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Elmahdi Masoud**

**Portefólio na formação de professores e no ensino
do Inglês**

**Portfolio in teacher education and in English
language teaching**



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Dissertação apresentada à Universidade de Aveiro para cumprimento dos requisitos necessários à obtenção do grau de Mestrado Académico em Supervisão, realizada sob a orientação científica da Prof^a Doutora Ana Raquel Simões, Professora Auxiliar Convidada do Departamento de Educação da Universidade de Aveiro.

I dedicate this thesis to my beloved father and mother

o júri

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Palavras-Chave

Portfólio, formação de professores, ensino de Inglês , avaliação dos estudantes

Resumo

O desenvolvimento educacional moderno trouxe novas portagens para a avaliação das capacidades que os alunos irão utilizar em tarefas da vida real. Esta necessidade tem criado uma mudança radical nos métodos tradicionais de ensino e avaliação. Assim, são necessárias abordagens alternativas de avaliação, quer do processo, quer do produto de aprendizagem. O presente estudo leva em consideração o uso de estratégias de utilização do portfólio no ensino de Inglês, com particular destaque para o sistema de ensino da Líbia. Além disso, apresentam-se definições, algumas vantagens e desvantagens do uso de portfólio, bem como possibilidades de sua utilização para a avaliação e melhoria do desempenho dos alunos.

Além disso, será dada atenção à importância de desenvolver a consciência dos professores para o portfólio. A investigação indicou que os portfólios podem ser vistos como conjunto selecionado de trabalhos importantes, o que se relaciona com a medição do desempenho do que foi conseguido. O seu uso pode fornecer aos professores maior feedback sobre o seu ensino e obter mais informações sobre o processo de aprendizagem dos alunos. Como conclusão, podemos afirmar que os portfólios podem servir como uma boa alternativa de ensino-aprendizagem e avaliação no ensino de Inglês, devido às vantagens que oferece.

Keywords

portfolio, teacher education, English language teaching (ELT), student's assessment.

Abstract

Modern educational development has brought up new tools for the evaluation of the skills students will need in real-life tasks. This need has created a radical change in traditional methods of instruction and assessment. Therefore, alternative evaluation approaches are needed in assessing both learning process and product such as achievement portfolio. The present study takes into consideration the use of portfolio assessment strategies in English language teaching with particular emphasis on the Libyan education system as a case study. In addition, definitions, advantages and disadvantages of the use of portfolio are presented using the achievement portfolio as a tool of teaching and evaluation pointing out its importance in improving students' performance. Moreover, attention will be paid to the importance of developing teachers' awareness as far as the importance of portfolios is concerned. Research has indicated that achievement portfolio is a collection of the important works, which is related to the measurement of the performance of what was achieved. Its use can provide teachers more feedback about their teaching and more information about students' learning process. As a conclusion, we may state that portfolios can serve as a good alternative teaching and assessment tool in English language teaching due to the advantages that it offers.

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Introduction

The preparation of achievement portfolio and its use in the school community have become an integral part of the school culture contemporaneity, since didactics is important to activate and renew the teaching and learning processes. This is because professional achievement portfolio reflects the different ways pedagogical visions to teachers and their philosophies, beliefs, skills and ways of thinking, which are necessary processes for teaching and learning (Winsor, 1999).

The portfolio has been used since long time ago, as it is used by the owners of certain character such as painters, engineers, photographers and others who were kept with the portfolio to showing their best works to be presented to specialists and concerned; that's when they get to a new job or when the need for competition or the comparison with others. The idea has evolved and got into the educational institutions and became one of the alternative methods to be used for instance, in ,students evaluation. The use of portfolios was spread in the last decades in many countries of the Western world, especially in the United States (Samuels, 1995). The idea is considered as response against the traditional familiar methods such as the old examinations approaches (Sweet, 1993). At odds exams the built which examines the student's ability from a specific angle and within a specified time; the portfolio allows the student the opportunity to show his/her abilities that have been accumulated and gathered during a long period of time. Thus, the portfolios allow the presentation of the most important parts or all parts of a particular subject on consecutive periods of time (Sweet, 1993).

Student's portfolio is a measurement tool that uses to evaluate the student's performance including their work s and activities and their best achievements, which can be then shown the acquisition of students' knowledge and skills that they learned

during the specified period of time. It also reveals what may fail in other assessment tools such as tests and reports submitted in school subjects (Danielson and Abrutun, 1997). Allam (2009) adds that the portfolios that are prepared by the students can help the teacher in the assessment of the activities and tasks at the same time, on the contrary of examinations that evaluate limited number of skills.

A portfolio is defined as the collection of learner's work assembled for the purpose of determining how much has been taught (Hancock, 1994). Hancock reported that the portfolio may include examples of the learner's completion of tasks such as reports (both oral and written), creative projects such as artwork, and contributions to group projects, and student writing (e.g., essays, poems, and written homework). The items chosen for inclusion in the portfolio can be selected by the learner, the teacher, or both, depending on the instructor's purposes.

For the purpose of using the portfolio in English teaching, where the need of learning English language is becoming very important over the wide world due to it is the language of science, technology and communication. Whenever the learning of a specific language is considered essential, it becomes important to teach that language and English is not an exception. Recent studies also emphasize the role of the alternative strategies, including portfolio achievement, in improving the linguistic performance for students of different stages. Studies have found out (Kabilan and Khan, 2012) that the use of portfolios in English language teaching is an effective and a strong method because it reveals the strengths and weaknesses of students. A study by Filimban (2010) also recommended the using of achievement portfolios in the evaluation of linguistic performance. The Libyan education system includes all different age groups, which starts at young children kindergarten to adult learners in graduate and postgraduate studies.

In the present study we identify a research question? / problem concerning the use of portfolios in English language teacher education:

- a) What are the benefits and the constraints of using portfolios?
- b) How can portfolio be integrated in teacher education for English language teaching?

In this research project we try to reflect on how to use portfolios in teacher education and English language teaching, specifically in Libyan education system.

The thesis is organized in five chapters. In the first chapter (portfolios) - we present a general review and definition of portfolio. Chapter two addresses the using of portfolio in teacher education. Chapter three presents the English language teaching; it explains the general objectives, difficulties and components of achievement portfolio in English language teaching in Libya. It includes the English language skills using portfolio achievement and justifications for the use of portfolios in English language teaching. Chapter four covers the education system in Libya taking into consideration English language education. At last, chapter five contains an overall summary and short reflection.

Chapter 1

Portfolios

1.1 Portfolio – what is it?

The Portfolio helps teachers to follow up different modern teaching methods on collective and individual works. There are many reported definitions for portfolio. Stone (1998) defines the portfolio as a continuous assembling of the best works of learner and of his/her achievements according to the organization and miscellaneous methods. Hamp-Lyons and Condon (2000) suggest that portfolios are especially suitable to be used with non-native English speaking students because portfolios provide a broader measure of what students can do, and because they replace time spent in writing contexts, which has long been claimed to be particularly discriminatory against non-native writers.

Shores and Grace (1998) recommended that portfolios can be supported child-centred learning and help students to get successful learning strategies in early stages. The study proposed ten systematic process steps for teachers to ensure successful attainment of a portfolio processes. The steps are: (1) to establish a portfolio policy; (2) to collect work samples; (3) to take photographs; (4) to use learning logs; (5) to interview children; (6) to take systematic records; (7) to take anecdotal records; (8) to prepare narrative reports; (9) to conduct conferences; and (10) to prepare pass-along portfolios. In addition, it can be assumed that portfolios encourage students to take risks and it also supports a creative educational learning environment.

To O'Malley and Chamot (1996) portfolios can be described as a collection of practical examples of EFL learning experiences. Yang (2003) defined portfolio as a compilation of students' work, which documents their effort, progress and achievement in their learning, and their reflection on the materials negotiated for the portfolio.

Bird (1990) sees portfolios as an organized group of documents that provide evidence and proof on the competence of teacher in the cognitive aspects, trends and skills involved in the framework of education art. Others defined portfolio as a collection of tasks and works performed by learner and a record of the works which were collected and produced during a certain time period.

Arter and Spandel, (1991), Paulson, Paulson and Mayer (1991), Del Vecchio et. al. (2000) agree that portfolios are a purposeful collection of student work that exhibits the student's efforts, progress, and achievements in one or more areas. Other authors, like French (1992) also refer to portfolio as a purposeful, chronological collection of student work, designed to reflect student development in one or more areas over time and student outcomes at one or more designated points in time.

Another author defines portfolio as a systematic collections of student work selected to provide information about students' attitudes and motivation, level of development and growth over time (Kingore, 1993).

To Parton and Collins (1993) portfolios are a way of enhancing self-evaluation and reflective thinking. Thus, the process of embarking in a portfolio requires the teacher to identify some of the facts or educational events, and to analyse what happened and evaluate his/her performance in terms of educational and learning outcomes of students.

According to the National Education Association (1993), student portfolios show the achievement reached, since they are an educational record that focuses on the work of students and on the reflections about their works.

Mansvelder-Longayroux et al. (2007) stated that a portfolio is a collection of work and information that has been compiled by the learner. What is included will vary due to the function and role displayed by the portfolio. Some learners may be considering certification through accreditation of prior experiential or certificated learning, but whatever its function the portfolio will require close alignment to the learning outcomes of a specific module, and the tutor and learner will need to decide together the focus and selection of work.

The portfolio tells a story about a learner's journey. It documents the processes of learning, development and any challenges encountered along the way. The learner will reflect upon their learning, identifying how their knowledge in a particular field has developed and clearly identify present and future challenges. The tutor's role is to help learners bring the four steps of collection (of materials), selection (of evidence), reflection (on inclusion of events and materials) and connection (final part of the reflection process, which draws everything together in a meaningful way) together as these are rarely straightforward. The tutor is also required to check that the portfolio is an authentic and true account of the learner's journey.

