

A COMPARATIVE INVESTIGATION OF ENGLISH PREPARATORY
SCHOOL STUDENTS' AND INSTRUCTORS' PERCEPTIONS OF USING E-
PORTFOLIO AS AN ALTERNATIVE ASSESSMENT TOOL AT UNIVERSITY



YEDİTEPE UNIVERSITY

JUNE, 2022

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I hereby declare that all information in this document has been obtained and presented in accordance with academic rules and ethical conduct. I also declare that, as required by these rules and conduct, I have fully cited and referenced all material and results that are not original to this work.

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ABSTRACT

This qualitative study was conducted to explore and compare the perceptions of tertiary-level students and teachers on the implementation of the electronic portfolio (e-portfolio or EP) assessment within the writing course of an English language preparatory program. The participants of the study were 30 English as a foreign language (EFL) students from different departments and 31 EFL teachers at a private university in İstanbul, Turkey. Qualitative data were gathered through open-ended questionnaires and in-depth focus group interviews with both participant groups. Thematic analyses of the data revealed that most of the teachers and students accepted EP development as a beneficial assessment and learning tool in the writing course offered in the English preparatory program. Moreover, students reported that EP had a positive effect on their language skills, especially writing skill in terms of sentence formation, appropriate use of punctuation, organization, vocabulary, and grammar. Despite reporting many benefits, they also mentioned several procedural problems related to the implementation of EP. When the responses of the students and teachers were compared, it was clear that there were more similarities than differences in the way they perceive EP assessment, its effectiveness, benefits and limitations. In light of the responses received not only from the students but also from the teachers of the English language preparatory program, an EP implementation model that can be used in the writing lessons has been proposed in order to increase the benefit that students will receive from this assessment in their language learning processes.

Key words: E-portfolio, writing assessment, alternative assessment, EFL writing

ÖZET

Bu nitel çalışma, bir üniversitedeki İngilizce hazırlık programının yazma dersinde kullanılan elektronik portfolyo (e-portfolyo ya da EP) değerlendirmesine ilişkin öğrenci ve öğretmenlerin algılarını araştırmak ve karşılaştırmak için yapılmıştır. Araştırmanın katılımcıları, İstanbul, Türkiye’de bulunan özel bir üniversitede farklı bölümlere kayıtlı olan 30 yabancı dil olarak İngilizce öğrencisi ve 31 İngilizce öğretmenidir. Nitel veriler, her iki katılımcı grubuyla açık uçlu anketler ve grup olarak derinlemesine görüşme yoluyla toplanmıştır. Verilerin tema analizi, hazırlık programında verilen yazma dersinde öğretmen ve öğrencilerin çoğunun e-portfolyoyu etkili ve faydalı bir değerlendirme aracı olarak kabul ettiğini ortaya koymuştur. Ayrıca öğrenciler, e-portfolyonun dil becerileri, özellikle de yazma becerileri üzerinde cümle kurma, metin organizasyonu, kelime ve dilbilgisi kullanımı açısından önemli bir etkisi olduğunu bildirmiştir. Bununla birlikte, e-portfolyo uygulanmasıyla ilgili birkaç prosedürel sorundan da bahsedilmiştir. Öğrencilerin ve öğretmenlerin yanıtları karşılaştırıldığında, e-portfolyo değerlendirmesini algılama biçimleri, etkinliği, faydaları ve sınırlılıkları açısından farklılıklardan çok benzerlikler olduğu ortaya konmuştur. Sadece öğrencilerden değil öğretmenlerden de alınan yanıtlar ışığında, öğrencilerin dil öğrenme süreçlerinde e-portfolyo uygulamasından alacakları faydayı arttırmak için bu yabancı dil hazırlık programının yazma derslerinde kullanabileceği bir e-portfolyo uygulama modeli de önerilmiştir.

Anahtar kelimeler: E-portfolyo, yazılı değerlendirme, alternatif değerlendirme, yabancı dil olarak İngilizcede yazma



To my beloved family

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

EFL	English as a Foreign Language
ELT	English Language Teaching
EP	Electronic Portfolio
LOA	Learning Oriented Assessment



1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background to the Study

Assessment is of paramount importance to any teaching and learning context (Pierce, 2002). While discussing alternatives in language assessment, Brown and Hudson (1998, p. 653) posited that language teachers have many assessment options to choose from, and these options were listed as “selected-response assessments (including true-false, matching, and multiple-choice assessments); constructed-response assessments (including fill-in, short-answer, and performance assessments); and personal-response assessments (including conference, portfolio, and self- or peer assessments).” The scholars also suggested that careful selection of these assessments depend on the aim and objectives of any course. Indeed, in light of language curriculum goals and objectives, not only teaching/learning activities but also assessment tasks are shaped. An important link among teaching, learning and assessment is supported through their alignment in the education system (Biggs, 1999).

Correspondingly, language assessment procedures have adapted itself to the recent trends of second language learning and teaching. Owing to the impact of student-centered and communicative approaches in English as a foreign language (EFL) context within the last decades, language assessment has also moved from traditional and product-oriented ways of assessment (e.g., “pencil and paper” language tests) to process-oriented and performance-based assessment (e.g., language portfolio) to assess learners’ language improvement (Jacobs & Farrell, 2001). While traditional assessment has offered certain advantages in relation to different purposes of language testing (e.g., to measure language proficiency level of test takers, to diagnose learners’

strengths and weaknesses, to place them into correct levels, and so forth), performance assessment has been an important alternative within language assessment (Brown & Hudson, 1998).

According to Hamayan (1994), alternative assessment is one of the terms used to refer to “informal assessment procedures often used in the language classroom” (p. 45). Typical examples of such methods include “portfolios” (Hamp-Lyons, 1996, p.240), “learner diaries or journals and interviews with teachers” (Genesee & Upshur, 1996, p.165). For the last two decades, as a result of the shift into alternative assessment techniques, alternative assessment has become popular in that it supplies meaningful information for both teachers and learners through its focus on the learning process. This fundamental change has caused the emergence of alternative forms of assessment to seize the proof of greatest learner performance over time, such as “practical and oral demonstrations, written classroom work, reflective journals, case studies highlighting problem-based learning, portfolios and peer-/self-assessment reports” (Pimentel, 2010, p. 57).

After the revision of 1997 language curriculum reform in Turkey to make it more communication oriented, the shift from traditional assessment to more authentic and performance-based assessment has become prominent (Kırkgöz, 2007). As a result of this, portfolios have been added to the foreign language assessment system of Turkey. Portfolio assessment that is used in language education refers to students’ collecting their classwork and presenting them in a folder to their teachers as proof of classwork. It can focus not only on one specific skill such as writing or speaking but also all language skills or learner experiences in general. Since the benefit to be gained through this experience is expected to be mutual, it is used by several educators so as to observe students’ learning process and evaluate their progress

(Woodward, 1996). Furthermore, according to Cole, Ryan, Kick and Mathies (2000), keeping a portfolio is accepted as an alternative to traditional assessment since it helps learners to demonstrate their language performance through collecting and selecting class work and reflecting on the learning process (Topp, Clark, & Goeman, 2002; Yancy, 2001).

Technology integration into teaching and learning has been accepted as an important benefit in order to boost learning results (Lin, Yang, & Lai, 2013) since it assists students to obtain language skills, and more interactive environment can be created for language learners with it (e.g., Butler-Pascoe & Wiburg, 2003; Tabatabaei, 2012). Thanks to modern technology supplying a fundamental educational policy, many researchers and organizations have become more aware of the importance of technology in educational settings. As a result, portfolio assessment has also been digitalized. Digital portfolio, known as electronic portfolio or e-portfolio (EP), has emerged as a strong alternative to the traditional paper-based portfolio although the traditional one is still used in many educational settings. An EP is a dynamic folder or website with databases of students' learning experiences and classwork that suggest socially networked, and indexed repositories of e-learning evidence (Hopper, Sanford, Hong, & Monk, 2016).

According to Hung (2008), EPs offer more benefits than traditional portfolios. Most important three reasons for using EPs are mainly assessment, learning and employability (Acker, 2004; Barrett & Carney, 2005). According to DiBiase (2002), EPs could increase learners' participation and motivate them to succeed by interacting with and receiving feedback from both teachers and peers. In addition, learners' self-assessment performance can be raised through it (Kavaliauskiene, 2004), and self-assessment can be used as a way to encourage learning of students and assist them to

be trained in the evaluation process (Oscarsson, 1989). Jones and Shelton (2011) stated that portfolios are “a medium for reflection” (p. 21). It indicates that EPs encourage learners to reflect on their own learning process. Thus, self-reflection has a vital part to increase learners’ self-determination and critical thinking ability (Lam, 2018). Another benefit offered by an EP is that both teachers and learners can gather and arrange artefacts in several non-identical forms. In addition, EP could be accepted as an alternative method to improve learners' writing skills (Lorenzo & Ittelson, 2005) because it is in conformity with student-centred methods (Barrett, 2005). Moreover, EPs provide a reviving atmosphere for teacher and peer feedback because of not being repressed by time as well as enabling learning to happen anytime without the limitations of buildings of education (Yancey, 2009; Chen, 2009; Cambridge, 2008; Waters, 2007; Jafari & Kaufman, 2006; Mason et al., 2004). EPs provide a great opportunity for individuals spending their lifetime around school and work by assisting the transferring competencies from school to the work (Dorninger & Schrack, 2007). Last but not least, there have been plenty of studies based on EP assessment in numerous fields, and these findings show that EPs are more beneficial than paper-based portfolio or standardized exams (Tartwijk & Driessen, 2009; Topp, et al., 2002; Swain & Ring, 2000). When some multimedia items are added such as videos, audios, text, as well as reflections, EPs become a better source to reflect learners’ performance and knowledge when compared to traditional assessment methods (Topp, et al., 2002).

Indeed, considering its benefits, EP usage is getting more widespread in higher education (Soto, Barquín, & Fernández, 2016). Plenty of programs make use of EP for learners to store their homework in order to foster student learning and reflection (Cleveland, 2018). EP implementation saves its place as an important method in

higher education to assess students because it has several positive effects on quality of learning, technology and program quality (Forawi & Mitchell, 2012). Similarly, EP is a relatively common procedure at English language preparatory schools at universities in Turkey. It is usually preferred in the writing courses by the preparatory schools to make students see their errors, receive feedback, and reflect on their language progress.

It is quite clear that the awareness of the importance of assessment to student learning has resulted in innovative changes in assessment, transferring the focus from the traditional assessment to the process-oriented forms of assessment, which appreciates the process as well as the outcome through a more genuine presentation of practice (Guskey, 2003). EP implementation emerges as a bright assessment technique that provides a different system including a new tool to facilitate the learning and teaching procedure with the new roles allocated for teachers and learners (López-Fernández, 2008). Therefore, this current research aims to revisit EP assessment within English language preparatory school context at university and provide valuable implications by suggesting an implementation model after careful consideration of instructors' and students' perceptions of its use in writing classes.

1.2. Statement of the Problem

The shift from traditional to performance-based assessment has signaled, according to (Stiggins, 2005), “a call for ending teachers' high dependence on the conventional assessment, in which students try to get high scores in the exams” (p. 325). Instead of that, teachers are supported to use a number of language assessment methods to offer evidence of student progress (Stiggins, 2005). Through these methods, making learners function as active participants during assessment process, where their

learning is just evaluated at regular intervals with certain grades has been aimed.

Thus, with the “integration of alternatives in assessment such as EP and self- and peer- assessments, students lead an active role in communicating evidence of learning to themselves, to their peers, teachers, and families all along the journey to successful learning” (Stiggins, 2005, p. 326). As previously stated in Section 1.1, assessment is of utmost importance to any teaching and learning context (Pierce, 2002). That is why language assessment procedures should be well-designed and appropriately implemented in relevant teaching-learning contexts to feed learning.

Among alternatives in assessment, portfolio assessment is quite widespread at a diversity of segments of education in EFL contexts, including English preparatory schools of higher education. It is usually preferred in the writing courses to make students see their language errors, receive feedback, and reflect on their language learning progress, in addition to language achievement exams. There are five basic principles which form the power of portfolios on language curriculum, instruction, and student learning: providing a new point of view on learning, integrating analyses of development and learning, encouraging self-assessment and reflection on work, and supporting teachers as arrangers of learning (Klenowski, 2002). It can be inferred that these principles are cornerstones of portfolio assessment, yet not all of these principles are well-implemented in the language preparatory programs to make students benefit from the portfolio assessment in Turkish EFL context.

Furthermore, although there are many advantages mentioned above, Cohen (1994) emphasized some limitations of keeping a portfolio such as the grading process and its being time consuming. Moreover, Hamp-Lyons and Condon (1993) stated that presumptions and beliefs on portfolio evaluation must be considered in detail, and as a

result, drawbacks of this process must be scrutinized consistently in terms of students' opinions on portfolio keeping in foreign language writing classes.

On the other hand, although paper-based portfolios have been used for a long time, there are still some issues related to its implementation within the education settings concerning “teacher assessment literacy, contextual constraints and the research–practice divide” as suggested by Lam (2018, p.70). Same seems to be valid for the implementation of EP assessment, which has been the major motive for this study. Thanks to the development of technology, English learning and teaching has also been converted into digital forms such as the use of EP assessment instead of paper-based portfolio assessment. As Warschauer (2007) stated, due to technological developments, combination of technology with language teaching and learning has been necessary. While both university preparatory students' and teachers' reflections on EP use have a great role in its appropriate implementation, literature on this matter comparing the perceptions of both teachers and students in order to present insights into students' experiences in the university prep program and discuss the implications is very limited.

Therefore, concerns related to the appropriate implementation of EP in English language preparatory schools at tertiary level in Turkey made it necessary to investigate the current perceptions of students and instructors at the university context so as to offer valuable suggestions regarding the implementation of EP within the preparatory school programs.

1.3. The Purpose of the Study

This study aimed to explore the perceptions of both university English language preparatory program students and teachers on EP assessment within the writing course

and compare their perceptions. In accordance with this purpose, the following research questions were asked:

1. What are the perceptions of students on EP implementation within the writing course offered in the English preparatory program at university?
2. What are the perceptions of EFL teachers on EP implementation within the writing course offered in the English preparatory program at university?
3. How do teachers' and students' perceptions on EP implementation within the writing course offered in the English preparatory program at university match or mismatch?

1.4. Overview of Methodology

This qualitative study focused on comparative investigation of university preparatory students' and teachers' perceptions on EP implementation within writing courses at a private university in İstanbul, Turkey. Therefore, throughout this study, the researcher intended to develop a detailed realization of how students and teachers have perceived the implementation of EP as an alternative assessment in the preparatory program. For this reason, collection of qualitative data was thought to be the most appropriate approach to answer the research questions asked in this study (Creswell, 2007). Data were gathered from 30 university preparatory students and 31 university preparatory teachers of a private university in İstanbul. 2 open-ended questionnaires and 2 in-depth focus group interviews were completed. Then qualitative content analysis and thematic analysis are adopted to analyze the data and answer the research questions asked in this study.

1.5. Justification of the Study

The purpose of the study was to investigate and compare the perceptions of both English language preparatory school teachers and students on the effective implementation of EP in writing classes and suggest a model for implementation on the basis of their perceptions. This study and its design can be justified in certain ways.

First of all, this study focused on the EP assessment and its implementation within the university English preparatory school context and it attempted to provide not only teaching implications for teachers but also a model for its effective implementation for language education programs. As it is impossible to conceive a learning procedure apart from its assessment approach (Ghany & Alzouebi, 2019), Hayward (2015) declared that assessment itself is actual learning. Formative assessment is specifically linked with the general aim of the EP which is “to facilitate and document learning and development over time” (Scully et al., 2018, p. 2). This shows why EP has become so important as an assessment system in higher education (López-Fernández, 2008), and this inspired the current study.

Secondly, the investigation of teachers’ and students’ perceptions on EP assessment will have valuable contributions to the language assessment literature. Silverman (1997) stated that technology must be incorporated into education, yet limitations of a technology-enhanced course should be overcome by giving learners more responsibility on their learning process (Rakes, Flowers, Casey, & Santana, 1999; Nicaise & Barnes, 1996). Thanks to technological developments, electronic teaching portfolios have been accepted as an assessment tool in the educational field (Milane, 1995). However, the literature on EPs is still limited. It is necessary to update the suggestions regarding the appropriate implementation of EP assessment in higher

education, find more improved ways to assess students and use the findings in order to decide on the steps of implementation procedure (Green, 2014).

Thirdly, within the Turkish EFL context, although there are some studies regarding the implementation of EP in Turkey, there are not enough studies comparing teachers' and students' perceptions at the same time and suggest an implementation model on the basis of the findings within the language preparatory school context in Turkey. For instance, Baris and Tosun (2011) conducted research on the influence of EP on the academic success of the students and positive effects of EP were observed on students' academic success at the end of this experimental research. In addition, Aydın (2010) focused on EFL writers' perceptions of portfolio keeping at Balıkesir University and two results were obtained from this study: (1) portfolio implementation in EFL has some benefits on writing ability of learners; and (2) EFL students can figure out the problems during this process. The other study conducted by Baturay and Daloğlu (2010) was about EP assessment in an online English language course to show its effectiveness on writing, and most of the learners were pleased with positive effects of an EP to improve their foreign language. In addition, in her MA thesis, Tonbul (2009) proposed an EP implementation model for first grade ELT students at Gazi University, and as a result of her thesis, she called for EP research which also explores teachers' perceptions and experiences on EP. These studies indicated the importance of EP assessment to EFL learners, yet there is no consensus on its implementation, which requires more studies on this topic. This has also inspired the present study.

Furthermore, this study can also be justified in terms of its research design. Since this study aimed to answer its research questions through qualitative data collection tools (questionnaires and in-depth semi-structured interviews with both

teachers and students) in order to investigate perceptions of teachers and students, the results of the study attempted to provide detailed answers to the research questions and help the researcher to come up with an implementation model. Deggs and Weaver (2009) noted that “perceptions of learners are an indispensable part of raising the effectiveness and quality in higher education” (p. 41). They also added that learning experiences and outcomes of students can be collected by using survey questionnaires within the evaluation studies. Students’ perceptions should be taken into consideration while making decisions about using EPs because their feedback can be helpful in designing and implementing successful EP tasks that would be effective for language learning and teaching.

Lastly, to the best of the knowledge of the researcher, there is no comparative research investigating both teachers and students’ perceptions on the effectiveness of EP in university preparatory class context in Turkey. Qualitative data including responses for semi-structured interviews and questionnaires were collected in order to compensate for this deficiency in this field.

1.6. Significance of the Study

EP is used as a tool to evaluate students’ academic performance, skills and improvement in educational settings. This study focused on EP implementation from the perspectives of not only teachers but also students. The comparison of teacher and student perceptions makes the study more reliable since similarities and differences between teachers and students’ ideas on EP assessment will be identified. As the number of studies including both teachers and students as participants at the same time is very limited, this study will be a good contribution to the EP literature.

Besides, as the implications of the study, suggestions on the EP implementation obtained from both participant groups will be used to offer an implementation model

that can be an example for language preparatory programs. In that sense, the findings of this qualitative study are significant to the community of stakeholders in higher education who implement, integrate, support, and use EP as an assessment and learning tool in writing and writing-intensive courses since this study aims to explore how students' and teachers' perceptions on EP can be used as a source to improve the effectiveness of it for both teachers and students.

Lastly, the findings of this study can offer some valuable information for university preparatory programs implementing not only portfolio assessment but also EP assessment in their institutions. The results of the study may open new doors regarding EP implementation, and as a result, the other institutions can benefit from the results.

1.7. Limitations of the Study

This study has some limitations. First of all, the sample size was limited to 30 university preparatory students and 31 preparatory school instructors in the same university. The number of participants could be increased but it was not possible during the data collection process of this study. Secondly, only qualitative data collection was adopted to seek answers to the research questions, yet quantitative data could be added to allow for mixed method design. Moreover, the responses were gathered electronically, and it is assumed that all of the students and teachers gave honest answers. Besides, the results of this study are valid only for low proficiency students of preparatory classes of universities. For these reasons, the findings cannot be generalized to high proficiency level of students or other school contexts.

