from the portfolio assignment mode. In other words, speaking e-portfolio could not help students significantly outperform their counterparts who did this assignment on a paper-based format.

5. Discussion

The data we have reported here furnished no support for the suggestion that the model of speaking e-portfolio implementation in the study fosters speaking achievement of non-English majored students at PetroVietnam University. As observed during the course, students in both groups really engaged in the English lessons and committed to complete all speaking assignments. Evidence from their assignments and performance in the exams could demonstrate their skill development. As for speaking e-portfolio-students, their improved speaking performance may

also stem in other advantages of speaking e-portfolio development process. First, as speaking e-portfolios were constructed on a virtual learning management system, students can store their speeches and keep track of their improvement over time. Second, submitted students' speeches and reflection were visible to other class members. Therefore, students can visit their classmate's collection, and learn from the strong and deficient sides in those performances. Third, self-reflection notes and peer-reflection audios were required to be included in each speaking e-portfolio entry, making every student truly engage more in the reflecting task. The benefits of these reflecting tasks are twofold. For one, it increased students' involvement in speaking e-portfolio completion process. For another, it fostered students' reflective thinking and deep learning which are conductive to the development of learner autonomy and speaking achievement. However, despite the promotion of speaking e-portfolios on students' speaking achievement, students who learnt with speaking e-portfolios did not outperformed students who learnt with traditional method. However, it can be seen from the score data on their speaking pre-test and post-test that there was no difference in students' English speaking skill achievement between e-portfolio and paper-based portfolio assignment modes. That is to say, speaking e-portfolios could not help students outperform those who learn with the traditional mode. These findings could derive from the following factors.

First, the fifteen-week semester was probably insufficient for students' speaking performance to be improved (Barrett, 2000). Thus, it was not until the second haft of the semester that students could complete speaking e-portfolio assignments in the expected manner. Many students, especially those who did not have a personal computer and Internet access back then, still had constant struggles to get familiar to the website at the initial weeks of the course. Hence, their intrinsic eagerness was gradually replaced by their tiredness. If speaking e-portfolio project was implemented with longer intervention time, it may have produced more positive results on students' achievement. This idea seems to be in line with the findings from previous research (Cepik & Yatibas, 2013; Huang & Hung, 2010). In Huang and Hung's (2010) study, for example, data show evidences of students' improvement in their speaking skills in terms of language quality, and lexical richness regardless of some problems in their speaking e-portfolio implementation. One possible reason for that outcome may be related to long e-portfolio implementation time - nineteen weeks which was sufficient for the participants' improved accuracy in using language. That assumption overlapped with Aliweh's (2011) argument that short implementation time of one semester could hardly be sufficient for e-portfolios to improve students' writing achievement. In lines with these authors, Soliman and Wahba (2014) reported that effects of language e-portfolios on learners' performance had not come clearly until the fourth semester. These revealed that time could be one of the decisive factors to the effect of e-portfolios on language learners' achievement (Soliman & Wahba, 2014).

Second, technological-related issues such as students' inexperience in online learning and unavailability of technological resources may contributed to minor success of speaking e-portfolios in improving students' achievement. As already discussed above, all EG students had little or no experience in online or blended learning. According to students' response in the first part of students' questionnaires and speaking e-portfolio introduction session, that was the first time they learned with e-portfolios or used computer programs as video editing, voice recording,

video recording in learning. Despite technological training sessions, many students could not use these technological tools at ease in the first weeks of the course. That students' unfamiliarity with digital learning adversely influenced their learning achievement was also mentioned by Bollinger and Shepherd (2010). Despite being conducted with longer time – two semesters, their experimental study with language e-portfolios did not yield satisfying results on enhancing cognitive load and language achievement (Bolliger & Shepherd, 2010). That finding was believed to stem in students' inexperience in working with websites. Turning back to the current study, the scenario was even worse. Thus, almost haft of EG students did not have personal computer with Internet access at that time. To complete each speaking e-portfolio entry, many of them had to resort to public Internet access where they could upload their filmed speeches, listen to peer-reflection, and send their reflection on others' performance. Students' concerns, therefore, were constantly expressed on the quality of their performance due to endless noises and distractions in public Internet service.

