



RESEARCH PAPER**Pakistani Learners' Perceptions of Portfolio Assessment as a Motivational Factor in Learning English as a Foreign Language****¹Dr. Aamir Majeed, ²Maida Maqsood* and ³Mahmuda Akther Labony**

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ABSTRACT

The importance of aligning assessment methods with EU standards for efficient language acquisition has grown in response to the dynamic changes in educational needs. The purpose of the study is to investigate how students' motivation to learn English as a foreign language (EFL) is influenced by portfolio-based assessment. This study recognizes the difficulties teachers encounter when implementing effective classroom instruction and assessment strategies, and it responds to the increasing interest in assessing student performance. The study aims to collect student opinions regarding portfolio-based rewards for EFL coursework and investigates the effects of this evaluation technique on motivation. Using online surveys, graduate students at "The Linguists," a Sialkot-based English language institute, participated in this qualitative study. The goal of the qualitative lens of inquiry was to learn how students perceived the motivational impact of portfolio assessments. The questionnaire included both closed-ended and open-ended questions to find out how students felt about the impact of portfolio assessments on their motivation and interest in learning. Analysis showed that portfolio evaluations had a favorable impact on students' motivation to learn EFL, independence, and critical thinking. Pupils highlighted how portfolios promoted self-evaluation and increased engagement, which showed promise for improved learning outcomes. They saw portfolios as essential for identifying their advantages and disadvantages, encouraging self-reliance, and developing reflective abilities. The study, which noted students' increasing independence over time, emphasized the necessity of teachers providing initial guidance in the use of portfolios.

KEYWORDS

English, Foreign Language, Learners' Perceptions, Motivational Factor, Portfolio Assessment

Introduction

Adapting the educational system to the needs of the times necessitates ongoing modification as a result of numerous political, social, and economic shifts, as well as scientific and technological advancements. In order to maintain and adapt to European Union rules, it is necessary to make adjustments to student evaluation in order to support effective assessment that causes students to acquire a foreign language.

There has been a significant uptick in the interest in evaluating student performance on the part of educators, researchers, and educational systems. In this topic, the role for evaluation in the process of learning and instruction is emphasised. Teachers

now face challenges not only in the classroom but also in the assessment of students' learning. To better aid students in acquiring information, competence, and conduct, the evaluation procedure at the school at classroom levels must change.

The purpose of this research is to hear students' feedback on a potential portfolio-based incentive tool for EFL study. Portfolios are highly effective forms of assessment because they incorporate teacher and student feedback. The portfolio's continual image of an individual's progress and reflection of that progress is another major benefit, setting it apart from more conventional procedures like summative assessment or standardised testing. Evidence for this can be found in a 2007 study (Herrera et al).

Literature Review

Black and William (1998b) defined formative assessment as: "All actions in which teachers and students engage provide data that will be used to modify and improve teaching and learning activities. (p. 140). This definition is not limited to formal tests, quizzes, or homework, but is a collection of evidence of learning through practice, such as student portfolios, self-assessments, peer assessments, and strategic questions. Popham (2008) also states that teachers and students can influence and change the teaching process. More specifically, he defines assessment as follows: "Assessment provides information about student achievement that teachers use to improve their instructional practices." (p. 6).

In the above definition, we find three main components: evidence of student knowledge, the nature of feedback provided, and the improvement of teaching practices. These three key elements of formative assessment are also distinguished by Brookhart (2011), "Formative assessment: 1) gather information about instructional practices, 2) make judgments about instruction based on the data collected, 3) help students based on their needs for improvement." (p. 43).

In a meta-analysis of studies on classroom assessment practices, Terry Crooks (1988) summarized the results of 14 separate areas of research to shed light on student achievement and the impact of classroom assessment practices. Crooks summarized the findings of his research on the impact of assessment on students. According to him, class assessment is an assessment based on the activities that students participate in as part of their educational programs. These activities can include tasks such as formal tests designed by teachers, tests based on the school curriculum (questions and other exercises as an integrated part of the learning materials), student-directed questions and various other performance activities (cognitive and psychomotor). ." (p. 467).