According to Tranowski (1998, p 17), the portfolio is a "tool for self-assessment, and evaluation of breeding programs for students Bachelor and Graduate studies". It is also a tool to reflect growth, the strengths, the capacity of the organization and creativity in the application of knowledge of learner. Fenwick and Parsons (1999) suggested that portfolios are used to collect samples of the learner's work and that these samples are collected across the time period, reflecting the content of some of what he /she studied, the solutions to problems, articles, home assignments, tests

and exercises, reports on the achievements of the learner that have been evaluated by counterparts and all the works that have been proven extent learn of learner.

Gomez (2000) believes that portfolio assessment is the systematic collection of the student's work measured against predetermined scoring criteria. These criteria may include scoring guides, rubrics, or rating scales.

After presenting several definitions of portfolio, we will focus on the main differences between portfolios and student folders, since sometimes these two are seen as synonyms, whereas in fact it is not true.

1.2 The differences between portfolios and student folders

Despite the multiplicity of definitions applied to portfolios, there is consensus within researchers that the achievement portfolio is not just a portfolio containing snippets or different tasks it also doesn't mean a random collection of works. All definitions are conforming on essential elements, like the importance of content selection, self-evaluation, and reflections of student self-awareness, besides the focus on the use of the learner for higher-order thinking skills (Juliana and Chau, 2010).

The concept of achievement portfolio raises a lot of confusion to educators, because it is mixed with the concept of portfolio students' papers, or brochures, as well as to what some calls documentary bags, or work portfolio, or evaluation portfolio, or performance portfolio. Notice that all these materials keep the word portfolio. Despite the multiplicity of titles and the emergence of a large group of definitions, all the concepts share certain elements. The contents of the students' work portfolio should reflect what is confirmed by the educational curriculum of levels and educational outputs, and what he/she has learned from the curriculum. A random portfolio has nothing to do educational output (Alam, 2004 and Painter, 2001) which can be explained in the following table:

Table 1.1: The differences between the portfolio and student's folder

| Student folder | Portfolio achievement |
|--|---|
| Student works at random and the student folder is not based on levels or educational outcomes. | Student works enlists based carefully on the levels or educational outcomes. |
| Including a sample of his/her daily activities which is probably not linked to the levels or the desired educational outcomes. | Reflect student's effort and progress towards achieving this levels or outputs created previously. |
| Contents are picked by the teacher who the selection for the student (who does not know). | Helping the student in the selection of the portfolio contents according to the outline suggests by the teacher with the participation of him or her. |
| Students don't participate in the preparation, they don't pre-determine. | Contents of the portfolio are determined in advance with the participation of the student. |
| There is no evidence of the student reflections or is his / her self-reflection. | Student's reflections and his/her self-reflection displayed in an appropriate manner, such as an article or newspaper. |

From the illustrated above the importance of achievement portfolio has great significance to students in terms of disclosure of their development and of their progress and knowledge of the achievements of each student and knowledge of the individual differences.

- It is a portfolio, a record, a file, or a bag;
- It is a tool to collect experiences;
- The portfolio includes a selection of the best works;
- It is a tool used to measure the performance of the learner;
- It displays achievements and the growth of the students; and
- Focuses on a particular field or in different fields.

1.3 Types of portfolios

Following different authors, there may be identified different types of portfolios, according to the intention\purpose, to the length, and to other criteria. Hart (1994) and Painter (2001) describe three types of portfolio: two basic types and

the third is a combination of first and second type. What concerns us here is discussing briefly the main types of portfolios identified by Hart:

- a) **Working portfolio:** Contains all the student work during the season or year in a course or in a particular subject. This type is used as a tool for modifying evaluation. In terms of size, it is larger than presentation portfolio because it contains all or most of the material the student has gathered. This may include summaries and full reports on units of study enclosing with videotapes or photography lessons that have been implemented; and notes or pictures with comments on how to pass the lessons; as may be added report to see the lessons carried out by colleagues, so that it appears the ability to analyse and critical thinking. In this type of portfolio, the samples are arranged and classified accurately and carefully taking into account the chronology and logic of the organization of samples and materials.

- b) **Presentation portfolio:** It is dedicated to showcasing the most important and best student work during the period of learning or at the end. This type is used as a tool for the final evaluation (Summative Evaluation). This file usually highlights the best capabilities or skills of the student in areas that he /she learns, in order to establish a convincing manner, helping the student in competition when necessary. When preparing the portfolio it must be taken into account the accuracy in the selection and non-prolongation.

Haladyn (1997) described five types of portfolios named: (a) ideal, (b) showcase, (c) documentation, (d) evaluation, and (e) class portfolio.

- a) **The ideal portfolio:** all students' works are included in this kind of portfolio. It is important for students to evaluate their own portfolio, since in this case portfolios are not assessed or graded.

- b) **The showcase portfolio:** the type of the showcase portfolios can be used to let students show their work reflecting their growth.
- c) **The documentation portfolio:** includes a group of works over time showing growth and improvement, thus, reflecting the student's learning of the results that have been identified.
- d) **The evaluation portfolio:** includes a standardised collection of student work and could be found by the teachers or in some case by the student.
- e) **The class portfolio:** includes student's grade according to the teacher's view and knowledge about students in the classroom.

Melograno (2000) identified nine types of portfolios which can be used separately or in a combined way:

- a) **Personal portfolio:** more general view of students' life, including for instance the interests, the life outside school, referring to family and friends.
- b) **Working portfolio:** an on-going collection of works, where the most important is to show the process that has been taken. It may be done in a daily, weekly or monthly basis.
- c) **Record-keeping portfolio:** mainly used by the teachers in order to keep a record of what has been going on in school (including samples of assessment instruments, photos, materials created and used in classes).
- d) **Group portfolio:** instead of having only an individual character, it also contains group work. It may be constituted, for example, by individual parts and by other parts created in group, focusing on collaborative work.

- e) **Thematic portfolio:** a portfolio that is based / focused in a theme or unit and not in the entire discipline or subject.
- f) **Integrated portfolio:** usually involves more than one discipline/subject. The most important feature is that it is based in interdisciplinary work, involving for instance projects in Mathematics and Language or Geography and Language.
- g) **Showcase portfolio:** a selection of students' best works, thus having a limited or short collection of works, since the purpose is to exhibit students' main achievements in a 'show' of the best work undertaken.
- h) **Electronic portfolio:** becoming more and more popular because of the current technological changes and achievements. The electronic portfolio has as main characteristic the possibility to use technological tools and programs in order to collect, storage and manage different multimedia resources (photos, videos, hyperlinks, web programs...). Notice that it has to be different from the paper version, since it can include these multimedia tools.
- i) **Multiyear portfolio:** instead of having a sample or collection of the work of one year, it includes more than one year work (for example primary education: 4 years, since the 1st until the 4th grade), showing the progress achieved by the students.

Venn (2000) described two major types of portfolios: process and product portfolios. A **process portfolio** documents the stages of learning and provides a progressive record of the student's growth. A **product portfolio** demonstrates students' master in terms of a learning task or a set of learning aims and only contains a selection of the best work. Teachers use process portfolios in order to help students to identify their learning goals, as well as to document progress over a period of time, and demonstrate learning mastery. In general, teachers prefer to use these process

portfolios because they are ideal for documenting the stages and progress that students go through as they learn.

1.4 Problems and disadvantages of portfolio assessment methods

The use of portfolios has some advantages and benefits in the field of education and has some disadvantages. We will now focus on the disadvantages.

- One of the disadvantages of using portfolio is that it is time consuming. It takes a very long time for teachers to record the works and assess the performance of students with the time spent (Birgin, 2007). Moreover organizing and evaluating the portfolio and give feedback to the students can be a waste of time (Stecher, 1998).
- One of the most complex disadvantages is the difficultness to assess portfolios. The teacher needs to identify all the criteria and elements that he\she will use, because if the goals of evaluating the portfolio are not clear, then the portfolio could just be a variety of the work and cannot reflect accurately the growth of students or their achievement. Thus the goal of portfolio evaluating should be explaining in a clear and detailed way (Cicmance and Viecknicki, 1994).
- Another important fact that has to be taken into account is the need to use special tools to evaluate portfolios. Developing portfolio assessment criteria and rubrics may be difficult for the teachers at the beginning. Some authors suggest the use of checklists or, rubrics and digital portfolio due to reduce the assessment time that spent in assessing tasks (Birgin, 2007; Defina, 1992 and Lustig, 1996). The data from education portfolio can be difficult to analyse. The use of observation lists and checklists is possible to facilitate the process of analysis. If it is possible to design a computer-based portfolio and electronic

portfolio for students, it is easy to check portfolios and to give feedback to students (Birgin, 2007; Chen et al., 2000 and Lankes, 1995).

- When assessing a portfolio authorship questions may occur: was it the student who really created this portfolio? Or did the student get help from someone outside class? In order to prevent these questions, the best thing is for teachers to follow what students do in their class for the portfolio.
- One problem of using portfolio is storage: how to deal with it and control the portfolio in a crowded classroom? Students are required to bring their portfolio materials. To overcome this problem, electronic portfolios may be better, since they allow students to store information easily and so it is not as difficult to control and deal with it (Baki et al., 2004 and Chen et al. 2000).
- Another problem of portfolio assessment is to support the parents or the community such a new and unfamiliar system of assessment, etc. Some parents are accustomed to receive their children's grades on the report card at the end of the term. This change may be difficult for parents to accept or adapt to this new system. Hence, teachers have to take an effort to educate them, so that parents become aware of what's going on with the new evaluation method at the beginning of the school year. Parents should be called for discussing and displaying their child's portfolio with the teacher. Parents should be an essential part of the evaluation process (Thomas et al. 2005).
- Despite all these listed disadvantages, some authors concluded that teachers agree that even if it is not very easy to use portfolios at first, if you receive information you will be able to use portfolios successfully and with good results, namely in terms of students' growth and motivation (Koretz et al, 1994 and Stetcher, 1998).

