

#### ISSN 2581-5148

Vol. 5, Issue.3, May-June 2022, page no. 177-189

To cite this article: Nadia Asma', Prof. Diah Kristina, M. A, Ph.D and Dr. Sumardi,M.Hum (2022). E-PORTFOLIO FOR ENGLISH SPEAKING: A CASE STUDY OF ENGLISH TEACHER'S STRATEGY IN IMPROVING STUDENTS' SPEAKING SKILL DURING SCHOOL CLOSURE CAUSED BY PANDEMIC, International Journal of Education and Social Science Research (IJESSR) 5 (3): 177-189

## E-PORTFOLIO FOR ENGLISH SPEAKING: A CASE STUDY OF ENGLISH TEACHER'S STRATEGY IN IMPROVING STUDENTS' SPEAKING SKILL DURING SCHOOL CLOSURE CAUSED BY PANDEMIC

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DOI: http://dx.doi.org/10.37500/IJESSR.2022.5312

### ABSTRACT

This case study investigates the impact of e-portfolio on Indonesian EFL students' speaking abilities. It investigates whether e-portfolio helps students improve their speaking skills while schools are closed due to a pandemic. 32 students from an Indonesian Senior High School participated in the study. In the English subject, the students were given two speaking assignments. They had to prepare, video or audio record, and publish their assignments to MS Teams which served as an e-portfolio platform. Online Interviews and self-assessment form were utilized to gather data. Content analysis was used to examine the data gathered. The results demonstrate that using an e-portfolio can help Indonesian EFL students improve their academic, affective, and technological improvements toward English speaking ability.

**KEYWORDS**: E-portfolio, Teacher Strategy, Speaking, Pandemic.

## INTRODUCTION

Schools starts to shifted their teaching environment and practical activities to the virtual environment as the number of new COVID-19 cases and school closures increased (Sepulveda-Escobar, 2020). The interest in e-learning tools and technology has exploded since these help teachers to deliver their material via online rather than face-to-face (Jones, 2021). E-learning tools and technology are developed to have rich futures so teachers can adjust and use it based on their need in improving their students' skills. One of the e-learning tools and technology is e-portfolio. It has gotten a lot of attention in EFL context and are being employed to assist and enhance learning and teaching (Hinojosa-Pareja et al., 2020; Oh et al., 2020). Furthermore, e-Portfolios can encourage more student-cantered learning, reflective activities, and tailored learning among students with varying levels of knowledge (Stefani et al., 2007; Yang et al., 2016). An e-portfolio is defined as "a digitized collection of artifacts including demonstrations, resources, and accomplishments that represent an individual, group, or institution" (Lorenzo and Ittelson, 2005). In other words, it is a digital collection of student's work, reflections, learning, and experience, which may be composed of "text-based, graphic, or multimedia elements archived on a Web site" (Namaziandos, 2020). The literature seems to reveal a general consensus of

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three major types of e-Portfolio. In the same vein, Maher and Gerbic (2009) concluded that there are three different types of portfolios: a learning portfolio, a showcase portfolio, and an assessment portfolio. The current study, however, regarded the portfolio as an learning tool and assessment tool to be used for gauging students' speaking development.

Since teachers are aware that their students' outcome is an indicator of the quality of their work, accountability purposes of assessment might dominate teachers' assessment beliefs. Although teachers are encouraged to use formative assessment during the school year, they seldom utilize this assessment type. Bolliger and Shepherd (2010) and also Lin (2008) reported that using e-portfolio was successful in enhancing the communicative and interactive skills of students as they will be required to communicate and interact with their peers and teachers to improve their learning using an e-portfolio system. Namaziandost, et al., (2020) and Yastibas & Yastibas (2015) also reported that e-portfolio is considered as a dynamic assessment tool since the construction of e-portfolio is experiencing a developing status as a result of the organization of content, collection and selection of artifacts, the self-assessment and self-reflection of the learning process, and improvement made according to selfassessment and self-reflection. According to scholars like Goldsmith (2007), Schmitz et al., (2010), and Gray (2008) e-portfolios are regarded as personalized tools as students will have the opportunity to form their e-portfolios on their own. Goldsmith (2007) also report that the students describe their ability to understand these connections as well as the connections between their own lives and their academic work. It can be applied for the assessment of learners' learning development; and provides learners with feedback on their learning, teachers with the assessment of students' learning development. Akçıl & Arap, (2009) also report that e-portfolio is motivational since it provides the students with the ownership of their learning and leads to the improvement of their skills. It promotes self-reflection as students are required to reflect on their learning and assess their learning processes via e-portfolios.

