

Using Electronic Speaking Portfolios for Assessment in the EFL Classroom: Students' Perspectives

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Kwak, Yeonwoo. and Judy Yin. 2018. Using electronic speaking portfolios for assessment in the EFL classroom: Students' perspectives. *Korean Journal of English Language and Linguistics* 18-3, 442-469. The present study investigates students' perceptions of using electronic speaking portfolios in the EFL (English as a foreign language) classroom. In particular, the study explores students' experiences throughout the portfolio cycle and aims to find out the students' perceptions of the e-speaking portfolio as an assessment as well as a learning tool. A total of 17 undergraduate students enrolled in the Basic English Speaking course posted ten video clips of their speaking activities, including five initial oral drafts and five revised versions, on their blogs throughout the semester. The students were asked to keep a reflective journal every week about their experience and were interviewed twice. The results of the study show that students benefited from experiencing recursive cycles as they accumulated their entries. In addition, students perceived the e-speaking portfolio as an effective learning tool and an assessment tool as the e-speaking portfolio provided the essential diagnostic information to guide their awareness of their current state and directions for improvement. From the Assessment as Learning (AaL) perspective, this study suggests that the e-speaking portfolio be implemented as a tool to enhance learning by means of diagnostic assessment.

Keywords: EFL speaking assessment, speaking performance test, speaking portfolio assessment

1. Introduction

Due to the prevalence of teacher-centered and product-oriented assessments in the ESL classrooms, there have been numerous studies that discuss the disparity between assessment and learning suggesting alternative ways to connect learning and assessment (Earl 2013, Hamp-Lyons and Condon 2000, Lam 2015). Likewise, there

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have been a number of criticisms of the conventional assessment approaches in the EFL classrooms in Korea (Jeon et al. 2010, Kim and Yi 2013, Koh 2014). As such, there is a need to search for alternative student-centered and comprehensive assessment methods that integrate assessment into the entire learning process. Among various alternative assessment strategies, portfolio-based assessment has been shown to serve both as a learning tool and as an assessment tool (Hamp-Lyons and Condon 2000, Hsu 2016, Ok and Erdogan 2010). This process-oriented assessment has shown to be particularly helpful in assessing the productive skills (Chen 2011, Hung and Huang 2015, Sun 2009) and various types of portfolio assessment including electronic ones have emerged (Campbell 2003, Godwin-Jones 2003, Hsu et al 2008, Huffaker 2005). Such studies on the effectiveness of e-portfolios have mostly focused on the writing skills and relatively few studies have dealt with assessing speaking skills (Hung and Huang 2010, Özdemir-Çağatay 2012). In order to determine its usefulness of e-portfolios for assessing speaking skills in the Korean EFL context, this study focuses on the following questions:

1. What do the students experience as they go through the process of accumulating entries in their e-speaking portfolios?
2. What are the students' perceptions of e-speaking portfolio as an assessment tool?
3. What are the students' perceptions of e-speaking portfolio as a learning tool?

2. Theoretical Background

2.1 Portfolio Assessment in ELT

As an alternative assessment tool, portfolio assessment in the EFL context has received much attention from researchers (Lam 2014). As to what a portfolio is, Paulson, Paulson, and Meyer (1991) provided a definition of portfolio as "a purposeful collection of student work that exhibits student's efforts, progress, and achievement in one or more areas" (p. 60). Genesee and Upshur (1996) defined portfolios as "a purposeful collection of students' artefacts created over time to display their efforts, growth and achievements to themselves, teachers, parents and other key stakeholders (as cited in Lam, 2014, p. 699)." Hung (2012) described portfolios as "a purposeful

collection of students' work that documents their progress over time" (p. 22).

While these definitions vary to some extent, they share the concept of portfolios as a purposeful collection of students' work. However, the element of "collection" does not completely account for what constitute a portfolio. McDonald (2012) pointed out that a random collection of students' products cannot be considered a portfolio, claiming that portfolios should include certain factors to be legitimate. Likewise, a number of researchers emphasized the factors that must be considered when designing the portfolio in order to maximize its effect on student learning. In accordance with this, Hamp-Lyons and Condon (2000) described nine characteristics that carefully designed portfolios contain: collection, range, context richness, delayed evaluation, selection, student-centered control, reflection and self-assessment, growth along specific parameters, and development over time.

While all of those characteristics are important, Hamp-Lyons and Condon (2000) claimed that there are three essential elements that should be included to make a portfolio: collection, reflection, and selection. It was suggested that the other characteristics could be subordinated to these three essential ones. In other words, to constitute a valid speaking portfolio model based on these main elements of portfolios, the speaking portfolio should include more than one speaking performance (collection), encourage learners to recognize strengths and weaknesses through self-assessment (reflection), and allow for students' control on their work by making choices (selection).