Veen (2001) suggested that portfolios require additional time to planning evaluation system and assessment, as well as time to collect all the necessary data and samples of work, which can make portfolios huge and difficult to control. The development of systematic management system and deliberate is difficult, but this step is necessary to make portfolios more usual than other students' work. One of the most difficult aspects in using portfolios is assessment, because the teacher has to create the criteria to be used, the scales and some other evaluation tools. Even when using all these tools it is still difficult for the teacher, since it may be a subjective task.

1.5 Advantages of using portfolios

Portfolios could represent the view of the learning process to students and check the continuous reactions for them (Adams, 1998). In addition, they enable students to obtain the self-assessment their progress (Defina, 1992). Portfolios provide evidence of the students' interests, their skills, successes and development in a given time period. Portfolio is a systematic collection of students' studies, helping to assess students as a whole (Birgin, 2007). Portfolios are a powerful hardware which help students to acquire important capabilities such as self-assessment, critical thinking and monitoring of him / her self-learning (Asturios, 1994 and Micklo, 1997). Moreover, portfolio provide pre-service teacher assessing their own learning, growth, their practice to become self-directed practitioners and their contributions to their individual and professional development (Birgin and Baki, 2007 and Mokhtari et al. 1996). Mullin (1998) stresses that portfolios provide teachers with a new perspective in the field of education.

Portfolios offer a number of benefits for both teachers and student and they can be considered as a powerful assessment approach since said it is developed to re-shape the roles of teachers, students and the assessment process in a positive way. Portfolio assessment strengthens student learning by increasing learners' attention and involvement in their learning processes and promoting student-teacher and

student-student collaboration. Portfolios provide unique insights into the progress of each student (Brown and Hudson, 1998). A student portfolio can help them to develop ownership of their learning and encourage self-analysis as they reflect on their work (Wortham, 1998; Trotman, 2004; Grabe and Kaplan, 1996 and Genesee and Upshur, 1996). Students often have the freedom and responsibility to choose the contents of the portfolio and the conditions for their writing, which also promotes motivation and learner autonomy. In addition, portfolios have the potential to reveal a lot about their creators and they can become a “window” into the students (Paulson, Paulson and Meyer, 1991).

Weigle (2002) presents some benefits of using a portfolio:

- A portfolio is a collection of writing product.
- It is an opportunity for students to show his/her writing performance in various genres and for diversity of readers and purposes.
- The portfolio is a reflection to the learning situation, since it describes what the student has done in the class.
- The evaluation of the portfolio is usually in the end of the term, which enables the students to enrich and enhance his/her piece of writing until the time of evaluation.
- The portfolio includes pieces of writing selected from the student with guidance of the teacher.
- It gives sense of responsibility of the student.
- It contains reflective essays that represent kind of self-assessment.
- It is a tool to enhance student's ability, organization, and developing arguments.

1.6 Portfolio assessment

Portfolio assessment is a per-formative assessment. It is becoming a more common type of assessment in writing programs, since it allows students to demonstrate development of their writing products over time. Portfolios also act as a process-oriented assessment of long-term progress in writing, since they provide evidence of editing and revision in the construction of a final product (Douglas, 2000). Therefore, portfolio assessment is seen as both product and process assessment (Hirvela and Pierson, 2000), and as presented in figures 1-1 and 1-2.

Figure 1.1: Portfolio as processes, Simões and Pinho's translation (2003)

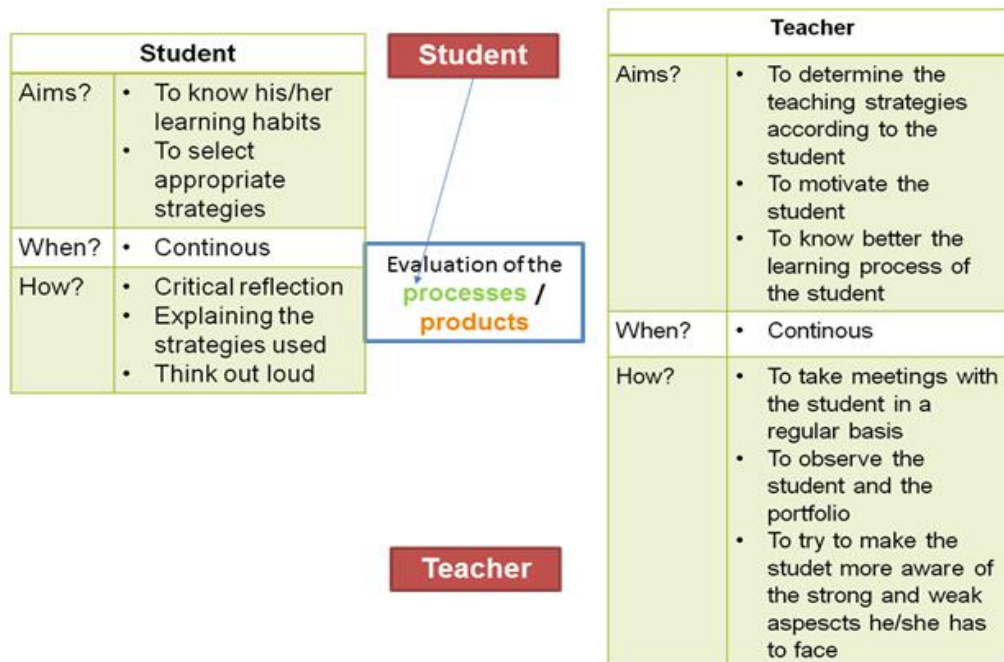
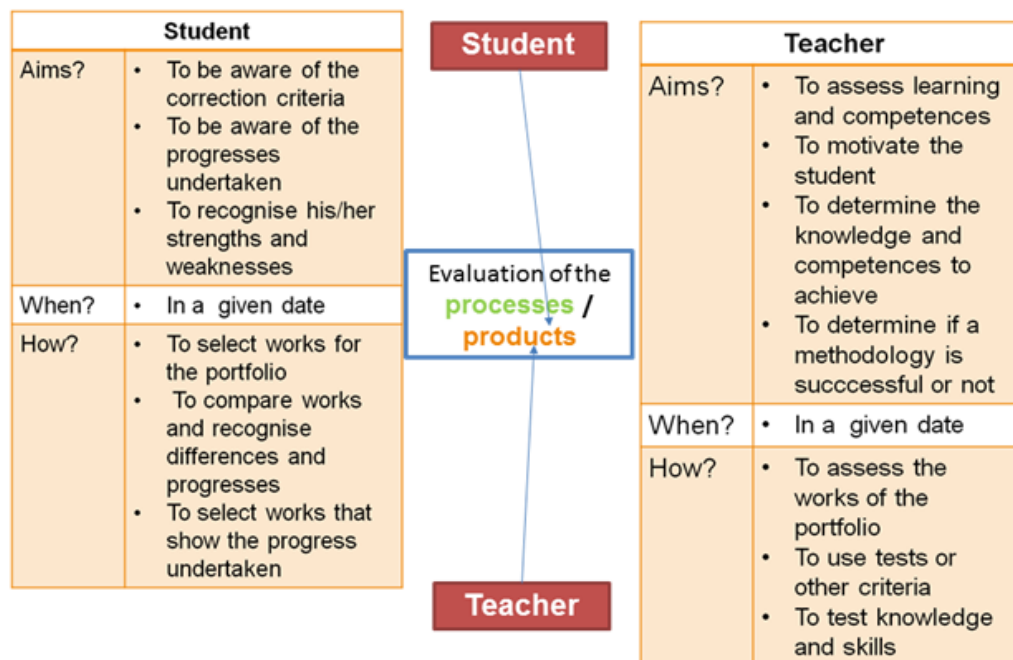


Figure 1.2: Portfolio as a product, Simões and Pinho (2003)



As previously indicated, portfolio assessment is one type of alternative assessment. Among alternative assessment types there has been continuing growth of interest in and practice of portfolio-based assessment of writing. Hamp-Lyons and Condon (1993) assert that portfolio-based assessment is superior to traditional holistic assessment, because of the many programmatic benefits it brings with it. As Brown and Hudson (1998) note, portfolio assessments enhance students' creativity and productivity, provide information about both the strengths and weaknesses of students, encourage open disclosure of standards and rating criteria, as well as the use of meaningful instructional tasks, and call upon teachers to perform new instructional and assessment roles.

Hyland (2003) lists the procedures for designing and implementing portfolio assessment, the first being the determination of the content of portfolios based on course objectives and student needs analysis. Second, it is crucial to discuss the purposes and procedures of the portfolios with students regularly throughout the term.

A discussion and decision on the assessment criteria among the teachers will be helpful and should be shared with the students. Planning the draft check dates and feedback conferences is a further step that helps keep students on task in the portfolio productions. Writing products and presentations enable students to share their works with the others. Finally teachers need to encourage reflection by the students so that they can analyse their own writing and even reflect on the criteria decided for portfolios.

Douglas (2000) suggests five characteristics of portfolio assessment procedures:

- i. Comprehensive: both depth and breadth of work is represented;
- ii. Predetermined and systematic: careful planning is essential;
- iii. Informative: work must be meaningful to teachers, students, staff and parents;
- iv. Tailored: work included must relate to the purpose of assessment; and
- v. Authentic: work should reflect authentic contexts, in and out of the classroom.

Portfolio design and development requires that the teacher stress the purposes of the portfolio and how it will be used in assessment. Teachers of English as a second language need to reflect on students' portfolios to evaluate their own teaching instead of conducting informational tests (Johnson, 1996). Learning how to assess portfolios is a tool that helps students to learn the procedures and the process of solving learning problem.