He summed up what he had learned about assessment and its significance for the educational setting and its pupils. His studies show that students benefit from assessment because it helps them prioritise what they need to learn, increases their interest in learning, strengthens their sense of their own abilities, directs their study efforts, reinforces their progress, and impacts the growth of their knowledge and study techniques. According to Crooks, "assessment is one of the most important elements that affect education."

The effects of formative assessment were not investigated by Brookhart (2007), who studied the relationship between teacher evaluation practises and student motivation in secondary schools. Learning goals can be more effectively addressed through the use of formative assessment strategies like gap analysis and remediation.

Further, "The Impact of Assessment Practises on Student Achievement," by Brookhart, Moss, and Long (2009), highlighted the results of a five-year study carried out in conjunction with the Armstrong School at Western the state of Pennsylvania and the Centre for the Advancement of Learning and Teaching at the School of Education at the University of Duquesne in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. The research centred on formative assessment, which involves two-way communication between a teacher and a student about the latter's progress through a course, with the latter's awareness of his own growth as a learner serving as an important outcome.

Student belief in one's own abilities to handle a certain task successfully is known as self-efficacy.

Students' ability to self-regulate as they play an integral part in their own education.

Boosting confidence comes when students evaluate their own work, set goals for themselves, and work towards them.

The extent to which students put forth effort in pursuit of their goals is largely dependent on their self-attributions, or the reasons they give for their successes and setbacks.

In light of the literature review, the results of the aforementioned studies, and the benefits of preliminary evaluation of results as well as student motivation, we decided to think about the student a portfolio as one in the formative assessment treatments and determine its impact on the desire of learners to learn. Foreign language instruction in English.

Portfolio analysis is not a novel idea. Historical portfolios were originally a collection of works by a pupil meant to display their skill. (Bintz, 1991). As a tool of making the shift from conventional to more genuine forms of evaluation, portfolios have gained in popularity. Mayer and Tusin (1999). Students can demonstrate their effort, growth, and level of comprehension over time by compiling their work, as stated by William and Thompson (2008). However, the purpose of portfolios is shifting as a result of the increased significance and utility brought about by improvements in portfolio design and content. Portfolios are a great way to showcase student work and show that it is linked with the learning objectives, and they are based on constructivist ideals, which hold that students ought to develop their own educational experiences rather than receiving guidance by professors. "(Steffe & Gale, 1995)" Portfolio preparation, as described by Biggs (1998), is an active process that necessitates constant review, reflection, and reflection in order to provide proof of the achievement of learning objectives. Students are more likely to take stock of their progress, recognise areas in which they can improve, and be inspired by the process of creating a portfolio (Harris, Dolan, & Fairbairn, 2001). This premise needs to be empirically tested in order to show that the portfolio is a valuable assessment tool.

Portfolios, according to the authors Wiggins and McTighe (2007), "serve as a collection of images including distinctive photographs from various periods and places", in contrast in comparison to conventional evaluation systems that take a "snapshot" of students' work at a given moment. In addition, Herrera et al. (2007) state that portfolios display a collection of students' work and that "some demonstrate how students learn about the method and how the outcome of their work met the criteria of the setting." According to Genesee and Upshur (1996), a portfolio is a collection of work that serves to demonstrate one's growth and accomplishments to oneself and one's contemporaries. The development of students is monitored through the usage of portfolios. A student's progress

in several areas of the target language might be highlighted in a foreign language portfolio with a narrow focus. When it comes to evaluating students' progress, Genesee and Upshur insist that portfolios are crucial. They are crucial because they serve as a public and permanent record of a student's linguistic growth. The authors make it apparent that using portfolios as a form of student assessment can increase motivation and responsibility. Students who are given the opportunity to contribute to their own assessment and learning benefit from portfolios. Wiggin and McTighe (2007) argue that before using portfolios, educators should decide what they hope to achieve from the experience. The teacher has complete discretion over the types of student work assigned, who is responsible for supervising it, and how often it is examined for accuracy. Teachers sometimes urged students to submit essays, reflections, illustrations, self-assessments, advance notes, films, and audio samples in their course work.