A well-designed portfolio assessment with the essential elements can provide learners proper guidance in their learning process. First, it allows assessors to judge the learners' performance more accurately by providing more information via multiple samples over a longer period of time (Hung and Huang 2013). By accumulating evidence of learners' development, portfolio assessment can prevent misjudgment of students' performance based on a single test score and eliminate 'day-by-day' variations in their performance (McDonald 2012). Another benefit of portfolio assessment is that it allows for Assessment as Learning (AaL), wherein assessment occurs throughout the learning process instead of at the end of the instruction as a summative evaluation. AaL is opposed to Assessment of Learning (AoL). Rather than separating learning and assessment in Assessment of Learning (AoL), portfolio assessment focuses on the ongoing process of learning, and improves learning based on the information gained from the assessment (Carless 2011, Earl 2013, Hamp-Lyons and Condon 2000, Lam 2015). Moreover, portfolios can serve as an effective tool to

empower students in their own learning process. Since learners can check the evidence of their developmental changes, they become more conscious of what they know and how they perform, which leads students to make more independent decisions and take responsibility for their learning (Bahous 2008, Lam 2014, 2015, Hamp-Lyons and Condon 2000, McDonald 2012, White 2005). Lastly, portfolios are believed to bring about a positive washback effect (Lam 2015). Washback is defined as “the influence of testing on teaching.” (Alderson and Wall 1993, p. 1) or “the positive or negative influences tests have on teachers’ instruction and students’ learning” (Hung 2012, p, 21). According to McDonald (2012), students gained insights into metacognition, learning about learning, and changed their actual decisions in the learning process in a positive way while collecting much evidence of their progress for an extended period of time.

2.2 E-portfolio Assessment in ELT

With the advent of the information technology age, various Internet tools and information technologies have been introduced into the EFL classroom. Teachers are now more eager to employ different types of web 2.0 technologies such as blogs, wikis, chats, or podcasts to enhance their students' learning experience (Ducate and Lomicka 2008, Lord and Lomicka 2004). These new generation web applications are more interactive than the previous web 1.0 tools, such as e-mail or discussion boards, engaging learners in the learning process more successfully (Huang 2015, Lee 2009). As students' Web 2.0 authoring activities are becoming increasingly popular in the classroom, Schiller (2009) suggested that these online learning aspects should also be reflected in the assessment. Accordingly, there have been attempts to apply Web 2.0 tools into classroom assessment for the past few years (Barwell et al. 2011, Hung and Huang 2015). They confirmed that these Web 2.0 based assessments are useful for documenting students' progress in its online archives and demonstrating students' maximum potential.

Among second generation web tools, Godwin-Jones (2003) argued that there has been growing interest in employing blogs for educational purposes because of its function of uploading and linking files in multimedia formats. Ducate and Lomicka (2008) suggested that blogs have emerged as one of the best new web 2.0 applications because they provide extensive language learning opportunities outside the classroom. Huang (2010) also suggested that blogs could be a successful platform for

language education by allowing learners to interact with each other, share ideas, and receive feedback. Furthermore, Hsu et al. (2008) claimed that blogs can serve as an effective assessment tool that can display students' learning progress in speaking over a period of time. For speaking skills, a number of studies revealed that blogs have a great potential to provide extensive speaking opportunities for language learners (Hsu et al. 2008, Hsu 2016, Huang and Hung 2010, Shih 2010, Sun 2009). Similarly, Hung and Huang (2015) also found that blogs helped to archive and reflect on their overall progress in speaking performance. In summary, blogs have proved to be an optimal platform for an electronic speaking portfolio assessment.

Electronic portfolios are defined as “multimedia environments where learners can showcase the works that represent their growth and competencies” (MacDonald et al. 2004, p. 52). E-portfolios have more potential than paper-based portfolios and can benefit many EFL learners in a variety of ways. First of all, electronic portfolios are portable and more readily accessible. Freed from the limitation of time and location, learners can work on their portfolios as long as they have access to the Internet (Hung and Huang 2013). Moreover, e-portfolios enable learners to collect, store, and manage their works in a relatively easy and efficient manner. Learners can easily transfer the content of their portfolios just with a click of a mouse. In addition to collecting and organizing artifacts efficiently, e-portfolio assessment makes it possible to collect them in more varied formats (Barrett 2000). It is these multimedia possibilities that facilitate e-portfolios for the speaking skills. Another advantage of e-portfolios is that multiple readers or listeners can access an e-portfolio simultaneously, making it widely accessible to the public. Especially when publishing their entries online, learners can have a heightened sense of audience and would be more motivated to create quality content in their e-portfolios for a broader audience (Godwin-Jones 2003, Hung and Huang 2013). Last, e-portfolio assessment is useful in terms of providing quality feedback. It not only greatly reduces the amount of time for providing feedback, but also provides learners with more individualized feedback through two-way communication between the instructor and learners (Hsu et al 2008).