Chapter 2

Portfolios in Teacher Education

The overwhelming acceptance of teaching portfolios by education programs, state certification officers, national accreditation bodies, and teacher education associations speaks to the perception that these tools may be able to capture the complexities of teaching and learning as no other assessment tool currently in use (Grant and Huebner, 1998). Defined by Shulman (1992), and later by Wolf (1994, p. 111), "a portfolio is the structured documentary history of a carefully selected set of coached or mentored accomplishments substantiated by samples of work and fully realized only through reflective writing, deliberation, and serious conversation".

Grant and Huebner (1998) highlight the notion that portfolios must be a collaborative venture, coached and discussed by fellow teacher candidates, teacher education faculty, and the teachers involved in the required fieldwork of the classroom. This is considered a necessary element to develop explicit teaching knowledge, increase professional autonomy, and to make public the standards for effective teaching (Grant and Huebner, 1998).

Many teachers and educators advocate teaching portfolios for the purpose of assessment of candidate teacher (Tellez, 1996). In 1998, 32 countries have adopted teaching portfolios as an assessment tool for either preserving teacher candidates or in-service teachers to earn certification (Lyons, 1998). Both teacher educators and teacher candidates accept teaching portfolios as an assessment tool. However, there remains an important distinction between the creation of portfolios and the evaluation of portfolios. Furthermore, there remains a major issue about the contents of

portfolios being able to articulate and demonstrate the knowledge, skills, and dispositions necessary for effective teaching. Teacher educators need to be thoughtful about the essential difference between the creation of teaching portfolios themselves and related assessment issues (Bird, 1990; Snyder, Lippincott and Bower, 1998; Lyons, 1998; Moss, 1998; Stone, 1998; Tellez, 1996 and Wolf and Dietz, 1998). The implementation of teacher portfolio assessment in pre service teacher education contexts has been increasing during the decade of the 1990s (Bird, 1990 and Campbell et al., 2001; Lyons, 1998; Wolf, 1991). In addition, despite a lack of researcher documentations in concern, it might be simply represented the lag between the design and the implementation of the practice and opportunity for research or research reporting (Bird, 1990; Herman and Winters, 1994 and Wolf, Whinery and Hagerty, 1995). What has been reported is a description of the design and implementation process incorporating teaching portfolios into teacher education programs (Constantino and DeLorenzo, 2002; Glatthorn, 1996; Martin-Kniep, 1999 and Wyatt and Looper, 1999).

Since then educational researchers and practitioners cite the increasing use of the portfolio as a tool and as a means of educational teacher programs (Barton and Collins, 1993 and Loughran and Corrigan, 1995). The portfolio in teacher education may be defined as the collection of information about the capabilities of the student teachers acquired in different contexts over time. Wolf and Dietz (1998, p. 13) describe the basic features of the portfolios as “a structured collection of teacher and learner work setting up portfolio across a variety of contexts on over time, governed by thinking and enrichment through cooperation, which has it also aims for the advancement of teacher and learner learning”.

- Benefits (advantages of using portfolio in teacher education) – what is developed with or by the teachers in training education?

- a) Knowledge, skills, and dispositions. Hammond, Wise and Klein (1997) recommended that an assessment system for teacher candidates should reflect the knowledge, skills, and dispositions all professional teachers are expected to master as a minimum requirement for responsible classroom practice.
- b) Developing organizational skills.
- c) Receiving support and guidance from those involved in the portfolio process.
- d) Being able to share ideas about portfolios with peers; and
- e) Improving communication with higher education institutions.

The process of defining effective teaching requires both a refined language for discussion of practice and the establishment of the norms of a profession so that a closer, more fruitful examination of teachers' practices can be accommodated (Bird, 1990; Lyons, 1998; Shulman, 1998; Snyder, Lippincott, and Bower, 1998). The process of portfolio assessment has been described as offering this opportunity to teacher candidates (Campbell et al., 2001; Constantino and DeLorenzo, 2002).

Portfolio assessment systems, as developed during the 1990s, are at the heart of a vision of teacher education as a profession (Lyons, 1998). Standards of rigor and of excellence form the basis for the curriculum and performance assessment of teacher education (Lyons, 1998; Shulman, 1998 and Snyder et al., 1998). The adoption of standards as a guide for both curriculum and assessment also had the effect of promoting some of the knowledge, skills, and dispositions considered to be indicative of effective teachers. For example, evidence of effective learning and the fostering of the candidates' own learning are expected components of today's teacher education assessment systems (Loghran and Corrigan, 1995). Collaboration, for instance, is a new norm of teaching creating collaborative, interpretive communities of teacher learners who can critically question their own teaching practices (Shulman, 1998 and Wolf, Whinery, and Hagerty, 1995).

The student teaching portfolio is an on-going assessment throughout the education program but it is also the final undertaking in a teacher education program's performance assessment system. It is based on rigorous standards and high expectations. The system, while consistent and demanding, nevertheless encourages individuality and imaginative professional development through the flexibility afforded by the portfolio, both as a measure of effective teaching and a means of professional growth (Kimball and Hanley, 1998). The rich and subtle life of a classroom can be presented and assessed through these student teacher portfolios with actual documentation of a teacher's work, of student work, with analyses and reflections by a teacher candidate (Kimball and Hanley, 1998).

Teacher candidates should be evaluated, receive feedback, and set goals for themselves under the authentic conditions of what teachers must do in order to be successful in the classroom and with the mentoring of experienced classroom teachers (Kimball and Hanley, 1998). The student teacher portfolio offers opportunity for the candidate teacher to document their teaching knowledge, skills, and dispositions, as guided by acknowledged national standards for effective, quality teaching. As teacher candidates collect artefacts or evidence of their teaching practice for the teaching portfolio, they reflect about them when writing, and discussing these pieces and reflections with peers and instructors. As teacher candidates involve themselves in the process of portfolio development, their current abilities seem to become what previously were only potential abilities in their zones of proximal development (Wagner and Brock, 1996).

The proximal zone for each candidate teacher changes continually, as students achieve cognitive awareness of their own strengths, needs, and modes of learning. Participation in portfolio assessment is important to document the candidate's own teaching competencies, which provides numerous opportunities to engage in such empowering professional experiences as reflective thinking, social interaction with professional peers, becoming an informed decision maker, and setting professional

goals (Wagner, Brock, and Agnew, 1994). In other words, the act of developing a teaching portfolio may actually teach the candidates about teaching and about their own strengths and needs in developing their competencies.

The portfolios have been particularly important for teachers and researchers in order to enhance teachers' reflective thinking (Wisor and Ellefson, 1995; Wade and Yarbrough 1996; Tillema and Smith, 2000; Davies and Willis, 2001; Zubizaretta, 2004; Cardona, 2005 and Orband-Barak, 2005). Several studies reported that portfolios help in the development and in the enhancement of reflective thinking because portfolios could become a learning episode, without thinking that portfolios could become a little more than just practice in papers (Wolf and Dietz, 1998).

Therefore, for educational purposes, it is necessary that the narrative written in the portfolio does not become a descriptive scrapbook, but should include the impact on the learning and teaching experience. Reflection involves the analysing, comparing, summary, clarifying and choosing this should be shown in the teacher portfolio. Since purposeful writing is internalized into one's on-going thinking (Roaland, 1995) by reflective writing, the students can move from specific to general, as well as develop the thinking habit (Griffin, 2003). Therefore, the educational literature has focused on the medium of writing (Journal writing and portfolio writing) (Schon, 1987).

In sum, when using the portfolio, the student teachers not only develop their ability to think and reflect upon their professional and personal development, but they also increase the number of opportunities to learn about themselves and about the teaching and learning process. However, while the use of portfolio is becoming more popular, the research on this matter is still in its infancy in the field of second/foreign language (L2) teacher education.

Jadallah (1996) and Antonek, McCormick and Donato (1997) conducted case studies to analyse the reflective thinking of EFL/ESL (English as a Second Language) student

teachers through their portfolio analysis development throughout the practical teaching training period. Jadallah (1996) said that providing students with educational experiences and subsequent analysis of reflection resulted in opportunities to develop the teaching and learning experiences. Similarly, Antonek, McCormick and Donato (1997) stressed that the portfolios allowed student teachers to select activities, to deal with behaviour issues in their classrooms and also to develop decision-making skills. The researchers concluded that the portfolios were suitable for the development of the teacher, namely their individual autonomy and reflection competences. These studies were conducted on the use of traditional pen/paper portfolios and stressed the possibility of using portfolios to develop the reflective practice. Therefore, the demand of the implementation of portfolio writing in teacher education programs has seen favourably and thus accepted (Rodgers, 2002). However many studies (Dutt-Doner and Gilman, 1998; McKinney, 1998 and Stone, 1998) have shown some of the restrictions from the use of portfolios in teacher education. These include: (i) storage professional documents; (ii) maintenance and (iii) accessibility (assess and reliability of technology). Student teachers collect a variety of materials and resources, the evaluations from supervisors and from teachers collaborators, as well as observation reports of teaching, teaching plans, learner work samples, and photos displaying the teaching experiences in their portfolios. Georgi and Crowe (1998) state that the storage, maintenance and accessibility can solve all these problems by developing and using the electronic portfolios.

Chapter 3

English Language Teaching in Libya

3.1 The general objectives of teaching English language in Libya

Mentioned in the formal framework for English teaching which was presented by the Ministry of Higher Education in Libya (2004), there are the following objectives for English Language Teaching:

1. Enhance intellectual, personal and professional capacity of the students;
2. Lead students to acquire linguistic communication skills, listening, speaking, reading and writing;
3. Lead students to acquire the necessary linguistic sufficiently to use English in various life situations;
4. Develop an awareness of the importance English language in the local labor market;
5. Develop an awareness of the importance the role of the English Language as a means of communication universal;
6. Develop linguistic competences that enable them to understand cultural, economic and social community issues and to participate in finding solutions to them;
7. Enhance the understanding of cultural differences between peoples and respect;
8. Realize the importance of English Language as a universal language to benefit from the achievements of other cultures in the light of Islamic teachings;
9. Realize the English Language as a universal language, to provide culture and civilization to others;

10. Positive guidance about learning English Language Development.

These goals may represent different visions; they aim at teach students the language skills and their development, in what concern; they will be able to use them in their life and education, and teach them the importance of the English language.