1.8. Definition of Terms

The following terms are defined in relevance to this study:

Artefact: Any object made, altered, or used by people. “Evidence of the knowledge or proficiency of prescribed skills” (Gibson, 2006, p. 142).

Assessment: “The process of assessing knowledge, skills, and behaviours” (Kim, 2006, p. 52).

Assessment-for-Learning: The procedure of pursuing evidence to find out what learners already know and what they need to grasp through the optimal way in their learning process (Stiggins, as cited in Barrett & Carney, 2005).

Authentic Assessment: “An assessment in which learners are supposed to perform some genuine tasks that mirror real life issues as the important implementation of vital knowledge and skills” (Lawson, Kiegaldie, & Jolly, 2006, p.281).

Portfolio: A planned collection of student artefacts which shows the student’s development procedure and improvement in some areas” (Paulson, Paulson, & Meyer 1991, p. 60).

E-portfolio: It is explained as the student artefact accumulated in electronic forms (Barrett, 2001).

Reflection: Study of the analysis of artefact, ideas, expressions, and the procedure that strengthened the formation process. Reflection answers the questions like “what” and “why” of the selected artefacts (Gibson, 2006, p.145).

Rubric: a scoring guide that gives specific criteria on a student's work in order to evaluate student performance regarding the standards. Rubrics may be either holistic (more general) or analytic (more specific).

Proficiency: a measure of a student's knowledge and competence displayed in a persistent manner across several disciplines in numerous fields over time. The specific knowledge and competence of the exhibited proficiencies are decided based on the skills and knowledge measured in opposition to specific assumptions such as grade span expectations (GSEs), other content standards, and applied learning skills (RIDE, 2004).

Traditional assessment refers to standardized assessment conducted in paper and pencil form in a limited time such as midterms, finals or proficiency tests with multiple choice or true/false questions (Schackelford, 1996).

Manual Feedback: It is a feedback style giving the corrected version of the error directly.

Error Correction Code: It is a feedback style given with some codes or abbreviations to introduce the error.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter presents the literature on assessment in English language teaching, traditional assessment, alternatives in assessment, portfolios, EP, comparison of paper-based portfolio and EP, implementation of EPs and studies on EP.

2.1. Assessment in English Language Teaching

Assessment is an indivisible and fundamental element of education as well as being a mechanism for teachers to get more information on their students (Burnaz, 2011). Troudi (2009) stated that assessment goes on playing a vital role in learning and teaching and it has both extensive and intensive roles based on research studies in conventional education. Therefore, assessment is essential for students to assess their progress and success. Learners get the chance to recognize their own skills; hence, this situation makes them both enthusiastic and curious to encounter the difficulties of the language lesson. Nevertheless, while determining the right of assessment, some aspects related to learners' needs, skills and point of views should be considered to perpetuate a trustworthy and applicable assessment system (Burnaz, 2011)

Testing and assessment have an indispensable place in a syllabus (Alderson, 2005; Popham, 2006; Richards, 1984), one of the bases of education certainly (Hatipoğlu, 2017) since testing and assessment and teaching are so interlaced notions and procedures in education system that it is even impossible to ignore one of them during this process to have quality and fruitful education (Heaton, 1988). Indeed, quality education is only possible with suitable and successful testing and assessment policies (Popham, 2009). Apart from some traditional purposes of testing and assessment in order to show the amount of learning objectives which have been succeeded, testing and assessment is also conducted to detect the necessities of learners to find out the better.

Formative and summative assessments are two functions used in education and most of the classroom assessment is formative so as to evaluate learners in the learning process while they perform their skills with the purpose of helping them to continue this procedure. The main focus is ongoing development of the learner meanwhile and comments of teachers emerge as feedback to upgrade learners' language skills (Hd. Brown, 2004). Summative assessment is a procedure where a result is obtained by criterion and standardizations. Scriven (1967) stated that there is no judgement during the summative assessment process. In contrast with formative or diagnostic assessments, the primary aim of summative assessment is to find out the final success of a learner in a particular field of learning at an allocated time, which makes it different from other assessment types (Harlen, 2004).

To summarize, assessment can be used to motivate students to learn during this procedure (Black & William, 1998) and observing their improvement (Inbar-Lourie, 2008a) besides assessing the results of tutoring in the meanwhile or at the end of the process. An exact and sustainable definition of student achievement is necessary to keep up with quality teaching and purposeful learning. This fact empowers instructors to construct efficient instruction, give beneficial feedback, and form impressive assessment techniques to gather the proof of learning (Wyatt-Smith et al., 2010).

2.1.1. Traditional Assessment

Before alternative assessment methods, traditional assessment was mostly in demand. Skills and knowledge of the students were measured in an allocated time by some preferred traditional assessment tools such as "multiple-choice tests, true-false tests, matching tests, fill-in-the-blank tests, short answers and essays" (Schackelford, 1996, p. 45). In addition, traditional assessment methods were applied as functional

tools in education system because teaching and assessment methods were equivalent to each other (Burnaz, 2011). However, members of the process-oriented curriculum regard traditional techniques unsuitable for foreign language classes. More explicitly, they mention the deficiency of valuable information as both being product and process of learning in traditional assessment (Barootchi & Keshavarz, 2002)

Furthermore, traditional assessments are defined as secondary and artificial by Bailey (1998). She also adds that traditional assessment is standardized and consequently, it is once, quickness-based, and norm-referenced. In addition, feedback is not available in traditional assessment and this situation makes teaching and learning fragmented. On the other hand, learners' improvement might not always be shown based on test results. Besides, Anxiety can occur because of the necessity of passing the tests with high marks as a fundamental criterion of this kind of assessment.

As a result, the drawbacks based on traditional testing frequently conceal the knowledge of a student or his performance in a second language (Huerta-Macias, 1995). Furthermore, the time gap between instruction and exam date can make the learners feel as if they have fallen out, which also creates stress. As Brown (2004) indicated, "Today, test designers are still in search to have more authentic, valid assessment techniques that encourage real world interaction" (p. 19).

2.1.2. Shift from traditional assessment to alternatives in assessment

By 1980s, the language-testing had changed its way based and started to focus on creating communicative tasks (Brown, 2004). Bachman and Palmer (1996) stated the vital principles of language testing as the need for a consistency between language test performance and language use: "In order to have a beneficial language test which

meets its objectives, test performance must be also related with language use of real-life situations in a clear way” (p. 9). Brown (2004) stated that the problem of language assessment was the unreal and artificial tasks which were far away from reflecting the language in real life context. As Weir (1990) noted, “Integrative tests such as cloze only tell us about a candidate’s linguistic competence and they do not give any information directly about a student's performance” (p. 6).

By the challenges communicative language testing had presented, test constructors turned their way into designing the kinds of real-world and authentic tasks that language learners were able to show their performance on (Brown, 2004). As a result of this process, the assessment field became more interested in the authentic and genuine tasks (Skehan, 1988, 1989). Supporters of this model aim to form methods of assessment into a line with actual learning goal behaviours (Harris & Bell, 1994). In language courses and programs around the world, test designers are dealing with this new and more learner-centered assessment (Alderson, 2001). Brown and Hudson (1998) stated, standardized tests are not communicable, and this situation can result in negative washback. On the other hand, as Hd. Brown (2004) declared, “performance-based assessment includes communicative elements such as oral-written production, open-ended answers, integrated performance, group performance, and other interactional tasks rather than paper-and-pencil tasks” (p.150).

Steiner (1995) stated, “We are confident that the changes in the test will result in letting students become more interactive when learning English, more confident to show their writing and reading skills and apart from them, will empower students to learn English itself rather than getting ready just for exams” (p. 15). In addition, according to Shohamy (1998), tests will be in our lives in a different form which will lead to more effective teaching and learning for useful and constructive purposes.

To sum up, as it was stated above, methods of assessment could have an impact on the ways of teaching in the classroom (Cheng 1997, Wall 1996; 1997), while new theories based on language learning and teaching result in important differences in testing systems (Spolsky, 1995). In the classroom, the activities and assessment methods are mostly performance-based, and completely mingled because it creates a social learning environment that enables learners to interact, communicate, succeed the targets and provide feedback from learner to learner as well as teacher to learner (Glenn Fulcher & Fred Davidson, 2007).

2.1.3. Alternatives in assessment

Scholars became interested in different assessment methods and suggested the term alternative assessment as a turning shift from traditional assessment methods for the last several decades because of some constraints of traditional assessment methods (Burnaz, 2010). According to Hancock (1994), alternative assessment is a permanent procedure which requires both of the student and teacher to have judgments regarding student's L2 improvement based on untraditional methods. Hamayan (1995) described alternative assessment as "one of the terms used to refer to informal assessment procedures such as those often used in the classroom" (p. 212). According to Worthen (1992), "There are several terms used to define alternatives to traditional assessment such as direct assessment, authentic assessment, performance assessment, while the most general one is alternative assessment" (p. 445). Today, assessment which is learning oriented is preferred mostly instead of traditional ones, but in this study, alternative assessment will be used to avoid ambiguity.

Alternatives in assessment are learner-centered approaches which examine the amount of knowledge and skills regarding real life as well as considering the

differences of individuals. Alternative assessment tools can be exemplified as “portfolio, project, performance assignments, concept maps, structured grids, descriptive branched trees, word association, self-evaluation and peer evaluation” as stated by Çalışkan and Kasıkcı (2010, p. 6). Besides, Hamayan (1995) stated “alternative assessment tools produce information that can be transmitted easily to administrators, teachers, and students to understand; they are suitable to be mingled; and they can provide the more holistic teaching methods which can be used in the classroom” (p. 220). In other words, assessment is a tool to support learning during this process (Black & William, 1998) and to support the learning development (Inbar-Lourie, 2008a) as well as measuring the outcome of teaching during or at the end of teaching and learning processes.

Alternative Assessment offers a radical difference and provides a more effective learning so that it can promote learning and as well as measure and interpret what has been learned (Jones & Saville, 2016). Basic alternatives of classroom interaction consist of tasks, goals, scaffolding, feedback and emergence. Classroom interaction is a place where learning usually occurs and feeds learners back into further learning. After determining the task, feedback is the necessary part of this assessment process (Jones & Saville, 2016). Brown and Hudson (1998) stated the importance of “the practicality, reliability, and validity of alternative assessment as well as its face validity, washback potential and authenticity” (p. 650). Overall, Jacob and Farrell (2001) declared that alternative assessment tools are evolved to reflect real-life situations based on thinking skills. On account of this statement, three principles are introduced for assessment in ELT settings. First of all, meaning is emphasized more than form in alternative assessment procedures. Secondly, alternative assessment

methods, such as portfolio and EP, give importance to the learning process and look for it. As a third one, they support learners with real life simulations throughout group tasks and peer assessment. Regarding all these principles and arguments alternative assessment has been commonly used in the classrooms.

2.1.3.1. Portfolio as an alternative assessment tool

Portfolio is considered as one of the most frequently benefited means of assessment (Burnaz, 2011). There have been numerous studies and several definitions on portfolio assessment in ELT setting. Although the definitions of portfolio seem different from each other, they have something in common in terms of their purposes. According to Muslimi (2015), popularity of portfolios has increased among people dealing with educational issues both in EFL and in ESL contexts which mostly focuses on process rather than product.

In their definition of portfolio, Coombe and Barlow (2004) stated: “As far as portfolios are defined in writing assessment, a portfolio is a purposive collection of student writing over time that shows the stages in the writing process a text has gone through and the stages of the writer’s growth” (p. 19). It can be inferred that a criteria/rubric should be decided and formed in order to evaluate a student's work. Hence, portfolios cannot be called only “a collection of student’s works”, which means any folder or work done by learners during the term or period. Valeri-Gold, Olson and Deming (1991) stated that portfolio is a way to help learners become active and think analytically. This can be the implication of interaction and critical thinking.

As a result, it can be inferred from the citations above that portfolio is one of the most popular and preferred tool because of its usefulness in spite of the other alternative assessment procedures in ELT. As stated by Bailey (1998), traditional

paper tests are done only once, while the portfolio process comes up with prolonged assessment.

2.1.3.1.1. Strengths of using portfolios in foreign language classes

There are various advantages of keeping a portfolio as an alternative assessment tool (Burnaz, 2011). As stated by Brown and Hudson (1998), “portfolio assessment is a way to help learners learn in a motivated way interacting with each other during the learning period, fostering collaboration among students and teachers as well as stimulating learners to grasp essential object language for students and teachers for language development” (p .664). It can be inferred that portfolio is a lifelong and communicative assessment which students are always in during this process. It is one of the important features of language teaching approaches called student -centeredness which enables learners being part of their own assessment process by analysing their work, deciding the way they follow and assessing the progress (Delett, Barnhardt, & Kevorkian, 2001; McMillan, 2001; Mullin, 1998; O'Malley & Pierce, 1996; Salkind, 2006).

As Paulson, Paulson and Meyer (1991) stated, “portfolios can reflect what students know and think and as a result, portfolios have the capacity to give information about their creators” (p. 61). According to Brown and Hudson (1998), portfolios are the tools furnishing comprehension within improvement of students.

Portfolios can help learners to take their own responsibility while learning as an interactive assessment tool (Burnaz, 2011). Hirvela and Pierson (2000) stated that portfolios indicate the performance of learners rather than their knowledge. They also add that dominance of learner is succeeded by letting them evaluate their own improvement and decide the most appropriate pieces they will present or/and what teachers want to see in their work, which shows the responsibility taken by learners.

According to Johnson and Rose (1997) “when it is essential for students to revise what they need to learn, how they will learn and what they have learned, they will take charge of this learning process” (p. 11). According to Paulson et al. (1991), if portfolios are applied carefully, they can both become instruction and assessment at the same time and together they mean more than separate ones. Besides, a portfolio encourages learners to show more effort because of the motivation it creates after seeing their own improvement. Specifically, if the goals set by learners themselves are accomplished, this process increases the motivation during the learning phase.

(Johnson & Rose, 1997; McMillan, 2001; Jones & Shelton, 2006). Using portfolios is also so beneficial to make learners understand their lacks, strengths and the progress they have had over time regarding different skills. Furthermore, portfolios teach learners to work together with their peers, take control of their learning, and become self-supporting during the portfolio process (Paulson et al., 1991).

With respect to teachers, portfolios are the tools that give concrete evidence of learners regarding their progress by the help of output created at the end of this process. One important Portfolios offer different ways to assess learners in contrast to traditional methods. Paulson et al. (1991,) noted that “while achievement tests provide limited consequences regarding the specific units, portfolios help teachers to perceive learners from more comprehensive points such as taking risks, forming original ideas, and learning to assess their own performance” (p. 63).

One important advantage of portfolio for teachers is that portfolios give the chance of getting the whole picture of student improvement thanks to the data taken by the work completed during this process and as a result, the data can be taken concerning usefulness of their instruction (Mullin, 1998; O'Malley & Pierce, 1996; Salkind, 2006; Valencia & Calfee, 1991). Mullin (1998) stated that portfolios supply

unbiased grading within student performance because of being longitudinal, as opposed to traditional assessment.

Portfolios are also important for teachers to understand and analyse individual differences by the help of self-reflection. As Hirvela and Pierson (2000) clearly pointed out that self-reflection and self-assessment help learners to gain their own responsibility of their learning and this makes them more motivated and enthusiastic while learning during process.

Overall, all of these citations above indicate that portfolio assessment has numerous benefits for teachers and students.

2.1.3.1.2. Limitations of using portfolio assessment

While there are some benefits of portfolios cited in the previous section, the challenges should also be taken into account. Cohen (1994) stated that although portfolios are so useful for language assessment, the limitations of portfolio keeping cannot be ignored.

According to Brown and Hudson (1998), five items categorized as the disadvantages of using portfolios can be given under the name of logistics, interpretation, design decision, reliability and validity. For example, portfolios can be time-wasting for teachers and students as well as difficulty of grading. Bushman et al. (1995) noted that managing time is so challenging in portfolio assessment since teachers have so many responsibilities to guide learners for improving their portfolios regarding their planning, collecting, editing, and revising process. As a result, these responsibilities turn into extra workload to teachers concerning the amount of time and effort. As Song and August (2002) stated, “the planning procedure of lessons and portfolio tasks, guiding the learners while planning portfolio tasks and lessons, coaching students on drafts, and helping them form, which turns into a process-

oriented course, and in addition, evaluation process of portfolios demands a significant workload from instructors” (p. 51).

Determining a criterion in order to be fair and having competent teachers in order to have fair evaluations is another challenging point during portfolio implementation. According to Gottlieb (2000), it is essential for teachers to be assisted professionally to maintain portfolio implementation. It can be inferred that guiding and assessing learners is really challenging. As a result, teachers need to be competent with professional help in order to be a good guide and assessor.

The validity and reliability of the portfolio is also another problematic issue. Miller and Legg (1993) state that test methods, task types, and criteria procedures can affect the validity of performance-based assessments. It is often acclaimed that getting high inter-rater reliability is not easy during the grading process. Hence, if the criteria have some problems such as being so general or detailed, different raters can have inconsistent results on the same document because of criteria or incompetent raters (McMillan, 2001; Montgomery & Wiley, 2008; Moya & O'Malley, 1994). Nevertheless, Moya and O'Malley (1994) note that these kinds of problems can be solved by the help of careful planning, various judges, well-trained raters, route planning of objective and subjective sources of information.

Consequently, although it is difficult to handle these kinds of challenges of portfolio implementation, advantages seem to be greater. It requires lots of effort, commitment to provide a balance between advantages and disadvantages in order to have reliable results.

2.2. E-Portfolio (EP) as an Alternative Assessment Tool

EPs are similar to paper-based portfolios, yet as highlighted by Carmean and Christie (2006), “the information collection, storage, and management are done electronically” which “empowers learners to use artefacts of different media types such as electronic documents, multimedia presentations, graphics, or video” (p. 8). EP usage has been in demand within distance education programs, online programs, and even in hybrid education systems which combine both face-to-face and online education. After the Covid-19 outbreak in the world in 2020, the importance of EP assessment especially in language education has increased. This growing popularity resulted in increasing use of digital patterns for students and the necessity to arrange, investigate, document, and transfer this work. These kinds of tasks profits computer capabilities of storage, display, improvement, and communication to alter curriculum (Batson, 2002).

EP also called as digital portfolio by several scholars (e.g., Barrett, 2005; Kim, 2006; Yancey, 2001; JISC, 2008; Jafari & Kaufmann, 2006), are different from paper-based portfolio regarding access and delivery, which is sometimes supported “by a commercial e-portfolio course management system or in-house server supporting student web pages” (Johnson, 2006, p. 51). Therefore, one important benefit of EP is that student work can be accumulated and kept in an electronic format.

EPs have been defined as the following significant educational development in the technology world. Historically, the use of portfolio assessment appeared especially in writing classes in order to have more productive and holistic results as a consequence of whole language movement (Belanoff & Elbow, as cited in Barrett, 2005; Gearhart, 2009). Owing to technological developments such as computer, Internet, etc. in educational settings, language teachers get more enthusiastic to use

technology in language teaching and assessment rather than having monotonous and boring classes (Warschauer & Whittaker, as cited in Richards & Renandya, 2002). Hence, language learning and teaching process requires to be mingled with technology (Warschauer, 2007).

EP began to be used after paper-based models of portfolios were elevated into electronic ones because of technological developments. It has the same kind of information as paper-based portfolios apart from collecting and storing all the documents electronically. This feature helps the students to use different media types while creating their art such as graphics, videos (Carmean & Christie, 2006).

Based on some research studies regarding the usage and implementation of EP in some writing courses such as Freshman Writing programs and Technical Writing courses, some information has been provided about benefits of EP including rise in (a) obtaining to student works, (b) methods or means for constructive feedback, (c) chances for reflection, and (d) assessment on identified learning results (Price, 2006; Johnson, 2006). Furthermore, according to the research conducted (e.g., Johnson, 2006; Williams, 2001), the e-portfolio was a way to let prolonged and dynamic discussion between teacher and learner as well as learner to learner interactivity and reflection. Carless (2006) stated that learners' social awareness and confidence increases and converts learning to a gripping proceeding thanks to Information Technology (IT).

