

The Use of E-Portfolio to Improve English Speaking Skill of Turkish EFL Learners

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ABSTRACT This study investigates the effect(s) of e-portfolio on the speaking skills of Turkish EFL learners. It examines whether e-portfolio has a similar positive effect on improving speaking skills as it does on writing skills. The study was carried out with 17 students in an English Language preparation department of one of the universities in Turkey. The students were given two assignments depending on the units covered in their listening and speaking courses. They were required to prepare and video record or audio record their assignments, and upload them to www.lore.com, which was used as an e-portfolio platform. To collect data, interviews, self-assessment papers, and cover letters were used. The collected data were analyzed using content analysis. Results show that e-portfolio is equally effective in Turkish EFL learners speaking skills as it is with their writing skills.

INTRODUCTION

Gray (2008) mentions that the interest in the potential of e-learning tools and technology has been increased because e-learning tools and technology are believed to make learning more student-centered and create more personalized forms of education. One of the e-learning tools and technology is e-portfolio. An e-portfolio is defined as “a digitized collection of artifacts including demonstrations, resources, and accomplishments that represent an individual, group, or institution” (Lorenzo and Ittelson 2005: 2). In other words, it is a digital collection of student’s work, reflections, learning, and experience, which may be composed of “text-based, graphic, or multimedia elements archived on a Web site or on other electronic media such as a CD – Rom or DVD” (Lorenzo and Ittelson 2005 : 2). As seen, e-portfolio is a digital and personalized collection of one student’s own learning process.

There may be different kinds of e-portfolio to teach different subjects, but each of them has some common features. An e-portfolio is

1. authentic because it is composed of students’ real works including their self-assessments and self-reflections about their own learning process (Goldsmith 2007; Reese and Levy 2009);

2. controllable because students are responsible for the organization of their e-portfolios, self-reflecting their own learning process, and improving their learning according to their self-reflections (Goldsmith 2007);
3. communicative and interactive because it provides meaningful communication and interaction between peers and between students and their advisors, which can help students to improve their learning (Bolliger and Shepherd 2010; Lin 2008);
4. dynamic because there is an ongoing structure in e-portfolio process including organization of content, collecting and selecting artifacts, self-assessing and self-reflecting the learning process, and improving what is found problematical during the process;
5. personalized because students organize and decide the content of their own e-portfolios, take the control of the whole process, self-reflect what they have done, and improve their own learning depending on their self-reflections (Goldsmith 2007; Gray 2008);
6. integrative because it allows students to connect their work in courses to the outcomes of institution, students use their ability to “understand these connections as well as the connections between their own lives and their academic work” (Goldsmith 2007: 37);

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7. multi-sourced because it can allow students to get prompt feedback and self-reflect their own learning process, and this can help students to assess their own learning processes. In addition, it provides educators with the opportunity to assess students' performances by using students' e-portfolios which include different learners' self-assessment and self-evaluation of their own learning processes (Goldsmith 2007);
8. motivational because self-reflection, feedback, being the owner of their e-portfolios, and improving their learning motivate students to engage, study, and do their best (Akçyl and Arap 2009; Bolliger and Shepherd 2010; Rhodes 2011);
9. reflective because reflection, especially self-reflection is an important component of e-portfolio and enables students to self-reflect and assess their learning processes (Goldsmith 2007; Reese and Levy 2009; Lin 2008).

Therefore, e-portfolio can be an effective teaching tool that can support student-centered education and make students' learning process followable.