Third, students' low level of proficiency was another challenge for the implementation of speaking e-portfolios. As mentioned earlier, at the time of the study, students were at elementary level of English. In addition, they did not have rewarding experience in learning English at high school. No matter how motivated they were at the beginning of the course, making speaking e-portfolio individual speeches as required was not a piece of cake for them. In fact, those students had chronic uphill struggles to formulate ideas, look for vocabulary, and correct their pronunciation. Hence, preparing for speaking e-portfolio speeches had already been incredibly time-and-effort intensive, not to mention filming, uploading, peer-reflecting, and self-reflecting to complete each speaking e-portfolio entry. This result was different from those in previous studies which were carried out with high-proficiency learners (Cepik & Yastibas, 2013; Huang & Hung, 2010; Valdez, 2010). Valdez's (2010) study, for instance, was conducted on university students who had high command of English speaking and writing skills within two consecutive semesters. Even though most students' responses in the interview showed signs of their resisting attitude to the use of e-portfolios in future English course, their e-portfolios still featured evidence of improved writing skills. To be more specific, the participants were able to address a wider range of topics, and adjust their writing styles to suit different audience groups. In Huang and Hung's (2010) study, speaking e-portfolios were also implemented with students who had good command of English. The study also yielded positive findings about effect of e-portfolio on lexical richness in students' speeches. Concerning Cepik and Yatisbas's (2013) study, e-portfolios could play significant role in improving Turkish students' speaking skills in terms of grammar, vocabulary use, pronunciation, greater confidence and learning awareness. Among various factors involved, students' upper-intermediate English level was probably an essential one contributing to the success of speaking e-portfolio implementation.

As the ultimate aim of any newly introduced educational tool is to enhance students' language learning, it seems plausible to suggest that students' current level of English should stay at the heart of speaking e-portfolio design and implementation principles. That, however, does not necessarily mean that speaking e-portfolio model should be used for high-proficiency students only. The key for more rewarding attempt in incorporating speaking e-portfolios for students of different proficiency level lies in proper design. Basing on these arguments,

suggestions for speaking e-portfolio incorporation at the investigated context will be proposed further in the next section.

Fourth, the limited effect of e-portfolio was probably related to boredom of monologue as the only speaking e-portfolio assignment type. In the final conference session, some students expressed their preference for speaking assignments involving collaborative efforts among students. They recommended that beside individual speech, group conversations, role plays should also be set as speaking e-portfolio assignments. It can be referred from students' opinions that the monotonousness of making individual speeches for speaking e-portfolio entries would have demotivated them.

Fifth, speaking e-portfolio assignments were all homework intentionally designed to provide students with time and space to prepare for their speeches (Goh & Burns, 2012). That, by chance, made students resort to memorization of their learnt speeches. Overtime the participants may have failed to use English flexibly for spontaneous communicative situations in the class. That possibly impeded the development of students' speaking skills to some extents. Cepik and Yastibas's (2013) study could, again, be taken as a contrasting example for this. There was an alteration of task types for two e-portfolio assignments. The first assignment stipulated students' individual talk. The second one was open for students' selection to work individually, in pairs, or in groups. That variety of assignment types could have maintained students' motivation, encouraged their engagement, and thus considerably contributed to their improved speaking skills at the end of the course. The possibility of students' choice in developing their speaking e-portfolios as just mentioned from Cepik and Yastibas's (2013) study also leads to the next concern for speaking e-portfolio design. A complete conformity to final oral test resulted in exam-driven orientation for speaking e-portfolios. That could have been another cause impairing students' creativity and interest – two crucial elements to maintain students' stable motivation and commitment in improving their speaking achievement. That is to say, conforming to course book topics and oral exam format may have eroded students' individuality. Students almost had no opportunities to make and carry out choices in terms of topics, task types, or favorite artifacts to be included in speaking e-portfolios. However, the unforeseen side effects of that design appeared to prevail over its original function in supporting students' learning.

Different from the current study, Huang and Hung's (2010) speaking e-portfolio design allowed students to select some learning artifacts. Beside the compulsory speaking assignments, the participants in this study were encouraged to include their favorite learning evidence of various kinds such as song lyrics, poems, video clips related to the lesson. In effect, such variety of artifacts could add students' identity to their speaking e-portfolios. Individual students' speaking e-portfolios were no longer a me-too product where clone performance could easily produce to meet the predefined judging criteria. Rather, they are students' personal learning possession which could have inspired them to assume greater responsibility for their learning. That led to students' improved lexical volume in their speeches as a rewarding outcome of the study.