Besides, Abrami and Barrett (2005) defined an EP as a digital container which can be formed by using text, pictures as well as videos and sound. In order to develop and create an electronic portfolio, according to Sun (2002), an EP can be developed through the collection of student work as the evidence of the learning process. Sun's explanation of the steps of forming an EP can be seen in Table 1.

Table 1
Steps of EP

Step	Description
Step 1	Storing and keeping student work done during the course writing assignments on a disk,
Step 2	Beginning to form e-portfolio
Step 3	Creating a new file including a cover page in order to write a table of content showing the parts which will be presented in the portfolio
Step 4	Copying the saved work done into the file in a preferred order
Step 5	Having bookmarks and web addresses of each student artefact according to its title given in the appendix part
Step 6	Saving all the work kept in the file and delivering it to the teacher

According to Collins (1992), the traditional scoring system of writing changed because of the usefulness of e-portfolios and as a result, a new scoring system, which enables teachers to share, check and work interactively with learners, took place. Pourverdi Vangah, Jafarpur, and Mohammadi (2016) defined EP as a productive assessment tool based on evidence of competence, performance of learners.

As a result, EP is one of the alternative assessments techniques to arrange, plan, and evaluate learning process of learners (Bahous, 2008) as well as a procedure to accumulate and audiotape works of both teachers and students as well as having reflection on them (Hartnell-Young et al., 2007). EP has been accepted as a vital and outstanding part of the teaching and learning process in higher education (Alcaraz, 2016).

2.2.1. Benefits of EP

EP has plenty of benefits for both teachers and students considering educational settings. Students have a high level of self-determination while developing portfolios. Hence, they take their own responsibility to show what they have learned during the process of portfolio implementation and this situation creates an interactive relationship between teachers and students (Johnson, et al., 2006).

To start with, a clear benefit of EPs is that it provides learners extra informative opportunities based on technology. According to Chen and Mazow (2002), “EPs are beautiful since they encourage interactive learning in the fields of subject contents as well as the use of technology” (p. 6). Stiggings (2002, as cited in Barrett, 2006) stated that portfolios can support the learners with more engagement and consciousness in a way. Many kinds of artifacts could be integrated with EPs (Klenowski, 2002). Multimedia elements and texts can be mingled by using pictures, graphics, and audio and video recordings (Barrett, 2006). In addition, EPs avail themselves of work which is previously formatted electronically (Ahn, 2004). EPs make it simple to continue, modify, and upgrade (Brown, 2004) and owing to these qualities, they are more suitable to be updated continuously (Niguidula, 2003). EPs either saved to CD-ROM or to the web facilitate to carry the documents and share them with others as well as transferring to a new system (Smith & Tillema, 2003). According to some studies, (Ahn 2004, Canada, 2002; Heath, 2005; Young, 2002), many artefacts can be integrated into electronic portfolios, and they have lots of technological advantages such as editing, updating, storing easily as well as sharing with others and transporting into different systems. In addition, thanks to their accessibility, they are easy to get and view by students, teachers, parents and administration.

Concerning the benefits of electronic portfolios, Ahn (2004) stated that EPs help students to get quick and regular feedback. EPs smooth the way for interchanging of opinions and feedback (Wiggins, 2004). Receiving feedback in a fast and regular way is possible for students during EP implementation (Ahn, 2004), by using electronic media channels (Barrett, 2005). EPs are accepted as an important contribution of feedback in formative assessment (Ainsworth & Viegut, 2006). EPs, especially Web-based ones, provide several chances for communication situations. "Since EPs give the opportunity of storage and availability, they make all reflection types possible: alone, in interaction with peers/ instructors/ coaches, and advisors through written, spoken, videotaped, or graphically represented ways" (Riedinger, 2006, p. 93). In addition, EPs help proficient teachers to get awareness of students' variable skill levels and learning styles and this allows the teacher to be capable of giving dynamic and prompt feedback in order to stimulate learners' progress by motivating them (Riedinger, 2006).

The findings also demonstrated that EP had a positive effect on writing ability of learners and can be advantageous to assess skills of learners in second language writing. According to Masaeli and Chalak (2016), this study showed that EP implementation can be a beneficial tool to encourage learners and make writing more fascinating to them. Furthermore, Mustafa (2011) proved that the use of EP has a significant effect on learners' writing performance when Chang et al. (2011) proved the effectiveness of EPs among language teachers as an assessment tool. In addition, Chang et al. (2011) proved the usefulness of EP for teachers as well.

EPs can be used for various purposes such as assessment, accreditation, reflection, and professional development as stated by Marcoul-Burlinson (2006).

According to Barrett (2006), purposes for portfolio usage contain development, evaluation (achievement of learning) and presentation. The level of creativity and flexibility necessary for the development of the portfolios are determined by diversity of purposes.

As a formative assessment strategy, the EP shows the progress each student has during the assessment process. E-portfolios help proficient teachers to get awareness on students' variable skill levels and learning styles and this allows the teacher to be capable of giving dynamic and prompt feedback in order to stimulate learners' progress by motivating them (Riedinger, 2006).

Overall, according to the literature, EPs are regarded as important for learners to stimulate their learning process (Alcaraz, 2016; Scully et al., 2018). EPs enable teachers to guide the process better and transmit it (Gallardo et al., 2016).

2.2.2. Challenges of EP use

While many advantages of EP implementation are cited above by some researchers, there are also some challenges which will be mentioned as negative sides. Jorgensen and Hansen (2004) cite the work of Borko, Machalic, Timmons, and Siddle (1997) stated that the combination of the two objectives of assessment and learning can be troublesome owing to the conflicts between the requirements of two different objectives essential for both assessment and individual based learning.

First of all, Cooper and Love (2001) noted that assessment quality can be affected immensely and negatively by lack of accessibility and differences of skill levels. Besides, according to Jafari (2004), if the EP criteria are not defined clearly, it will be a burden to the usefulness and effectiveness as a learning and assessment tool since the responsibility of having clearly defined criteria belongs to instructor as well

as their attitudes which may have an important part in the effectiveness of EP (Jafari & Kaufman, 2006).

Lack of training can be counted as another important challenge that destructs the effectiveness of e-portfolio in higher education. EP training is given to most teachers in K12 environments as part of their education (Barrett, 2005; Jafari & Kaufman, 2006). Student teachers and pre-service teachers experience creating their EPs during their education process. Creating their own portfolios make learning more transmittable for students as well as making them experienced (Jafari & Kaufman, 2006; Attwell et. al., 2007). Based on the research directed on EP, the tool or EP management system is the one to have been focused by training and professional development (Jafari & Kaufmann, 2006). Teachers are scarcely provided with EP training which consists of main pedagogical notions to support teachers to get used to its use. Therefore, Cooper and Love (2001) argued that EP-based assessment must rely on courses' pedagogical and assessment basics and teachers' assessment decisions must be dependent on fundamental pedagogical principles to get optimum results. The challenges related with EP management system and pedagogical issues result in some problems for teachers to accept and use EPs in the classrooms (Jafari & Kaufman, 2006; DiBiase, 2002; Lorenzo & Ittleson, 2005). Based on this problem, Strudler and Wetzel (2005a; 2005b) revealed that the programmes in the six 'mature' EP users in their study had no temperance of assessment by university evaluators whose training was scarcely apparent. They also noted inequality in assessment and pinpointed the necessity to assist and train evaluators as one of the goals determined by the universities.

As a result, it can be inferred that if the EP process is not guided properly, potential challenges can decrease the effectiveness. Hence, EP implementation as an

assessment tool can be full of challenges based on authenticity, misrepresentation, and validity (Delandshere & Arens, 2003; Shulman, 2004; Meeus et. al., 2006).

2.3. Comparison of Traditional Portfolios and Electronic Portfolios.

Traditional paper portfolios pile up hardcopy of students' works formed as the evidence of their learning process. Hard copies of classwork based on students' learning are called paper portfolios and they are mostly organized according to time order in order to display learners' academic progress during the learning process (Love, McKean, & Gathercola, 2004). Paper portfolios are generally kept in files, big boxes or double pocketed folders (Wetig, Topp, & Clark, 2005). However, at the end of the portfolio development, if the students put all the work done during portfolio implementation, space problems can occur in the folders. As a result, it can be problematic for teachers and students to keep paper-based portfolios in just one folder due to its size (Rogers & Williams, 2001; Tartwijk & Driessen, 2009). This situation can result in hardship for teachers to keep and evaluate paper-based documents and most of the portfolios are thrown away after the graduation of students (Diehm, 2004). In addition, it is difficult to keep pace with our day, copy and share them with other people (Tartwijk & Driessen, 2009).

Thanks to technological developments, traditional portfolios are replaced with EPs to make authentic assessment easier. On account of technology, it is possible for students to create, store and control their works in their portfolios by using electronic tools. While paper-based portfolios do not allow students to use several ways to show their divergent learning, EPs make it possible (Tanner, 2001). Moon (2005) stated that multi-media including text, audio, video, images can be used in EP implementation to be the representative of learning process by the collection of artefacts.

In brief, there are four main differences between EPs and paper-based portfolios. First of all, use of EP makes it easier to organize, revise, update, and integrate materials. Computing functions such as sorting, searching, editing are beneficial factors which are used in EPs to direct a variety of contents (Bridge & Eddy, 2006; Kimball, 2005).

2.4. Implementation of EP as a Self-Directed Learning

According to (Baturay & Daloğlu, 2010):

The constructivist approach in learning and teaching puts the learners at the heart of learning procedure and provides them with the chance of evaluating their own process. Evaluation in constructivism needs alternative assessment techniques and portfolio as an example of this method is a way to mirror the performance of a learner by giving exact information about student proficiency in several fields of learning (p. 7).

In the similar vein, Strampel and Oliver (2007) noted that learners can benefit from technology to reflect better and to encourage critical assessment. Furthermore, if the technology is used effectively, this can enable learners to control and self-assess their own learning process more accurately. The notional basis of an EP is related with the constructivist approach, and Barret (2010) defined it “as a purposeful collection of learners’ work centering on the learning process reflecting their effort and improvement” (p.35).

Based on the psychological learning leading, self-directed learning includes interactiveness of the learners who are responsible of their own learning by accomplishing the process in which information is put in order and reviewed and in addition, it includes being interactive in the procedure of reflection before conducting

final evaluation (Gencel & Saracaloglu, 2018). Particularly, according to Knowles (1975), self-directed learning is defined as:

A proceeding where individuals take the responsibility to detect their learning needs, forming learning goals, with or without guiding, in diagnosing their learning needs, formulating learning goals, analysing human and material resources for learning, selecting and carrying out appropriate learning ways, and evaluating learning outcomes. (p. 15)

Although advantages of using EP to encourage learners to take their own responsibility as in self-directed learning have been approved in the literature, some implementation issues related with EPs occur in a curriculum. Hence, EP implementation requires meticulous attention to be utilized by students in their learning.

2.4.1. Pedagogies and processes of EP implementation

It is necessary that “the main aim of implementing an EP in a teacher education programme must be mentioned and defined clearly to both students and faculty, otherwise, the strength of EP can be misused” (Riedinger, 2006, p. 96). The pedagogies and procedures of implementation will be decided regarding the objective of EP (Lamont, 2006). Attwell (2006) agreed there are several approaches related to various pedagogical goals and procedures of EP usage to teach and learn. Strudler and Wetzel (2005b) also stated the importance of clarification of purpose for EPs as well as assistance of faculty in the study of universities with ‘mature’ implementations of EPs.

Besides, Challis (2005) accepted the EP implementation procedures are not same as paper-based portfolios because of misuse and investigation of digital

evidence/data as well as the opportunity to study the material over time. She also mentions the enhanced probabilities of communication owing to the global accessibility of web EPs. As a result, it is fundamental to determine the main purpose of EP usage to implement the appropriate tools which will serve that purpose.

2.4.2. Different models for EP development

EP development is defined by bringing two different procedures together such as portfolio development and multimedia project development which are both fundamental (Barrett, 2000). Danielson and Abrutyn (1997) described EP development as including:

- *Collection*: According to the portfolio's main aim, viewers, and subsequent usage, artefacts will be gathered.
- *Selection*: Learning objectives based on portfolio ought to be reflected by the election criterion chosen accordingly. These should include some specific standards as well as their related assessment rubrics.
- *Reflection*: Reflections should be included on every part of portfolio
- *Projection*: Analyse the reflections and form new goals

According to this model, it is obvious that after collection of students' work which is based on careful selection of criteria, students should be reflecting upon their work and internalize the process for new tasks. On the other hand, Ivers and Barron (1998) identified the multimedia development steps as:

- *Assess / Decide*: The focal point is the need of viewer, presentation aim, and suitable techniques for the last portfolio

- *Plan / Design*: In the second phase, the emphasis is to arrange the presentation, decide suitable content
- *Develop*: Collect materials in order to put them in order for the best presentation by using a worthy authoring program.
- *Implement*: The person who develops the portfolio performs it.
- *Evaluate*: In the last part of this process, the purpose is to evaluate the efficiency of the presentation regarding its context and main target. (p. 32)

The formative evaluation developmental model developed by Wolf (1994) is described in three stages, consisting of 1) collection, organizing, and presenting; 2) scaffold, consultation, and collaboration; and 3) feedback. These were explained below.

- 1) *Collection, organising, and presenting*: E-portfolio planning will be started by students and an organised procedure will be followed to learn in a personalised way. Through the process, new ideas will be attempted to form by students and mingle them with genuine ones as the proof of the learning along this experience.
- 2) *Scaffold, consultation, and collaboration*: In this step, as a consequence of communication and interactivity, cognitive skills of learners will be expanded amidst teachers and members of the team. This condition will enable learners to form new ideas based upon former knowledge and experiences by triggering them. Communication skill is believed to be a vital way of creating new ideas.
- 3) *Feedback*: In this pace, students become aware of their experiences as well as perceiving their self-esteem and competence by giving feedback and

comparing reflections amid learners throughout peer-evaluation and setting the determined objectives to the expected learning results.

2.4.3. The impact of EP on the writing skill

Writing is one dynamic structure of communication; it enlarges critical thinking (Tierney, Soter, O'Flahavan, & McGinley, 1989) as well as making learning easier (Deshler, Palincsar, Biancarosa, & Nair, 2007). In addition, language learners' academic achievement and improvement frequently depends on their capability to convey knowledge through writing (Mason, BenedekWood, & Valasa, 2009). Hence, writing has become important in second/foreign language education.

Weigle (2002) stated that traditional approaches are insufficient for writing assessment because of some reasons. First of all, they are too unwise to evaluate learners' writing capacity regarding merely one draft written in limited time and about an unauthentic subject. In addition, he concluded that one draft of writing could not indicate learners' writing capability properly and teachers are not competent enough to evaluate students' writing assignments. Consequently, according to Weigle (2002), writing ought to be evaluated as a process rather than a result.

Several scholars have supervised several studies to explore different points of writing skill. For example, Khodashenas, Kishani Farahani, and Amouzegar (2013) stated that a portfolio can provide contribution to the improvement of the learners concerning their writing ability as well as being used as an encouraging assessment and teaching instrument in English language classes. Furthermore, two case studies which were reported by Hirvela and Sweetland (2005) explored student experiences with portfolios in two ESL writing classes. According to the findings, the idea of portfolios was liked. However, their usage was not validated in writing classes.

Another research conducted by Masaeli and Chalak (2016) was on the impact of applying EPs upon students' writing skill in an English language institute in Isfahan, Iran. The results of the research proved the effectiveness of e-portfolios to improve students' writing competency. They found that students were more pleased with EPs, and their results of post-test were better. They concluded that EP applications can be useful for both learners and teachers.

Khodashenas and Rakhshi (2017) conducted research on the impact of EP assessment on the writing performance of Iranian EFL Learners. The findings showed that the participants of the experimental group got better results than those of the control group. Hence, they concluded that EP assessment has a significant effect on students' writing performance.

Aghazadeh and Soleimani (2020) carried out a study on the effect of EP on EFL students' writing complexity, accuracy as well as fluency (CAF). The findings showed that both teachers and learners liked EP. The findings contributed a lot to English teachers, specifically, writing instructors.

Likewise, Farahian and Avarzamani (2018) explored the effect of EP on EFL learners' metacognition and writing skill. The findings revealed that EPs had a considerable effect on learners' metacognition and writing proficiency.

Consequently, all of these findings indicate that EP implementation has a positive impact on students' writing skills.

2.5. Studies on the EP Implementation in Turkish EFL Context

Studies on EP in the Turkish EFL context have focused on examining students' perceptions on and attitudes towards its implementation (e.g., Üstünel and Deren, 2010; Yastıbaş, 2013) and conducting experimental studies to see the effect of EP on

certain language skills, especially writing (e.g., Erice, 2008), and vocabulary learning (e.g., Öğmen, 2011).

To illustrate, Üstünel and Deren (2010) conducted a study on the impact of EP assessment on students' perceptions of the educational environment. This study concerns several important topics and difficulties among teachers in the classes and among policymakers attempting to modify the national assessment and evaluation system based on new humanistic-constructivist approaches. In addition, the research incorporates traditional paper and pen assessments and portfolio assessments as well as starting a new way. It is supposed to open an innovative way from either traditional or alternative to hybrid assessments. The purpose of the study is to find a better way to assess learners by using EP by contemplating the significance of the educational environment on students' development process and negative effects of traditional assessment systems on students' perceptions. The data collected by pre-and-post-test questionnaires is used to determine if students' perceptions are significantly different at the end of the process. Regarding the results, there is not a considerable difference in students' perceptions on the whole of educational domains between experiment and control groups. On the other hand, to try out these ideas, this test is administered to higher classes at the same school, Yerkesik Primary school, and also high school students. It can be deduced from the results that the older students get, the worse they think about exams.

Another study was conducted by Gulbahar and Tinmaz (2006) on implementing project-based learning by using EP assessment in a small-scale classroom.

Constructivism attracted attention thanks to its learner-centred approach and interactive participation of students (Frank, Lavy, & Elata, 2003; Richardson, 2003). Constructivist approach empowers learners to learn by doing and participating

actively. Project-based learning is based on constructivism which supports active student participation in analytical conditions (Doppelt, 2003). The main purpose of the course is to make a contribution to the software production skills of students to form effective educational software for their future classrooms. It was a case study, and the participants of the study were senior year preservice teachers at a private university in Turkey. Students took the responsibility of their own learning through the course. Regarding research results, the course increased students' self-confidence by giving them the control of their own learning and appreciating their ideas. Moreover, EP assessment motivated students and boosted their self-assurance.

In addition, Kecik et al. (2012) conducted a study to determine the practicality of an EP application in a distance education teaching programme. The main objective of this study is to carry out thorough evaluation of EP assessment in the distance teaching practice course at Anadolu University from the perspective of university supervisors, preservice teachers, and cooperating teachers. A survey was used based on the needs of preservice teachers and to what extent these needs were met regarding these three groups' viewpoints. Qualitative and quantitative data were collected to determine the feasibility of the EP. According to the results, the needs of preservice teachers were accepted by all three groups. In addition, it was concluded that most of the planning, teaching, and reflection necessities in the teaching procedure can be provided by EP applications.

In another study, Kazan (2006) reported that his aim was to describe the usage of Electronic Development File applications in the Turkish Education System. Finally, he revealed that students' concern for their marks faded away. Moreover, these applications increased individuality and self-reliance of the learners.

A literature review on EP in the Turkish EFL context made by Alan and Sümbül (2015) demonstrated that students' attitudes towards EP development were quite positive in that they benefit from EP development with respect to their "academic achievement, attitudes towards the course, sense of responsibility, creativity skills, and practical skill" (p. 93). The scholars concluded that considering the contribution of EP development on students at any level, full integration of EP into the education system requires a well-designed implementation model.

As an example to this call, Tonbul (2009) worked on an EP model for ELT students at Gazi University. He examined the perceptions and experiences of 26 students developing an EP for two months. "EP software environment for personal blog sites from Microsoft Corporation (MSN Spaces)" was employed in the study. The findings of the study reported positive feelings of students on EP both as a learning and an assessment tool, and a model for implementation. The model can be summarized with 5 steps explained in Tonbul (2009):

1. Defining Goals and Audience of the Electronic Portfolio

- Identify the goals to be addressed in the electronic portfolio. To do this;

Examine the course syllabus

Ask students to express their own learning goals

- Know your audience and choose a format the audience will most likely have access to.