Different kinds of materials such as newspapers and literature, technology such as audio blog, communication strategies, listening, and pronunciation are used to teach speaking (Akdemir et al. 2012; Keshavarzi 2012; Teng 2012; Atli and Bergil 2012; Tavit 2010; Hsu et al. 2008). In their study, Akdemir et al. (2012) use an authentic material, newspapers to teach speaking, and find out that students can be familiar with the real English and can express their ideas about the news by using structures in the news. In another study, Keshavarzi (2012) mentions the use of literature to teach speaking and claims that speaking can be improved through literature. It is because literature requires careful reading and critical thinking about the text(s) in order to answer the teacher's questions. In Teng's study (2012), students are taught how to use communicative strategies like topic avoidance and circumlocution, which has led to improvements in students' speaking skills. In addition, speaking can be taught by being integrated with listening and pronunciation. For example, Atli and Bergil (2012) study teaching speaking by focusing on pronunciation. They have found out that pronunciation increases students' awareness of the sounds in English and helps

them be more self-confident while speaking. Besides them, technology can also be used to teach speaking. To give an example, Hsu et al. (2008) use audioblog to improve students' oral skills in which students recorded themselves depending on the assignment given to the blog, the teacher listened to them and gave feedback to each recording. As a result, students reported that they could improve their speaking skills.

E-portfolio is used in language teaching and learning. It is used to teach writing skills because it is believed to improve learners' writing (Eric 2008). When it is used in teaching writing, it makes students more autonomous, creates a student-centered environment in the class, and enables them to follow their progress during e-portfolio process (Eric 2008). It results in improvements in writing. However, it is not commonly used to teach speaking skills in language teaching and learning. Therefore, the present study aims to answer the following two questions:

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

METHODOLOGY

Instruments

To collect data, two interviews (interview 1 and interview 2), two self-assessment papers, and cover letters were used. The researchers used triangulation to measure and determine the reliability and validity of the data collection instruments. Interview 1 was conducted at the beginning of the study in order to find out what the students thought about speaking, what kind of difficulties they had while speaking, and what their ideas were about self-assessment of their own speaking performances. Also, they were given two self-assessment papers to self-assess their own projects about the two assignments in order to help them to understand what they did well and what they thought they should improve. Then, they were given cover letters in which they self-reflect their learning process during the project. In the end, interview 2 was carried out with them to understand and learn how speaking e-portfolio could affect their speaking in terms of performance, motivation, self-confidence, and self-assessment, how it could affect

their technology skills, and what they thought about whether e-portfolio should be used or not in speaking classes.

Participants

The number of the students participating the study was 17. There were 8 male and 9 female students. Their ages were between 18 and 29. They were upper-intermediate students in an English Language preparation department of one of the universities in Turkey. Their proficiency level was determined by the proficiency test prepared by the Testing Office of the department.

Data Collection Procedure

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

A. The first four weeks: The first four weeks was designed to carry out the first assignment about fashion. In the first week, interview 1 was conducted with the students. 17 interview papers were distributed to the students, but only 9 returned. The students were informed about the e-portfolio process and the expectations of speaking e-portfolio. They were trained how they could record and create their own video or audio by using IPhoto and submit their assignments to lore.com, which is used as the online speaking e-portfolio platform. Also, the researchers formed two blog pages for the students which indicate them how to make an email account, record video or audio, upload their recordings to youtube.com, and submit their projects to lore.com. The first assignment was an individual study. After the students were given their first assignments, they prepared and submitted their first projects to lore.com in the second week. Since they had some problems with recording and uploading, the researchers did another training session with the students. Students' projects were evaluated and given feedback by the researchers. Depending on the feedback given, they prepared their projects again and submitted them in the third week. In the fourth week, the students self-assessed their projects. After the self-assessment process finished, the researchers evaluated their re-uploaded projects.

B. The second four weeks: The students were given their second assignment about games in the fifth week. In the second assignment, they

were allowed to prepare their projects individually, in pairs or groups. After they prepared and submitted their projects, the researchers evaluated their projects and gave feedback for each project in the sixth week. In the seventh week, the students organized and prepared their projects again according to the feedback given. Afterwards, they self-assessed their projects. In the eighth week, the researchers evaluated the students' projects. The students wrote cover letters about the process. They were given 17 cover letters, but 12 returned to the researchers. In addition, interview 2 was conducted with the students. 17 interview papers were given to the students, but only 8 returned to the researchers.