2.3 Previous Studies on Electronic Speaking Assessment

There have only been a few studies on portfolio assessment for speaking skills as most of the research in second language acquisition have focused on writing performance (Godwin-Jones 2003, Ho 2003, Hsu et al. 2008, Huang 2015, Hung and

Huang 2010, Shih 2010, Sun 2009). However, there has been some research on "voice blogs" or "audio blogs", in which students employed blog sites to practice their speaking performance. Voice blogs or audio blogs in these studies have much in common with the e-speaking portfolios in the current study in that they employed blogs either for developing or assessing speaking skills over a long period of time.

Some of the studies on voice blogs, for example, used a teacher's blog site as an online space where students' assignments could be checked rather than a portfolio assessment. Sun (2009) conducted an explorative study on the effects of voice blogs on the EFL learners' speaking skills, where the participants posted a total of 30 blog entries on to a teacher's blog site. The results of the study showed that students developed a variety of learning strategies and perceived blogging as a means of learning, self-expression, and social networking. In the follow-up study, Sun (2012) investigated the effects of voice blogging on gains in speaking proficiency in terms of language complexity, accuracy, and fluency (CAF). The findings suggested that students generally perceived improvement in their speaking performance, whereas there was no significant improvement in their language CAF. Similarly, Hsu (2016) also conducted quantitative research on the effect of audio blogs on the development of L2 speaking CAF with 30 EFL college students in Taiwan. Here, students also used their teacher's blog site to upload 15 audio blog entries instead of using their own. This study had slightly different results in that the participants made an improvement in their speaking complexity but not in their speaking accuracy and fluency. the research design, students did not have their own blogs and used one blog site that the teacher-researcher set up for the entire class. So, the blog was used merely as an online space where students' assignment could be checked rather than a concept of a portfolio assessment.

While blogs in the aforementioned studies were set up by an instructor only, there are other studies in which students had their own blogs. For example, Shih (2010) investigated if voice blogs improved EFL learners' public speaking skills in English for Specific Purposes (ESP) courses. Here, the participants were not required to accumulate multiple oral drafts over a period of time but yield one oral draft and its revised version only. That is, voice blogging in this study was to explore voice blogging as an experimental blended learning model rather than as an e-speaking portfolio assessment. However, not only were students asked to post videos of their speeches onto their personal blog sites, they were also asked to upload the revised version of their speech after receiving individual feedback. This study was the only

case among these previous studies where participants recorded themselves in a video file instead of an audio file and had a chance to revise their speaking based on the feedback.

On the other hand, voice blogs in Huang's (2015) study led students to produce multiple oral drafts on their blogs and suggested positive prospects of blogs as e-speaking portfolios. In order to investigate EFL learners' perceptions of using voice blogging to develop their communication skills at a Taiwanese university, participants were first required to read web-based materials and then summarize or respond to them in the voice blogs. That is, this study attempted to combine reading and speaking skills by using web applications as a platform. The results suggested that voice blogging could be successfully incorporated into the EFL curriculum by offering extensive reading and speaking practice outside of class. Similarly, Hsu et al. (2008) conducted a study in which 22 ESL learners were asked to record oral assignments and archive them in their blogs. This study was to examine how audio blogs could improve ESL learners' speaking performance. The results of the study indicated that both learners and instructors had positive attitudes towards use of audio blogs, with learners gaining more confidence in their speaking performance. Despite the fact that neither study is exactly intended to serve as e-speaking portfolios, either focusing on another skill other than speaking or on the role of blogs as an online space for additional learning opportunities, the findings from these studies suggested a high possibility of adopting blog sites for implementing e-speaking portfolios.

Last, there were also studies which focused on the use of blogs as an e-speaking portfolio assessment. Huang and Hung (2010) conducted research on the implementation of electronic speaking portfolios, using blogs as an assessment tool. In their study, participants uploaded a total of six audio files of themselves speaking on a topic related to the in-class discussion. The qualitative analyses of data collected from e-portfolios, an attitude questionnaire, and interviews reported that EFL students perceived the implementation of electronic speaking portfolios positively. As a follow up study, Hung and Huang (2015) also investigated the usefulness of blogs as a learning and assessment tool for English speaking performance. 51 EFL learners at a college posted five audio entries to their blogs throughout a semester. The findings suggested that most participants considered speaking blogs useful for their learning. However, they preferred conventional assessment to blog-based assessment.

While both aforementioned studies (Huang and Hung 2010, Hung and Huang 2015) were specifically conducted on the electronic speaking portfolio assessment, their

research design had some limitations. First, unlike most of the writing portfolios in which students compose several drafts based on the feedback they receive; students did not have a chance to revise their speaking. Moreover, there was no feedback provided from the instructor, but instead feedback from their peers in both studies. Also, audio files that were collected into their blogs did not include all the necessary factors that constitute speaking performance. Some of the important elements of speaking performance such as eye contact, gestures, and lip movement were missing in the audio blog entries. With respect to this, Hsu et al. (2008) suggested that video files could improve students' speaking performance. It could have been beneficial to students if they were required to upload self-recorded videos instead of audio files.