Belanoff (1994) argues that when students are given the freedom to choose the assignments for which they will be evaluated, to reflect on and revise those assignments on their own, to take risks in their work and to solicit feedback from their peers, assessment ceases to be a negative force and instead becomes a positive force which encourages progress, maturity, and autonomy. Portfolios are not only a representation of classroom activities and student work, but also of "continuous adjustments to teaching methods and assessment" and an evaluation of learning, both of which boost student motivation. I. Introduction (Herrera et al., 2007:32). Reflection, according to Gallagher (2001), is an essential part of portfolios because it helps students benefit from their observations and practise while also connecting theory and practise. Reflection, according to Gallagher, helps students do more than just recognise where they need to improve their knowledge and skills; it also affirms the good things they already know and can do.

Material and Methods

The participants in this preliminary investigation were graduate school students. Students' perspectives on portfolio assessment were examined through a qualitative lens in this study. Students' opinions on the portfolio assessment method and its effect on their interest in learning were gathered using an online survey. This study has objectives for the study that will be completed with appropriate research questions in order to investigate how students view portfolio as a motivating element and to achieve its goals using the findings of numerous studies on the use & motivation of portfolio.

Participants

The research sample consists of 48 students enrolled in English classes at "The Linguists," an English language institute in Sialkot. Given the qualitative focus of our research, convenience sampling was the method of choice.

Data Collection

An online anonymous poll was administered to students to glean their thoughts on portfolio assessment (see Appendix). Google Forms and Whatsapp were used to distribute this survey to all students. In order to learn more about their thoughts on EFL assessment methods, the survey used a questionnaire with both open-ended and closed-ended questions. Portfolio assessment's impact on learning and student motivation was called into question. 48 out of 55 students participated in the survey in the year 2022. The chose owner of the institution coordinated the data collection process. Ten questions on student perception of portfolio use and evaluation were closed-ended, requiring responses of "agree," "strongly agree," "disagree," "neutral," and "other," while three questions on

student perception of the evaluation of portfolios as a motivating factor were open-ended and required brief answers.

Data analysis

Descriptive reports and tables presenting the results of each query with percentile values were used for data analysis. The following steps were taken to analyse the data using this methodology: Closed-question data was analysed using percentages. The following bar charts illustrate how students feel about the portfolio and why they feel that way.

Thematic analysis was used to examine the narrative descriptions given in response to free-form questions.

Ethical considerations in data collection

Keeping to these moral standards became a major problem for everyone involved in this project. One of the primary focuses of the study was to make the purpose of the investigation very clear so that no misunderstandings would arise. Several measures were taken in this investigation to guarantee the highest possible level of ethical conduct. The researcher made sure to get approval from the head of the research facility where the study was done before collecting any data. Before providing the web-based survey, the goal of the research, the optional nature of involvement in the study and the ability to walk away from it should they decide not to take part are explained. All participants were made aware that their responses would be used exclusively for scientific analysis. All data utilised in this investigation were kept confidential. Each piece of information has been meticulously labelled for security.

Study Limitations

This study's goals were to (1) identify the students' opinions of portfolios' use in foreign language education and (2) determine whether or not there is a connection between collections' use as a means of assessment and its effect on students' motivation to learn a foreign language.

All reasonable efforts were made to ensure the confidentiality and anonymity of the participants in this study.

Results and Discussion

There were just 48 pupils that filled out the survey. Despite the fact that this study's small sample size is a drawback, the findings reported here can nevertheless help us gain a better comprehension of how students value Portfolio Assessment. The two questions that served as the basis for this study will be examined in light of the findings.

To get input from students regarding a possible portfolio-based EFL study reward mechanism. Since they take into account comments from instructors and students regarding the learning process, portfolios are useful instruments for assessment. This inquiry employed qualitative methods. Students at the English language training centre "The Language Researchers" in Sialkot provided us with responses to a questionnaire survey that we used. Students expressed that using portfolios as an assessment tool increased their sense of independence, pushed them to think critically, and motivated them to work harder when questioned about their feelings towards the practice. Rather than focusing solely on highlighting students' shortcomings, the portfolio method of assessment

fosters student growth and self-reliance. The portfolio pushes children to study English as a foreign language by fostering their critical thinking and independence. The purpose of this study is to determine how students perceive their portfolios as motivating factors. It will accomplish these aims by using the results of other studies on the use and inspiration of showcases. The objectives of the study will be fulfilled with pertinent research questions.