Data Collection Environment: Lore

www.lore.com is a free online course management tool which a teacher can organize his/her course, give assignments to his/her students, collect and grade their assignments. Lore looks like Facebook because each user has their own profile pages, can post their own messages, like others' posts, and make comments to their friends' post. Also, the teacher can make announcements about the course and share documents.

The researchers used Lore as the online platform for speaking portfolio. The students were given two assignments on Lore. When they prepared their video or audio about the assignments, they first uploaded their videos to YouTube because Lore cannot allow video uploading, but video sharing by copying and pasting the video links, and second they submitted their projects on Lore. The researchers, therefore, could evaluate the students' videos. The students could see their feedback under their videos, improve and re-prepare their videos according to the feedback given. In addition, the researchers could observe the students' learning process when they clicked on their profile pages because Lore kept their projects there.

Data Analysis

The data collection instruments were totally qualitative, so content analysis method was used to analyze them in an order determined according to the research questions. To make content analysis, the researchers applied to the qualitative data analysis procedure mentioned by Cabarođlu (as cited in Köse 2006). The proce-

ture includes familiarization, coding/labeling, clustering, defining codes operationally, retrieving and organizing data, and looking for interrelationships between categories (Köse 2006), but the researchers used familiarization, coding/labeling, clustering, retrieving and organizing data, and looking for interrelationships between categories. The first research question asks if e-portfolio can be effectively used in speaking skill. Each data collection instrument was analyzed separately, and the findings were evaluated in the end. The researchers read interview 1, self-assessment papers 1 and 2, and interview 2 to familiarize with the data. Then they coded the repeated items in interview 1, self-assessment papers 1 and 2, and interview 2. In cover letters, they followed the same way, but they also used cluster of codes. Then they made a general evaluation of the findings and determined the attitudes of the students towards the use of e-portfolio in speaking skill in order to understand whether e-portfolio can be effectively used in speaking skill. The second research question investigates the question of how e-portfolio contributes to the students' speaking skills. Interview 2 and cover letters were analyzed together for the second research question. At first, the researchers read interview 2 and cover letters and tried to find out the data that they would need for the research question. This process required repeated reading because it enabled them to be familiar with the data. In the second step after familiarization, they developed codes depending on the repeated items in the data collection instruments. In the third step, they clustered the codes and developed three categories: academic, affective, and technological improvements.

RESULTS

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

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

The Effective Use of E-portfolio in Speaking Skill

To answer this question, cover letters, interview 1, interview 2, and self-assessment papers

were analyzed. The analysis of each data collection tool was given in different parts and in a chronological order determined by the date when each of them was carried out. In order to understand the effectiveness of e-portfolio in speaking skills, the students' attitudes towards the use of e-portfolio in speaking were determined by using the assumptions acquired through the analysis of each data collection tool.

Interview 1

There are 8 questions in interview 1 in order to find out what the students thought about speaking, what kind of difficulties they had while speaking, what they thought about self-assessing their speaking, and what they thought about whether recording, watching or listening to their speech on an online safe platform could improve their speaking. Starting with what they thought about speaking, six of nine students thought that speaking is an easy skill to learn and improve because practicing can improve their speaking skills. Following are some example excerpts from students' interviews.

Student 1: "Speaking is not difficult to learn, but it should be improved. It can be improved by practicing a lot."

Student 2: "Easy because it can be improved by speaking."

As it is mentioned in the first paragraph, most of the students thought that speaking can be learned and improved easily as long as they practice speaking. On the other hand, two of them thought that it is difficult to learn because of lack of practice and anxiety while one thought it is either difficult or easy depending on the practice. It can be said that the students' ideas about speaking are shaped mainly by practice and partly by feelings.