2. Taking into account the type and extent of technology available to the students

- Carry out a need analysis before beginning the electronic portfolio development process to identify students' technological needs and capabilities
- Identify the resources available for electronic portfolio development.

What hardware and software do the students have?

How often do the students have access to it?

What technology skills do you and your students have?

- Select software to fit your teaching goals, students' technological skills, and available equipment.

3. Introducing the concept of electronic portfolio and electronic portfolio development process to class

- Introduce the concept of electronic portfolio and electronic portfolio development process to class.

Prepare tutorials which include what an electronic portfolio is, why we use it and how the students create their own electronic portfolios. Use illustrations to make it clear.

Give brief lecture at the beginning of the semester

Provide instructional training sessions

- Create your own electronic portfolio as an example for the students and encourage the students to take part in this process.

4. Determining the content of the electronic portfolio

- Identify and determine the content of the electronic portfolio with your students (title, samples of work, short resume, viewer comment box, pictures, videos etc.)

5. Constructing electronic portfolio

- Be sure that every step is clear for all of the students
- Help your students to construct their electronic portfolios
- Help your students to record their portfolios to <http://spaces.msn.com>

(p, 128)

Control and evaluate their electronic portfolios' effectiveness in light of determined purpose. In an environment of continuous improvement, an electronic portfolio should be viewed as an ongoing learning and assessment tool, and its effectiveness should be reviewed on a regular basis to be sure that it meets the goals set.

Also, in her MA thesis, Tonbul (2009) indicated that she tested the model with some students and provided the EP samples from an Internet accessible website. As a result of her thesis, she called for EP research which also explores teachers' perceptions and experiences on EP. This has also inspired the present study.

Overall, it is clear that numerous studies have been conducted based on EP which is utilised at several different segments of life to education in Turkey. However, it can be understood that further research on EP is needed.

2.6. Students' Perceptions in EP Implementation Process

Implementation of EP within different educational settings has been studied in the field. Recent research highlighted the fact that the advantages of EP

implementation are constantly acknowledged by students (Chau & Cheng, 2010; Welsh, 2012; Klampfer & Köhler, 2015; Nguyen & Ikeda, 2015; Wuetherick & Dickerson, 2015; Sharifi et al., 2016). For instance, in a study by Bolliger and Shepherd (2010), 85% of participants admitted that the EP encouraged them to learn. In another study, Wakimoto and Lewis (2014) revealed the effectiveness of EP by 90% of the participants' agreement. On the other hand, 45% of the participants found EP implementation confusing. It was also noted by Welsh (2012) that the students using EP (experimental group) were able to improve their metacognitive skills and become more motivated to learn when compared to the control group. The summative evaluations and learning acquisitions were also higher for the experimental group.

The EP was accepted as an encouraging and supportive tool to improve metacognition and reflection on learning (Bolliger & Shepherd, 2010; Nguyen & Ikeda, 2015; Sharifi et al., 2016). Klampfer and Köhler (2015) conducted a study on the influential factors of high motivation towards EP. According to the results, perceived effectiveness and relevance were counted as cognitive and contextual factors that increased the degree of motivation as well as that of self-autonomy, which is also accepted as a contribution to students' stimulation into EP (Chau & Cheng, 2010; Mobarhan et al., 2015).

In addition, student motivation is a two-sided way regarding EP. Students always report their motivation to learn owing to EP (Klampfer & Köhler, 2015; Nguyen & Ikeda, 2015; Sharifi et al., 2016). On the contrary, the students who were not motivated enough evaluated EP negatively, which was aligned with low grades on assessment of student learning methods (Cheng & Chau, 2013). Similarly, the level of the students' motivation affects performance quality in the implementation of the EP. Cheng and Chau (2013) detected that the students who had both mastery goals

(intrinsic motivation) and performance goals (extrinsic motivation) became more successful on EP assessment than the ones with either only mastery or performance targets. They also added that the students with low motivation and negative evaluation of EP had low scores. As a result, it seems apparent that student motivation with regard to the EP should be taken into consideration so as to improve learning methods and have better learning results.

Although there are numerous benefits of EP as an alternative assessment tool, its usefulness is restricted and invalidated if it is not executed accurately (Eynon & Gambino, 2017). Compiling an EP is a complicated procedure that needs training of both university and students (Cheng & Chau, 2013). Harrington and Luo (2016) stated that students could not understand the advantages of EP when the EP was applied for the first time in their university. They were barely able to perceive the usage of EP to combine different features of their creation. Nevertheless, when the implementation procedure was scrutinized again by the researchers, it was found out that EP was not implemented accurately to keep up with the objectives determined by the courses and program of study. Moreover, on the research of the EP assignments held to dynamize reflection, the improvement of metacognition was not frequently supported. As a response to these findings, educators adapted the EP program adjusted by the educators to assist the progress of metacognitive skills in a better way. In addition, teachers supported students more to make them create EPs, which can show their educational careers better.

Consequently, students participating in the adapted EP program managed to acknowledge the EP as a tool that could mingle their learning experiences as well as bestowing more than its implementation during faculty courses

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1. Introduction

This chapter introduces the research design, data collection and analysis procedures used in the study. Accordingly, information on the participants, the research setting, and procedures related to data collection is presented.

3.2. Research Design

The present study is exploratory in nature as it aims to explore the perceptions of two groups of participants, teachers and students, in order to reach up-to-date implementation suggestions regarding the use of EP in the university preparatory school setting in Turkey. As an exploratory study, it also seeks evidence through qualitative data to answer the research questions posed in this thesis. Qualitative research is a general notion (Punch, 2000), including diverse forms of investigation assisting researchers to grasp and clarify the sense of social phenomena with the least disruption of the natural setting as much as possible (Merriam, 1998). Qualitative researchers examine people, things and events in their natural surroundings (Punch, 2000) and try to give a meaning or explain phenomena in connection with meanings people add to them (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). In that sense, qualitative data were collected in the participants' natural setting to deeply understand their perceptions on EP assessment within writing classes in the English prep program at university.

The data analysis approach adopted in this study was qualitative content analysis and thematic analysis. Content analysis is an empirical method that could be used to dig into texts and images so as to interpret meanings (Krippendorff, 2004), which conforms to social sciences research (Hartley & Morphew, 2008). A beneficial modern definition of content analysis, hence, is: “a research method for the

personalized analysis of the content of text data by the classification procedure of coding and identifying themes or patterns” (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005, p. 1278). In content analysis, data are “taken as givens” (Krippendorff, 2004, p. 30). The data often consist of “texts that are aimed to be read, interpreted, and understood by people” instead of analysis (p. 30). Weber (1990) declared that one of the benefits of content analysis is that it becomes possible for researchers to get implications from the documents being available for a long time to make deductions. Besides, Fraenkel, Wallen and Hyun (2014) claimed that content analysis can be accepted as a beneficial way in order to find out learners’ perceptions and experiences in their learning setting and it “empowers investigators to observe humans indirectly by an examination of their connections” (Fraenkel et al., 2014, p. 476).

On the other hand, Hsieh and Shannon (2005) stated that there are three clear-cut approaches regarding qualitative content analysis, formulated on independent coding schemes: conventional content analysis, directed content analysis, and summative content analysis. Conventional content analysis is mostly preferred when there are not enough theories or literature on the occurrence. Inductive category approach is used when the codes are originated from word by word reading and finally arranged into an inductive category approach, in which codes are derived from word-by-word reading and eventually organized into relevant categorization. Directed content analysis is mostly preferred to justify or expand existing theories where significant variables or notions are pinpointed as primary coding groups described using determined theory. When the usage of words is being explored by quantifying words or contents, it is called summative content analysis. Furthermore, the analysis of underlying meanings of latent words or contents is part of this approach. In this current study, a summative content analysis approach was adopted to examine the data

because “it is a modest and unreactive method to inquiry related phenomenon” (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005 p. 1285).

Besides, Braun and Clarke (2006) stated that a detailed and comprehensive analysis is provided by thematic analysis. According to Attride-Stirling (2001), thematic networks which are used to direct thematic analysis detect themes in a text and contain three levels:

- Basic theme: The simplest feature of the data which cannot be examined without the next level theme. After basic themes are identified from the text, they are classified together under the organizing themes. After basic themes are revealed by coding, codes are collected together to construct basic themes.
- Organizing theme: The middle order theme surrounding the basic themes as well as empowering them to be coherent. Collection of organizing set up form global themes.

Global theme: It is the highest order theme which tells the main topic of the text. The other levels are smaller parts of global themes.

Thematic analysis was also applied for this study since the open-ended questions seek answers for some specific experiences and ideas. When the data were analyzed, three different global themes came out. Then, organizing themes picked out from global themes. Eventually, organizing themes were broken into smaller parts, codes and classified under some categories.

The data gathered for the study come from one educational setting, which is an English language preparatory program of a private university in Turkey. In addition, data were collected through questionnaires with open-ended questions and semi-structured interviews. Then these were analyzed to reach comprehensive findings.

3.3. Research Setting

This study was conducted with the involvement of English preparatory program instructors and students at a private university in Istanbul, Turkey. The English preparatory school program focuses on general English language education based on productive (writing and speaking) and receptive (reading and listening) skills to empower learners to maintain their own departmental studies. Students are required to be proficient enough in language to reach out to their departmental classes.

In this university setting, English is the medium of 30 percent of the instruction. Students who have the opportunity to study at any of these English-medium departments are expected to take a proficiency exam that measures learners' knowledge, performance and skills in several aspects. The exam includes multiple choice questions of reading comprehension, vocabulary, grammar, and listening comprehension and an essay-type question to test writing. In accordance with the results of the proficiency exam, some students can skip the mandatory preparatory program if they get a sufficient score from the exam. If not, they are divided into levels as low and medium for a year, and the classes include 19 or 20 students. The preparatory program includes two semesters and four different tracks. Each track lasts nine weeks, including 28 hours of English lessons (writing, reading, grammar, listening and speaking) each week.

Furthermore, writing is one of the most important skills within the program, and it is improved through the study of grammar and vocabulary. The study of other skills is also expected to support the writing performance. Portfolio assessment (paper-based and EP) is one crucial component of the writing course in the program. During the

Covid-19 pandemic between the years 2020-2022, the program preferred EP assessment. The data for this study were collected during this time.

3.4. Participants

Data were gathered from two groups of participants: students and teachers. 30 students studying at the English preparatory program of a private university and 31 English teachers who work in the same program participated in this study. The target population was limited to one private university in İstanbul, Turkey. The participants were selected through convenience sampling methods as they were accessible for the study.

3.4.1. English Teachers

50 teachers who offer writing classes in the English preparatory program were the sample for this study, yet 31 of them participated in the study. Their ages range from 25 and 50. They were granted certificates in teaching and had BA, MA and PHD degrees. Most of the teachers are quite experienced, and their years of teaching experience range from three to 25. Besides, they reported that they offered the writing course at the English preparatory school for many years. Demographic information of the teachers can be seen from Table 2.

Table 2*Demographic Information of the Participant Teachers*

	Number	Percentage
Gender		
Male	6	19, 4 %
Female	25	80, 06 %
Year of teaching experience		
0 to 9 years	7	22, 6 %
10 to 15years	17	54, 9 %
16 to 20 years	5	16, 1 %
21+	2	6, 4 %
Education		
BA	9	29 %
MA	17	54 %
PHD	5	16, 02 %
Year of teaching writing experience		
1 to 5 years		
6 to 10 years	10	32, 2 %
11 to 15 years	10	32, 2 %
16 to 20 years	8	25, 9 %
	3	9, 7 %

According to Table 2, 25 teachers out of 31 (80, 06 %) are females and 6 (19, 4 %) of them are males. The teaching experience of the teachers, 7 teachers (22, 6 %) have 0- 9 years of teaching experience while 17 teachers (54, 9 %) and 5 teachers (16,1 %) have 10-15 and 16-20 years of experience respectively. 2 teachers (6, 4 %) have above 21 years of experience. In regard to their degree levels, 9 teachers (29 %) have a BA degree while 17 teachers (54 %) and 5 teachers (16, 02 %) have MA and PHD degrees respectively. As for the year of teaching writing experience, 10 teachers (32, 2 %) have 1-5 years of teaching writing experience while 10 teachers (32, 2 %) have 6-10 years. 8 teachers (25, 09 %) teach writing between 11 and 15 years while 3 teachers (9, 7 %) teach writing between 16 and 20 years.

3.4.2. Students

Student participants from low English level were chosen for this study as the researcher was the teacher of these students in the preparatory program. 45 students formed the student sample, but 30 of them responded to the questionnaire. Their ages range from 18 to 28. The students are from the Law and Political Science departments. Demographic information of the students can be seen in Table 3.

Table 3

Demographic Information of the Participant Students

	Number	Percentage
Gender		
Male	13	43, 03 %
Female	17	56, 07%

According to Table 3, 13 students out of 30 (43, 03%) are males and 17 (56, 07%) of them are females.

3.5. Data Collection Procedure

As in every scientific study within educational sciences, it is necessary to obey the ethical principles, considering “the right of informed consent” and “respect for subjects’ privacy” in human-subjected studies (Ary et al., 2010, p.56). On this matter, Ary et al. (2010) added acquiring the permission of the participants is vital to notify them about their willingness of participation in the research as well as recording their confirmation of involvement (p. 58). Hence, to ensure the participants’ voluntary involvement in the study, they were informed about the research topic and the data collection procedure. Then their written consent was asked as an obligatory component before they began filling in the questionnaire. Furthermore, the

participants' names were concealed because of the confidentiality of the data gathered from both teachers and students.

Since this study aimed to explore and compare the perceptions of both university English language preparatory program students and teachers on EP assessment within the writing course and use the findings to suggest an EP implementation model for university preparatory schools, two qualitative data collection instruments were benefited from: questionnaire with open-ended questions and focus group interviews.

Questions used in the questionnaires and interviews were prepared and checked by the researcher's supervisor. After needed alterations were made, the questionnaires were piloted on two students and two teachers separately before their actual administration. Revisions were made upon the comments obtained from these participants regarding the clarity of the items. Patton (1997) stated that the validity of a qualitative study is mostly connected with the reliance, validity, reliability, and interior stability of the procedures to gather and examine the data of the research. In this qualitative study, piloting was used to establish reliability and validity of the questionnaires and interviews.

After the piloting step, the data collection process started with the online questionnaires administered to both students and teachers. The links to the questionnaires were shared with both groups through email. Following this, the responses obtained were analyzed by two different raters to increase reliability. After the administration of questionnaires to both students and teachers, semi-structured focus group interviews were conducted to triangulate the data and obtain more insightful responses regarding the issue at hand and the research context. Open-ended interview questions enable researchers to study the research focus in depth, to see

processes, and to reach reasons for observed relationships (Weller, et. al., 2018). Moreover, carrying out in-depth interviews is one of the most effective ways to investigate the complexity of personal perceptions (Cicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006). Hence, interview data were gathered from five instructors and five students. Students were interviewed through Zoom as a focus group. Both interviews were recorded upon the permission of the participants. The recorded data were transformed into texts through a transcription tool called Descript.

The questionnaire and interviews that were administered with the student group were done in students' native language, Turkish, in order not to lose data because students are not proficient in English. Yet, the questionnaire and interviews with English teachers were conducted in English as the teachers have a good command of English and they constantly communicate in English within their program.

3.5.1. Open-ended questionnaire

So as to see how EP assessment is perceived by students and teachers in the English preparatory program, two separate questionnaires were formed; one for students and the other for teachers. They were sent via a web-based survey tool, known as Google form. Both of the questionnaires were formed in three parts: the consent form, demographic information, and open-ended questions requiring specific answers.

The student questionnaire was sent to 50 university preparatory class students through a Google Form link to pile up comprehensive information about their perceptions on implementation of EP assessment. Yet, 30 students answered the questionnaire. In the first part, students were informed about the study. Demographic data such as age, gender, their faculty, and some background information regarding

their education was asked in the second part. The third part seeks responses for eleven open-ended questions on the comparison of EP and traditional assessment, differences between EP and paper-based portfolios, the process of the EP implementation, the perceived advantages and disadvantages of EP implementation, their perceived feelings regarding EP effect on their language-related and social skills, their awareness on EP evaluation criteria, the feedback on EP provided by the teachers, and the suggestions of learners to improve the process of EP assessment. See Appendix A for the student questionnaire.

The teacher questionnaire was delivered to 45 preparatory class teachers through a Google form link, but 31 teachers completed the form by answering 13 open-ended questions. Similar to the student questionnaire, the teacher questionnaire is composed of three parts: the consent form, demographic background (age, gender, year of teaching experience, and qualifications), and open-ended questions. The questions were in the form of constructed response and very similar to those that were asked to the students. A different question that appeared in the teachers' questionnaire was asking the perceived benefits and challenges of EP assessment for teachers themselves. The suggestions of teachers to make the EP implementation process more beneficial for students were also asked in the questionnaire. (See Appendix B)

3.5.3. Semi-structured focus group interviews

So as to have further data explaining the perceptions of students and teachers regarding the EP assessment within the writing courses in the English preparatory program, semi-structured focus group interviews with five randomly selected participants from both groups were conducted on Zoom. The primary objective of the semi-structured interview questions was to define and expand main themes examined

in the data from the online questionnaire. They were asked to share their perceptions and experiences of EP assessment and its implementation in the program. Their suggestions were again asked to obtain further data for the study. See Appendix C for interview questions for students and Appendix D for the interview questions for teachers.

3.6. Data Analysis

The questionnaire and the recorded interview data were transformed into texts through a transcription tool called Descript. Qualitative content analysis through which a text with certain words, themes, or concepts is categorized was used (Thomas, 2006). More specifically, summative content analysis and also thematic analysis were preferred since the data were read, categorized and quantified. The responses obtained were analyzed by two different raters to increase reliability. Consistencies were negotiated to have common themes.

After both questionnaires and the focus group interviews were analyzed following the questionnaires separately, students' and teachers' responses were compared in order to have more reliable results on the implementation of EP assessment within the writing course of the English preparatory program.

3.7. Trustworthiness of the Study

The primary aim of all research is to provide reliable and valid outcomes. Although results of quantitative studies are related to numbers and statistics, qualitative studies such as the present study pursue answers to issues by observation and in-depth interviews. Hence, it may be possible for a person to question the reliability of the results in a quantitative study. Furthermore, the results of qualitative studies might include the bias of the researcher.

On the contrary, according to Merriam (2009), internal validity and reliability of research can be the elements to analyze the trustworthiness of a study. In addition, Lincoln and Guba (1985) stated that credibility, confirmability, dependability and transferability are the elements to guarantee trustworthiness of a qualitative study. The data analysis for this study was conducted considering these four different aspects of trustworthiness.

3.7.1. Credibility.

According to Fraenkal and Wallen (2012), a qualitative study's credibility is equivalent to internal validity, instrument validity and reliability. Validity in a study means the reality of the results and it empowers researchers to guarantee what they are measuring is what they mean to measure. Consistency of the results of a specific period of time shows reliability. The concern in a qualitative study is the possibility of the researcher's bias because the study is examined by the researcher based on his or her analysis of the data provided by interviews and open-ended questions. Things can be interpreted in a different way by each researcher. Thus, the credibility of qualitative studies is ensured through some important steps by the researchers. Triangulation of data was used to warrant credibility in this study.

3.7.2. Triangulation.

Gathering multiple data from participants is called triangulation. In this study, after participants were given an online open-ended questionnaire, some of these participants were requested to answer these questions through an interview to get more detailed answers and keep away from any misinterpretation. The researcher used both audio and video recordings to scrutinize the data repeatedly during the interview to guarantee that accurate and valid conclusions were interpreted by the researcher. In

addition, all of the interviews were recorded by both video conferencing and audio recordings by the researcher, and they were all recorded based on the consent of the participants. Furthermore, both questionnaires and interviews were piloted for the coherence of the questions and purity of the wording.

3.7.3. Transferability.

Making generalizations is possible in qualitative studies by thick description as suggested by Lincoln and Guba (1986). An elaborated description and interpretation of a condition by the researcher is called a thick description. When similarities of two contexts are defined by thick descriptions, similarity of the findings in the two contexts can be assumed (Guba, 1981). Hence, very comprehensive and thorough descriptions were made to warrant transferability for this study.