Sixth, rigid speaking e-portfolio assignment schedule was likely another hindrance to students' progress in oral performance. With seven speaking e-portfolio entries for a course, students had nearly two weeks to complete each entry including an individual speech, peer-reflection and self-reflection. Some students reported in the final class conference session that

they could perceive their improvement but still found speaking e-portfolios a heavy workload for them. Many others maintained that they completed the assignment with great effort, but could hardly have enough time to think deeply about their improvement. As for Cepik and Yatibas's (2013) research, e-portfolio implementation could also lead to students' improvement in their speaking skills because this learning tool fostered learner autonomy development, reduced students' anxiety, contributed to their confidence, and developed different aspects of students' speaking ability such as grammar, pronunciation and vocabulary. These impressive findings can be resulted from practical design for e-portfolio development process. To be specific, the authors assigned only two speaking e-portfolio assignments. Each assignment lasted four weeks. When the students completed their first individual assignment, they could choose to work in a group, in a pair, or on their own for the second assignment. Such reasonable workload provided students with sufficient time to prepare for their performance, formulate profound reflective thinking on their work and the assigned peer's, and plan for improvement.

6. Implications

The findings analyzed above had several implications for the implementation of speaking e-portfolios. First, speaking e-portfolios or any other language skills portfolios need sufficient time to be developed so that its effects can be manifested as fully as intended. Second, in order to increase students' interest and motivation to study with e-portfolios, teachers can involve them in negotiation of self-assessment, self-reflection, and even teachers' evaluation rubrics. These negotiated judging criteria can help students have greater commitment in completing e-portfolio assignments. Third, if the nature of some speaking assignments is flexible enough, teachers can let students to choose how they will complete their assignment, individually, in pairs, or in groups. This will possibly lead to learner autonomy growth, students' greater sense of ownership towards their e-portfolios and students' better engagement in e-portfolio development process. In addition, teachers and students should be technologically well-trained to be competent enough for their constant work with e-portfolio during the English program. That will prevent possible frustration related to failure to log in, upload assignments, or simply send an important piece of message or announcement on e-portfolio platform. Last but not least, e-portfolio implementation should be introduced to any language course with reasonable work allocation to allow sufficient time for students to complete, revise, and self-assess their assignment. Accordingly, teachers can also have enough time for evaluating their students' work. As for the current English teaching context of the study, it is possible to assign three assignments for each e-portfolio. Each assignment will last four weeks. The first week is time for assignment introduction. Students' completion and submission of their task will be carried out in the second week before teacher evaluate students' assignments. In the third week, students can revise and resubmit their modified assignment based on teachers' evaluation and feedback, and then sell-assess their assignments. In the fourth week, teachers make final evaluation on students' revised work. Variations on e-portfolio design can be made for each English course, and for each particular group of students. However, properly designed task types, practical e-portfolio work allocation, sufficient e-portfolio development time, encouraging assessment rubrics, and adequate technology training are possibly the hallmarks of effective implementation of language e-portfolios.

7. Conclusion

This paper reveals that speaking e-portfolios could not yield significant effect on students' speaking achievement. These findings, however, should not be widely taken as a reference for many other English teaching contexts due to the minimal sample size withdrawn from very low population and some other distinctive features of the research context.

In brief, the paper examined the role of speaking e-portfolios on students' achievement in learning EFL speaking skills. Data from students' speaking pretest and post-test revealed that speaking e-portfolios could promote students' speaking achievement. However, the effect of speaking e-portfolios on students' achievement was not different from that of the traditional learning method. A thorough reflection on the participants, the research context, and speaking e-portfolio design revealed some possible reasons for these findings. To be more specific, these results may derive from insufficient intervention time, students' inexperience with online learning, their limited access to necessary technological equipment, their low proficiency, their dampened motivation due to speaking e-portfolio monologue assignment types, exam-driven speaking e-portfolio development, and heavy workload of speaking e-portfolio project.

References

Alawdat, M. (2013). Using E-portfolios and ESL learners. *Online Submission, 3*(5), 339-351.

Aliweh, A.M. (2011). The effect of electronic portfolios on promoting Egyptian EFL college students' writing competence and autonomy. *Asian EFL Journal, 13*(2), 90-132.

Barrett, H.C. (2000). Create your own electronic portfolio. *Learning and leading with technology, 27*(7), 14-21.

Bolliger, D., & Shepherd, C. (2010). Student perceptions of E-portfolio integration in online courses. *Distance Education, 31*(3), 295-314.

Cepik, S., & Yastibas, A.E. (2013). The use of e-portfolio to improve English speaking skill of Turkish EFL learners. *The Anthropologist, 16*(1-2), 307-317.

Goh, C.C., & Burns, A. (2012). *Teaching speaking: A holistic approach*: Cambridge University Press.

Grant, V. (2010). To 'E' or not to 'E' electronic portfolios in the adult ESL classroom. *Hawaii Pacific University TESOL Working Paper Series, 8*(1), 2.

Gray, L. (2008). Effective practice with E-portfolios. *Higher Education Funding Council for England, JISC, Bristol*.