3.2 The difficulties of teaching English language

Teaching English as a Foreign Language is not an easy task. When it comes to the places where English serves a very limited purpose, it becomes more crucial and painstaking to teach and learn. Teaching English as a foreign language (TEFL) in the Middle East catches the attention of many researchers and scholars, especially the difficulties and obstacles that teachers and students face. Researchers believe that learning any foreign language occurs through the integration of culture and education, which helps learners to understand the target language and learn it. So teachers should not focus on learning grammar or the acquisition of basic linguistic skills of the foreign languages without raising the issues of culture. There are many difficulties facing English language teaching as a foreign language, for instance those identified by Mayora (2006):

- 1- Delays in teaching English language to advanced stages in school. Although some private schools teach English in the initial stages, there is still a lack of curriculum within English language teaching fit for the initial stages;
- 2- The specified time to teach English language is not enough, since the lessons do not to exceed three hours per week;
- 3- Sometimes classrooms of students get to forty students, which make it difficult to teach, since it is difficult for the English teacher to follow the progress of all his/her students;
- 4- Disparity abilities of learners per class makes it difficult to determine the level of learners, and to identify the scientific material appropriate for them; and
- 5- Scientific and professional deficit of some English teachers.

The most important English language learning difficulties in Libya are presented in the psychological constraints. That belongs to the nature of human beings including the prior outlook for the English language, and misconceptions about foreign language learning. In addition, the management of obstacles are represented in the lack of money and plans, qualified teachers and education aids. Furthermore, we must identify the general educational system obstacles where the objectives are not clear for the teachers, students and parents; and also the traditional teaching methods that are not suitable with the concept and the nature of contemporary education. The study of Agl (1986) presents a few difficulties that Arabic students learning English language face, namely:

- Writing system (trends and letters) is different from their mother language;
- The teaching methods are using indoctrination ways that depend on the memory;
- Examination system is strict, where the assessment is concentrated only on the memories of the students and neglect language skills; and
- Linguistic differences between Arabic and English (for example, the alphabet used), making it more difficult to learn and teach the foreign language.

3.3 English language skills

English Language learning includes the development of four basic skills, like:

1. Listening Skills

Listening is the most important of these arts (skills) followed by the speaking, reading and writing. It is the primary means of linguistic communication, and it is an important skill for the student's life. It is a functional skill inherent to the individual throughout his/her life and it is intended to distinguish between the sounds in order to understand them. The importance of Listening lies on the way that the individual grows linguistically and increases his/her wealth of vocabulary and structures. Listening also has an impact on the level of school education, because someone who does not

listen well will not speak well and will not read well (Salah and Al-Rashidi, 2010; Al Khazaleh and others, 2011).

Nunanr and Miller (1995) summarized the importance of listening in foreign language in four topics:

- a) It equips the learner with information, if the learner does not understand this information it means that the learner cannot begin;
- b) The learner must interact with what he/she hears and talking may be an evidence that he/she may understand the meanings, since the ability to understand oral discourse is very important for interaction, and even if the lack of understanding of what is heard from the oral discourse is not considered an impediment, it may be the motivation of the learner to interact with the language;
- c) Listening activities help the teacher to attract the attention of the learner to new forms of language, such as the vocabulary, the rules, verbal and non-verbal interaction;
- d) By listening the learner can acquire language, enabling him/her to learn how to speak a language should firstly learn how to listen to it.

Despite the importance of listening, the most important thing is to learn the language, but the reality is that teaching is still incomplete (Salah and Al-Rashidi, 2010). Many of the teachers do not care about this skill and do not pay attention to non-cognitive processes. Salah and Al-Rashidi (2010) identify some possible reasons for this to happen: some teachers believe that the training of the listening skill is not possible; and some teachers believe that listening skills are acquired without the need to teaching and training them.

2. Speaking skill

Speaking is the first linguistic mean used by humans to explain their ideas. The speaking skills correspond to listening linguistic skill; where language is often consisted of two parties: speaker and listener. However, the speaking skill comes second (after listening) in terms of frequency of use (Al Khazaleh et al., 2011). Al Bukhari (2007) defined speaking as a translation of information and ideas of the opinions and feelings to the talk. The speaker may then exchange his/her views (opinions) with others. There are three terms in the field of developing speaking skills: "Speaking: means the ability to use the right to language, while intended talking the ability to use the appropriate for the language in their context and the talking here other than speak includes verbal language and language the accompanying. When one of the parties to the communication process lead role of speaker the productive side of the situation it is called to word the say" (Tamie, 2006, p.186).

3. Reading skill

Reading is the basis of education and the road leading to the knowledge and to gaining experiences. It is also important for the individual, since it is a longer and permanent process practiced inside and outside the school. It is also a mean that allows individuals to contact with others; it is the foundation of all educational process and the key to all study materials. In addition, it may also be one of the main reasons of the education weakness (Lafi, 2006). Reading process does not only depend of the decipherment, but also of the understanding of the hidden concepts. Therefore, reading is a mental process where the reader requires his/her past experience to understand the text deeply (Taimeh, 2006).

Through the work of the researcher as an English language teacher in general education, the teaching of reading stage starts from sixth grade in Libyan system. During this phase there are configured basic reading habits and some of the skills and abilities by making the learners know the names of the characters and their

sounds, and by discriminating audio and visual, and linking the pictures with expressed words, and reading short sentences which consist of two or more words. Eid (2011) said that the beginner, when learning any language, faces several difficulties, including:

- Nature of language: there are some words that may be pronounced in more ways than one. For instance, the word “read” in the present tense has a different pronunciation from “read” as in the past tense.
- Voices of language: For each character in the English Language voice and name, letter (A) is different from his/her voice in the reading.
- There are letters written in some words and that are not pronounced, for examples, letter (g) in the word (light) is written but does not utter, and there are letters pronounced that aren’t written, such as the word “phone”.

Filimban (2010) reported that the language teachers try to undertake creativity and innovation, renovation and diversification into the means used, and the author realizes that the correct reading performance is not acquired easily, but by practicing and repetition. The researcher added that the English language teacher should take into account the characteristics of this language and the use of modern strategies in the teaching of the reading and also take into account individual differences among students In terms of speed and slowness in learning.

4. Writing skill

The writing is a very important language skill in the translation of ideas and needs. It is a skill acquired through practice and repetition. Al Najjar (2011) defines the writing as translation of feeling and opinions and description of experiments and recording of the events according to symbols. Writing is characterized by a multiplicity of sources: it demonstrates the ideas, information translation, or description of the particular event. Writing comes after learning the reading; and it is a way that was used by

humans with the purpose of recording the events to break spatial and temporal distances.

It is well known that the primary goal of language teaching is the acquisition by the learner in terms of the ability to communicate orally or in writing form. Al Khazaleh and others (2011) have stated that the objectives of teaching writing are to configure and perfect the following skills:

- Draw the letters to be easy reading;
- Writing words correspondent to the correct dictation rules and grammar;
- Composition of phrases and sentences and paragraphs that demonstrate the meanings and ideas;
- Selecting the ideas that preferred including all writing style required; and
- The ability of organization these ideas required by the writing style using.

3.4 Using portfolio achievements in English language

Portfolio achievement has become more recently a key part of student assessment in English language in many of the developed countries, in spite of the technical and scientific difficulties which the effective implementation of this style of assessment faces, and which requires further study and research (Alam 2004) . It is a tool to measure the achievements and progress of the student during a certain time period, and it is also a teaching tool that helps in the development process of language learning and in the development of the students' language skills (Carner, 2010). Portfolios have been used in the field of English teaching since the mid-nineties. Its use also aims to maintain a complete record of the language learning, illustrating the extent of student's linguistic development (Zobra and Tosun, 2011).

3.5 Justifications for the use of portfolios in English language teaching

Arfan (2004) summarizes several justifications, which are encouraged to use portfolios, namely:

- Language is a mental process: in order to become more highly qualified linguistically, the portfolio can be used to monitor the mental processes undertaken by the students;
- Language contains all mental skills levels: the language skill begins with the verbal and unconscious response of the learner in specific status such as the fear, but ends with problem solving. Here portfolio can be used to monitor the nature of these skills and its correlations.
- Language is a practice skill and needs to be considered as learning and teaching skill. Assessing and measuring these skills also depends on practice, but only theoretical; and this may be achieved by cumulative assessment portfolios;
- Language is an interactive process: Kasem (2002) said that language is used to interact with others in society, and so there should be provided an interactive education environment. In this approach, the cumulative assessment portfolios can also offer the interactivity among the students; and
- The language is of a cumulative nature; therefore, expertise should be selected in order to develop the multiplicity of concepts, meanings and terms of words and sentences.

3.6 Components of portfolio achievement in English language

Portfolios can be included in English language teaching in several contents and inputs, such as samples of short stories, poetry, reflection articles, literary analysis, a sample of the writing of students, lists explaining books to readers outside the classroom, reviews, points of view on a subject, article, book, movie, program, social occasion, answers to a test in the understanding of the subject reading, or writing a

review, ..., etc. This highlights the linguistic content competence of the student in real situations meaningful (Alam, 2004).