In summary, while the previous studies have shown the effectiveness of a variety of online speaking tasks using the blogs, their objectives were limited to providing an online website merely to check students' assignment of extensive speaking practices rather than to conduct e-portfolio assessment. Furthermore, even in the studies that have utilized e-portfolio assessment, their research designs did not include essential factors, such as providing feedback, collection of multiple drafts, chances for students to revise their oral drafts, or use of video files, in the assessment process. Therefore, the present study attempts to explore an in-depth view of students' experiences participating in electronic speaking assessment, which involves all those essential factors of electronic portfolios.

3. Method

3.1 Participants and Settings

This study was conducted in an EFL course during the 2017 spring semester at a university in Korea with 17 undergraduate students. The participants majored in English education and were enrolled in the Basic English Speaking course. The group was composed of 11 female and 6 male students. Among 17 students, 16 of them were freshmen at the university and only one was a sophomore. Three class hours per week was allocated to the course for 14 weeks. The course aimed to provide guidance and opportunities to practice speaking in general and academic speaking and thus improve their spoken vocabulary, grammar and pronunciation. Therefore, the course consisted of lectures, group discussions, and presentations as in-class activities, and

their electronic speaking portfolios, which was an outside-the-classroom task.

3.2 Procedure

In this study, EFL students’ speaking performances were recorded and collected in their personal electronic speaking portfolios during the semester for the purpose of feedback and evaluation. In order to supplement the limitations of the previous studies on e-speaking portfolio assessment, students were required to record their speaking in a video file instead of an audio file. They were also asked to revise their oral drafts based on the feedback and upload the revised version by the next week. Each of 10 oral drafts, including 5 initial oral drafts and 5 revised oral drafts, were to be submitted on a weekly basis. After they posted a portfolio entry, they described what they experienced in a reflective journal every week. To design the speaking portfolio assessment, some of the essential procedures of each stage of the speaking portfolio assessment were adapted from Hung and Huang’s (2013) study (see Table 1).

Table 1. Procedures for Implementing E-Speaking Portfolio Assessment

Stages	Period	E-Speaking Portfolio Entry	Task
Pre- implementation	Week 1		Course introduction on the requirements and the assessment
	Week 2		Training sessions on e-portfolio and blogs
	Week 3	Entry #1	Picture description task
	Week 4	Entry #2	Revised version of the picture description task
	Week 5	Entry #3	Narration task
	Week 6		(Interview)
Implementation	Week 7	Entry #4	Revised version of the narration task
	Week 8	Entry #5	Instruction task
	Week 9	Entry #6	Revised version of the instruction task
	Week 10	Entry #7	Opinion task
	Week 11	Entry #8	Revised version of the opinion task
	Week 12	Entry #9	Teaching demonstration task
	Week 13	Entry #10	Revised version of the teaching demonstration task
Post- implementation	Week 14		(Interview)

“Naver Blogs” were selected among various blog sites for its user–friendliness and accessibility. The results of the pilot study revealed that learners did not have to learn any high–tech skills, easily uploading video files both from their computers and mobile applications. This way, students were able to post their speaking activity directly from their smartphones after recording and re–upload their revised version after checking feedback via their mobile application. Each blog entry for their e–speaking portfolio consisted of three sections: the title on the top, student’s video clips in the middle and teacher feedback as comments at the bottom of the web page. The cyclical process of the portfolio is shown in Figure 1.



Figure 1. The Recursive Cycle of E–speaking Portfolio

3.3 Data Collection and Analysis

To explore students’ perceptions towards the electronic speaking portfolios, the data for the study was collected throughout the spring semester of 2017. Multiple sources of data including observation, reflective journals, interviews and students’ portfolio entries were collected to triangulate the data. The course was observed for 14 weeks by the researcher, who took notes of important events. The students were also asked to post an entry once a week to reflection their ongoing experience with their e–speaking portfolio. Their portfolio entries were graded in terms of both quantity and quality, which were reflected into their final grade under the category of participation. The researcher conducted two interviews, the first one during the midterm period and the last one after the final exam. The reflective journal entries and the interview

sessions were written and conducted in Korean. The entries and excerpts shown in this study have been translated by the researcher and each participant was given a pseudonym.

This study adopts the qualitative data analysis method that involved transcription, identifying themes, and results revision based on peer examination. (Miles and Huberman 1984). The data were analyzed using the constant comparative method generating and connecting categories by comparing incidents and categories in the data to other incidents and categories (Creswell 2005). The researcher also applied prolonged engagement with the participants for a total of three months, which consisted of member checking, peer debriefing, and triangulation of data (Mathison 1988).

4. Results and Discussions

4.1 Students' Experience during the Process of E-speaking Portfolios

The students went through recursive cycles of seven stages while producing their electronic speaking portfolios entries. With the research design guiding them, students not only felt the connection of each stage in the recursive cycle, but also reported on important transitional changes in the process of repeating the recursive cycle of the e-speaking portfolios.