When the students were asked whether they had difficulty in speaking and what they were if so, eight of nine students wrote that they had difficulties while they were speaking while one of them mentioned that he did not have any difficulty in speaking. The difficulties of the students can be categorized as academic and affective difficulties that were determined by the researchers depending on the students' responses to the question 3 in interview 1. Academic difficulties are generally related to grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation while affective ones are related to anxiety, self-confidence, and mo-

tivation. The example excerpts from the students' responses to the question three show this categorization clearly.

Student 1: "Yes, I have. I cannot form sentences while I am speaking..."

Student 2: "Of course! Pronunciation is very bad and difficult. Some words are fossilized, I cannot change them."

Student 8: "... I am very anxious while speaking. While everybody knows the truth, that I speak incorrectly makes me anxious."

Student 9: "Because I am not self-confident and do not practice enough, I have difficulties."

As it is understood from the excerpts, not forming sentences, pronunciation, and unknown words (which are categorized as academic difficulties by the researchers) may create difficulties to the students. Being nervous, excited, and not being self-confident (which are categorized as affective difficulties by the researchers) may cause difficulties in speaking, as well.

The question 4 focuses on the students' self-assessment of their own speech. They were asked whether they self-assessed their own speech before or not, what their ideas were about the effect(s) of this experience on their speaking if they did it before, and how it would affect their speaking performance if they had to do it for the first time. Depending on the answers given to this question, seven students did not self-assess their speaking before while two of them did it. Although seven students did not self-assess their speech before, four of them believed that self-assessment could improve their speaking. The following excerpts of student 1 and 2 show that although they did not self-assess themselves before, they thought it could improve themselves.

Student 1: "Such an evaluation will improve my speaking skills because more practice means more skills."

Student 2: "No, I did not evaluate. It can improve."

While these two show that the students have some positive ideas about self-assessment, the excerpt below taken from student 4's response to the question shows that self-assessment can enable students to find out their deficient sides and try to improve them.

Student 4: "I self-assessed slightly and saw I had some deficient sides in some topics. For example, my vocabulary level was deficient. I tried to speak more fluently by trying to improve it. I mean it had a positive effect."

The last question in the interview is about whether the students' recording, watching or listening to their speech on an online safe platform can improve their speaking. Nine of the students thought that this activity could improve their speaking because it may help them to be self-confident and improve their self-assessment skills as it can be understood the excerpts below.

Student 3: "Yes, it can improve. I can correct my mistakes by watching my mistakes."

Student 5: "It may! We will be more self-confident and it can improve our speaking."

Self-assessment Paper 1

Self-assessment paper 1 was given to the students after the first task was completed. It allowed the students to self-assess their learning process. They were required to self-assess their own projects and mention what they did well and should improve in their projects.

In self-assessment paper 1, the number of the students who self-assessed their project is 15. Ten of the fifteen students thought that they prepared their first tasks well. The reasons for this evaluation are generally related to the organizations and designs of the videos. On the other hand, the others thought that their first projects were not good owing to the lack of computer skills such as recording a video or audio, and the students' feelings about the topic of the task. As a result, it can be said that these two reasons may affect the students' understanding of evaluation negatively.

In self-assessment paper 1, the students were required to explain what they should improve according to them. The areas that the students thought that they should improve are related to preparing a video, grammar, pronunciation, and vocabulary.

Self-assessment Paper 2

Self-assessment paper 2 was given when the students completed their second task that is about games. Like in self-assessment paper 1, the students assessed their own learning process in terms of what they did well and what they should improve in the second task.

Sixteen students self-assessed their projects for the second task, and fifteen students thought that their second projects were good because of

the improvements they had in terms of grammar, pronunciation, vocabulary, organization, video, and self-confidence and because of the topic of the second task. Eight of them thought that they improved themselves in different aspects such as pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, organization, and computer skills while one of them thought that he improved his self-confidence.

In the second task, the students were allowed to prepare their second projects individually, in pairs, or in groups. Only four of the students prepared their second project as a group. The group work could motivate group members to prepare their video, help them be more creative, and make their projects more authentic. The examples from the group members given below show the effect(s) of group work on students' motivation and creativeness.