3.7.4. Dependability.

Reliability is identified as consistency or dependability in qualitative studies according to Lincoln and Guba (1985). When the study is directed again, getting the same results shows reliability of this study. Nonetheless, providing reliability in the qualitative studies has been a perturbation owing to the changing nature of human behaviour. Meriam (2009) stated that getting different results does not show the lack of reliability in qualitative studies. Having consistency between the data and result carries more importance in qualitative studies. Meriam (2009) presented some strategies to ensure dependability in qualitative studies. One of the strategies to guarantee dependability is triangulation as presented by Meriam (2009).

Dependability of this study was ensured by giving the participants an open-ended questionnaire and conducting interviews with some of the participants to clarify their answers.

3.7.5. Confirmability.

Confirmability in qualitative studies means that there is no researcher bias, and the results are objective. Hence, Guba (1981) proposed to change the objectivity from the researcher to the data since it is true that researchers are prejudiced when data and instruments are used. This signifies that having provable data is more important than having a certifiable researcher. Triangulation is conducted to warrant confirmability in a qualitative study as declared by Guba (1981). This method was used for the current study. According to Miles and Huberman (1994), two raters analysing the same data can decrease bias of the researcher. In this study, the data were examined by two raters separately and compromised on the themes. As suggested by Miles and Huberman (1994), 70 % of a consensus on the data was adequate.

4. RESULTS

This study aimed to explore the perceptions of both university English language preparatory program students and instructors on EP assessment within the writing course, compare their perceptions and use the findings to suggest an EP implementation model for university preparatory schools in the implications section.

In accordance with this purpose, the following research questions were asked:

1. What are the perceptions of students on EP implementation within the writing course offered in the English preparatory program at university?
2. What are the perceptions of EFL teachers on EP implementation within the writing course offered in the English preparatory program at university?
3. How do teachers' and students' perceptions on EP implementation within the writing course offered in the English preparatory program at university match or mismatch?

Findings of each research question were summarized in the following sections.

4.1. Findings of the First Research Question

In order to answer the first research question, “*What are the perceptions of EFL students on EP implementation within the writing course offered in the English preparatory program at university?*”, content of the data obtained through student questionnaires and interviews were read line by line and initial categories were spotted. Then themes in the answers were determined and identified. Table 4 shows the categories and themes obtained from the data with the number of participants who mentioned them and the relevant percentages.

Table 4*Students' perceptions on EP assessment*

Students' Perceptions on EP	N	%
Perceived Benefits of EP assessment		
- Improvement on language skills (Q) / writing skill (I)	30	100 %
- Contribution of feedback (Q+I)	5	100 %
- Improvement on technological skill (Q+I)	30	100 %
- Self-confidence and critical thinking (Q+I)	15	50 %
	8	26, 7 %
Perceived Limitations of EP assessment		
- Time Limitation (Q+I)	7	23,3 %
- Word Limitation (Q+I)	5	16,7 %
- Unclear feedback from teachers (Q)	2	6,7 %
- Being stressed because of being graded (Q)	2	6,7 %
-Technology-related problems (Q+I)	2	6,7 %
- Lack of writing practice (Q)	1	3,33 %
Suggestions on EP implementation		
-Topic Selection (Q+I)	9	30 %
-Feedback Timing (Q+I)	12	40 %
-Feedback style: Manual feedback (Q+I)	16	53,3 %
-Feedback style: Correction code (Q+I)	13	43,3 %
-Awareness of the EP rubric (I)	5	100 %

Note. Q: Questionnaire data; I: Interview data

4.1.1. Perceived benefits of EP assessment

EFL students who participated in this study declared numerous benefits of EP implementation while learning English in the preparatory program. According to the responses of the students, EP implementation enabled learners to improve their writing skills in terms of sentence formation, rule development regarding academic writing, appropriate use of punctuation, organization as well as vocabulary, grammar, reading, listening, and speaking skills. Two students described the perceived language improvement as in the following quotation:

Expanding my academic writing ability. Vocabulary development. It provides a plus for my four language skills (reading, writing, speaking and listening). I do not obtain knowledge and culture because of the research I

have done while writing. These are some of the benefits it has offered me.

(Students' Questionnaire, S5)

Writing, spoken vocabulary, and grammar improved more. Because we actually scan all the words in our minds when we write. We remember the grammar rules and pay more attention to them. The more we write, the more our speaking ability improves. (Students' Questionnaire, S10)

Even though students were assessed based on their performance and proficiency, all of the participants stated that their progress during EP implementation was important for them. They all felt satisfied and self-confident when they observed their progress. In the interview, a student summarized this in the following way:

Definitely observing my progress is more important while keeping an e-portfolio, because it makes me feel better, too and there is a quite big difference between my first portfolio and the other portfolios we write recently and observing my process increases my confidence in English.

Therefore, it's more important to see my development. (Students'

Questionnaire, S13)

They also added that EP enabled them to learn from their own mistakes and not to repeat these mistakes again. Even though they accepted the fact of being graded in an educational field, they thought that their development was more precious.

In addition, one of the students declared the improvement on her technological skills in the following way:

The writing and reviewing process is more convenient and easier than paper-based one. I also think that it contributes to the technological development of students (formal font size, learning style, etc.) (Students' Questionnaire, S3)

The responses above showed that students believed EP implementation increased their capability and performance on writing, vocabulary, grammar, reading and technological skills. They had several reasons to declare that e-portfolio implementation was a great contribution to improve their language progress including four skills while they were learning a foreign language.

Student participants also paid attention to the role of feedback as a benefit of EP implementation. Considering that EP procedure is the opportunity of getting feedback from teachers, all of the students (30) believed in the usefulness of receiving feedback to improve their writing ability. It is clear that receiving clear feedback enables students to improve themselves and learn from their own mistakes. EP implementation provided seven learners to examine their mistakes and correct them by either correction code or manual feedback. One student explained the importance of feedback in the following way:

I really look forward to feedback, because I want to see how I make grammar mistakes and I want to work on it to improve my English further. I always work on these mistakes. (Students' Questionnaire, S18)

Moreover, students stated that clear feedback prevented them from making the same mistakes. Two students summarized their feelings as follows:

Feedback allows us to realize our mistakes and learn from them. I think these comments are to our advantage. (Students' Questionnaire, S20)

In my opinion, our teacher's feedback is a roadmap for us. By following these comments, we can reach the right one. In addition, we can find the source of our mistakes while following this map. (Students' Questionnaire, S30)

Another benefit of EP assessment was that it enabled students to be more self-confident to express their opinions and improve their critical thinking ability. Eight students mentioned that EP helped them to share their ideas in a freer way. Two students summarized their feelings in the following way:

E-portfolio work helps to think and write more practically faster. I can see my mistakes immediately and correct them. (Students' Questionnaire, S18)

It allows us to express in-depth ideas about a topic in a limited time. This way, we can present our ideas more comfortably in a formal setting in the future. (Students' Questionnaire, S10)

Moreover, it enabled them to be more creative thanks to e-portfolio. One student stated:

I think that e-portfolio studies have many benefits in terms of language learning. First of all, the best way to learn is to learn by making mistakes. We have the chance to see the mistakes we made in the portfolios and when we correct these mistakes, we understand why we made a mistake. Second, we need to be creative to write. E-portfolios allow us to be more creative and this obligation pushes us to think fluently in English. Thanks to these studies, we can think in more detail. In addition, we are motivated to learn more

vocabulary so that we do not fall back on or go off topic in our articles.

(Students' Questionnaire, S18)

These responses showed that students benefited from e-portfolio in several ways. Apart from the advantages on writing, grammar, vocabulary, students felt that their critical thinking ability improved, and they became more creative. Therefore, it is clear that this kind of self-directed learning fostered their self-confidence to share their thoughts freer thanks to e-portfolio.

According to students' perceptions, another benefit of EP procedure was the opportunity of getting feedback from teachers. All of the students (30) believed in the usefulness of receiving feedback to improve their writing ability.

It is clear that receiving clear feedback enables students to improve themselves and learn from their own mistakes. E-portfolio implementation provided seven learners to examine their mistakes and correct them by either correction code or manual feedback. One student explained the importance of feedback in the following way:

I really look forward to feedback, because I want to see how I make grammar mistakes and I want to work on it to improve my English further. I always work on these mistakes. (Students' Questionnaire, S27)

Moreover, students stated that clear feedback prevented them from making the same mistakes. Two students summarized their feelings as follows:

Feedback allows us to realize our mistakes and learn from them. I think these comments are to our advantage. (Students' Questionnaire, S 13)

In my opinion, our teacher's feedback is a roadmap for us. By following these comments, we can reach the right one. In addition, we can find the source of our mistakes while following this map. (Students' Questionnaire, S 9)

The answers above showed that feedback helped students to realize their mistakes and correct them. Students stated the importance of receiving clear feedback and added that they learnt from their mistakes by virtue of feedback.

4.1.2. Perceived limitations of EP assessment

Although students mentioned the benefits of EP assessment within the English preparatory program, they also stated some limitations encountered during EP implementation. Only three students said that there was no difficulty they faced during this process. While students mentioned different kinds of limitations they met, seven students out of 30 emphasised the pressure they felt because of the limited time given for EP writing. To illustrate, one student said, "According to me, time is so limited". Another student explained her feelings about time limitation in the following way:

My subjective opinion is that the time allotted for portfolios is short. I have difficulties in completing my homework in the last semester of the preparatory class that I am a student in. The fact that I also work apart from being a student has a great effect on this. (Students' Questionnaire, S5)

Students also stated that if the topic was also unfamiliar or unattractive, it also made the writing task more difficult to finish in the allocated time. Two students stated their ideas as follows:

When you don't have much idea about some writing topics, it can make writing an essay in the time given for that topic difficult. (Students' Questionnaire, S4)

Sometimes the time can be short, and some topics can be difficult in that I sometimes do not have an idea about the topic. So, this affects my writing in a detailed way. (Students' Questionnaire, S19)

As student participants mentioned in the questionnaire, the duration of the time given for an EP task was not enough for students. This perceived difficulty was multiplied if the selected writing topic was not also familiar to students.

Furthermore, there are some rules of EP procedure determined based on the rubric and the criteria. Minimum and maximum word limit is one part of the criteria. However, according to the findings, five students confessed that both minimum and maximum word limit resulted in their either losing focus or creativity on idea generation on the topic. As a result, the word limit requirement made the writing process more difficult and complicated as for the students. Two students stated the difficulty of this situation as in the following:

I guess the only problem was the word limit. I'm not talking about the lower limit, this is very normal, but the upper limit was causing me a problem and most of the time I exceeded it quite a bit. ... During the reduction, I was either underemphasizing the most important points or causing a loss of meaning. (Students' Questionnaire, S11)

I do not think that e-portfolio studies have difficulties that can be considered very important, but the upper limit of words can be low from time to time. In

this case, we may have to restrict the thoughts we want to express. (Students' Questionnaire, S 17)

According to the findings, two students also indicated the difficulty of understanding feedback provided by the teachers. Two students stated that they felt stressed because of being graded, and one student also added that lack of practice on writing was a disadvantage for them to write better.

In addition to the limitations mentioned above, the students also pointed out the technology-related problems. Since EP was implemented online, some perceived difficulties were mentioned. Even though a paper-based portfolio written in the classroom atmosphere could enable them to write better and more focused without using technological opportunities, EP was perceived as easier for some students because of the chance of searching sources on the Internet and cheating opportunities. For example, one student summarized her feelings as:

Since the e-portfolio is online, we can translate sentences using the Internet, but if it were in a classroom environment, we would try to write it ourselves and we would develop our writing. That's why I don't think the e-portfolio is very beneficial. (Students' Questionnaire, S6)

Besides, 11 students thought that a paper-based portfolio could be more beneficial on their writing procedure owing to some reasons stemming from technological opportunities such as cheating, translation facilities, and auto-correction facility of Microsoft Word as well as technical problems. Therefore, it is clear that although the technological advantages during the e-portfolio process seem positive at first, they also seem to offer some limitations in terms of students' language progress.

Finally, the possibility of communication problems between teachers and students due to EP's being online were indicated by two students:

We may experience a communication problem between the instructor and the student in some cases arising from 2 different dimensions. In online portfolios, the process may take longer after the first feedback. (Students' Questionnaire, S1)

If we count this as a difference, it may be more difficult than paper-based portfolio due to the lack or interruption of the internet, computer and technological equipment required for the E-Portfolio to function. (Students' Questionnaire, S9)

4.1.3. Suggestions on EP implementation by students

Students' suggestions on the implementation of EP in the preparatory program focused on topic selection, feedback (timing and style), and the evaluation rubric.

First of all, all of the students agreed on the effectiveness of feedback during EP assessment on their language improvement. 12 students pinpointed that the feedback procedure must be designed more interactively. About this matter, one student stated:

In my opinion, e-portfolio studies are very useful for us, but it can be more useful if common mistakes in writing corrections are evaluated and discussed with the students during the lesson interactively. (Students' Questionnaire, S21)

They also added that when the teacher gave feedback late, it did not support their learning because they lost their focus on their assignment. As a result, they suggested getting detailed feedback right after the task is finished. One student

mentioned this by saying, “It is very important to give feedback to students more quickly and in detail”. (Students’ Questionnaire, S3)

When the students were asked about their perceptions on the feedback style, especially the selection of the manual feedback and the correction code, to understand which one they benefited from most, 13 students stated that receiving feedback through the correction codes was more effective for them to correct their mistakes because they tried to find the correct forms of the mistakes on their own. They felt that this autonomous process strengthened their learning and became more memorable not to make the same mistake again. One student summarized his feelings about correction code in the following way:

I think using correction code in our e-portfolio is a better method. I think it is more effective because it makes us think about that mistake and find the truth ourselves. (Students’ Questionnaire, S30)

On the other hand, 16 students agreed on the effectiveness of manual correction because of its symbolic nature, the use of correction code was found more challenging for students to understand. They added that sometimes they could not realize their mistakes so they could not fix them. They also declared the importance of extra explanation written in the comment boxes on the Word document by their teachers in order to figure out their mistakes and correct them. Two students stated:

It is better to have direct corrections by manual feedback. I understand my mistakes better and correct them better. It becomes more important to me.
(Students’ Questionnaire, S3)

I find it more beneficial for my teacher to write some short notes explaining what I did wrong, because in this way, I both see my mistake and understand how I will correct it in a clearer way. (Students' Questionnaire, S13)

The responses of students indicated that more students (16) agreed on the effectiveness of manual feedback. They thought that the correction code made the EP procedure more challenging and complicated. On the other hand, 13 students supported the correction code because it provided autonomous learning opportunities and became more memorable for them to figure out their mistakes.

As the students were aware of the fact that EP implementation was a tool to improve their language skills, they mentioned the importance of topic selection. They took attention to the fact that if they were not familiar with the topic given, this process would become more difficult and challenging for them because they could not generate ideas during the writing process. As a result, nine students suggested that topic selection had better be designed with students or the topics should be determined regarding students' interest and preferences. In addition, they suggested being given more than one option to choose the one which attracted their attention most during the process. For instance, two students stated:

Having more discussion topics can contribute to students' writing their own ideas more willingly. Because I think that when the chosen topic for an e-portfolio is not interesting for students, the results cannot be satisfactory for both students and teachers. (Students' Questionnaire, S24)

Sometimes while writing an e-portfolio, we come across topics that we have no idea about, everyone has to choose the same topic, which is what I didn't

like. I think choosing a topic should be optional. I think this will give students a chance to write their own ideas. (Students' Questionnaire, S19)

As a final suggestion, students highlighted the role of the evaluation rubric within appropriate implementation of EP. Nevertheless, responses of the students indicated that since they were not so interested in the rubric used to evaluate their essays, they were only superficially aware of the evaluation criteria. Based on their answers, it was clear that learning and fixing their mistakes was their primary goal rather than the rubric. One student described this as in the following:

.... I don't mind the grade of the e-portfolio. Of course, it feels good to get high scores, but since my goal is to observe my mistakes and write better in the next portfolio, the score doesn't have much effect on my motivation. I can say grammar, punctuation marks and paragraph structure are crucial.
(Student 2)

4.2. Findings of the Second Research Question

In order to answer the second research question, “*What are the perceptions of EFL teachers on EP implementation within the writing course offered in the English preparatory program at university?*”, content of the data obtained through teacher questionnaires and interviews were analyzed and then themes in the answers were determined and identified. Table 5 presents the categories and themes obtained from the data with the number of participants who mentioned them and the related percentages.

Table 5*Teachers' Perceptions on EP assessment*

Teachers' Perceptions on EP	N	%
Benefits of EP for students		
- Improvement on language skills (Q) /writing skill (I)	22	71 %
- Online (technical) opportunities (Q + I)	20	64, 5 %
Limitations of EP for students		
- Technical difficulties (Q + I)	9	29 %
- Cheating (Q + I)	9	29 %
- Lack of motivation (Q)	10	32, 2 %
Benefits of EP for teachers		
- Technological opportunities (Q +I)	28	90, 3 %
Limitations of EP for teachers		
- Workload (Q + I)	12	38, 7%
- Lack of training on EP assessment (including training on the grading procedure) (I)	5	100 %
Suggestions on EP implementation		
- Peer-assessment / Self-assessment (Q + I)	16	44, 4 %
- Feedback (I)	5	100 %
- Topic selection (Q + I)	6	19, 3 %
- EP rubric (Q + I)	28	77,8 %
- Number of drafts (Q + I)	31	86 %
- Time limit (I)	2	40 %
- Monitoring students (I)	5	100 %
Suggestions for Program Coordinators		
- Monitoring students/making them turn on cameras or using canvas (I)	5	100 %
- Having practice hours in the writing syllabus (I)	5	100 %
- Using only correction code (I)	1	20 %
- Peer Assessment activities (I)	5	100 %
- Using "pass or fail" instead of grading (I)	1	20 %

Note. Q: Questionnaire data; I: Interview data

4.2.1. Perceived Benefits of EP for students from teachers' perspective

EFL teachers who participated in this study declared many benefits of EP implementation for students while learning English in the preparatory program. According to the responses of the teachers, when four language skills were taken into consideration, 22 teachers out of 31 said that EP was mostly beneficial to improve

writing skills of learners. To illustrate this, one teacher stated, “Writing improves very well, because they get feedback on it.” 13 teachers thought that it improved grammar while 10 teachers said that it was advantageous for reading skills. One teacher summarized the importance of grammar in the following way:

I think it is grammar because my students received lengthy notes about why they should/should not use some grammatical forms. I give importance in analyzing why one uses something particular. That is the reason why my students have improved their grammar competence significantly. (Teachers’ Questionnaire, T5)

On the other hand, less teachers thought that e-portfolio improved listening and speaking skills. Seven teachers stated its importance on listening and four teachers declared that it was useful for the speaking skills of learners. One teacher emphasized the coordination of two skills by saying:

Writing and speaking. Since these skills are more productive, students can show their performance when they are ready. Curriculum has an expectation to achieve at the end of the term, but students can work on these productive skills at their own space and pace. Once they receive the feedback, they can work individually. But of course, all skills can only be improved with the help of fruitful practice. (Teachers’ Questionnaire, T17)

Furthermore, the responses of the teachers confirmed that EP provided students some technological advantages which both facilitated and encouraged them. Teachers mentioned some online opportunities such as accessibility, writing faster, storing, online sources and auto-correction. One teacher stated:

Students may write and submit their portfolios from wherever they are. The place constraint disappears. There is no need to submit a written form.