The information on the study participants, broken down by age and gender, is displayed in the table 1 below. According to the character gender, there were higher contributions from females than from males in the entire sample. However, when looking at contributions based on age, it was found that while female participation increased from the first to the last year, it was higher in the second year.

Table 1
Information regarding the participants in the study

		Year				
		1st year	2nd year	3rd year	final year	Total
Sex	Male	9	15	15	17	12
	Female	15	17	17	15	24
Age	19-21	10	10	11	12	9
	21-22	12	11	10	9	10
	22-23	10	11	11	11	11
Total		8	16	12	12	48

The aforementioned criteria describe how participants view the input they receive from questionnaires. It was questioned how portfolio evaluations affected student motivation and learning. The survey was completed by students in 2022. The institution's designated owner oversaw the coordination of the data gathering. Three broad inquiries on students' perceptions of the evaluation of portfolios as a source of inspiration were necessary, while ten closed-ended questions on how students felt about the use and evaluation of their portfolios required responses of "agree," "strongly agree," "disagree," "neutral," and "other." Nearly 10 questions have been posed, and participant answers and feedback vary from one topic to the next. The table 2 below illustrates that, in comparison to the students' neutral or disagreeing responses to these constants, the rate of agreement in multiple variables appears to be high. As a result, it is shown that the students' average agreement percentage was 60%.

Table 2
Participants' perceptions about feedback providing Questionnaires

Questions	Responses				
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Q1: The use of portfolio assessments encourages me to assess my own learning progress, weaknesses, and strengths throughout the course.	25%	43%	6%	6%	4%
Q2: I think the use of portfolio assessment should be used in other subjects as well.	25%	50%	18%	4%	2%
Q3: The portfolio-based assessment can reliably access my learning achievements	25%	52%	21%	2%	4%
Q4: The use of portfolio assessment reflects what I have learned from my writing class	31%	43%	22%	6%	0%
Q5: The use of portfolio helps me in evaluating my progress in learning	27%	52%	14%	8%	0%

Q6: I can access my strengths and weakness through use of portfolio assessment	40%	47%	13%	8%	0%
Q7: I can see my learning development from the use of portfolios	33%	53%	12%	4%	0%
Q8: The use of portfolios makes writing course more interesting	27%	54%	19%	13%	0%
Q9: The use of portfolio increases my learning engagement out of class time	16%	60%	21%	4%	0%
Q10: The use of portfolios encourage and motivate me to take part in my own learning	31%	54%	14%	2%	2%

The accompanying graph describes how participants felt about the questionnaires they were asked to complete. Beginning with the covered area, participants are categorized as follows: strongly disagree (blue), agree (brown), neutral (agree), disagree (yellow), and severely disagree (remaining).

The research also showed that in order to develop self-reflective skills through the workbook method, pupils need more time. Individuals recognize the advantages of maintaining a portfolio as they get more comfortable with introspection. The outcomes of the study indicate that although students first require teachers' assistance when using a portfolio, they eventually become more independent as a result of utilizing one. As a consequence, as people began to question their own learning processes, they began to take control of their education.

The following summary, presented in tabular style, is based on a survey of students' attitudes on portfolios as an assessment tool.

Table 3
Effects of the use of portfolio in multiple aspects of learning by the students

Sr. No	Parameters	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	Assess learning	4.2 %	6.3 %	12.5 %	50 %	27.1 %
2	Used in other subjects	2.1 %	4.2 %	18.8 %	47.9 %	25.0 %
3	Assess learning achievements	4.2 %	2.1 %	20.8 %	47.9 %	25.0 %
4	Learning is reflected	0 %	6.3 %	27.1 %	37.5 %	29.2 %
5	Progress evaluation	0 %	2.1 %	14.6 %	56.3 %	27.1 %
6	Strengths and weakness accessed	0 %	8.3 %	18.8 %	35.4 %	37.5 %
7	Visible learning developments	0 %	6.3 %	14.6 %	45.8 %	33.3 %
8	Develops interest	0 %	12.5 %	20.8 %	39.6 %	27.1 %
9	Learning engagement	0 %	4.2 %	35.4 %	41.7 %	18.8 %
10	Part in learning	2.1 %	2.1 %	14.6 %	50.0 %	31.3 %