In the first stage of the cycle, Preparation, students displayed significant changes in the way of preparing their speeches along the repetitive cycles. At the very first cycle of the e-speaking portfolio, they displayed two distinct strategies in preparing their speech: preparing a script or speaking spontaneously without the script. However, while repeating the cycles, those who reported writing scripts increasingly replaced the scripts with keyword lists. It was either due to the feedback they received or their experiments with speaking strategies to improve their speaking. After they finished planning their speech, they reportedly practiced their speaking four to five times over 30–40 minutes on average before recording their tasks. This stage of Preparation was shown to be connected to the next stage, guiding participants to go back and forth between recording and reviewing.

Between the 2nd stage of Recording & Reviewing and the 3rd stage of Uploading, the participants responded that they had recorded themselves and reviewed their

speaking many times until they were satisfied with their speaking performance. Along the repeated cycles of the e-speaking portfolios, almost all of them reported watching their videos at least once in this reviewing process and uploading the best one of their choice. Even those who were not accustomed to speaking to a camera or watching their own videos became more comfortable in the process of repeating the cycles.

Unlike the beginning of the portfolio assessment, I felt less burdened with videotaping myself. I even tried funny gestures and ad-libs too. (Yonsu, Interview #2)

After the fourth stage, 1st Feedback, most of the participants played their first video file again to compare it with the feedback they received. The participants perceived this experience unique because of the chance to review their speaking performance in the video with the given feedback.

I had to play the video in the previous entry before I started to revise my video. While comparing the feedback with the video file, I could see what my problems were. (Yuri, Reflective Journal Entry #6)

In the next stage of Reflection & Revision, the feedback the students had received in the previous stage served as a basis for their reflection. They also reported feeling a strong need for more practice in their speaking along the recursive cycles and tried to find additional learning materials or sought more resources from their peers. As a result, a majority of them responded spending increasingly more time on revising and practicing their speech. This increase in the amount of the time they spent revising and practicing their speech was more obvious after the second or third cycle of the e-speaking portfolios, when they realized they repeatedly received the same feedback.

In the stage of 2nd Feedback, the instructor provided feedback focusing specifically on the areas that students chose to work on. The findings showed that this second feedback on their revised version had an impact on their next speaking portfolio entry in the upcoming cycle. In other words, the participants took into careful account the feedback they received when preparing for a new speech on the different topic in the next cycle. For example, some participants, who tended to adhere to the Koreanized version of pronunciation and intonation, added one more step in the stage of preparation after receiving feedback on this area. They looked up pronunciation of the

words they were not sure of and replaced their words and expressions that are found more commonly in spoken language. In summary, e-speaking portfolios led students to improve as well as to track their progress successfully along the repetitive cycles of the seven stages.

4.2 The Students' Perceptions of E-speaking Portfolios as an Assessment Tool

As a result of repeating the recording and reviewing stage, the students mentioned that such repetition lowered their level of anxiety of both taking a test and speaking in English. Students stated several reasons why they felt less vulnerable when they were speaking in e-speaking portfolios. First, students reported that they felt less burdened because they had plenty of chances to redo their speaking performance. While students cannot help but feel high levels of test anxiety in other, one-shot, timed assessments, this fear-free environment in e-speaking portfolio allowed them to display their best performance. Moreover, students also felt more empowered and confident because of the opportunity to select and post their best performance to represent their speaking abilities. Hence, speaking portfolios not only reduced their test anxiety but also lowered their language anxiety. In addition to unlimited opportunities for speaking, the absence of large audience at the moment of speaking led them to become less afraid of making mistakes, thus concentrating more on their speaking task.

I was usually given only one chance to display my speaking performance in the classroom presentations so far. So, I got nervous and make mistakes in such speaking tests, which I can't redo. But, here in e-speaking portfolios, I can practice and record speaking as many times as I want... I can also choose the best performance, which represents my true speaking proficiency. (Jiwon, Interview #2)

As there is no audience, I can practice plenty of times alone. I usually get pretty anxious when I have to speak in front of many people in a speaking assessment such as classroom presentations. Here, I can show my true speaking performance without high levels of anxiety. (Sunmi, Reflective Journal Entry #5)

The design of the e-speaking portfolio cycle offered participants an opportunity to

repair their speech by involving them in the revision process of their first oral draft. Feedback became more meaningful since students had a reason for making use of the feedback when posting a revised version. While other types of assessment can also provide feedback students can reflect on, most of them do not always check how much progress students have made based on the feedback. Here, participants were obliged to practice specific areas pointed out in the feedback. Therefore, rather than moving onto another new speaking task without making progress on their weaknesses, students reported on their efforts to bridge the gap they noticed on their own or from the feedback in the cycle. The following quotes are extracted from student interviews and reflective journal.