Student 2: "I think we went go- kart and this is very good for our assignment. Our assignment topic compare real and artificial game. It is very good."

Student 5: "I think our idea is creative so it is good..."

The second part of self-assessment paper 2 is about what the students think they should improve in their second tasks. Ten of the sixteen students thought that they should improve mainly pronunciation, grammar, and organization of the videos while four of them thought that they should improve mainly their computer skills such as using a moviemaker program and video recording.

Cover Letters

The aim of cover letters is to enable the students to self-evaluate their own learning process during the e-portfolio process and self-reflect these evaluations. They were given to the students after they completed their second task and did their self-assessment of their learning process in the second task.

The effectiveness of e-portfolio in speaking skill is determined and shaped by the students' gains. The researchers developed three categories which are dependent on the students' responses about what they improved after they finished coding cover letters. These categories are academic, affective, and technological improvements.

Academic improvements involve improvements in grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation,

and in other skills like writing. It seems that e-portfolio process could improve the students' self-assessment skills, so they could find the problematical parts in their videos and try to improve them. To give an example:

Student 1: "When I watch my projects for the first and second tasks, I can see the difference between my first project for task 1 and my second project for the second task. I think my second project is better than the first one in terms of appearance and I spoke better in the second project."

The ideas of the student 1 mentioned in the excerpt show that the student could observe her improvement by watching her videos in her speaking e-portfolio. Also, self-assessment enabled the students to realize their mistakes they made while they were speaking. Here are some examples:

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

Student 7: "... I paid attention to my pronunciation. I searched how to pronounce the words that I used, and read my writings to find out my grammar mistakes again and again."

Student 8: "... I tried to improve my pronunciation by rehearsing in front of the mirror."

The excerpts indicate that the students could be aware of their grammar, pronunciation, and vocabulary mistakes they made while speaking. They tried to overcome these mistakes. As a result, they self-evaluated their own learning, recognized their good and deficient sides, and tried to improve them. This process could improve their grammar, pronunciation, and vocabulary.

The use of e-portfolio in speaking could improve the students affectively in terms of anxiety, responsibility, and self-confidence. E-portfolio could reduce the students' anxiety, so they could speak easily. To illustrate:

Student 2: "...I was very excited while I was preparing the video, but I learned how to overcome my excitement while speaking..."

Student 4: "...I am very anxious while speaking; but I could not encounter such a problem during the speaking e-portfolio process..."

In addition to reduce in the level of anxiety, students could become more self-confident while

they were speaking in their videos in that they could overcome their anxiety, so they could speak easily. This could contribute to the students' self-confidence.

Student 3: "E-portfolio assignment in speaking classes improved our sense of responsibility."

The use of e-portfolio in speaking requires some basic computer skills such as recording a video or audio, uploading a video to the Internet, and using a website to submit homework. As it is mentioned in self-assessment papers 1 and 2, some of the students had problem(s) because they did not know how to record a video or audio, to organize the content of a video, and to upload a video to YouTube. When the research ended, the students mentioned that they improved their computer skills during the project. Here are some examples that indicate the students' comments about the improvements in their computer skills.

Student 7: "During the preparation process, I had some difficulties because I did not know how to use I-Movie very well. I had to look for pictures for the second video and made the video again and again. I did not experience any difficulties in the third video."

Student 9: "...I learned how to use some computer programs..."

To sum up, it can be said that the academic, affective, and technological improvements could have affected the students' feelings about the e-portfolio tasks positively. It may be because the students could understand that they could improve their own learning in speaking classes through the use of e-portfolio.

Interview 2

There are six items in interview 2, and they are about the effects of e-portfolio on speaking, technology skills, motivation, self-confidence, self-assessment, and whether e-portfolio should be used in speaking or not. In order to understand the students' attitudes towards the use of e-portfolio in speaking, the items of interview 2 were analyzed in order.