3.7 Studies addressing the portfolios in English language teaching

Borek and Chappell (2005) commissioned a study aiming to recognize the type of students' portfolio that can be used in TEL to tenth grade students. The researchers used the descriptive method, where the study sample consisted of 140 students, ranging from seventh to twelfth grade. The study was conducted in the United States of America and the sample was selected between African and American students from the school where the study was conducted. The researcher used the questionnaire as a tool of the study. Most of the study sample students were capable to successfully create a portfolio on their own, and most students were enthusiastic about the idea of creating the portfolio, and they loved the idea of using a portfolio instead of other assessments instruments and tests. The study recommended the necessity to use the idea of portfolio achievement, for being an effective tool with significant impact in the traditional methods.

In Taiwan there occurred a study (Chen, 2006) aimed at verifying the effectiveness of the use of portfolio in English language teaching in intermediate stage. The researcher used a quasi-experimental approach on a sample consisting of two classes from the seventh grade containing 67 students. The results showed that 92% of the students confirmed that teachers whom use portfolios became more interactive with students and showed more clarification of the goals to achieve. Students prefer their assessment by using portfolio achievement as a good tool, suitable for the measurement of learning experiences. As far as the results of the performance of teachers are concerned, the study has revealed that teachers have benefited and enhanced their confidence in the students to learn English language when integrating portfolio in language learning, according to the theory of multiple intelligences, critical thinking skills, and cooperative learning skills.

Carner (2010) has conducted a study aiming to access the students' perspectives about assessment by using portfolio achievement in writing courses, and aiming to find out the performance of the participants in this study. The number of participants in this course was of 140 Turkish students from the middle and secondary stages who were studying English language in a foreign language school affiliated to the University of Anatolia. The study surveyed the views and attitudes of the students about the portfolio achievement, using the questionnaire to collect the information. The results indicated that some subjects in this study preferred to be evaluated in the traditional way (a pencil tests system), but in most of the subjects they believed that the assessment by using portfolio achievements contributed to the implementation of the English language learning process. The study also concluded that there are a number of subjects have a negative related in assessment of the portfolio and writing courses. Aydin (2010) conducted a study aimed at identifying the amount of attention of the English language and problems related to conservation of the student portfolio achievement in the writing of English as a foreign language. The study focused on the impact of student portfolio's achievement to improve the learners' writing skills. The study relied on data collection instruments like: the questionnaire, the survey, and the interviews. The study was conducted in the Faculty of Education at the University of Balikesir in Turkey with a sample of 39 English language teachers. The study found out that portfolios helped the students to improve vocabulary. The study recommended that it is necessary for teachers to use the portfolio as educational tool for solving the educational problems that facing students.

Tosun and Zobra (2011) conducted a study aimed to identify the most important problems experienced by students in kindergarten in English language teaching, to identify the advantages of using student portfolios in kindergarten, and to understand the possible enrichment provided by the use of student portfolio achievement for language materials and other educational materials. The sample consisted of 24 children from two different kindergartens in Turkey, children aged 6 years. Observation was used as a tool of the study, which reached the conclusion that the

use of portfolios and of other educational tools enhanced children's interest in English language course. The study recommended that it is necessary for the courses to be enjoyable and not boring for students. Therefore, interesting educational tools in should be used with children in order to have a high effect on students' attention and to help students in the learning process. Finally, these tools include songs, music, animations and etc.

The study of Zhang (2011) addresses the use of portfolio in teaching English as a second language; the study also aims to identify the strategies that have to be taken into consideration by the teachers. The study presents that the relation between the language education and its teaching is too complicated; and there are four main basics to be focused on during teaching English language as a second language, which are: methodology, curriculums, the educational environment and the evaluation methods. Moreover, Kabilan and Khan (2012) conducted a study with the purpose of evaluating the education methodology used in the portfolios by the English teachers to define the most important challenges they face. The study reports that the using of portfolios is effective and powerful, and is a useful tool in order to present the strengths and weaknesses of students. In addition, it is a helpful tool to show the abilities of students and to find out their proficiency level and develop their language skills.

Chapter 4

Education in Libya

4.1 Libyan education system

Libya became an independent country in 1951 after forty years of occupation by European powers. The country had been an Italian colony until the defeat of the Axis forces in North Africa in 1942. From 1942 to 1951 it was under temporary British military rule. Under the monarchy (1951-1969), all Libyans were guaranteed the right to educations. Schools at all levels were established; and old Koranic schools were reactivated and new ones were opened resulting in a heavy religious influence on Libyan education (Deeb and Deeb, 1982). The revolution in 1969, and the establishment of the modern Libyan state, brought with it considerable changes to the educational system. For example, the number of primary schools increased significantly and primary education became compulsory for all children in Libya. In the 1970s an educational structure was introduced with four levels: primary (six years), intermediate (three years), secondary (three years), and vocational (three years). Students studied a range of subjects such as Arabic language, Islamic religion, English language, French language, Science, and Mathematics. The teaching workforce in Libyan schools in the 1970s and 1980s relied heavily on expatriate teachers from Egypt.

Further significant changes took place in the 1990s, with the introduction of what is called the "New Educational Structure". This structure divided the educational system into five levels. These levels are illustrated in the following figure and in table 4.1.

Figure 4.1: Structure of the Education System in Libya, World Data on Education (2007)

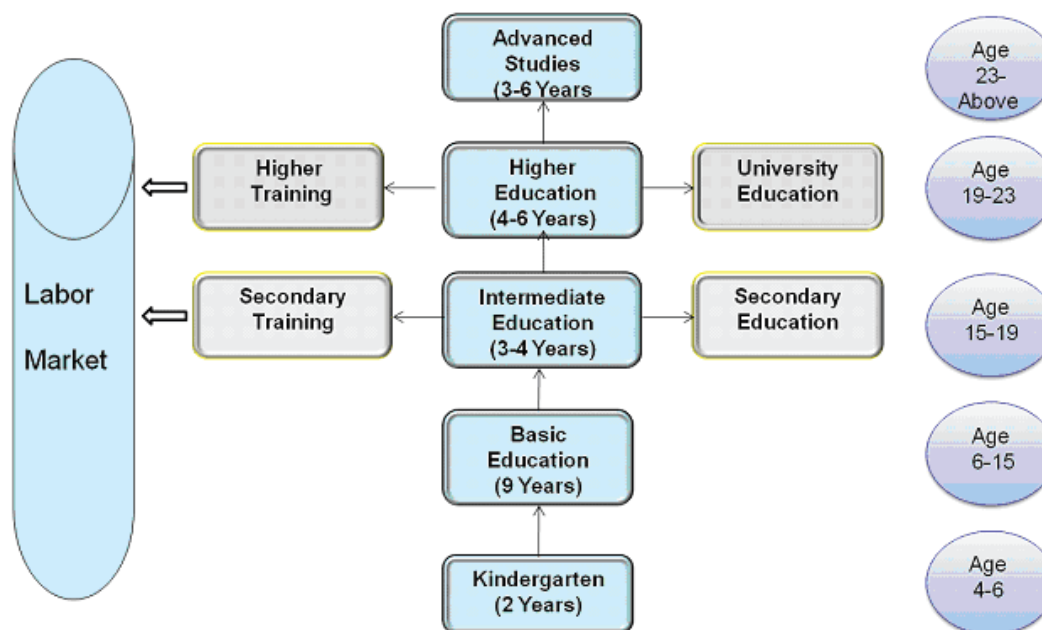


Table 4.1: Libyan education system

| Education | School/Level | Class | Age | Years | Notes |
|-----------|-----------------------|-------|-------|-------|---|
| Primary | Primary | 1-6 | 6-12 | 6 | |
| Primary | Secondary | 7-9 | 12-15 | 3 | Students attend vocational or Technical schools for secondary education. The other alternative is religious secondary school. |
| Secondary | Specialized secondary | 1-3 | 15-18 | 3 | Extends for 3-4 years. Considered A levels |
| Tertiary | Higher education | | | | Higher Education extends from 3 years at Technical Colleges on to 6 years at other colleges. |

4.2 Description of each stage

Compulsory Education: In Libya education is free to everyone from elementary school right up to university and post-graduate education, both in Libya and abroad. Pre-

university education is divided into primary, preparatory, and secondary education. Schools are everywhere and for nomads, there are mobile classrooms and teachers.

4.2.1 Age limits

Education is compulsory between age 6 and 15 years of age. Where preschools are available, children begin school at the age of four. Because of herding responsibilities, some Bedouins do not start school until a more mature age.

4.2.2 Primary education

The first 9 years of school in Libyan education system are compulsory and free. This basic education program includes lessons in Arabic, Islamic languages, mathematics, natural sciences, history, geography, art, music, and technical and physical education and each subject is taught by individual teacher.

4.2.3 Middle education

The final 3 years of basic education take place at middle school. Upon completion, a basic education certificate may be awarded, following which pupils have the choice of finding work, or going on to secondary school.

4.2.4 Secondary education

Grades 10 to 12 at secondary school complete the Libyan schooling cycle at general level, where students may choose between science and arts to prepare to go on to university. Should they prefer to go to technical secondary school instead, then they may spend 4 years studying one of economics, arts and media, biology, engineering or social sciences there, with a view to perhaps spending time at a higher institution later too.

4.2.5 Vocational education

Vocational education programs are available to pupils who do not complete their 9 years of basic education, although they may receive these during this period too. Over 44 programs are available in fields as diverse as electrical and mechanical, building and carpentry, architectural, agricultural and marine fishing, and even in what are referred to locally as female vocations.

4.2.6 Tertiary education

Higher education in Libya is provided by both general and specialized universities, and polytechnics, higher institutes and teacher training colleges too.

4.2.7 Academic year

Libya's school year consists of 35 weeks of instruction. Students attend school 6 days per week or 280 days per year. School begins in September (Terms – holidays). Friday is the weekend holiday for all students and employees in the education sector. In January we also have a two weeks break, the workers day, and the independence day of Libya. Table 4-2 summarised the table time of classes' hours in the Libyan education system.