E-portfolio is used in language teaching and learning. However, it is not commonly used to teach speaking skills in language teaching and learning. Therefore, the present study aims to answer the following two questions:

- 1. Can e-portfolio be effectively used in speaking skill?
- 2. How does it contribute to students' speaking skill?

## LITERATURE REVIEW

## E-Portfolio in EFL teaching-learning context

The benefits of e-Portfolios have been well documented in the literature. E-portfolios are viewed as conveniently accessible evaluation tools that can store a variety of media, can be easily updated, and can certainly be used to reference students' work (Namaziandost, Hosseini et al., 2020). Two major benefits of incorporating e-portfolios into teaching-learning contexts include providing learners with opportunities to reflect on their own learning and, more crucially, providing teachers with great



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opportunities to provide feedback on their students' work (Ahn, 2004). E-portfolios have ten distinct characteristics, according to Yastibas & Yastibas (2015) which are Authentic, controlled, communicative, dynamic, customized, integrative, multi-purposed, multi-sourced, motivational, and reflective attributes were attributed to the deployment of an e-portfolio system in their evaluation of the literature. They said that an e-portfolio is authentic because it allows students to take ownership of their learning by requiring them to create their own e-portfolios, reflect on their learning processes and results, and enhance their learning as a result of their reflections (Goldsmith, 2007; Reese & Levy, 2009).

### E-portfolio representing formative assessment

Although the phrase e-portfolio is often used interchangeably with the term formative assessment, it can also be used for summative evaluation (EUfolio, 2013). E-portfolios, in this context, serve as a repository for student work (Yastibas & Yastibas, 2015). E-portfolios for formative assessment, on the other hand, can be attributed to what was mentioned in the European Commission guide for the use of e-portfolios, also known as EUfolio, which introduced eportfolio for formative assessment as a "collaborative, continuous discourse between teacher and student" (EUfolio, 2013) and, like all forms of formative assessment, can be used to revisit the teaching and learning processes to accommodate student needs (Black & Wiliam, 2010). As a pedagogical tool, an E-portfolio system can also improve formative assessment in the classroom. The platform encourages feedback, which leads to improved communication between the student and the teacher. This is consistent with Marshall and Wiliam (2006), who stated that the primary goal of formative assessment is to develop and support learning, and providing feedback should involve both the teacher and the student.

Level 1, Level 2, and Level 3 e-portfolio functions are all covered in this development process. The student can save exemplars of work at Level 1 (student repository). This work can be used to create success criteria, which are the standards by which work will be appraised once completed, determining its success in the eyes of both the student and the teacher. In the student workspace at Level 2 (student workspace), the student is actively involved in the creation process and can seek input from peers, teachers, as well as engage in self-reflection. Once the procedure is complete, the student can exhibit their knowledge at the product stage and display their work in their showcase (Level 3).

### E-portfolio enhancing learning

E-portfolios could assist learning in a variety of ways since they are built on the use of formative evaluation to support the development of reflection and self-regulation, both of which are considered essential components of the learning process (Welsh, 2012). Several research have examined the concept of self-assessment and its impact on student learning growth (Namaziandost, et al., 2020). The major findings of the studies cited, according to Welsh (2012), were founded on the idea that active participation in the assessment process aids in the development of higher-order thinking including analysis, synthesis, and evaluation.