In other speaking assessment, I usually thought, "Ok, I need to work on this." after receiving the feedback. The problem was that I actually never tried to fix it right away because I didn't have to. But, in e-speaking portfolio, I must re-shoot my video again, reflecting the specific feedback that I received. And this helped me so much. Even though I talked about the same topic in my revised version, the experience that I had was totally different because of the feedback. So, I really appreciated having another chance to repair my speech. (Ara, Interview #2)

The results indicated that the students perceived the e-speaking portfolios as a great diagnostic tool that helped them determine their actual speaking abilities. In terms of validity, most students believed that the speaking portfolio examined exactly what it was supposed to assess. They compared their experience in past speaking assessments with the e-speaking portfolio assessment, claiming that they had only been tested for their skills of memorizing the written script in their speaking assessment prior to the speaking portfolios. In comparison, students stated that their activities in speaking portfolio assessment were thought of as an extension of speaking activities in the classroom. That is, they perceived that they were being assessed on what they had learnt and practiced in class, establishing a high level of content validity.

I think what I do in class was closely related to what I do in e-speaking portfolios. The speaking activities in e-speaking portfolios seemed to be more samples of presentations in class (Minsu, Reflective Journal Entry #10)

Moreover, participants thought that the speaking performance assessed in their portfolios coincided with their general oral proficiency. That is, they thought their performance in speaking portfolios corresponded to their speaking performance in class or even to their level of speaking proficiency. Some of the students found that the feedback they received from e-speaking portfolios had a lot in common with that from the class.

Despite some differences such as absence of audience, I felt that the same speaking skill was being assessed in the e-speaking portfolios. Actually, even the feedback I received in class, such as choppiness, also showed up in the feedback from e-speaking portfolio assessment (Minsu, Reflective Journal Entry #2)

I realized that my performance in e-speaking portfolio is almost the same as my actual speaking proficiency. For example, when I speak in short, simple sentences, I have inappropriate pauses at all. But, when I have to produce long, complicated ones, I speak a little haltingly or even get stuck for about 10 seconds. This happened both in e-speaking portfolios and in other contexts too. (Minsu, Reflective Journal Entry #7)

Students also felt that e-speaking portfolio had a high level of reliability. They believed that it captured their true speaking performance without interference of anxiety that could negatively affect their speaking. They mentioned that the influence of language or test anxiety was minimized with multiple chances of recording their performance. They also pointed out that having a choice for the time and the place to record their speaking made the speaking assessment free of environmental variables, yielding more consistent results.

I believe that my true speaking proficiency was revealed in e-speaking portfolios. In speaking portfolios, I can shoot my video at any time, anywhere, as many times as I want. So I cannot make an excuse that I was nervous or made mistakes because of circumstantial factors. In other words, the speaking performance in portfolios is my precise speaking proficiency (Yuna, Reflective Journal entry # 10)

Students also stated that these positive attitudes towards e-speaking portfolios as assessment tools led them to value and trust the feedback they received. They

expressed that they were able to judge their level of proficiency objectively and understand what kind of efforts they have to make to improve.

Most of all, they took one important step as an EFL learner by giving up the idea of becoming a "perfect" speaker. Several students described this drastic change in their attitudes in their reflective journals; they no longer felt guilty of speaking English with some errors. They felt comfortable when showing their weaknesses in their speaking portfolio, which was perceived as another chance for them to learn and improve their speaking.

As one of the biggest changes, I realized that my fear was gone. It was not just about speaking in English. With my experience with e-speaking portfolio, I also got rid of my fear of becoming perfect. I felt free of burden of being a perfect speaker that I had. Instead of hiding my weaknesses, I tried to show them more so that I have a chance to get over them. (Dain, Reflective journal entry #11)

Moreover, they also changed their ideas of being assessed. While previous speaking assessments had been regarded as a hurdle that they had to pass or fail, they thought of the speaking portfolio assessment as a part of learning. The visible progress between the beginning and the end of the portfolio entries made it possible for learners to believe that assessment was an integral part of learning.

I think I have become more comfortable. Before e-speaking portfolio assessment, I felt overwhelmed by the idea of my speaking performance being examined and scored. However, I have become more comfortable as I kept recording in speaking portfolio cycles. (Minsu, Reflective Journal Entry #4)

This increased confidence also encouraged students to be highly motivated to speak English. They actively searched for more occasions in which they could practice and develop their speaking proficiency. Many of the students described that they had spent their free time watching English TV shows or videos uploaded by English speakers in Youtube so that they could acquire more spoken vocabulary with native-like pronunciation and intonation. They also tried to talk in English with their peers outside the classroom and asked for help from those who are at a higher level of English proficiency. The following excerpt from the reflective journal shows their heightened motivation to improve their English.

As I accumulated portfolio entries, I have noticed more of my weaknesses to work on. I also started to picture myself without those weaknesses in the near future. This experience became an impetus to plan my learning and keep working to make progress. I listened to a wide range of English spoken vocabulary, watched more English videos online, and sang English pop songs. (Donghun, Reflective Journal Entry #11)

4.3 The Students' Perceptions of E-speaking Portfolios as a Learning Tool

In this study, the repetition of the recursive cycle involved students in the integrated process of learning, teaching, and assessment. They reported alternating between learning and teaching along the recursive cycle, throughout which the assessment occurred as well (see Figure 4).