Hsu, H.Y., Wang, S.K., & Comac, L. (2008). Using audioblogs to assist English-language learning: An investigation into student perception. *Computer Assisted Language Learning, 21*(2), 181-198.

Huang, H.T.D., & Hung, S.T.A. (2010). Implementing electronic speaking portfolios: Perceptions of EFL students. *British Journal of Educational Technology, 41*(5), E84-E88.

Moya, S.S., & O'Malley, J.M. (1994). A portfolio assessment model for ESL. *The Journal of Educational Issues of Language Minority Students, 13*(1), 13-36.

Oxenden, C., Latham-Koenig, C., & Seligson, P. (2004). *New English file: PreIntermediate. Students' Book*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Özdemir-Çağatay, S. (2012). *Speaking portfolios as an alternative way of assessment in an EFL context*. Bilkent University,

Paulson, F.L., PasrI, R., & Meyer, C.A. (1991). What makes a Portofolio? Eight thoughtful guidelines will help educators encourage self-directed learning. *Educational Leadership*.

Phung, L.T., & Dang, T.T. (2016). The effects of speaking eportfolios on learner autonomy for non-English major students at PetroVietnam University. *Hirao School of Management Review, 6*, 106-169.

Rolheiser, C., Rolheiser-Bennett, N.C., Bower, B., & Stevahn, L. (2000). *The portfolio organizer: Succeeding with portfolios in your classroom*: ASCD.

Soliman, A., & Wahba, H. (2014). *E-portfolios and English Language Learners*.

Stefani, L., Mason, R., & Pegler, C. (2007). *The educational potential of E-portfolios: Supporting personal development and reflective learning*: Routledge.

Tran, T.Q.N. (2011). Sử dụng bộ sưu tập tài liệu học có tự nhận xét của người học trong giảng dạy kỹ năng viết tiếng Anh. *Hue University Journal of Science (HUJOS), 68*(5).

Valdez, P.N. (2010). Reflections on using the digital portfolio in academic writing in a Philippine university: Problems and possibilities. *Philippine ESL Journal, 5*(1), 160-170.

Vygotsky, L.S. (1980). *Mind in society: The development of higher psychological processes*: Harvard university press.

Yurdabakan, İ. (2011). The view of constructivist theory on assessment: Alternative assessment methods in education. *Ankara Üniversitesi Eğitim Bilimleri Fakültesi Dergisi, 44*(1), 51-78.

XEM XÉT LẠI VAI TRÒ CỦA BỘ SƯU TẬP TÀI LIỆU HỌC ĐIỆN TỬ ĐẾN KẾT QUẢ HỌC KỸ NĂNG NÓI TIẾNG ANH CỦA SINH VIÊN

Tóm tắt: Được sử dụng trong lớp học tiếng Anh từ thập niên trước, bộ sưu tập tài liệu học điện tử vẫn đang được đón nhận và đánh giá là một công cụ dạy, học, và đánh giá hữu ích. Nhiều nghiên cứu đã được thực hiện để xem xét vai trò của bộ sưu tập tài liệu học điện tử đối với việc dạy tiếng Anh. Bài nghiên cứu này được tiến hành nhằm tìm hiểu tác động của bộ sưu tập tài liệu điện tử đối với kết quả học môn Nói tiếng Anh. Nghiên cứu bán thực nghiệm được áp dụng trong 15 tuần với 30 sinh viên đại học tại Việt Nam - được chia theo hai nhóm. Số liệu thu thập được từ hai bài thi Nói - trước và sau khi thực nghiệm cho thấy vai trò bộ sưu tập tài liệu điện tử có vai trò không đáng kể đối với kết quả học kỹ năng Nói tiếng Anh của sinh viên. Kết quả này xuất phát từ một số nguyên nhân như thời gian thực nghiệm chưa đủ dài, năng lực tiếng Anh còn hạn chế của sinh viên, và một số điểm yếu trong cách thiết kế bộ sưu tập tài liệu điện tử môn Nói. Các khuyến nghị về việc áp dụng bộ sưu tập tài liệu điện tử vào chương trình dạy tiếng Anh tại trường đại học cũng được đề xuất, như cân đối số lượng bài tập trong bộ sưu tập tài liệu điện tử, đa dạng hóa dạng bài tập Nói, cho sinh viên tham gia vào việc thiết kế mô hình đánh giá (đặt ra các tiêu chí đánh giá trong mẫu phản hồi chéo) để củng cố thêm sự kiểm soát của sinh viên đối với chính bộ sưu tập tài liệu học của mỗi mình.

Từ khóa: Bộ sưu tập tài liệu học điện tử, kỹ năng nói, giáo dục đại học, thiết kế nghiên cứu bán thực nghiệm