Table 4.2: Schedule in Libya - number of hours in schools per day or per week

| Education | School/ level | Hours | class per day |
|-----------|-----------------------|--------------|--------------------------------------|
| Primary | Primary school | 8:15 - 13:15 | Primary school has about 4 classes |
| Secondary | Secondary school | 8:15 - 14:45 | Secondary school has about 7 classes |
| Secondary | Specialized secondary | 8:30 - 14:45 | Also has about 7 classes |
| Tertiary | Higher education | 9:00 – 15:00 | |

Higher education in Libya is provided by universities (both general and specialized) and higher technical and vocational institutions. The higher education system is financed by, and under the authority of the state. The Open University is the only

institution within the public sector that relies to some extent on tuition fees paid by students.

4.2.8 Language of instruction

Arabic is the language of instruction and English and French are taught as second or foreign languages. The first and major language in Libya is Arabic language, which is learned from the primary school and up to the high schools and universities. Meanwhile, the second language is English, which is considered an educational language in some science faculties such as engineering and medicine, and the third language is Italian and French but not in wide range. The English language starts to be taught since the 5th grade and until university in Libyan education system, but the French is taught partly in secondary school (see table 4.3).

Table 4.3: Foreign languages in Libyan education system

| Primary | Languages | Secondary | Languages |
|-----------------------|-----------|-----------------------|----------------|
| 5 th grade | English | 1 th grade | English/French |
| 6 th grade | English | 2 th grade | English |
| 7 th grade | English | 3 th grade | English |
| 8 th grade | English | | |
| 9 th grade | English | | |

4.2.9 Curriculum

In the first six-years of education, in primary schools, students learn mathematics, natural sciences, hygiene, art, crafts, literature, and physical education. In secondary schools, students can choose a literary or scientific program of study. Language studies at this level include English and French in addition to Arabic.

4.3 Teacher education in Libya

Faculties of Education in Libya provide two distinct preparation programmes: integrated preparation and continuing preparation (Hegy, 2006 and Kouchouk et al., 2008). Students enrolled in the integrated teacher preparation programme are required to take four years of education and academic core courses. These include principles of education and psychology, principles of teaching, social and historical foundations of education, and basic cultural courses. In addition, students must successfully complete courses in methodology, educational psychology and technology, educational philosophy, comparative education, curriculum, and social psychology, specialised courses in the Arts sections or in the Science sections, as well as cultural courses.

As part of the English language teacher preparation programme, student teachers perform teaching practice in preparatory schools during their third year and in secondary schools during their fourth year. Upon completion of the four-year programme, a student is qualified for a Bachelor of Arts (B.A.) degree in one of the following specialised areas: Arabic and Islamic studies, English, French, History, Geography, Philosophy, or Sociology; or a Bachelor of Science (B.Sc.) degree in one of the following specialised areas: Mathematics, Chemistry, Physics, Biology, Commercial Education, Industrial Education, Agricultural Education, and Basic Education.

The Continuing Teacher Preparation program is aimed at educating graduates of non-education faculties to become teachers. These students enrol in education courses full time for one year or part time for two years. Successful completion of these courses results in obtaining a general diploma in education and an appointment as a preparatory school teacher. Graduates of the general diploma program and the integrated programme may apply to take postgraduate studies in education if their GPA is not less than 'Good'. Recently, university faculties have witnessed an

increase in the number of the students. In addition, students realise that good university grades yield financial benefits, and successful completion of the degree allows them to teach in schools and to earn extra money through private tutoring for the national exams.

4.4 English language teaching in Libya

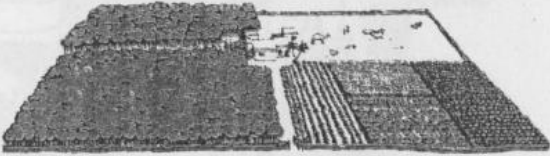
English language plays a major role in the Libyan educational system. It is taught from the intermediate level onwards, and in the universities numerous scientific, technical, and medical courses are conducted in English. During the seventies and eighties, new English textbooks were introduced to the intermediate and secondary public schools. I will comment here on the approach to English adopted in these textbooks so that later on the shift in pedagogy implied by the new curriculum will be evident. The Living English for Libya textbooks included topics focusing on different aspects of Libyan life. For example, some units focused on the lives of the Libyan farmers, and how these farmers managed their daily life. Figure 4.2 presents a sample from one of these textbooks. A typical lesson using these textbooks would start with a reading passage to introduce the students to the new words followed by comprehension questions about the reading passage. The lesson would also include a sentence completion exercise, and some drilling exercises to practice the grammatical exercises covered in the lesson. Typically, the teachers would start the lesson by writing the new words on the board, and pronouncing these words for the students. Teachers would also ask the students to repeat the words after them to make sure that the students are pronouncing the words correctly.

Arabic often dominated the classroom interaction, especially when teachers were explaining the meaning of the new words. Students often wrote the Arabic equivalent of the English words to help them memorize the meaning. After presenting the new words and making sure that the students understood the meaning and pronunciation, teachers would read out the text excerpt to the students. Students would listen very

carefully to the teachers while they were reading and when the teacher had finished reading the text, they would select some students to read it. The teacher would usually make sure that students pronounced the words correctly and sometimes would interrupt their reading to correct their pronunciation. The teacher would also check on the students' comprehension of the meaning of the words, and sometimes would ask the students to give the Arabic translation of these words. The next stage of the lesson would deal with the grammatical structure included in the passage. The teacher would write the grammatical structure on the board and provide explicit explanations and examples. The students would listen very attentively to the teacher, writing down every example written on the board. After dealing with the grammatical structure, the teacher would ask the students some questions to check their comprehension of it.

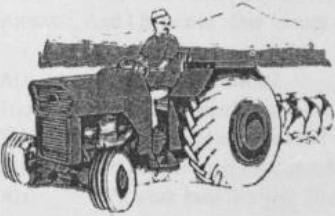
Figure 4.2: Lesson form Libyan textbook of English language.

LESSON TWO



A. Ahmad's father, Mr. Fellaḥ, is a farmer. His farm is not big. But it is not small, either. He likes his farm very much. He always says, "My farm is part of me!" From an airplane the farm looks like this:

The big part of the farm is for trees. The other two parts are for animals and wheat and barley. Mr. Fellaḥ grows some vegetables, too. Potatoes, onions and carrots are vegetables.



B. Mr. Fellaḥ works hard. Only his wife and children help him. But he has machines. Machines can help farmers very much. Look at Mr. Fellaḥ. What is he doing? He is working. He is driving a tractor. The tractor is pulling a plough. What does the plough do to the earth? It cuts the earth, and it turns it over.

Mr. Fellaḥ's machines always run well. Why do his machines always run well? Because he always cleans them. He always oils them, too.

During the late eighties, the relationship between Libya and the West was characterized by political tensions. On 15th April 1986, American aircraft flying from bases in Britain and carriers in the Mediterranean bombed Libya killing hundreds of people and destroying many buildings. This incident created resentment and anger towards the West across Libya (Almoghani, 2003 and Elmajdob, 2004). As a result, the government of Libya decided to ban the teaching of English in schools and universities across the country. Teachers of English were ordered to give up teaching English. Some of these teachers were asked to teach other subjects such as History and Social Science. Others were given administrative responsibilities. English departments in universities were also shut down. Only students in their third and fourth year were allowed to continue their study after intense negotiations with the Libyan authorities. However, no new students were allowed to enrol in the English departments. The status of teaching English in Libya deteriorated considerably between the mid-eighties and the mid- nineties. The resources allocated to English language teaching were severely reduced, and English language teacher education was no longer provided. In fact, many Libyan English language teachers changed their careers.

It was only in the mid-nineties that the Libyan government started to fully reintroduce English language teaching into its educational system. This process was beset by many problems and challenges. First, there was a shortage of Libyan English language teachers due to the closure of English language departments and English language training institutions who were the main suppliers of Libyan teachers of English. Second, many Libyan English language teachers had left English language teaching, and it were difficult for them to restart teaching after years of being away from the English language. Third, the reintroduction of English language teaching was not systematic and gradual, but it was unplanned and sudden. For example, many students who were at the time at the university level had not studied English when they did their secondary and intermediate levels of education. These students suddenly had to study English at the university level without any basic knowledge of

English. However, nowadays, the new education system is becoming different where the basic of English language of university and high education students is quite good as comparison to past system. The communicative approach to English language learning has not yet reached the Jamahiriya (Libya). Schools lack the use of educational media; there is even no use of tape recorders and no testing of oral skills. Some schools have overhead projectors, but it seems that teachers do not have printed or blank transparencies or suitable pens to use them. "Each basic school class is taught English in the same classroom as the other subjects. There are no language laboratories or even specialist English teaching rooms" (UNESCO, 1996, p. 22-23). In the mid-nineties the country started to suffer the consequences of banning English language teaching. A key response by the Libyan government to this situation was the introduction of a new English curriculum in 1999-2000 to its preparatory and secondary levels of the education system.

4.5 English foreign language teacher education in Libya

In Libya, qualified English teachers have not kept pace with government mandates. El-Naggar et al. (2001) point out that many English teachers lack training in the effective instruction of young learners and experience in communicative teaching methods, and they feel that their own English skills are inadequate. This places great emphasis and responsibility on the shoulders of those in charge of planning, designing and implementing English language teacher education in Libya at the pre-service level, where student teachers are trained to be qualified teachers, and at the in-service level, where English teachers' professional development is monitored and evaluated to help them continue progressively in their profession. According to Snow et al. (2006) non-native teachers of English represent 80% of all English teachers globally and their level of language proficiency deserves due attention. Taking this into consideration, the site of this study states the following aims in their documentation for the ELT preparation program. By the end of the program, student should be able to:

- Become models of language proficiency.
- Become knowledgeable about the dynamics of culture in general.
- Draw on a comprehensive command of subject matter and the language of instruction.
- Provide multiple paths to help students develop language proficiency.
- Select; adapt; create and use varied resources.
- Employ a variety of assessment methods.
- Contribute to the growth and development of their colleagues.