All of the students who returned interview 2 papers to the researchers thought that e-portfolio affected their speaking in a positive way. One of the reasons why they thought so is related to self-assessment because they thought that e-portfolio could improve their self-assessment

skills, so they could recognize their good and deficient sides in their projects, and could improve their deficient sides. The following examples illustrate this:

Student 5: "Of course, I think it affected because I did it for the first time and after I watched, I recognized the mistakes especially pronunciation I did."

Student 8: "I think it affected. I realized my mistakes when I watched it after I recorded it."

Self-assessment could help the students to find out what they should improve as it did for student 5. Depending on the self-assessment, it is understood that pronunciation is one of the areas in which the students had problems and which they thought e-portfolio helped them improve. Examples below show this assumption:

Student 1: "I think it affected to some extent. Because while recording audio, I think it improved my pronunciation. So it must have affected my speaking in class."

Student 3: "I think it affected. I find the word that I mispronounced while watching and correct their pronunciation."

E-portfolio could affect the students' speaking skills affectively, and this could contribute to the improvement in the students' speaking skills as seen in the following excerpt.

Student 7: "Because speaking myself is more relaxing, I think e-portfolio has a positive effect on me. I can say my speaking ability has improved."

All of the students thought that e-portfolio could improve their technology skills especially video recording and video upload. It may be because technology is the key point of preparing an e-portfolio, and the students were required to record a video or audio and upload it to YouTube in order to submit. These obligations could lead to the improvement in technology skills. The excerpts below exemplify the improvements in technology skills.

Student 1: "It affected certainly. Because I did not upload any video to the Internet. Also, I learned how to use I-movie."

Student 7: "Normally I am good at computer, but I did not know anything about making a video. Thanks to this implementation, I learned many things about making a video."

Three of the eight students thought that e-portfolio could motivate them while the rest did not think so. Therefore, it can be said that e-portfolio did not motivate the students a lot, but

to some extent. E-portfolio could decrease anxiety, so this could motivate the students to speak without being anxious. Also, e-portfolio could affect the students' sense of responsibility. To illustrate:

Student 2: "Yes, it increased my motivation. It increased my sense of responsibility for doing homework."

Student 4: "It did not affect negatively. Instead, it motivated me to speak more. In the beginning, I was anxious when I spoke, but I could decrease my anxiety to some extent thanks to e-portfolio."

Although e-portfolio could motivate the students to some extent, most of the students thought that it did not motivate them to speak.

Five students thought that e-portfolio made them more self-confident in speaking while the rest did not think that e-portfolio led to improvement in their self-confidence. E-portfolio could improve the students' self-confidence to some extent, so they started to feel more eager to speak and could speak easily as understood from the excerpts below.

Student 2: "Yes! It improved my self-confidence in speaking. I became more eager to speak. Because nobody looks at you while speaking, and I can delete the video if I do not want."

Student 3: "I think it affected. I can speak in a more relaxing way."

Personality traits and the nature of speaking might cause the students not to improve their self-confidence during the e-portfolio implementation in speaking assessment. Here are two examples:

Student 1: "I did not think it affected because speaking in public is different from speaking while recording a video or audio."

Student 5: "Unfortunately no! I have lack of self-confidence resulting from me. Therefore, I could overcome this by using neither video nor another tool."

Seven of the eight students thought that e-portfolio could enable them to find out their good sides and deficient sides which they think should be improved while the rest did not agree that e-portfolio could help him do so. The students stated that they generally realized their mistakes in grammar, pronunciation, and vocabulary, so they tried to improve their mistakes, which resulted in the improvements in their speaking.

All of the students who returned their interview 2 papers thought that e-portfolio should

be used in speaking classes because they thought that e-portfolio could improve their speaking, self-assessment, and technology skills, and could force the students to make some research about the topic. E-portfolio is enjoyable and educational. Here are some example excerpts:

Student 1: "It should be used because I think it improves speaking skills."

Student 3: "I think it should be used because we can improve ourselves in many ways. We can learn how to make and record a video. Also, we can improve our mistakes after we watch our videos."