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The use of an e-Portfolio as a platform for student self-assessment can help students take control of their learning and become more self-reliant (Black et al., 2004). Self-assessment, according to Black et al. (2004), offers students with opportunities to operate at a metacognitive level. When students participate in self-reflection, they begin to construct an outline of their efforts that allows them to guide and manage their artifacts for themselves. Students can engage in peer-to-peer discourse and peer evaluation using the E-portfolio-based assessment platform. In a similar line, Stefani et al. (2007) determined that peer-reflecting on students' artifacts is an excellent motivator for students to improve the quality and effort they put into their work. Furthermore, those who make comments gain as much knowledge as those who receive criticism on their work. In line with the importance of self- and peer-assessment, Welsh (2012) conducted another study in which she claimed that self- and peer-assessment could be considered an effective way of promoting self-regulation in students, and that this process was aided by the use of an eportfolio assessment platform.

#### Attitudes towards implementing E-portfolio system

Exploring the students' perceptions towards the implementation of the E-portfolio assessment platform has gained an attraction in the field of educational technology. One study conducted by Wang and Jeffrey (2017) did shed light on college students' attitudes towards the adoption of eportfolios in English assessment and learning. The results of their study revealed that the vast majority of participants showed a preference for the e-portfolio assessment platform in comparison to paper-based examinations. Another investigation conducted by Welsh (2012) was an attempt to explore the students' perceptions of using the PebblePad e-portfolio platform to promote self- and peer-based formative assessment. In her investigation, the researcher aimed at documenting the experiences of assessment and feedback and PebblePad application on the course and detailing the effect of these on students' ability to self-regulate learning. The findings of her study indicated that the implementation of the E-portfolio-based assessment platform has the potential to enhance students' self-regulation. Even though the implementation of the E-portfolio assessment platform has gained prominence among educators (Yancey, 2009), in some cases, teachers expressed that they were excessively overburdened with the workload from the application of the e-portfolio assessment platform (Chang et al., 2012) or solely demonstrated that they were lacking necessary training about the proper usage of E-portfolio assessment system (Fong et al., 2014). Yancey (2009) carried out a study to show how an e-portfolio assessment platform can be utilized to gather reflections from students. In her review of e-portfolio implementation, she concluded that students who reflected were more engaged and reported more benefits of learning.

#### METHODOLOGY

#### Research Design

This study is a case study that explore the impact of e-portfolio on Indonesian senior high school students' speaking abilities during the school closure caused by Pandemic. It was carried out for eight weeks online to know the students' speaking development. Interviews, students' diaries, and students'



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self-assessment forms were used as the data for this study. The tools used to gain the Microsoft Team, WhatsApp, and Google Form.

### Instruments

To collect data, two interviews (interview 1 and interview 2) and two self-assessment forms were used. The researchers used triangulation to measure and determine the reliability and validity of the data collection instruments. Interview 1 was conducted at the beginning of the study in order to find out what the students thought about speaking, what kind of difficulties they had while speaking, and what their ideas were about self-assessment of their own speaking performances. Also, they were given two self-assessment papers to self-assess their own projects about the two assignments in order to help them to understand what they did well and what they thought they should improve. In the end, interview 2 was carried out with them to understand and learn how speaking e-portfolio could affect their speaking in terms of performance, motivation, self-confidence, and self-assessment, how it could affect their technology skills, and what they thought about whether e-portfolio should be used or not in speaking classes.

### Participants

The number of the students participating in the study was 32 students at grade XI in one of Indonesian senior high schools. There were 14 male and 18 female students.

#### Data Collection Procedure

This study lasted eight weeks. The eight weeks was designed and organized as follows:

A. *The first four weeks:* The first four weeks was designed to carry out the first assignment about fashion. In the first week, interview 1 was conducted with the students. The online interview through Google Form were distributed to the students, but only 22 returned. The students were informed about the e-portfolio process and the expectations of speaking e-portfolio. They were trained how they could record and create their own video or audio by using PowToon and submit their assignments to MS Teams which is used as the online speaking e-portfolio platform. Also, the researchers formed one WebQuest using google site for the students which indicate them how to make an email account in PowToon, record video or audio, upload their recordings to youtube.com, and submit their projects to their teacher's online website. The first assignment was an individual assignment. After the students were given their first assignments, they prepared and submitted their first projects to their teacher's website in the second week. Since they had some problems with recording and uploading, the researchers did another training session with the students. Students' projects were evaluated and given feedback by the researchers. Depending on the feedback given, they prepared their projects. After the self-assessment process finished, the researchers evaluated their reuploaded projects.