4.6 Teacher education and development in Libya

Since many educational innovations require teachers to change their classroom practices and adopt new ways of teaching, teachers' education and development are also regarded as an essential factor in the implementation process. As Malderez and Wedell (2007, p. xiii) emphasize "the effective teaching of teachers is the key factor influencing the extent to which the effective implementation of new education policies and curriculum reforms takes place as intended". In addition, Carless (1999, p. 23) argues that "teachers need to acquire the skills and knowledge to implement something, particularly if it is slightly different to their existing methods". Thus, as discussed in Chapter 1, the application level of the innovation requires that while teachers examine and assess the innovation, they need to be monitored and supported in a way that their personal practical understandings and knowledge of the innovation are enhanced. Carless (1999) highlights the consequences of neglecting the retraining of teachers:

If teachers are not equipped to deal with the implications of a new approach, they are likely to revert to the security of their previous behaviour and the desired change may not take place. Without sufficient retraining, even teachers initially enthusiastic about an innovation can become frustrated by the problems in innovation and eventually turn against it. (Carless, 1999, p. 23).

However, it should be noted that briefing teachers with short sessions about the innovation will be insufficient in equipping teachers with the necessary skills, knowledge, and attitudes for successful implementation of the innovation as Adey and Hewitt (2004, p.156) put it "real change in practice will not arise from short programs of instruction, especially when those programs take place in a centre removed from the teacher's own classroom".

An example of this in ELT is reported by Lamb (1996). Returning one year later after conducting a two week training sessions for English language teachers in Indonesia, he commented that "a great deal of our original input had simply been lost, and what was taken up was reinterpreted by teachers to fit their own beliefs and their own concerns about what was important to them and their students" (Lamb, 1996, p. 147). This raises several questions about the way teachers in Libya were introduced to the new curriculum.

Furthermore, teacher training and development programs which depend on knowledge transmission models may not be effective in bringing about the desired change (Adey and Hewitt, 2004 and Kennedy, 2005). In these models teachers often act as receivers of specific knowledge which is imparted to them by an 'expert' without taking into consideration the context in which teachers work. Acknowledge the importance of the context, Bax (2003, p. 283) states that "any training course should make it a priority to teach not only methodology but also a heightened awareness of contextual factors, and ability to deal with them".

For teachers to learn effectively they need to be able to reflect on their own learning and internalize new knowledge. Change in the classroom therefore involves much more than acquiring new skills or knowledge. It essentially means changes in attitudes, beliefs and personal theories in order to reconstruct a personal approach to teaching. This cannot be achieved unless there are opportunities to reflect upon their practice and the practice of others. (Bax, 2003, p. 283).

Teachers often encounter different obstacles while trying to implement educational innovations. Shamim (1996) claims that many teacher training programs do not take the dynamics of change, and the potential obstacles encountering change into consideration. According to Shamim, this makes teachers unable to face the problems that follow their attempts to implement change in their classrooms and institutions. She insists on the need to advise teachers of the various obstacles that might face them in the implementation process. She writes:

It is important for teacher trainers to encourage participants in teachers training programs to discuss both overt and 'hidden' barriers to the successful implementation of change in their own teaching/learning contexts. This will not only make trainees aware of potential sources of conflict but it will also enable them to develop strategies and tactics to deal with anticipated problems in initiating and managing change in their own classrooms. (Shamim, 1996, p.120).

As mentioned previously, teachers' beliefs play a significant role in teachers' adoptions or rejections of educational innovations. However, teachers may not be aware of their beliefs. Therefore an important role of teacher education programs is to raise teachers' awareness of their existing beliefs and the principles behind change. The need to raise teachers' awareness about their beliefs has been echoed by Hedge and Whitney (1996, p.122) who suggest that:

All teachers operate according to set of beliefs about what constitutes good classroom practice, but some may never have made those beliefs explicit to themselves. Thus an essential part of in-service education is to encourage teachers to reflect on their own professional practice, to make explicit to themselves the assumptions that underlie what they do and then to review those assumptions in the light of new perspectives and practices.

Chapter 5

Conclusion and Short Reflection

5.1 Conclusion

The portfolio has strong educational importance, since it provides more reliable evaluation of students' achievement and comprehensive views of their performances in context, and it encourages students to develop into independent and self-directed learners, and enhances communication among students and their teacher. The portfolio assessment can also provide teachers more feedback about their teaching and more information about students' learning, which is very helpful for teachers to reflect about how they can improve their teaching. The use of portfolio also gives comprehensive details and information about students' development within the learning process to teachers, parents and students themselves. The present study has taken in consideration the use of portfolio assessment strategies in English language teaching with particular emphasis to the Libyan education system as a case study.

One may conclude that the portfolio assessment can serve as a good alternative assessment in English language teaching due to the advantages that it offers. However, despite the advantage of the use of portfolio assessment in EFL teaching, it is not free from the drawbacks as well, as it has both advantages and disadvantages. Thus, one may say that it will be perhaps unreasonable and ineffective to use it as the only way of assessment. Therefore, the use of the portfolio assessment needs to be taken into consideration in more projects and within teacher education programs, in order to promote the development of knowledge on its real

benefits towards EFL learning, as well as to increase teachers' awareness on how to use it in their daily practice.

The present study aims to identify how are portfolios defined and used in English language teacher education, where portfolio assessment can be conducted on a classroom, school-wide, or district-wide basis. In the field of foreign language education, the advantages of using portfolios are obvious, namely: guiding students with opportunities to display a useful work, serving as a vehicle for critical self-analysis, and presenting mastery of a foreign language. Thus it becomes crucial that a student portfolio captures in as many ways as possible the learner's use of the target language. Depending on the emphasis given to the development of language skills and the ability to compose the foreign language, the use of language skills products will be a part of the student's portfolio.

Recently, portfolios are being more used in wide range in language skills teaching. Studies and research (Al-Hosni 2010) state that portfolio is one of the most preferred methodologies that demonstrates a clear picture of language skills and of their development, and it presents strength points that enhance students' self-confidence. A portfolio is a compilation of student work assembled in order to evaluate coursework quality and academic achievement, creating a lasting archive of academic work products, and a way to find out whether students have met learning standards or academic requirements. Portfolios allow the compiling, reviewing, and evaluation of student's work over time, providing a richer and more accurate picture of what students have learned and are able to do than more traditional measures, such as standardized tests or final exams, that in fact report only what a student knows at a particular point in time. In addition, portfolios can be a powerful tool for the collection of students' work that involves materials such as written assignments, journal entries, completed tests, artwork, lab reports, and other material evidence of student learning progress and academic accomplishment, involving awards, honours, certifications, and recommendations. Portfolios may also be digital collections, which

contain the same documents and achievements, but that may also include additional content such as student-created videos, multimedia presentations, spread sheets, photographs, or other digital artefacts of learning.

Portfolios can also be used in day-to-day instruction to help students reflect on their own work. By closely monitoring the learning progress over time by using portfolios, both teachers and students can highlight academic strengths, identify learning weaknesses, and recognize accomplishments and growth. In addition, portfolios can be used to keep parents and other adults more informed about what students are doing and learning in (and outside) the classroom. Moreover, at the secondary level, students may design a work portfolio for a specific class or maintain a comprehensive portfolio of all their courses over the high school years. In some cases, portfolios become part of a student's formal record and may be used in job and college-admissions applications.

As a conclusion, we may say that portfolio is in consonance with recent trends in language teaching and evaluation, with educational advantages that clearly tilt the balance in favour of portfolios as the most desirable form of assessment. It also contains a strong educational significance for students and teachers; it can provide teachers more detailed and useful feedback on their teaching and a lot of information about students' levels, which help them, improves their teaching methodology and evaluation. In addition, the portfolio assessment provides more authentic assessment of students' achievement and comprehensive views of their performances in contexts; it supports students to be independent and self-directed learners, enhances communication of teachers and students and encourages students to take responsibility for their own learning. Therefore, it provides the possibility to enhance the foreign language teaching and learning, which was illustrated for the English language in this study. The portfolio assessment strategy is recommended to serve as a good alternative assessment in English language education.

5.2 Short reflection

Portfolio assessment helps teachers how they can evaluate students' activities and tasks at the same time. As a teacher, I believe it can provide me more feedback on my teaching and a lot of information about students' learning, in what concern; it is a very helpful tool that can improve my teaching. In addition, the portfolio assessment provides more authentic assessment of students' achievement and comprehensive views of students' performances in contexts; it encourages students to develop into independent and self-directed learners, and enhances communication among teacher and students. It also can encourage students to take responsibility for their own learning, and enhance student-teacher communication. The portfolio assessment has a potential to demonstrate students learning process over time. As a result, portfolio gives teachers, parents and students themselves detailed information about student's development in learning process. So I will use it in the future in my college, since it provides a richer picture of student performance than that obtains by traditional methods.

Furthermore, I see the possibilities of portfolio use in enhancing the English language teaching. However, I realize that despite the advantages it offers, the use of the portfolio assessment in EFL teaching and learning is not free from problems or drawbacks. As it has both advantages and disadvantages, it will most probably be unreasonable and ineffective to use it as the only way of assessment. Therefore, on this occasion, I would like to put forward some recommendations. First, since it is still quite unfamiliar in terms of managing the implementation, the use of the portfolio assessment needs more projects and training to promote its real benefits toward EFL learning. Next, as a teacher or educator, I encourage myself as well as others in a similar profession, to develop our creativity and willingness in learning and applying the portfolio assessment in order to enhance our professionalism because portfolio can provide teachers more feedback about their teaching and more information about students' learning. Last but not least, we must encourage our students (not force

them) to be self-motivated in making use of the convenience offered by the innovation of the alternative assessment, portfolio assessment.

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