Interpretation

The above parameters define the effects of the use of portfolio in multiple aspects of learning by the students. As being portrayed by the table above, It seems that the rate of agreement in various parameters is high as compared to the students being neutral or disagreeing to these constants, and hence it is demonstrated that the students showed average agreement percentage to 50 %.

Qualitative data study of students' portfolios including their top concerns as a motivational element for studying English was a foreign language discovered that there were four categories.

1. My flaws and triumphs are both clear to me.
2. I shifted my perspective.
3. Self-analysis
4. Independence

In order to seek data of different ideas of students for the use of portfolio as the mode of assessment, the beginning step was questioning the students:

Motivation Enhancement and Portfolio Assessment 41 students responded to this question and 7 students didn't respond.

Students indicated that Portfolio Assessment was one of the main tool that helped them benefit from learning process. As some respondents indicated, "It has transformed the way I think about my problems" , Others have said things like, "It helped me a lot because it made me improve in the areas where I was weak" or "This helps me examine what is important to me, and I learnt it well." Responses like these show that students find the portfolio assessment to be timely and useful. One student observed that this increased their enthusiasm for language study. Other student responded "By allowing me to assess my own progress and performance it encourages me to broaden my horizon in certain aspects that need more effort and by knowing my strengths I can effectively try to". One student indicated that, "It provided me a path to know where I should work hard". Some respondents indicated about Portfolio Assessment that "It motivates them to keep on learning new things related to English language". Most of the student agreed with the benefits of portfolio assessment and claimed that "They become aware from their weakness" or "It helps me to see my progress overtime." As one student stated "To acquiring knowledge about the language which is considered as prior in the world of languages. English language is a mode of communication all over the world so it becomes need for". As reported by students, "I keep records of all my tasks and assignments which provide me a kind of feedback making me to work harder to improve my learning" which indicates that portfolio assessment helps students so that they can act on immediately while on the tasks and assignments. One of the student stated, "Portfolio helps me to increasing motivation by providing a complete guidance to me that what I have achieved and what I have to achieve further". Some of the students reported, "It helps me to identify my weak areas which can be improved", "It helps in recording and assessing progress", "As, through portfolio one can keep in check of his development so that steps of recovery or development encourages you to do more", "Portfolio helps me to enhance my motivation in acquiring English as a foreign language it helps me alot in learning the English as a foreign language", "Portfolio helps me in learning English as a foreign language and its helps me too understand the English much fast as compared too other", "It helps to increase student's interest", "It urges me to acquire new language as it seems interesting", "It provides several ways which can boast us to enrich our learning", "It made me independent and increased my critical thinking skills", "It increases our coordination with the language causing us to engage ourselves with English language", "It strengthens up me, in my vocabulary improvements", "It encourages me because i found many things at single platform", "It keeps the record of my mistakes and that helps in learning". 5 out of 48 students replied with Yes only and 7 out of 48 students didn't reply to this question. It is noteworthy to indicate that 5 students disagreed with the use of portfolio assessment as an important practice to motivate students in learning English as a foreign language.

Use of portfolios as an assessment by Teachers: 8 out of 48 didn't reply to this question, 17 out of 48 commented "No", "no they don't", "not at all". More students made similar comments by positively agreeing on the question and commenting "Yes, sometimes but not mostly and not all teachers", "Yes, but not all the teachers", "Yes, often used the portfolios as an assessment", "Yes, they do, but it creates anxiety and terror". "As some of teachers judge students through those portfolio", "my current teachers don't use portfolios but my teachers in school and college used them".