Considering the spread of the virus, students do not risk themselves or their instructors by exchanging a folder of paper and they do not have to buy, carry, and maintain the hard-copy portfolio folder. Also, students can discuss and interact with their instructors more easily. They can convey more information, commentary, etc. along with their portfolio tasks. (Teachers' Questionnaire, T20)

10 teachers stated that accessibility and storing was helpful for students to submit their e- portfolios easily, keep them in a safe environment and check whenever they needed. One teacher explained the advantages for students in the following way:

Since we live in a digital world, our students tend to use smart phones or computers a lot, it would be easier for them to access. They can work on their own skill in their preferred time. They can always go back and refer to what is there. Also, since it can be reached from anywhere, students can work on their skills anywhere (at home, school, when they are on holiday). (Teachers' Questionnaire, T31)

10 teachers declared that auto-correction and the opportunity of using online sources facilitated the work of students and helped them to be more aware of their mistakes. In addition, auto-correction quality of computers enabled them to correct their mistakes as an online opportunity. One teacher stated technological advantages as follows:

Students can check spelling errors automatically and learn the correct spelling of the word instantly. E-portfolio helps students improve both their

language skills and computers provide an opportunity for a student to reflect on their learning. Lastly, thanks to Turnitin tool students are more aware of the term and concept ' plagiarism' which is highly important for their future academic studies. (Teachers' Questionnaire, T25)

Nonetheless, these qualities were also accepted as a disadvantage to evaluate the success of the students by some teachers. They pointed out the danger of plagiarism. Their ideas will be analyzed in the disadvantages part in a more detailed way. As an example, one teacher summarized his feelings as follows:

The Word documents usually have auto-correction mode on, so the students' grammar and spelling mistakes are corrected by the program. This doesn't help students learn. (Teachers' Questionnaire, T18)

Five teachers mentioned the importance of getting immediate feedback as a positive side of using EP. One teacher stated, "They can track the feedback more easily; they can also follow the process more easily." Besides, six teachers added that all these technological opportunities encouraged learners and increased their sense of responsibility and gave them a chance for self-reflection as a result of more individualistic work. One teacher declared:

Students can see themselves or in other words their writings well by this method. They can evaluate themselves too. They see his strengths and weaknesses and their mistakes. So, he has the chance to improve himself. (Teachers' Questionnaire, T9)

Furthermore, the interviews conducted with the teachers also provided more evidence for these benefits. In the interview, one teacher summarized the benefits of EP implementation as:

E- portfolio is more practical and easier to implement, and another advantage is that it is easier to store the drafts because when some students may lose their paper-based portfolio packs, it will be difficult to follow their improvement. When it is an e-portfolio, we don't have any risk or we don't have any chance to lose them, so it is safer to store. We can use Turnitin, which is good because you know when we use it, we can detect plagiarism so if it is, they will work or not so this is also another way of course e-portfolio contributes to language learners when we give feedback. When we write comments and when we give feedback to students, we can see the improvement in their second portfolio. There is a huge improvement in their writing. We just help the learners learn from the mistakes and that's why I think it focuses on more process rather than result... (Teacher Participant 2)

Another teacher also stated:

I think it is effective, but I also believe that it contributes to their language learning. But if it's done correctly, and if it's done through more monitor, I think it could be effective. If we could be sure that they're only writing something on e-portfolio and they're not doing anything else, that could be more beneficial for the students and as for academic writing. (Teacher Participant 4)

As it was stated above, teachers all agreed that EP was beneficial for students to improve their language skills and enabled them to study more independently as a self-directed system.

4.2.2. Perceived Limitations of EP for students from teachers' perspective

Although teachers agreed on the benefits of EP implementation, they also declared some limitations of EP for students. To explain, 9 teachers confirmed that it also had some disadvantages for students regarding technological problems and students' lack of computer skills, which both decreased students' motivation and became time consuming. One teacher stated disadvantages of technical difficulties as follows:

Some students may not want to use computers. Some forget their passwords and therefore are unable to access them. Lack of internet access is another problem. (Teachers' Questionnaire, T23)

One teacher declared that some students may not have basic computer skills in the following way:

It could be time consuming for students especially for those who lack basic computer skills. Also, it is more beneficial if students receive feedback in person rather than remotely. (Teachers' Questionnaire, T17)

Moreover, 10 teachers expressed that some students were not in favour of using online assessment systems and they preferred using traditional methods to improve themselves more because some of the students needed more guidance and it was difficult for them to understand and apply online feedback. One teacher stated:

Some students prefer paper-based work. It depends on the character of a student. In addition, some students might not be self-autonomous. They would need a lot of guidance, which after a while might make them bored.

(Teachers' Questionnaire, T 8)

Similarly, the interviews with the teachers also support these limitations indicated on the questionnaires. All the participants admitted that the biggest problem was cheating of students while they were writing their EPs because they weren't monitored during the writing procedure. It was possible for students to copy and paste from online sources or make somebody else write tasks on behalf of them. Although Turnitin was used to detect the similarity rate of the students, it wasn't enough for teachers to be totally sure whether students had written it alone or not. Apart from this problem, some teachers also thought that some technological advantages such as auto-correction made the tasks easier and students lazier. One teacher summarized some limitations as follows:

In our institution we don't ask students to turn on their cameras during the tasks we don't know, and we are not sure if they write their portfolios on their own. If anyone else is writing on behalf of them, we don't know if they are cheating or not. If it is their original work or not, that's just not using the camera, I think it increases the probability of cheating. And also, ... most students use Google translate Ok, it is their words. Ok, it is not either pasted from another source, it is their words, but it is Google translate so it cannot be detected in Turnitin. But I know that it is not his or her sentence. So, it doesn't contribute to their grammar or spelling because it is their own work

so that's I think is the biggest problem and putting the cameras on is the best way to prevent them from cheating exactly. (Teacher Participant 2)

Apart from this problem, some teachers also thought that some technological advantages such as auto-correction made the tasks easier and students lazier. Another teacher stated:

We've been using e-portfolios for like 2 years now and I don't think they actually benefit from it because they just cheat like you just said, they use all these apps, google translate, auto-correction, so it's not actually their work, so I don't think they actually benefit from it. But if it's done correctly and if it's done through more monitors, I think it could be effective. (Teacher Participant 3)

Overall, teachers stated the disadvantages of EP implementation for students under three themes: technical difficulties, cheating and lack of motivation. Although teachers accepted the benefits of EP implementation procedure, they also accepted the difficulties which could prevent students from benefiting from it more.

4.2.3. Perceived Benefits of EP for teachers

When teachers were asked about their perceptions of advantages and disadvantages of e-portfolio implementation regarding its effectiveness for teachers, they shared their opinions based on their experiences. They mostly mentioned the technological opportunities provided by EP. For instance, 28 teachers stated the importance of technological opportunities to make EP implementation procedure easier and faster in some ways like storing, saving, and giving feedback than paper-

based portfolio as well as being eco-friendly. One teacher shared his opinion in the following way:

It is easier, eco-friendly, saves time. You can give feedback easily with comments, you do not need to print anything and save the environment. As it is easier than the traditional way, it takes less time. It is easy to store a lot of students' portfolio folders on online drives. (Teachers' Questionnaire, T5)

One teacher also stated that the usage of the internet made accessibility possible whenever they wanted and wherever they were by saying: "We don't carry papers around and we can do them wherever we are or whenever we have time". (Teachers' Questionnaire, T29)

As it was stated above, most of the teachers agreed that usage of technology was a great benefit for teachers to make the EP implementation procedure easier, faster than paper-based portfolio and observe students' performance better.

4.2.4. Perceived limitations of EP for teachers

When teachers were asked about disadvantages of e-portfolio implementation for teachers, 12 teachers out of 31 complained about the workload and pressure on them because of e-portfolio implementation especially if the classes were too crowded. One teacher summarized her feelings:

It takes too much time and effort especially with crowded classes (checking Turnitin similarity rates, writing comments online, etc.). Also, it is more challenging and complicated to explain the steps of the task online. (Teachers' Questionnaire, T1)

One teacher also stated, “while giving feedback, it is tiring to look at the screen for a long time. “Another problem claimed by eight teachers was lack of training of both teachers and students regarding e-portfolio implementation procedure and computer skills, which made the process more challenging. One teacher described this situation as follows:

Some teachers are not good with technology and tend to keep to the traditional way of teaching and assessing. And some students don't have easy access to technology or competency related to IT. Sociological differences don't provide the same opportunities to every student that makes the management harder. (Teachers' Questionnaire, T11)

It can be inferred that lack of basic computer skills decreased the effectiveness of e-portfolio implementation for both teachers and students. In addition, all the teachers used the same rubric to evaluate the writing performance of the students. When the drafts of the students were evaluated according to this rubric equally and there was no discrepancy between two teachers on the same writing paper, it meant that there was reliability. However, four teachers stated the reliability problem of the EP procedure. Even though there was a rubric used to evaluate students, providing reliability could be problematic. One teacher stated, “There may be some problems in terms of standardization.” (Teachers' Questionnaire, T3). In addition, because of the fact that students could cheat and use some open sources, the results teachers had might not reflect the real performance of the students. One teacher explained this problem by saying, “It is sometimes risky because some students might cheat during the assessed task. It would be difficult for the teacher to observe the real success of the students.” (Teachers' Questionnaire, T19)

It can be inferred that most of the teachers accepted that they benefited from technology usage to a great extent to make the EP implementation procedure easier, faster than paper-based portfolio and monitor students' improvement better. On the other hand, 12 teachers agreed that EP increased the workload on the teachers especially in the crowded classes. In addition, eight teachers said that technological problems created a big challenge for teachers and some teachers were not competent enough in technology.

4.2.5. Suggestions on EP implementation

In the research context, the e-portfolio implementation process included these drafts for each writing topic. First of all, teachers announced the topic and shared the criteria for the e-portfolio. Then, students were required to write their first paper and uploaded it firstly into Turnitin to see the similarity rate. If the similarity rate was under 40 %, Students uploaded their assignments into the files specific for each student under their names in OneDrive. After the teacher gave feedback by using correction code, students were asked to write the second drafts based on the feedback given. After students had written the second drafts, the teacher gave feedback by using manual correction and if students had more than five mistakes, they needed to write the final draft. They wrote three essays and nine drafts in one track and teachers graded their improvement on e-portfolio based on an evaluation criteria and rubric designed for their level by the program.

Teachers were asked about the EP implementation procedure at their program, all of the teachers approximately wrote the same process as given below. One teacher explained the e-portfolio implementation process in the following way:

I follow the steps given by my institution. Firstly, I present the type of written material students are assigned to produce. The students write the first drafts on a pre-prepared word template and upload it to their pre-prepared OneDrive folder. The instructor (me) takes some notes and gives feedback with a code system designated by the school. Then, students are expected to decode the feedback, understand the errors they made and make corrections accordingly. Finally, instructors do manual corrections and give further explanations. From then on, students are assigned to make further corrections in compliance with the instructors' comments. (Teachers' Questionnaire, T22)

12 teachers thought that peer feedback and self-evaluation should be included in the e-portfolio implementation procedure to foster their learning and motivate them. One teacher stated importance of them as follows:

Peer evaluation and self-evaluation are the most important part of this process because only then they can understand what is expected from them and what they should do to meet the criteria. In addition, it might be a way of socializing for them. (Teachers' Questionnaire, T6)

Apart from peer feedback, one teacher thought that feedback should be given in the classroom not individually. He stated:

Feedback giving process could be open to all students and it can be done anonymously so as not to hurt anyone. This way everyone can see the mistakes and all students may suggest correction and improve their skills. (Teachers' Questionnaire, T16)

Besides, six teachers thought that choosing the appropriate and familiar topics was fundamental to get more realistic results because unfamiliar and uninteresting topics avoided learners showing their actual performance due to lack of background information on this topic. One teacher said, “Topic selection is very essential. Any academic subject out of their interest decreases the efficiency greatly.” (Teachers’ Questionnaire, T4)

In addition, four teachers said that evaluation criteria/ rubric should be created based on the curriculum and all of the teachers should depend on it. In addition, criteria should be shared with students and all the instructions and expectations should be clear. One teacher shared her feelings in the following way:

The evaluation criteria should be decided by the curriculum and assessment team, but it must be shared with students transparently. It must have very clear instructions. (Teachers’ Questionnaire, T22)

The interview data also supported this suggestion. Except one teacher, all the teachers stated the importance of sharing rubrics with students to make them aware of what they were supposed to write. To illustrate, one teacher stated: “sharing rubric with the students. I completely disagree. I don't think they need to see that. Maybe we can talk about it, but I don't think they need to see it and have an opinion about it”. (Teacher Participant 2) However, another teacher opposed to that idea as follows:

I disagree about the rubric with my colleague because I always share the rubric with students because I think if they know what they're going to be assessed on, they lead or they guide their writing or they lead themselves accordingly, because sometimes I show them that you need to do this. You

need to pay attention to your style and organization or etcetera. And if you do this you get these points. If you don't do this, you lose these kinds of points, and they understand why they got those marks in the previous exams.

(Teacher Participant 3)

Furthermore, four teachers stated the importance of the number of the drafts. They thought that the number of the drafts should be decided concerning the individual work of learners. They agreed that multi-drafting might not be necessary for some students, especially strong ones. One teacher stated:

Multi-drafting is difficult in the e-portfolio process because some students need to write more drafts compared to strong students and the Turn-it-in process can be challenging. 2 drafts are OK with e-portfolios. Multi-drafting should be applied for those who really need it. (Teachers' Questionnaire, T27)

In the interviews, one teacher also summarized her feelings about number of drafts in the following way:

First of all, I can say number of drafts are quite satisfactory for me because we ask students to write two drafts if they have more than five mistakes and then they are like in the third track, but they should write minimum two drafts for improvement because in their first draft we give them feedback so they have to revise their organization or their sentence structure whatever based on the feedback so they should be writing these two drafts so the current system is good in terms of number of drafts. (Teacher Participant 4)

Although most of the teachers were pleased with the number of the drafts, only four teachers suggested a different way as stated above. While teachers' suggestions on the EP implementation were mostly based on peer/ self-evaluation, topic selection, rubric, and number of the drafts, 12 of them stated that peer and self-evaluation processes should be part of this procedure to make learners more active and responsible during the implementation process. Furthermore, they thought that his interaction would motivate them to learn more and increase their awareness. Six teachers suggested choosing more suitable and interesting topics for students to foster their writing motivation. Teachers claimed that unfamiliar topics decreased the learning incentive of learners. Four teachers stated that forming the most suitable rubric based on the school curriculum was very important. In addition, depending on this criterion and sharing it with students were important. Four teachers added that multi-drafting was not necessary for all the students and the number of the drafts should be determined differently based on the work of each learner. Three teachers were satisfied with the process. As a result, according to the answers, most of the teachers believed in the effectiveness of peer-self-evaluation, topic selection, criteria and number of the drafts.

According to the interviews, three teachers commented that the feedback must be given individually rather than whole class feedback because of being an assessment process. Also, if students were extremely low, recording individual feedback videos would be beneficial. One teacher stated:

The type of feedback, in each individual actually we give individual feedback rather than the whole class. This is what I do actually. And we just in the first draft, we use correction codes. It is good because it makes students find out their own mistakes rather than fulfilling and actually it is better. But maybe I

think we could record some individual feedback videos for some students who have really big mistakes. So, for problematic papers, maybe, we could record some features and the teacher can explain it in more detail or maybe teacher and student can have teams for interview or whatever like a session and teacher can explain very shortly. (Teacher Participant 2)

However, one teacher stated that whole class feedback as a combination of oral and written would be more beneficial if students permitted it because it would be a holistic practice to make learners learn from their mistakes. One teacher summarized his feelings in the following way:

The type of feedback I think, If the student allows it, it should be for the whole class, because sometimes when they see other people's, other students' mistakes, they also learn that they are doing something wrong. So, I think first asking for the students' permission to do it in the class. I think it's a better idea to do it in the classroom with the whole class because sometimes I show what they write like "I open up the paragraph or essay and I say what's the mistake here. And the whole class tries to find what mistake is made there, so I think it's a holistic learning process for the whole class. That's why I prefer it if the student allows it. I prefer whole class feedback and mostly oral feedback, but if I believe that the student will certainly forget something I said I generally write it also for the student, so I make a combination of oral and written feedback. (Teacher Participant 5)

This suggestion showed that whole-class feedback as a combination of oral and written should also be an alternative as an in-class activity to facilitate students'

language learning skills. In addition, three teachers stated that correction code was beneficial since it supported self-directed learning, but it worked better with high level students. One teacher shared her feelings about correction code as follows:

If they use error correction codes, instead of directly fixing their mistakes, like adding comments, be careful with your spelling, maybe in, in your introduction, check your thesis, state kind of feedback, indirect feedback can help them to understand, be aware of their mistakes and fix it for the second draft. (Teacher Participant 1)

Two teachers also stated that students could really benefit from progress meetings, but it was not possible for crowded classes. They also added that having more practice in the classroom would be beneficial for students. One teacher stated:

The progress meetings are not possible for crowded classes, or sometimes some students want it. I mean they ask you to evaluate their progress. So that's when I do it mostly. But I don't do it with the whole students, because sometimes it's not easy to do that. But sometimes I comment on their e-portfolios. For example, if we are doing the first one and then we start the second one. I said like this one or this portfolio. Yours is better than the first one, so I mean comparison, uh, maybe it's wrong, but I think it's like a progress check too. So that's my style of progress check. (Teacher Participant 4)

In addition, while three teachers were happy with the time limit, two teachers had some concerns about it. Those teachers stated that giving less time could prevent

students from cheating and exceeding word limit. One teacher stated her concerns about time limit as follows:

The timing I think we give students more time than they need, and that's the reason why they have time to cheat. if we give them less time, then they would panic because some students are really slow. I mean like some students wouldn't cheat but they are really slow. That would cause confusion for them. That's why I talk about timing. So that's my idea. (Teacher Participant 4)

As it was stated before, cheating was the biggest problem of the e-portfolio procedure. All teachers suggested that monitoring the students would solve this problem. As a result, making them turn on their cameras or making them write their e-portfolio in computer labs would be beneficial to avoid them cheating. One teacher summarized his opinion below:

As I mentioned in the previous question, I think the biggest problem about implementation of e-portfolio assessment is that we don't ask them to turn on their camera so we don't know who writes the task so we should force the students to turn on cameras during the task and I think this should be ok to provide the reliability of task. (Teacher Participant 4)

Another teacher stated: "In order to prevent this cheating problem, they could be written in the class using a computer lab. Or maybe they can use their tablets or computers. It would help them more, I think." (Teacher Participant1)

Another suggestion was about the inclusion of self and peer-assessment tasks. However, because of the program, they reported that it may not be feasible. Most of the teachers stated that they could not use peer assessment and self-assessment in their institution because of the pacing issue which needed to be covered in the tracks. However, they thought that it would be really beneficial with higher level students in terms of supporting independent learning. One teacher suggested including self and peer-assessment activities into e-portfolio procedure as follows:

I think in theory they are good and feasible, but the problem is that in our institution we have a pacing issue, right? We have some strange timing constraint. We don't have much time. We have only 8 weeks and we have a minimum of 3 portfolio tasks. So, if students also do self-assessment or peer assessment, unfortunately, we won't have any time for the other portfolio tasks or for the other things that need to be covered in the classroom. So due to pacing concerns in our institution, I think self-assessment-peer assessment activities are not applicable especially in lower-level classes. ... so maybe in higher level classes like in medium levels or higher levels they could be applicable. (Teacher Participant 3)

Another teacher supported this by saying:

I think it would be good because. I mean in the 21st century one of the skills is like being autonomous learners so if they could do this, it would be really good in the future. I mean in the future their learning will continue, so they can be more autonomous and learn how to correct their mistakes for free, but it is not so applicable for our system like this. (Teacher Participant 5)

It can be concluded that teachers are aware of the time and pacing limitations in their program; however, they still feel that self- and peer- assessment tasks as part of EP should be included in a well-designed EP model. Yet, this is on condition that their teaching schedules are arranged in a way that allows some time for these tasks.

4.2.6. Suggestions for program coordinators

Teachers had different suggestions to program coordinators. As it was stated before, cheating was one of the biggest problems of EP implementation. Teachers suggested monitoring students by making them turn their cameras on or using the system called “Canvas” to check the logs of the students. One teacher suggested:

As I said before, uh, in our school, like the way we teach online lessons all the time all are online. So, the testing should be careful in terms of the control of cheating. As I said, one thing that we can do is there are some systems, for example, canvas, you can upload the tasks on Canvas, at least for the first part, at least for the first draft, and you can check the logs of the students. Are they leaving the page? Are they utilizing help from somebody else? Or you can see the students, uh, in a zoom meeting, you can, they can turn onto your cameras while they're writing their task. So, in this way, you can control the task better. Are they utilizing somebody else or are they writing it alone? this can be a good application implementation. (Teacher Participant 1)

In addition, teachers stated that having practice on writing was extremely important, but they could not spend so much time on practice because of the density of pacing. Hence, one teacher suggested that if the practice hours were given in the syllabus, it

would be really beneficial for students, and they wouldn't be behind pacing. One teacher suggested that pacing should be more flexible so that they could have more practice on writing in the lessons to improve students' writing skills. This teacher summarized his feelings below:

I stand by my first suggestion. I think we should definitely have practice hours like. Given the topic it's in the syllabus giving the hour, I think it should be the same topic for everyone.