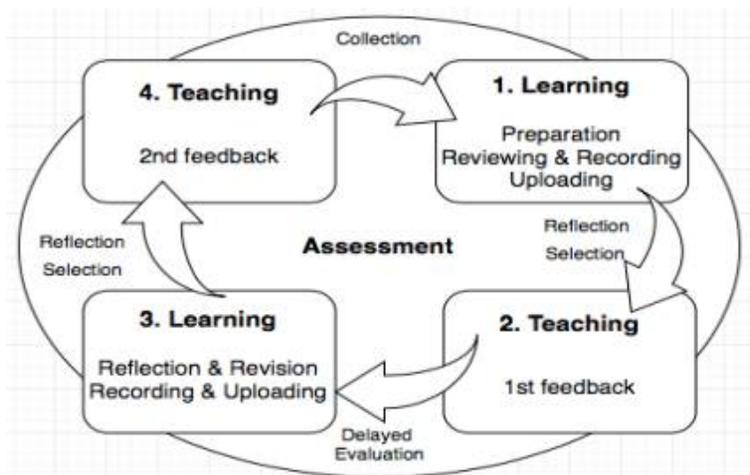


Figure 4. Assessment as Learning in E-speaking Portfolio Assessment

The results showed that the e-speaking portfolio assessment in the current study actualized Assessment as Learning (AaL) within its cycle of a series of stages such as planning, performing, and revising or editing with feedback. Students were inevitably to go through with self-assessment and self-reflection of their performance by selecting their best work and draw on metacognitive skills in the process of making revisions within the cycle.

In the initial learning period, consisting of the stages of preparation, recording & reviewing, and uploading, they self-reflect on their speaking performance (reflection) and selected the best portrait of their performance (selection). Both self-reflection and self-evaluation occurred while they reviewed and recorded multiple times. In the next teaching process, the instructor offered feedback on their initial entry. The evaluation of the initial entry did not occur at this stage but was postponed till the end of the cycle (delayed evaluation).

In the next learning process, students reflected on the feedback (reflection), revised their initial entry, and posted the revised version (selection). Simultaneously, participants also kept record of their reflection in their reflective journal, which served as a basis of their self-reflection and self-assessment. In the following teaching process, the instructor provided second feedback specifically on the areas students worked on, which was connected to the first learning process in the next cycle. As they repeated the cycle, their work was accumulated to demonstrate their progress (collection).

Overall, the assessment was not separated from teaching and learning but took place together throughout the entire recursive cycles of e-speaking portfolios. This was made possible as a result of factors embedded in the e-speaking portfolio which tied in teaching and learning. In summary, the results of the study show that AaL is manifested by this combination of teaching and learning as well as the factors of portfolio assessment that allowed for reflection.

Students believed that the videos in the electronic speaking portfolios played a critical role in monitoring their performance and increasing their autonomy. Students reported that videos served as important records of their performances by capturing what areas to improve on in their speaking at the stage of reflection & revision and after the stage of 2nd feedback. Therefore, while spending a great deal of time watching their videos at the recording & reviewing stage, students identified either improvement or stagnation more easily. Besides precisely displaying the areas to work on, video files captured a wider range of aspects of the speaking performance than audio files can, such as eye contact, gestures, and facial expressions. As most of the participants haven't observed themselves in the videos before, they found it necessary to work on these aspects of speaking performance and became more active learners as assessors.

I found videos in speaking portfolios extremely useful. I didn't have much chance

to speak in English, which naturally means no chance to reflect on my speaking proficiency either. I just had a vague idea that my level of proficiency would be this high or so. However, videos enabled me to objectively judge my speaking proficiency. (Harim, Interview #1)

In terms of language awareness, all participants reported that they noticed the gap while following the recursive cycles of e-speaking portfolios. They had noticed the gap at three different stages: recording & reviewing stage, reflection & revision stage and 2nd feedback stage. First, at the stage of recording & reviewing, participants noticed the gap between their intentions and their actual performance while watching their videos repeatedly to select the best performance to upload. Most of the participants considered this experience refreshing and helpful in that it enabled them to identify their level of oral proficiency by recognizing their weaknesses as well as their strengths.

The second noticing the in the reflection & revision stage was noticed after the participants received the first feedback. Unlike first gap between what they believed they could do and what they could actually perform, the second gap was between what they actually perform and what the feedback describes as desirable. Here, students were able to recognize the need for bridging the gap between their erroneous utterances and the more target-like ones.

Finally, the last gap was noticed while students reflected on the next feedback they received in the 2nd feedback stage. The gap that students noticed here was between how much they thought they improved and what the instructor thought of satisfactory in improvement. Therefore, if the students' performance, to some extent, corresponded with the one that the instructor expected to be enhanced, the participants did not notice the gap here.