Portfolio as an effective assessment practice The majority of participants (10 out of 48) didn't reply to this question during survey, other students reported 'I think the use of portfolio as an effective assessment practice helps the students to use the language in various aspects of life', other comments were, "Yes, it is an effective assessment practice because it provide an opportunity to formulate deeper understanding of the concepts that we're learning", "It is indeed an advancement in evaluating students in a productive way, beneficial in learning and encouraging them to learn and perform better academically...It needs to be promoted as a means", "Portfolio is a good tool to assess the weakness of a student", other stated, "A very new and good practice, as it gives guidelines to students about evaluating their weaknesses and strengths", "Yeah, I think its we the students who see their progress, it's a self assessment practice. So yeah in that way it's good," "It is effective practice as it does not demotivate the learners by assessing them through traditional techniques", one of the student commented "It assess students learning and keep a report of outcomes related to the learning."

Discussions

Based on their experiences with portfolio evaluation, students have found that this method is most useful for evaluating their own performance. The teacher's directions on how to use the portfolio aid the student in assessing his or her progress. Students should keep the final evaluation in mind as they work on their portfolio. Students also said that the evaluation of their portfolios impacted the way they thought about addressing problems, while the presentation itself helped students become independent. When completing the portfolio, students are additionally thinking about the task.

In the context of the second language classroom, subjective investigation of student inventories and assessment priorities highlights four main areas:

- Students' abilities and areas for improvement can be better understood with the use of the portfolio.
- Students' perspectives have shifted because of portfolio.
- Their portfolio ensures their freedom

Students benefit from increased independence, critical thinking, and academic achievement when portfolios are used as a form of assessment. A similar outcome was observed by Harris, Dolan, and Fairbairn (2001): the utilisation of portfolios stimulates students.

The portfolio as a form of assessment fosters student independence, engagement, and autonomy, as confirmed by Belanoff (1994). Portfolios encourage individuals to reflect on their work, choose appropriate material for assessment, rethink and refine their employment, take on further writing tasks, and solicit feedback from others. Assessment, as we recognise, is not an instrument to prove students' weaknesses but rather a positive aspect that pushes them to grow, develop, and become autonomous learners (Belanoff 1994, p. 35).

Conclusions

The purpose of this study was to investigate whether or not using portfolios as a tool for assessment for foreign language acquisition influences students' desire to continue studying the target language. The results of the student surveys revealed proof of the impact of a collection on how motivated learners are to learn.

The results of the study back up the claim that an investment portfolio can inspire students to study abroad. These positive results, however, cannot be achieved if the portfolio is merely used as a repository for student work. To be effective as a vehicle for inspiration, the portfolio process requires integrating the following four elements: An individual's learning strengths and weaknesses can be better understood with the use of a portfolio. Second, they develop their analytical skills through working on the Portfolio. In a third and final way, the Portfolio helps them better evaluate themselves. Fourth, a portfolio encourages students to think for themselves.

Students can use a portfolio to develop creative solutions to learning challenges and enhance critical thinking skills through self-reflection. The capacity for self-analysis, the evaluation of one's own work, enhances both learning and motivation. The research also revealed that students require additional time using the portfolio method to cultivate self-reflective abilities. As individuals become more acclimated to self-analysis, they realise the benefits of adopting a portfolio. The results of this analysis suggest that students need guidance from teachers when first utilising a portfolio, but that with time, they gain independence as a result of using a portfolio. Therefore, individuals started to take charge of their education when they started to critically evaluate how they were learning.

In conclusion, portfolios is an efficient kind of evaluation because it serves as a tool for revealing student weaknesses while also encouraging growth, maturity, and autonomy. The portfolio encourages children to think critically and independently, which in turn improves their motivation to learn English as a second language. The findings of this research will help educators include student portfolios into their evaluation strategies for teaching English to speakers of other languages.

Recommendations

Further research could be undertaken upon the results and inferences of this study, in addition to researching on the gap in research on formal evaluation practises of pupils who want to learn a foreign language in the Albanian environment.

An experimental study might be done to establish proof the impacts of the portfolio on pupil enthusiasm by prior instruction instructors in evaluation practises.

It would be possible to investigate the effects of various assessment processes on students' motivation to study a foreign language by conducting either an experiment or a quasi-experiment.

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