It's like a mock exam, but for a portfolio, so it's like a mock portfolio. I think the students would definitely benefit from them because they need practice rather than lecture. (Teacher Participant 1)

Another teacher suggested:

I think, as we don't have a testing office, we can only give a suggestion for the department coordinators, and I think it's like it should be as my colleague just said, maybe the pacing would be less so I would have more time for practice. I think we're just talking about the same thing as we give them too much information, but we practice less. That's why we maybe need to give them more chances of practice and that's why we can do some adjustments on the pacing. So it could be a suggestion for the department coordinators. (Teacher Participant 3)

It can be understood from these quotations that due to pacing issues; teachers do not find enough time to implement EP as expected, which may affect the students' learning negatively in return.

Additionally, one teacher stated that there should be a standardization in the feedback style and all teachers should use error correction code instead of manual feedback. One teacher stated:

Also, there should be a kind of standardization in the feedback for example, students, some teachers may prefer error correction code. Others tell the direct correction. I don't think that direct corrections would be very beneficial. So, there should be a kind of agreement among teachers, not only the rubric, but also giving feedback. It should be standardized. (Teacher Participant 5)

In summary, teachers suggested monitoring students by making them turn their cameras on or using the system called “Canvas” to check the logs of the students in order to solve cheating problems. They emphasized the importance of having practice hours in the lessons and suggested putting practice hours in the syllabus not to run to catch up with the dense pacing subjects or having more flexible pacing to make students practice more. One teacher stated the usefulness of correction code and suggested that all the teachers should use correction code in order to provide standardization with feedback procedure. While one teacher suggested having peer-assessment activities, one teacher recommended just giving “pass or fail” to students on their EP tasks instead of grading them to get more reliable results.

4.3. Findings of the Third Research Question

In order to answer the third research question, “*How do teachers’ and students’ perceptions on EP implementation within the writing course offered in the English preparatory program at university match or mismatch?*” content of the data obtained

through student questionnaires and interviews were compared and contrasted. Table 6 displays the similarities and differences among the perceptions of students and teachers in the university English preparatory program.

Table 6

Similarities and Differences among Students' and Teachers' Perceptions on EP Assessment

Similarities among their ideas	Differences among their ideas	
	Teachers	Students
- Improvement on students' language progress and especially on writing skill	- Error correction Code	- Manual Correction
- Improvement on students' critical thinking skills, self-confidence and creativity	- Individual Feedback	- In-class feedback
- Technological facilities (accessing, storing, editing, and using online sources)	- More effective than paper-based portfolio	- EP and paper-based portfolio almost same
- Technical difficulties (lack of computing skills and some technological opportunities)	- Grades are more important for students	- Improvement is more important for students.
- Ease of cheating	- Incomprehensive rubric for teachers	- Rubric is not important for students
- Effectiveness of feedback		
- Suggestions on topic selection		
- Suggestions on time and word limits		
- Suggestions on the number of the drafts		
- More effective than traditional assessment methods		
- The idea of EP's being an effective assessment tool		
- Awareness of students' on the evaluation rubric		

4.3.1. Similarities between Perceptions of Teachers and Students on EP

The responses of the teachers and students indicated that EP implementation had a positive impact on students' language learning skills, especially on writing. Both teachers and students agreed that EP also helped students to improve their grammar and vocabulary to some extent. In addition, they both stated that EP was a great tool to develop students' critical thinking skills and creativity by increasing their self-confidence. They both believed in the effectiveness of feedback on students' language improvement, and it was a process in which students learned from their mistakes. Furthermore, technological advantages such as accessing, storing, editing, and using online sources facilitated EP procedures for both students and teachers.

On the other hand, teachers and students stated that technical difficulties, lack of computer skills and some technological advantages created a negative impact for both students and teachers during the EP implementation process. For-example, although some teachers and students supported the usage of auto-correction feature of Microsoft Word and online sources while working on a writing task, some students and teachers believed that these alternatives decreased the effectiveness of EP procedure by making students lazier and led them to cheat.

Like teachers, students were also satisfied with the number of the drafts they had written, because multiple drafts helped them not to repeat their mistakes thanks to the feedback given by the teachers and they both admitted that topic selection was an important quality to encourage students during the EP implementation procedure. Furthermore, both teachers and students stated that the maximum word limit was unnecessary, and it reduced students' motivation and creativity by making them write less. Besides, most of the teachers and students agreed that EP was more effective as

an assessment tool than traditional assessment methods to both enable students to learn and improve their language skills and EP had a positive effect especially on students' writing skills.

4.3.2. Differences between Perceptions of Teachers and Students on EP

Although teachers and students' responses showed that they approximately had similar ideas in terms of effectiveness of EP assessment, their ideas differentiated in a few points. First of all, the responses obtained from questionnaires and interviews showed that students had some idea on what the evaluation rubric covers, but teachers believed that students were not aware of the importance of the rubric. Secondly, while most of the teachers supported using correction code feedback, most of the students preferred more detailed feedback like manual correction, because it was easier for students to grasp and correct their mistakes. In addition, most of the teachers agreed that individual feedback was more beneficial for students to be aware of their mistakes. However, students stated that they benefited from the whole class and immediate feedback more like the one they had practised on writing activities. Most of the students thought that EP was the same as paper-based portfolio in terms of its effectiveness except being online. On the other hand, most of the teachers believed that EP was more effective than paper-based portfolio when implemented correctly. Finally, although teachers stated that students gave more importance to their grades rather than their improvement, students declared that their improvement was more important than their grades.

Overall, answers of the students and teachers showed that EP was a useful assessment tool for both teachers and students for several reasons even though there were some limitations and disadvantages of this implementation procedure. Based on

the research results, perceptions of teachers and students were alike in many answers to prove both effectiveness of EP on students' language learning process and some shortcomings that were thought to decrease the effectiveness. As a result, the EP assessment method was accepted as a beneficial tool to improve and assess students while they were learning a second foreign language.



5. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

In this section, the crucial findings of the study will be summarized and discussed by comparing and contrasting the aspects mentioned in the literature review section. Moreover, the pedagogical implications, the limitations of the study and suggestions for further research will be depicted.

5.1. Summary

The perceptions of instructors and students on the impact of EP implementation in terms of students' language learning process has been scrutinized separately in educational context several times, nevertheless, the comparison of perceptions of both students and instructors has been underexplored. The literature review of this study indicated that a few studies have been conducted to examine the perceptions of both instructors and students regarding the effectiveness of EP on students' language learning improvement process and compare the data obtained from both of them to increase the effectiveness of EP implementation process by suggesting an alternative EP implementation model. When the studies of EP based on university preparatory school context are examined, no studies have been carried out yet. Therefore, the recent study was supervised to complete a notable gap in the literature.

The primary aim of this study was to figure out the perceptions of both university preparatory students and instructors' perceptions regarding the impact of EP on students' language learning process. In addition, the results of both instructors and students were analyzed and compared to perceive to what extent their perceptions matched and differed. Finally, regarding the comparison of the results of the instructors and students, an alternative EP implementation model was suggested to raise the effectiveness of this process.

5.2. The Perceptions of Students on EP Implementation within the Writing Course Offered in the English Preparatory Program at University

In this research question, the primary aim was to understand participant students' perceptions on EP implementation in terms of its benefits, challenges, effectiveness on writing and other language learning skills.

Results of student questionnaires and interviews indicated that the majority of the students believed in the effectiveness of EP implementation when they were learning a second foreign language. Most of the students thought that EP had a positive impact on their writing skills as well as other language learning skills. In this respect, the findings of this study are similar to what Lorenzo and Ittelson (2005) claimed EPs can be accepted as an alternative method to improve learners' writing skills because EPs are in line with student-centred methods (Barrett, 2005). These findings are also compatible with the study conducted by Yurdabakan and Erdogan (2009) in terms of the positive impact of EP on writing.

Furthermore, according to the findings of this study, EP as a kind of self-directed learning increased students' self-confidence and improved their critical thinking abilities as stated by Tierney, Soter, O'Flahavan, & McGinley, 1989). Based on students' responses, the findings of the present study showed that the EP encouraged them to learn as similar to the findings of Bolliger and Shepherd (2010). Most of the students expressed that they felt more motivated owing to creating their own artefact. As a vital aspect of an autonomous learner (Dickinson, 1995), motivation and independence have an important place for the learners during the EP implementation process. Furthermore, the participants added that they felt more independent during the EP procedure because they were supposed to create their own

work individually and independently. This finding is in line with the study conducted by Chau & Cheng (2010) and Mobarhan et al. (2015.) The opportunity of using technology in several beneficial ways is satisfying for students of our century. Moreover, learning process is facilitated by making students more interactive to decide, self-assess and solve problems in self-regulated learning style as well as having negotiation with educators about the topics of portfolios (Alexioua & Fotini, 2010; Baturay & Daloglu, 2010). To keep up with these issues, the findings of this study showed that EP affected EFL learners' writing significantly. Although there are several benefits of EP stated above, its effectiveness is confined and invalidated if it is not implemented properly (Eynon & Gambino, 2017). Students stated some disadvantages such as time and word limit, unauthentic topic and technical problems to put a barrier on their creativity and increase their anxiety as Cooper and Love (2001) also stated that assessment quality can decrease to a great extent by lack of accessibility and differences of skill levels.

The results of this study were consistent with the results reached by Reckase (1997), the EP shared similar benefits with paper-based portfolio such as problem-solving, developing creativity. Most of the students stated that there was not a significant difference of EP from paper-based portfolio apart from being online as opposed to the claim of Avraamidou and Zembal-Saul (2006) that EPs have favoured more than paper-based types recently. As opposed to this idea, 11 out of 30 students preferred paper-based portfolio because they thought that the results reflected their performance better, but they also accepted some technological advantages of e-portfolio such as saving, accessing, upgrading and presenting information in several electronic and paper-based forms as stated by Song et al, (2004). All of the students were conscious of EP implementation procedure because they all approximately

explained the same process and most of them were satisfied with the process including multiple drafts. This finding was consistent with Roberts et al. (2005) showing that paying attention to the different perceptions of several stakeholders, teamwork of pedagogical, administrative and technical procedures and combination of numerous technologies must be incorporated into the process to sustain effectual implementation of EPs. In addition, most of the students were familiar with rubric and they had an idea how they were evaluated. However, most of them stated the importance of their improvement rather than their grades. This result supports a study conducted by Kazan (2006) concluded that students' worry about their grades disappeared during EP implementation which helped to increase individuality of the students.

All of the students believed in the usefulness of receiving feedback to improve their writing ability. These findings are consistent with the findings of Farahian and Avarzamani (2018). Moreover, clear feedback prevented them from making the same mistakes. These findings showed that EPs are the significant tools that smooth the way for interchanging of opinions and feedback (Wiggins, 2004). Most of the students found manual correction more beneficial rather than correction code which was accepted more challenging.

The findings of this study also indicated that most of the students were dissatisfied with the traditional assessment method due to its being old-fashioned and inadequate to assess their language performance. These findings support the claims of Swain and Ring (2000), Tartwijk and Driessen (2009), and Topp, et al. (2002) that EPs are accepted more beneficial than traditional exams. The results also confirm the statement of Topp, et al. (2002) that multimedia items such as videos, audios, texts make EPs better sources to mirror the performance and knowledge of the students than traditional assessment methods. Results showed that most of the students

acknowledged that EP provided long-term learning, which is in line with what Bailey (1998) claimed.

Although most of the students' perceptions on EP implementation procedure were positive, they also had some suggestions to improve it in terms of feedback style, topic selection. Students declared that clear and immediate feedback helped them more to improve their writing skills. These findings support the assertions of Nicol and Macfarlane-Dick (2006) indicating that direct interaction with the teachers increased students' encouragement in the program. Interaction with instructors is directly related to students' satisfaction in the program, and timely and explicit feedback is considered important to the quality of the program (Nicol & Macfarlane-Dick, 2006). The results of this study support these assertions. Moreover, according to the findings, students suggested having more authentic and familiar topics to reflect their performance better as in line with what Brown and Hudson (1998) stated.

Overall, as it is stated in the results part, most of the students' perceptions on the procedure of EP implementation were positive. It is clear that portfolios / EPs are the tools to assist learners in this self-directed learning process by giving them more responsibilities as an interactive assessment tool like the finding of Burnaz (2011). In addition, regarding students' perceptions on EP implementation, findings indicate that most of the students benefited from EP and EP had a significant impact on their writing ability. Apart from several benefits, they also stated some disadvantages of this process and shared their suggestions to have a more effective EP implementation process.

5.3. The Perceptions of Teachers on EP Implementation within the Writing Course Offered in the English Preparatory Program at University

In this research question, the main aim was to understand teachers' perceptions on EP implementation in terms of its benefits, challenges and their suggestions to improve this process for both teachers and students.

The findings indicated that most of the teachers had a positive attitude towards EP implementation for both students and teachers. The results are in line with the statement of Forawi and Mitchell (2012) indicating that EP improves student learning in terms of technology, communication. According to results, teachers came to the conclusion that EP had a positive effect on students' writing ability as in line with Khodashenas and Rakhshi's (2017) studies. According to the results, EP assessment divulges improvement of the learners better by multiple checking as similar to the statement of Moya and O'Malley (1994). The results are also consistent with Acker (2005); Barrett and Carney's (2005) statement indicating that e-portfolios help teachers to evaluate learners better by becoming more aware of learners' learning procedure. In addition, regarding teachers' perceptions of EP on students' improvement, the findings were parallel to what Paulson et al., (1991) stated that portfolios/ EPs are the tools to help learners understand their weaknesses, strengths and be aware of their own improvement on different skills over time.

Findings support the studies of Aghazadeh and Soleimani (2020) showing that EP makes it easier to access online sources and helps instructors to get control over learning procedure. In addition, thanks to advanced technology, both teachers and students have the opportunity to store, access, edit papers more easily rather than a paper-based portfolio. The findings indicated that according to most of the teachers, EP was more beneficial for teachers in terms of giving feedback, storing, saving,

accessing easily owing to some technological advantages than paper-based portfolios. EPs also entitle learners to learn from teacher feedback more easily. The finding indicates that feedback carries a great importance to improve students' language learning skills. It is in line with Siarova's et al. (2017, p. 63) conclusion emphasizing "feedback provides positive results to support learning, teaching and assessment".

Most of the teachers supported using correction code to improve students' both critical thinking and language skills. Correction code was more advantageous for teachers to save time, but some of the teachers declared that manual and more detailed feedback was necessary for low level students. In addition, most of the teachers agreed that EP provided long-lasting learning for students when compared with traditional exams which were one-shot as in line with Bailey (1998).

Apart from the advantages, teachers also stated some disadvantages of EP implementation procedure for teachers. Although teachers accepted that EPs are more timesaving than paper-based portfolios regarding some technological advantages, EP tasks still require so much time from teachers. In addition, they mentioned the difficulty in grading. These findings are consistent with Song and August's (2002) statement indicating that the portfolio/ EP implementation procedure requires planning of lesson, guiding and coaching students during this process as well assessing their artefacts, which creates a great workload for teachers. The other challenge was the reliability of grades given by teachers. Teachers stated that although they had a rubric and criterion, grading might not be reliable enough because of standardization problems. This finding supports the claim of McMillan (2001), Montgomery and Wiley (2008), and Moya and O'Malley (1994) showing that same document checked by different teachers can have inconsistent results because of criteria or incompetent raters. As a result, most of the teachers declared that the rubric

had some shortcomings to get fair results because it was not comprehensive and user-friendly enough to be understood in the same way by all of the teachers, which resulted in inconsistency between teachers.

According to this study, EP facilitated teaching and learning thanks to technological developments such as computer, the Internet, etc. Nevertheless, some teachers stated some disadvantages of EP implementation for teachers in terms of technical difficulties such as accessibility, internet connection, lack of computer skills, which decreased the effectiveness of this process. These findings show that technology is two-faced including both advantages and disadvantages, as opposed to the barely positive statement of Warschauer and Whittaker, as cited in Richards and Renandya, (2002) emphasizing that technological developments such as computer, internet, etc., in educational fields make teachers more willing to use technology while teaching a foreign language rather than having traditional class settings. Furthermore, some teachers stated that it was possible for some of them to lack necessary computer skills to lead this process more effectively. This finding supports the study conducted by Jafari and Kaufmann (2006) indicating that training and professional development for teachers must be provided to improve EP management system

The findings revealed that the cheating problem was a big handicap of EP implementation as an assessment tool for teachers. Online procedures opened the door for students to be able to cheat by using online sources under the name of plagiarism because their cameras were turned off. Although Turnitin was used to detect the similarity rate of students, it was not enough to perceive whether students wrote their e-portfolio alone or not, which decreased the reliability and effectiveness of this procedure as an assessment tool. This finding was different from Chang et al. (2011) who proved the effectiveness of electronic portfolios among language teachers as an

assessment tool. However, teachers also stated that if EP were implemented successfully and accurately, it would be a more effective teaching and assessment tool for teachers.

The findings also showed that while EP has several benefits as an alternative assessment tool for both teachers and students, its usefulness is restricted and invalidated if it is not executed accurately as similar to what Eynon and Gambino (2017) stated. To improve EP implementation procedure, primary suggestions by teachers were based on self/peer evaluation, topic selection, criteria, number of the drafts written and word limit of EPs. According to the teachers, peer feedback and self-evaluation should be included in the EP implementation procedure to foster their learning and motivate them as in line with the proposal of Jaryani et al. (2010). In addition, results showed that choosing the appropriate and familiar topics was fundamental to get more realistic results as consistent with Brown and Hudson's (1998) statement. Teachers also suggested that criteria should be formed based on the curriculum and all of the teachers should depend on it in order to get more reliable results. This suggestion was consistent with Miller and Legg's (1993) statement showing that criteria procedures can influence the validity of ep assessment. In addition, although most teachers supported multiple drafts for students to learn from their mistakes, some teachers suggested that the number of the drafts must be determined on the basis of the individual work.

Furthermore, practice was accepted as one of the most important parts of EP procedure, so teachers suggested having practice hours in the syllabus itself not to be behind the dense pacing subjects or having more flexible pacing to have extra practice hours. This result was in line with Doppelt (2003) who stated that constructivist approach entitles learners to learn by participating actively. Teachers also suggested

being trained on how to grade students objectively to get fair and reliable results. This finding was consistent with Strudler and Wetzel's (2005a; 2005b) study showing that it was necessary to train teachers to avoid inequality in assessment as one of the important objectives by universities.

Overall, the findings revealed that according to the perceptions of the teachers, EP had a positive impact on students' writing and language learning skills although they acknowledged some disadvantages for students. In addition, teachers accepted the advantages of EP as an assessment tool for teachers while they also experienced some challenges during the implementation procedure. In general, teachers thought that EP was an effective assessment tool, but it should be implemented accurately and successfully to get the most reliable and valid results as in line with Paulson, Paulson and Meyer (1991).

5.4. How do teachers' and students' perceptions on EP implementation within the writing course offered in the English preparatory program at university match or mismatch?

In this research question, the primary objective is to compare the results of teachers' and students' perceptions to figure out similar and different opinions on the effectiveness of EP implementation.

The responses of the teachers and students indicated that most of the teachers and students were positive on the effectiveness of EP implementation during language learning procedure as similar to the study of Aghazadeh and Soleimani (2020). The findings showed that EP implementation affected students' language learning skills positively. Both teachers and students acknowledged that EP had a significant effect on learners' writing skills. This result was in line with research conducted by Masaeli

and Chalak (2016) indicating that EP improved students' writing ability significantly. The results were also consistent with Baturay and Daloğlu's (2010) study indicating that EP had a positive effect on learners' writing ability, and it helped learners to improve their foreign language. In addition, they both stated that EP improved students' critical thinking skills and creativity, which is in line with Barret's (1998) statement. Findings also support the studies of Chen and Mazow (2002) who stated that EPs encourage students to be interactive as well as being competent in technology. In addition, as in line with (Brown, 2004), both teachers and students emphasized the importance of feedback to enhance learners' language skills. As stated by Riedinger (2006), findings indicated that EPs are the tools to assist competent teachers to have a clearer picture of students' improvement on language learning skills and help teachers to give better and immediate feedback to encourage learners to do better.