B. *The second four weeks:* The students were given their second assignment about games in the fifth week. In the second assignment, they were allowed to prepare their projects individually, in pairs or



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groups. After they prepared and submitted their projects, the researchers evaluated their projects and gave feedback for each project in the sixth week. In the seventh week, the students organized and prepared their projects again according to the feedback given. Afterwards, they self-assessed their projects. In the eighth week, the researchers evaluated the students' projects. The students wrote diary about the process. In addition, the online interview 2 through Google Form were distributed to the students, but only 25 returned.

## Data Collection

MS Teams is a free online learning management system (LMS) which a teacher can organize his/ her online class, give assignments to his/her students, collect and grade their assignments. MS Teams like Facebook because each user has their own profile pages, can post their own messages, like others' posts, and make comments to their friends' post. Also, the teacher can make announcements about the online class and share documents.

The teachers used MS Teams as the online platform for speaking portfolio. The students were given two assignments on it. When they prepared their video or audio about the assignments, they first uploaded their videos to YouTube and share the video link in MS Teams. The teachers, therefore, could evaluate the students' videos. The students could see their feedback under their videos, improve and reprepare their videos according to the feedback given. In addition, the researchers could observe the students' learning process when they clicked on their profile pages because MS Teams kept their projects there.

## Data Analysis

The data collection instruments were totally qualitative, so content analysis method was used to analyze them in an order determined according to the research questions. To make content analysis, the researchers applied to the qualitative data analysis procedure mentioned by Cabaroðlu (2006). The procedure includes familiarization, coding/labeling, clustering, defining codes operationally, retrieving and organizing data, and looking for interrelationships between categories (Köse 2006), but the researchers used familiarization, coding/labeling, clustering, retrieving and organizing data, and looking for interrelationships between categories. The first research question asks if e-portfolio can be effectively used in speaking skill. Each data collection instrument was analyzed separately, and the findings were evaluated in the end. The researchers read interview 1, self- assessment papers 1 and 2, and interview 2 to familiarize with the data. Then they coded the repeated items in interview 1, selfassessment papers 1 and 2, and interview 2. In students' diary, they followed the same way, but they also used cluster of codes. Then they made a general evaluation of the findings and determined the attitudes of the students towards the use of e-portfolio in speaking skill in order to understand whether e-portfolio can be effectively used in speaking skill. The second research question investigates the question of how e-portfolio contributes to the students' speaking skills. Interview 2 and students' diary were analyzed together for the second research question. At first, the researchers read interview 2 and



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students' diary and tried to find out the data that they would need for the research question. This process required repeated reading because it enabled them to be familiar with the data. In the second step after familiarization, they developed codes depending on the repeated items in the data collection instruments. In the third step, they clustered the codes and developed two categories: effective and contribution.

### **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

The results of the analysis of the data collection instruments were mentioned and explained in an order determined to the research questions under the two following titles.

- 1. The effective use of e-portfolio in speaking skill
- 2. E-portfolio's contributions to students' speaking skills

## 1. The Effective Use of E-portfolio in Speaking Skill

To answer this question, students' diaries, interviews and self-assessment forms were analyzed. The students' diaries, the questions in interviews, and self-assessment forms were designed to find out what the students thought about speaking, did they look for their difficulties while they watched their speaking in the video, what they thought about self-assessing their speaking, and what they thought about whether recording, watching or listening to their speech on an online platform could improve their speaking. In order to understand the effectiveness of e-portfolio in speaking skills, the students' attitudes towards the use of e-portfolio in speaking were determined by using the assumptions acquired through the analysis of each data collection tool.