I watched my video again to check the feedback I received on my wrong pronunciation of /r/ and /o/. Then, I found it was true. I did pronounce /o/ wrong in such a word as "topic." I had no idea of this problem before I received the feedback. (Sohee, Interview #1)

Most of the students asserted that they valued extensive speaking practice provided by e-speaking portfolio assessment. They explained that they had hardly had any chance for extensive practice of speaking skills before. According to their responses,

they usually focused on reading skills in high school and did not have much chance to speak in English. As one of the students put it:

I was used to the high school classes where I would usually jot down what the teacher said or memorize the grammar rules. (Changho, Interview #1)

Students noted this lack of opportunity to speak English even in college. There were not many extracurricular activities where they could practice speaking in English. Students also felt that English courses did not usually leave much time for speaking practice as most of the class hours are spent delivering information due to limited time. Hence, students felt a strong need to expand their learning opportunities.

Without e-speaking portfolios, I don't think I would have had the chance to practice speaking English this much. (Jiwon, Interview #1)

Therefore, the findings indicate that both the frequency and the amount of time that they spoke in English dramatically increased. Thanks to e-speaking portfolios, students spoke English with a higher frequency. Without it, they reportedly would only talk in English once a week or every other week and only during the class hours. The following quotes were extracted from student interviews and reflective journals:

I think I would only speak in English every other week when I have to make a presentation to the class. But, instead, I spoke at least once a week for a couple of hours working on my speaking portfolio entries. This offered me great extra speaking practice. (Jiho, Interview #2)

Moreover, even when participants were not working directly on their e-speaking portfolio entries, they spared extra time in their daily lives to improve their speaking performance. They realized that they needed to make more efforts outside the speaking portfolio cycle to achieve the learning goals they set. As one participant stated:

I think I have changed my way of spending my free time. Before, I used to spend my leisure time just to have fun. However, I started to spend my time speaking English regularly to achieve the goals I set while conducting the speaking portfolio. (Donghun, Interview #1)

Some of them also began to watch TV shows from English speaking countries to acquaint themselves with more native-like intonation or expand their spoken vocabulary.

I started to watch American TV shows and sitcoms at night to improve my speaking. For example, while watching a sitcom called "Friends", I observed what types of spoken vocabulary native speakers of English use and where they usually place the stresses. (Sujin, Reflective Journal Entry #9)

Most of all, they took one important step as an EFL learner by giving up the idea of becoming a "perfect" speaker. Several students described this drastic change in their attitudes in their reflective journals; they no longer felt guilty of speaking English with some errors. They felt comfortable when showing their weaknesses in their speaking portfolio, which was perceived as another chance for them to learn and improve their speaking.

As one of the biggest changes, I realized that my fear was gone. It was not just about speaking in English. With my experience with e-speaking portfolio, I also got rid of my fear of becoming perfect. I felt free of burden of being a perfect speaker. Instead of hiding my weaknesses, I tried to show them more so that I have a chance to overcome them. (Dain, Reflective Journal Entry #11)

The students' perceptions of being assessed have changed throughout the process. While previous speaking assessments had been regarded as a hurdle that they had to pass or fail, they thought of the speaking portfolio assessment as a part of learning. The visible progress between the beginning and the end of the portfolio entries made it possible for learners to believe that assessment was an integral part of learning.

I think I have become more comfortable. Before e-speaking portfolio assessment, I felt overwhelmed by the idea of my speaking performance being examined and scored. However, I have become more comfortable as I kept recording in speaking portfolio cycles. (Minsu, Reflective Journal Entry #4)

This increased confidence also encouraged students to be highly motivated to speak

English. They actively searched for more occasions in which they could practice and develop their speaking proficiency. Many of the students described that they had spent their free time watching English TV shows or videos uploaded by English speakers in Youtube so that they could acquire more spoken vocabulary with native-like pronunciation and intonation. They also tried to talk in English with their peers outside the classroom and asked for help from those who are at a higher level of English proficiency. The following excerpt from the reflective journal shows their heightened motivation to improve their English.

As I accumulated portfolio entries, I have noticed more of my weaknesses to work on. I also started to picture myself without those weaknesses in the near future. This experience became an impetus to plan my learning and keep working to make progress. I listened to a wide range of English spoken vocabulary, watched more English videos online, and sang English pop songs. (Donghun, Reflective Journal Entry #11)

5. Conclusion

The results of this study showed that students gained a wider perspective and deeper awareness of their own speaking skills as well as their speaking development through as they experienced recursive cycles. In addition, they were given opportunities to reflect on the noticed factors and act out accordingly. Continuous feedback from the teacher throughout the semester allowed them to notice and become aware of their own speaking skills. Repetition of the contents of the feedback from the teacher seemed to have helped them focus on the particular area that needs improvement, which enhanced their self-assessment abilities. The students perceived e-speaking portfolios as an effective tool for both assessing and learning since they were able to experience the connection between the two.

This study implies that reflective learning is not the result of a one-time event but an accumulation of steps within the learning process. Teacher feedback should be provided with ample opportunities for students to digest the content by means of reflective activities such as keeping a reflective journal. In order to guide the students efficiently through the feedback cycle, it is essential for teachers to diagnose areas that need further development with continuous feedback as well as provide appropriate

opportunities for students to reflect on their progress.

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