According to the findings, it was clear that both teachers and students benefited from technological advantages such as accessing, storing, editing, using internet and online sources more easily during EP implementation. This result was consistent with the studies conducted by Ahn (2004), Canada (2002), Heath (2005), and Young (2002) showing that EP has variable technological advantages such as editing, updating, and storing easily as well as sharing with others and changing into different systems. The findings also supported the statement of Barret (1998) indicating that EPs are long lasting without constraints of a specific place like a class or school. While technology was accepted as highly advantageous by most teachers and students, the same teachers and students also mentioned the negative side of using technology in terms of technical difficulties, lack of computer skills and auto-correction applications. As stated by Cooper and Love (2001) assessment quality can decrease by

lack of accessibility and differences of skill levels. Also, as in line with Ghanya and Alzouebi (2019), some teachers or students might lack the essential technological skills for a successful e-portfolio implementation procedure, which also affects this process negatively.

In addition, according to most teachers and students, EP was more effective as an assessment tool than traditional assessment methods. This finding was in line with Bailey (1998) who stated that traditional paper tests are one-shot, while the portfolio assessment process is continuous and long-lasting.

Like teachers, students were also satisfied with the number of the drafts they had written, because multiple drafts helped them not to repeat their mistakes thanks to the feedback given by the teachers. This finding is parallel to the statement of Weigle (2002) indicating that just one draft is not enough to show the learners' whole writing performance. According to this result, both teachers and students agreed that improving writing skills was a process rather than an outcome, which was consistent with Weigle (2002). When their suggestions were analysed, the findings showed that topic selection should be determined carefully to encourage students and raise the effectiveness of the procedure. This finding was consistent with Brown (2004) who stated that the tasks reflecting authenticity and real world were important for learners to show their performance. Furthermore, both teachers and students stated that the maximum word limit decreased the students' motivation and creativity.

Overall, when the perceptions of teachers and students were compared, the findings showed that there were some similarities between them in terms of effectiveness of EP on learners' language learning skills. The results were in line with what Khodashenas, Kishani Farahani and Amouzegar (2013) stated that portfolios had a great contribution to the development of the learners' writing skills by both

motivating and teaching in English language classes. As Alcaraz (2016) stated, EPs have become a significant part of teaching and learning in higher education.

The findings also indicated that apart from similarities, there were relatively few differences between students and teachers' perceptions regarding EP implementation. In general, both teachers and students acknowledged that students benefited from feedback significantly. However, the results showed that most of the students preferred manual correction type while most of the teachers believed in the effectiveness of correction code type. Most of the students stated that when teachers gave feedback by using correction code, they had difficulty understanding the codes and even the mistakes. Hence, it was not effective enough for especially low-level students to correct their mistakes. According to students, the feedback must be clear and detailed for students to benefit from it more as well as increasing the quality of e-portfolio implementation as in line with (Nicol & Macfarlane Dick, 2006). In addition, although most of the teachers thought that individual feedback was more beneficial for students, students stated that they benefited from the whole class and immediate feedback more like the one they had practised on writing activities. Students wanted to be aware of the whole mistakes made among students to learn from these mistakes. Students also added that if the teacher did not give timely feedback after they had written their first draft, they lost their focus on the task as well as their motivation, which made the feedback ineffective. This result was in line with Riedinger (2006) as stated before in the discussion part.

According to the findings, although EP and paper-based portfolios were considered approximately similar in terms of several qualities by the majority of students, most of the teachers supported the efficacy of e-portfolio when implemented correctly. It was consistent with Warschauer (2007) who stated that technology must

be incorporated into teaching and learning procedures to get more effective results. However, it was also stated that both teachers and students should be aware of the objectives and procedure in advance to implement it accurately (Gallardo et al., 2016; Scully et al., 2018).

5.5. Implications

In the light of the results of the recent study, some precious teaching implications can be suggested for students, teachers, and program designers to increase the benefit obtained from the use of EP as a teaching, learning and an assessing tool.

First of all, considering the positive attitudes of teachers and students towards EP development and assessment and the benefit students are likely to have from EP in terms of their language progress; teachers, mentors, supervisors or administrators within EFL context should contemplate including EP assessment into their writing assessment components. In this study, the results revealed most students think EP enabled them to improve their writing skill, computer skills, be more self-confident, and more motivated to write in English. Therefore, EP should have a component of the writing courses.

Nevertheless, it is very important that the EP implementation process should be carried out accurately and properly by taking all of the steps into consideration. This study asked students' and teachers' suggestions on the appropriate implementation of EP in the language preparatory schools, and on the basis of these suggestions as well as both groups' perceptions, EP development and implementation model has been proposed.

5.5.1. Proposed EP implementation model

In Section 4, students and teachers were reported to have mentioned some limitations of EP assessment. From the teachers' perspective, these were related to lack of training and workload, and from the students' perspective, they were feedback, time and word limitations, technology-related problems, lack of writing practice, and being stressed due grades awarded. Furthermore, both participant groups were asked their suggestions to have a well-designed and appropriate EP assessment model, and they reported the points that need to be paid attention to. These suggestions from the students' perspective included topic selection, feedback style and timing, and rubric training. On the other hand, teachers' suggestions were related to inclusion of peer- and self-assessment tasks, feedback, the number of drafts, topic selection, rubric training, and monitoring students. Teachers also gave recommendations for language coordinators who usually plan the assessment procedures at university language preparatory program; and these were about having writing practice hours within the syllabus, including peer assessment activities, using pass/fail decisions instead of grades to save time, making students turn on their cameras while working on online writing tasks, and using only correction codes while giving feedback.

Inspired by Tonbul (2009), who recommended an EP development model for the first grade ELT students at a state university in Turkey, a 10-step EP implementation model for online/hybrid writing courses at the language preparatory school was proposed. The proposed model shown in Table 7 was based on the findings of this study including limitations, suggestions as well as both groups' perceptions on EP. It is important to note that this proposed model was suggested for

the research context; however, similar contexts can use it through necessary modifications in accordance with their teaching and learning contexts.

5.5.1.1. Step 1: Identify

In the first step, teachers should identify the goals and the objectives of EP development within the language program, the students' needs (technological, linguistic, psychological, and etc.) and their interests to plan the writing topics ahead. As is said, teachers and coordinators should determine the e-portfolio topics based on the familiarity and interests of the students to improve their critical thinking skills more.

5.5.1.2. Step 2: Plan

In the second step, teachers should plan the types of writing (e.g. cause and effect paragraphs, argumentative essays), the types of the writing tasks (individual/pair/group/collaborative), the assessment procedures (whether to award pass/fail or scores), the evaluation rubric, the peer- and self-assessment criteria, the reflective report criteria, the resources for teachers and students, and the feedback sessions.

Based on the suggestions of the students and teachers, self and peer assessment activities can be included in the e-portfolio process by school administrators and supervisors to support self-directed learning for students and make them more conscious of their improvement.

Table 7*Proposed Model of EP Implementation in Online/Hybrid Writing Courses*

Preparations	
Step 1. Identify	- the goals and the objectives of EP development within the language program - students' needs (technological, linguistic, psychological, and etc.) - students' interests for potential writing topics
Step 2. Plan	- the types of writing (e.g. cause and effect paragraphs, argumentative essays) - the types of the writing tasks (individual/pair/group/collaborative) - the assessment procedures (whether to award pass/fail or scores) - the evaluation rubric - the peer- and self-assessment criteria - the reflective report criteria - the resources for teachers and students - the feedback sessions
Step 3. Negotiate with the other writing teachers and course coordinators	- the writing syllabus and the EP assessment component - the assumed problems and solutions - the plagiarism checker and the accepted similarity percentage - the feedback cycle
Step 4. Get training	- on EP assessment - on giving feedback on student papers - on scoring with the evaluation rubric
Step 5. Prepare	- the writing syllabus - any handout or worksheet related to the course - tutorial for EP and sample EPs - the evaluation rubric - the peer-and self-assessment criteria - the reflection report criteria
<i>In the first few weeks of the writing course</i>	
Step 6. Negotiate with the students	- the expectations from the course - the syllabus - the topic selection - the number of drafts - the timing of feedback - the type of feedback
Step 7. Revise the syllabus according to the result of the negotiation	
Step 8. Introduce EP to students	
Step 9. Train students	- on peer- and self-assessment - on the evaluation rubric - on paraphrasing and how to avoid plagiarism - on reflectivity for EP
Step 10. Do EP writing practices without awarding grades	- to make sure everything is clear - to see whether any revision is necessary on the syllabus - to comfort students - to identify students who struggle with technical issues

5.5.1.3. Step 3: Negotiate

In the third step, teachers should negotiate with the other writing teachers and course coordinators the writing syllabus and the EP assessment component, the assumed problems and solutions, the plagiarism checker and the accepted similarity percentage, and the feedback cycle.

Since the teachers mentioned that cheating is facilitated through EP, some measures should be taken. For instance, the similarity percentage shown on the plagiarism checkers could be set lower. Besides, teachers really want students to benefit from the progress meetings or meeting sessions; however, due to pacing and time limitations this may not be possible. That is why negotiation of anticipated problems and solutions is crucial. Program designers should consider these limitations and the syllabi should be prepared accordingly.

5.5.1.4. Step 4: Get training

In the fourth step, teachers should be trained on EP assessment, giving feedback on student papers, and scoring with the evaluation rubric. Some teachers are concerned about the reliability of their scores and standardization issues. Therefore, training is very important for appropriate implementation of EP.

5.5.1.5. Step 5: Prepare

In the fifth step, teachers should prepare the writing syllabus, any handout or worksheet related to the course, tutorial for EP and sample EPs, the evaluation rubric, the peer-and self-assessment criteria, and the reflection report criteria.

5.5.1.6. Step 6: Negotiate

In the sixth step, teachers should negotiate with the students their expectations from the course, the syllabus, the topic selection, the number of drafts, the timing of feedback, and the type of feedback.

As it was stated before, feedback is one of the important elements of the EP implementation process. Students write three drafts of one EP topic by receiving two feedbacks from teachers. According to the results, both teachers and students were satisfied with the number of the drafts, since multiple drafts made students learn from their mistakes by writing them again and this process increased their awareness of their mistakes. As a result, multiple drafts should be applied during the EP implementation procedure to get the optimum effectiveness on students' improvement process. However, these can be negotiated with the students.

5.5.1.7. Step 7: Revise

In the seventh step, teachers should revise the syllabus according to the results of the negotiation.

5.5.1.8. Step 8: Introduce EP to students

In the eighth step, teachers should introduce EP to students through written, oral and multimedia tools. Students can be provided with the tutorials, resources, and samples. The procedure can be explained to them, and rules should be set before everything.

5.5.1.9. Step 9: Train Students

In the ninth step, teachers should train students on peer- and self-assessment, the evaluation rubric, paraphrasing and how to avoid plagiarism, and reflectivity for EP.

These are very important with respect to the appropriate implementation of EP in the program. Students' awareness should be raised, and they should know what is expected from them and how they will be graded. They also ought to reflect on their progress in order to benefit from this assessment as reflection is key to the success of EP.

5.5.1.10. Step 10: Do EP writing Practice without awarding grades

In the tenth step, teachers should do EP writing practice with students without awarding grades for several reasons: to make sure everything is clear, to see whether any revision is necessary on the syllabus, to comfort students, and to identify students who struggle with technical issues.

It is clear that according to the results, students learn and develop more by practising instead of the lectures of the teachers. Hence, some in-class writing activities can be put in the syllabus to make students practise more and receive interactive feedback during the lesson because students learn better in an interactive environment.

To conclude, if EP implementation is applied accurately and successfully by school administration and teachers, it can be recommended as a beneficial and effective assessment method for both teachers and students in terms of teaching and learning.

5.6. Limitations and Suggestions for Further Studies

There are several limitations of this study. Firstly, only a qualitative method was used to answer the research questions. In the further studies, both qualitative and quantitative methods should be employed to get a more comprehensible insight to the

perceptions of students and teachers on the effectiveness of EP on their language learning skills.

Secondly, the sample size was limited to 30 preparatory low-level students and 31 English instructors of a private university located in Istanbul. In the further studies, the data should also be collected from different universities where EP is used. In addition, more students at different levels of language proficiency can be included in such research. Moreover, the responses were gathered electronically, and it is presumed that all student and teacher participants answered the questions frankly. The results of this study are justifiable only for preparatory classes of universities. As a result, the findings cannot be generalized to other school contexts such as high school or universities in which there is no e-portfolio implementation or medium of instruction is Turkish. Therefore, it is suggested that further studies include different school contexts such as high schools, secondary schools.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Questionnaire for Students (presented through Google Form)

1. Genelde İngilizce yazma derslerinde kullanılan ve alternatif değerlendirme yöntemlerinden biri olan portfolyo ve e-portfolyonun geleneksel değerlendirme yöntemlerine (örn: yazılı, sınav, test) göre daha iyi bir değerlendirme yöntemi olduğunu düşünüyor musunuz? Neden?
2. Sizce e-portfolyo ile portfolyo süreci arasında e-portfolyonun online olması haricinde başka bir fark var mı? Açıklayınız.
3. İngilizce yazma derslerinde e-portfolyo çalışması gerçekleştirme sürecinizi kısaca açıklayınız (örn: 1. taslak, 2. taslak, 3. taslak, hataları düzeltme, vs.).
4. İngilizce yazma derslerinde sıklıkla kullanılan e-portfolyo çalışmasının sizce faydaları nelerdir? Kısaca açıklayınız.
5. İngilizce yazma derslerinde sıklıkla kullanılan e-portfolyo çalışmasının sizce zorlukları nelerdir? Kısaca açıklayınız.
6. E-portfolyo hazırlama sonrasında İngilizcede hangi becerilerinizin (örn: yazma-okuma-dinleme-konuşma-kelime bilgisi-dil bilgisi) daha çok geliştiğini ve gelişeceğini düşünüyorsunuz? Neden?
7. E-portfolyo çalışması değerlendirme kriterlerini biliyor musunuz? (Cevabınız evet ise; bu kriterlerden sizce hangisi/hangileri çok önemli? Cevabınızı "Diğer" seçeneğine yazabilirsiniz.)
8. İngilizce yazma derslerinizde kullanılan e-portfolyo çalışması ile aşağıdakilerden hangisi ya da hangilerinin değerlendirildiğini düşünüyorsunuz? (Birden fazla seçenek işaretleyebilir ve ekleme yapmak için "diğer" seçeneğini kullanabilirsiniz.)

9. E-portfolyo çalışmalarınızda öğretmeniniz tarafından verilen geri bildirimlerin (feedback) İngilizce yazma gelişiminiz üzerinde nasıl bir katkısı olduğunu düşünüyorsunuz? Bu yorumlardan yararlandığınızı düşünüyor musunuz?
10. E-portfolyo çalışmalarında yazma hatalarının öğretmeniniz tarafından düzeltme kodu (correction code) ile mi yoksa elle direk yapılan düzeltmelerle mi yapılmasını daha faydalı ya da etkili buluyorsunuz? Neden?
11. E-portfolyo çalışmalarının öğrencilere daha faydalı olabilmesi için önerileriniz nelerdir? (Örn: konu seçimi, geribildirim, değerlendirme kriterlerinin öğrencilerle beraber belirlenmesi, öz-değerlendirme ve akran-değerlendirmesi yapılması, taslak yazı düzeltme sayısı vb.)

APPENDIX B**Questionnaire for Teachers (presented through Google Form)**

1. Which assessment type leads to more memorable learning for you: traditional assessment or portfolio assessment? Why?
2. Which one was more important for you while keeping a portfolio: being graded by the instructor for your assignment papers or observing your development in English? Why?
3. According to you, what does e-portfolio measure and which criteria are taken into consideration when you are evaluated?
4. What is the impact of e-portfolio process on your writing ability? Explain briefly.
5. If you compare your opinions on e-portfolio between before and after e-portfolio assessment, what can you tell about it in general?
6. After the instructor marked your errors in your assignment paper, you tried to find your error and to correct them. Did it contribute to your English? Why, why not? Please give examples.

APPENDIX C

Interview questions for Students

1. Do you think the use of portfolio and e-portfolio as forms of alternative assessment in English classes at university prep programs assesses students' general and/or academic English skills more effectively compared to traditional forms of assessment? Why?
2. Are there any differences between the e-portfolio and portfolio process apart from e-portfolio's being online? If yes, what are they?
3. Please briefly explain how you implement e-portfolio in your English writing classes by referring to the steps (e.g., writing the first draft) and the procedure.
4. What can be the advantages/ strengths of using e-portfolio for students? Please explain briefly.
5. Considering four skills (Rg, Wg, Lg, Sg), grammar and vocabulary, which skills of your students have improved more thanks to the process of e-portfolio preparation?
6. What can be the disadvantages/ weaknesses of using e-portfolio for students?
7. According to your experiences, what are the advantages of using e-portfolio assessment for teachers? Explain briefly.
8. According to your experiences, what are the disadvantages of using e-portfolio assessment for teachers? Explain briefly.
9. Do you think that written and/or oral feedback you give for your students' writings and their e-portfolios has an effect on their improvement process of English? Why?

10. When you compare "correction code" and "manual correction" to correct the mistakes of learners, which one do you find more effective for learners' improvement? Why?
11. Do you think your students are aware of the evaluation criteria that you use to grade e-portfolios?
12. Do you think there are other aspects that e-portfolio assessment measures in addition to those that are stated in the evaluation rubric you use?
13. What are your suggestions for the e-portfolio process to be beneficial for students? (e.g., topic selection, feedback, deciding on the evaluation criteria together with students, having self-/peer evaluations, the number of revising drafts, and etc.)

APPENDIX D

Interview questions for Teachers

1. Which one are you in favour of as a teacher: paper-based portfolio or electronic portfolio? Why?
2. How do you evaluate the effectiveness of using e-portfolio in language classes in prep schools?
3. Do you believe its effectiveness in academic writing lessons? Why/why not?
4. In what ways does it contribute to language learners? (Mention its benefits.)
5. In what ways does it fail? (Mention its limitations.)
6. Do you feel that its benefits outweigh its limitations? Why/why not?
7. What are your suggestions on the implementation of e-portfolio assessment in the prep program to make students benefit from it more? After stating yours, please comment on the following suggestions about:
 - the number of drafts?
 - the type of feedback (individual vs. whole class, oral vs written, correction code)?
 - the timing?
 - sharing rubric with students and having their ideas about it?
 - having regular progress meetings with the students?
 - guiding students more?
8. What about these suggestions? Are they applicable/feasible in your context?
 - Students should reflect on their writing performance, strengths & weaknesses.
 - Students should engage in self-assessment and peer-assessment activities.

- The E-portfolio process should encourage independent learning.
 - The E-portfolio process should be interactive.
9. What are your suggestions to department coordinators or testing office members in prep schools on the effective implementation of e-portfolio?
 10. Have you ever felt that you needed training on how to effectively implement an e-portfolio assessment in writing classes in prep school? Why/ why not?
 11. Which aspect of its implementation have you felt you need training on: grading their writing performance? familiarity with rubric? marking? giving feedback? scaffolding/guiding students? encouraging them to reflect on their progress? Timing?
 12. What do you think about the rubric used to grade the learners' writing performance?
 13. Is it comprehensive enough? Is it user-friendly? Does it seem reliable and valid? How do you feel about teachers' competency to evaluate the learners in order to get reliable and accurate results? Are students familiar with it?
 14. Could you describe your way of integrating e-portfolio into your language classes? What was the typical procedure when you used it as an assessment method in prep school writing classes?
 15. Did you observe any benefit of using e-portfolio on your students' writing performance? Explain briefly.
 16. According to you, which aspects of language, skills, and learning does an e-portfolio assessment mostly measure?