## 1.1 Students' Perception toward Speaking

Starting with what they thought about speaking, only nine students thought that speaking is an easy skill to learn because practicing can improve their speaking skills. Following are some example excerpts from students' interviews.

Student 1: "Speaking can be improved by practicing a lot. It is not difficult to be learned"

Student 2: "it can be improved by speaking a lot."

As it is mentioned in the first paragraph, less than half of the students thought that speaking can be learned and improved easily as long as they practice speaking. On the other hand, 13 of them thought that it is difficult to learn. One of them said that

Students 13: "It is not easy to improve my speaking since I don't have friend who want to talk freely in English with me."

It indicated that students need to practice a lot in English and need to search an environment which support them to improve their English-speaking skill. It is in line with Cepik (2013) which reported

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that many students have problems in improving their speaking skill and teachers should provide an environment which could support the improvement of their students.

1.2 Academic and Affective difficulties affect the students' speaking ability

Due to difficulties in English speaking, all of the students wrote in their diaries that they had difficulties while they were speaking. The difficulties of the students could be categorized as academic and affective difficulties that were determined by the researchers depending on the students' responses to the questions in interviews. Academic difficulties are generally related to grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation while affective ones are related to anxiety, self-confidence, and motivation. The example excerpts from the students' responses to the interviews show this categorization clearly.

Student 11: "Yes, I have. I don't know whether my grammar is correct or no while I am speaking..."

Student 12: "I think, my pronunciation is very bad. I know the word but it is hard to mention it."

Student 18:" I am afraid that everyone will correct my words since I speak incorrectly"

Student 19: "I am not confident to speak English, I think everyone speak well and only me who could not speak it well. I don't have a lot of English vocabulary like my friends have"

As it is understood from the excerpts, academic difficulties such as grammar, pronunciation, vocabulary; and affective difficulties such as not being confident and anxiety may cause difficulties in speaking. It indicated that the students tried to find the problematical parts in their speaking. It is good since self-awareness help the students identified their problem so they could search the solution about it. It is in line with Cepik (2013) who mention that self-awareness could help the students to improve their speaking in terms of grammar, pronunciation, and vocabulary.

## 1.3 Self-assessing by watching video

Based on the interviews, only 18 students did self-assessing by watching their own video and assess their speaking based on the self-assessment form given by their teacher. They thought that this activity could improve their speaking since it helps them to assess their speaking by themselves.

Student 18: "Yes, it can improve. I can correct my mistakes by watching my mistakes such as the grammar that I used when I speak, my pronunciation, whether It is good or not.."

Student 17: "I will be more confident if I assess it first and correct it again and then I show the good one to my teacher and present it to my friends. It can improve my speaking ability too."

These sentences indicate that students did self-reflection and assess their speaking on the video. Self-reflection is important component of e-portfolio since reflection will lead the students to find their



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weaknesses and search the solution to improve their qualities in terms of grammar, pronunciation, and confidence (Goldsmith 2007; Reese and Levy 2009; Lin 2008).

## 1.4 Students' responses toward the e-portfolio

The students' responses toward the e-portfolio were categorized into academic, affective and technological improvement. The data was gathered based on the students' diaries during the process of speaking learning. *Academic improvements* involve improvements in grammar, pronunciation. To give an example:

Student 15: "When I watch my projects for the first and second tasks, I can see the difference between my first project for task 1 and my second project. I could realize the mistakes, especially my grammar and my pronunciation so I spoke better in the second project."

The excerpts indicate that the students could be aware of their grammar, and pronunciation, mistake they made while speaking. They tried to overcome these mistakes. As a result, they did better in the second task. It indicated that they have improvement in term of academic comprehension. It is in line with Goldsmith (2007) who said that doing self-reflection to their own learning process can help students to assess their own learning processes and prepare better outcome for the other assignment

Affective improvements involve reducing the students' anxiety and improving their confidence, so they could speak easily. To illustrate:

Student 7: "I was very excited while I was preparing the video, I learned how to overcome my excitement while speaking and it motivate me to speak a lot since I could assess it first before my friends and my teacher so I could fix the problem occur while I speak."