To sum up, interview 1 indicates that most of the students thought that speaking is an easy skill to learn while most of them had difficulties while speaking. Their difficulties are generally related to grammar, pronunciation, vocabulary, lack of confidence, and anxiety. Also, they thought self-assessment might help them improve their speaking. All of them believed that recording a video or audio and watching/listening to it again on the Internet might help them to improve their speaking skills. In self-assessment papers 1 and 2, the students had the same problems that they mentioned in interview 1, but they could improve themselves to some extent. In addition, they mentioned they had other problems related to technology and organization of the videos. Their problems were that they could not record and upload a video to the Internet. During the time between the first task and second task, there was an improvement in the students' computer skills because fewer students continued mentioning the same problem in self-assessment paper 2. In cover letters, the students mentioned about the effects of e-portfolio on their speaking skills. They thought they could improve their grammar, pronunciation, vocabulary, and their computer skills. They were less anxious and became more self-confident while speaking. Like the results of cover letters, the results of interview 2 show that the students believed that e-portfolio improved their speaking skills in terms of grammar, pronunciation, and vocabulary. Besides, e-portfolio had an important effect on their technology skills and made them more self-confident. All of them thought that e-portfolio should be used in speaking classes. The main reason for how they could understand what they improved is self-assessment because the effects of self-assessment can be seen in each data collection tool. Therefore,

the attitudes of the students towards the use of speaking e-portfolio in speaking are positive, which shows that e-portfolio can be used effectively in speaking skill.

E-portfolio's Contributions to Students' Speaking Skills

To answer this research question, interview 2 and cover letters were used because both were carried at the end of the study. As a result, they could give information about what the students think about the contributions of e-portfolio to their speaking performance. The content analyses of interview 2 and cover letters having been done separately for the research question 1 show that according to the students e-portfolio has contributed to their speaking performance in terms of the use of language (pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary) and of anxiety, self-confidence, and motivation to some extent. Depending on this, the researchers categorized what the students think e-portfolio has improved in their speaking as academic improvements and affective improvements.

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

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

Cover Letters

Student 5: "Yes, it did. For example, I understood that I made pronunciation mistakes. Video assignments enabled me to make grammatically correct sentences..."

Interview 2

As it is seen in the sample excerpts from interview 2 and cover letters, self-assessment helped the students to find out what they did well and what they thought they should improve. Then it caused them to look for solutions to overcome the problems they discovered. Consequently, it can be said that this circulation (watching the video – finding out the problems – looking for solutions – applying the solutions – recording the video again) could result in some improvements in the students' speaking performances. The examples below indicate this:

Student 5: "Yes, it did. For example, I understood that I made pronunciation mistakes. Video assignments enabled me to make grammatically correct sentences..."

Interview 2

Student 7: "... I think it (speaking e-portfolio) is beneficial for me. It improved my vocabulary and writing. While I was translating the sentences I wrote to English, I learned some new words."

Cover Letters

In terms of affective improvements, anxiety and lack of self-confidence may cause some problems in speaking as seen in the examples taken from the interview 1.

Student 8: "... I am very anxious while speaking. While everybody knows the truth, that I speak incorrectly makes me anxious."

Interview 1

The examples show that both anxiety and lack of self-confidence cause some problems in speaking. On the other hand, the students thought that e-portfolio could help overcome these problems because it reduced anxiety and improved self-confidence. To exemplify these improvements:

Student 2: "... I was very excited while I was preparing the video, but I learned how to overcome my excitement while speaking..."

Cover Letters

Student 7: "Because speaking myself is more relaxing, I think e-portfolio has a positive effect

on me. I can say my speaking ability has improved.”

Interview 2

Student 2: “Yes! It improved my self-confidence in speaking. I became more eager to speak. Because nobody looks at you while speaking, and I can delete the video if I do not want.”

Interview 2

Though the analysis of interview 2 in terms of motivation shows that most of the students returning their interview 2 papers to the researchers thought that e-portfolio did not improve their motivation a lot while speaking, it can be said that e-portfolio could improve the students’ motivation to some extent. It is because lack of self-confidence and being anxious may decrease the students’ motivation, as it is understood from the example of interview 1. On the other hand, student 2 in interview 2 used the word ‘eager’ to show that he wanted to speak, and student 2 in cover letter said he learned to overcome anxiety to some extent thanks to e-portfolio. These two comments show that e-portfolio helped the students to overcome anxiety and lack of self-confidence to some extent, so it could motivate them.

DISCUSSION

The first research question investigated whether e-portfolio can be effectively used in speaking skill. The results suggest that e-portfolio can be used effectively in speaking because it can improve speaking skills. Findings reveal that the students’ attitudes towards the use of e-portfolio in speaking are positive because the students thought that e-portfolio could improve their speaking in terms of grammar, pronunciation, and vocabulary (categorized as academic improvements by the researchers) and in terms of self-confidence, motivation, and anxiety (categorized as affective achievements by the researchers). The triangulation of the data collection instruments show that according to the students, there was an improvement in their speaking skills during the e-portfolio process. It mentions that they could become more self-aware of their learning during the e-portfolio process because they were allowed to self-assess their own learning in speaking e-portfolio. In this process,

they tried to find the problematical parts in their projects prepared for the speaking e-portfolio with the help of the feedback given, and they tried to improve those parts by themselves. As student data show, this increasing self-awareness could help the students to improve their speaking in terms of grammar, pronunciation, and vocabulary. The triangulation also indicates that being nervous and lack of self-confidence are psychological barriers that may avoid speaking to some extent, but they can be overcome through e-portfolio. Cover letters and interview 2 reveal that the students felt more relaxed when they prepared their projects for the speaking e-portfolio due to the fact that they did not have to speak in front of others, and also they made some preparations and had a chance to manage their preparation process. As a result, the speaking e-portfolio could result in reducing anxiety and increasing self-confidence. This may also contribute to motivation to some extent on the grounds that according to the students, they felt less nervous and more self-confident, so they could speak better. As it was mentioned before, the students’ attitudes towards the use of e-portfolio in speaking are positive, and the findings indicate e-portfolio could contribute to the students’ speaking. Consequently, it can be used effectively in speaking skill.

The second research question asked how it contributed to the students’ speaking skill. The results of the study have revealed that according to the students, they could improve their speaking in terms of grammar, pronunciation, and vocabulary and in terms of self-confidence, motivation, and anxiety. Students’ data explain the reasons for these improvements. First, the students have developed a sense of self-assessment and become more self-aware of their own learning. This awareness could help them understand what they did well and what they should improve. Then they were required to understand what they should improve and find out the solution(s) to overcome. Second, speaking in front of people and personality may cause anxiety and lack of self-confidence, which may affect speaking negatively. The speaking e-portfolio allowed the students to organize their own projects for the assignment and to practice their speaking alone, so the students could feel more relaxed to speak and build their self-confidence, which motivated the students to some extent.

The results show that e-portfolio also could improve the students' technology skills. The speaking e-portfolio required recording video or audio, uploading it to YouTube, and submitting it to Lore. The students, therefore, used programs like IPhoto and IMovie to meet these requirements. The speaking e-portfolio preparation process stemmed in improvements in the students' technology skills.

Speaking e-portfolio required the students to take the responsibility of their learning during the project. They were required to assess their own projects and to improve their weaknesses if they had. Also, they were allowed to choose a subject relevant to the assignments for their videos and to organize the content of them. Consequently, it can be said that speaking e-portfolio can make the students more autonomous in speaking classes.

CONCLUSION

The speaking e-portfolio can improve the students' speaking skills as it has done in their writing skills. The effects of it are positive on the students' speaking skills and are generally seen on their use of language (grammar, pronunciation, and vocabulary) and on their psychology in terms of feeling anxious and not self-confident while speaking.

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