This sentence indicated that self-reflection could cause self-motivation since it provides the students with the ownership of their learning and leads to the improvement of their skills (Akçıl & Arap, 2009; Bolliger & Shepherd, 2010; Rhodes, 2011). Speaking in front of people may cause anxiety and lack of self-confidence, which may affect speaking negatively. The speaking e-portfolio allowed the students to organize their own projects for the assignment and to practice their speaking alone, so the students could feel more relaxed to speak and build their self-confidence, which motivated the students to some extent.

*Technology improvement* involve of the adding skill of technological use of video or audio recording. The students used Powtoon to make the video and then they should upload it to YouTube. Here is the example that indicate the students' improvements in their technological skills.

Student 7: "During the preparation process, I had some difficulties because I did not know how to use Powtoon and how to upload it to YouTube. But now, after my teachers and my



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friend taugh me how to use it, I knew it and I could use it to for my other project. I did not experience any difficulties in the third video."

The results show that e-portfolio also could improve the students' technology skills. The speaking e-portfolio required recording video or audio, uploading it to YouTube, and submit- ting it to MS Teams as the LMS (Learning Management System) that the teacher used for collecting the students e-portfolios. It indicated that providing students with task which allow them to learn new tools in learning improves the students' technological knowledge of learning something (Ahn, 2004)

To sum up, it can be said that the academic, affective, and technological improvements could have affected the students' feelings about the e-portfolio tasks positively. It may be because the students could understand that they could improve their own learning in speaking classes through the use of e-portfolio. Providing learners with the opportunity to reflect on their own learning and more importantly giving teachers valuable chances to provide detailed feedback on their students' work are two main advantages of implementing eportfolios into teaching-learning contexts (Ahn, 2004).

### 2. E-portfolio's Contributions to Students' Speaking Skills

To answer this research question, interviews and students' diaries were used. As a result, they could give information about what the students think about the contributions of e-portfolio to their speaking performance. In terms of academic improvements, speaking e-portfolio enables the students to develop their self-assessment skills because one of the requirements of e-portfolio is to self-evaluate one's own learning in order to understand what s/he has done well and what s/he should improve. In accordance with this, it can be said that the students found out that they had problems with grammar, pronunciation, and vocabulary while they were speaking. This forced them to try to find some solutions to improve the problems they found out themselves in their speaking. The examples below illustrate the situation:

Student 4: "I did not record my voice while speaking before. Thanks to e-portfolio I could realize the mistakes, especially pronunciation... During this process, I understood that I made some grammar mistakes and incorrect use of some basic words. I could try to use the structures that I learned in the next assignment."

It indicated that the students could improve their speaking in terms of grammar, pronunciation, and vocabulary and in terms of self-confidence, motivation, and anxiety. Students' data explain the reasons for these improvements. First, the students have developed a sense of self-assessment and become more self-aware of their own learning. This awareness could help them understand what they did well and what they should improve. Then they were required to understand what they should improve and find out the solution(s) to overcome. It I in line with Ahn (2004) who report that providing learners with the opportunity to reflect on their own learning lead the students to find the problem along with the solution of the problem so they could provide better result for the next assignment.



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### CONCLUSION

This study was explored the effective use of e-portfolio in speaking skill and E-portfolio's contributions to students' speaking skills. The result showed that e-portfolio was effective and have contributed in students' speaking skill since it helps them to improve their academic, affective and technological knowledge toward speaking. The effects of it are positive on the students' speaking skills and are generally seen on their use of language (grammar, pronunciation, and vocabulary) and on their psychology in terms of feeling anxious and not self- confident while speaking. E-portfolio could be one of the teachers' tools in improving students speaking skill during the school closure. This research had some limitation due to the sample size and it was done only in senior high school level. It might have better understanding about e-portfolio if other research does e-portfolio for other school level with more sample.

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#### ISSN 2581-5148

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