Portfolio - Based in Writing Assessment: Students' Perception and Its Impacts on Their Writing Performance

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Abstract:
This experimental research investigated the impacts of portfolio - based assessment on non -English majored students' perception and their writing performance. The participants included seventy non -English majored students at Kien Giang University, who were divided into two groups including the experimental group and the control group with and without the intervention of portfolio – based assessment in their writing. The research instrument consists of writing tests (a pre - test and a post - test) and students' portfolio to measure students' writing performance, the questionnaire and the interview investigated students' perception towards the implementation of portfolio – based assessment in writing classrooms. The results of the research pointed out that the experiment group had a significant improvement on writing performance. The participants in the control group also improved their writing performance, however, their improvement was less than that of the experimental group's. Finally, the suggested pedagogical implications are hoped to contribute to the innovation of assessment method in teaching writing in the context of Kien Giang University.

Keywords: Alternative assessment, Portfolio- based assessment, portfolio writing performance, students' perception

1. Introduction

For the context of teaching English at Kien Giang University where the research was conducted, lecturers mainly use summative assessment to measure students' ability in language skills that statements was synthesized through personal communication between the researcher and other lecturers. However, this kind of assessment chiefly focuses on evaluating students' achievement but ignoring the skills. Most of the training programs still retains the traditional approach to assess students' writing ability including regular tests and teachers' subjective evaluation of individuals' writing work. This assessment methodology has many disadvantages. First, it is difficult to judge a writer's ability with just one test in 45 to 60 minutes. Given a limited time-frame, students have no time to draft the writing from the beginning till the end, no time to rewrite, and edit to suit a target audience. Second, a test is designed solely to assess the writer's ability to write in a tight schedule.

In contrast, alternative assessment focuses on the process of learning. Therefore, the techniques of alternative assessment provide immediate data of students' strengths and weaknesses in the particular areas of the instruction, which can help teachers address their problems immediately. In brief, alternative assessment techniques included portfolio-based assessment can keep the instruction and assessment method in line. Researches in the field affirmed portfolios are not by themselves an evaluation tool but rather a collection of student articles based on which the teacher can evaluate the student's writing ability and writing skills (Birgin, 2003; Birgin & Baki, 2007; Hamp-Lyons & Condon, 2000). However, studies in Vietnam mainly foster writing ability. For English major students or high school students using portfolio assessment in writing, this study was conducted to explore the impact of portfolio- based writing assessment on non-English majored at Kien Giang University.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Definition of Portfolio

Genesee and Upshur (1996) defined portfolio as a purposeful collection of students' work that demonstrates their efforts, progress and achievement in given areas. Particular in the area of writing, Hamp- Lyons (1991) defined a portfolio as "a collection of texts the writers produced over a defined period of time". According to Privette (1993) "The content of the text in portfolio follows the topic selected by teachers based on the objective of each class. Students also can selectively collect what to put on their portfolio, not compulsory finished texts (may be outline, draft, notes of ideas, reflections, report...)".

In the current study, the idea from Hamp – Lyons and Condon (2000) is chosen to be the working definition of portfolio because the researcher aimed to collect all of the evidence of student writing process. The evidence is used for observing students' strong points and weak points which could help teacher in adjusting instruction, or giving support.

2.2 Portfolio- based assessment and its characteristics

Hamp- Lyons and Condon (2000) indicated the characteristics of portfolio including collection of texts, range of performances, delayed evaluation, promoting time for revision, selection of texts, student-centred control, reflections and self-assessment, growth along specific parameters, and development over time which provides evidence of progress.

Ou (2004) indicates three features for choosing and developing scoring rubric of portfolio assessment; the degree of learning goal achievement; the degree to which a student expresses of personal characteristics; and the degree of students' collaboration with others and ability of making use of resources. Portfolio assessment is actually a viable alternative assessment and it is, in fact, a tool of instruction and assessment. Hence, using portfolio assessment in writing is supposed to enhance student's writing performance.

2.3 The effects of writing portfolio on writing skills

One study conducted by Elahinia (2004) explored the effect of portfolio assessment on Iranian EFL students' writing achievement. The findings indicated that portfolio assessment had a significant positive effect on writing performance of EFL Iranian learners. Furthermore, learners had a positive attitude towards their writing performance via portfolio assessment. Yurdabakan and Erdogan (2009) investigated the impact of portfolio assessment on reading, listening and writing skills of a group of secondary school students in Turkey. They discovered that portfolio assessment had significant positive influence on students' writing ability. The mean score of writing in the portfolio assessment group was significantly higher than that in the control group. The similar results were not found for reading and listening skills. Fahed Al-Serhani (2007) illustrated that portfolio assessment had an expressive positive effect on students' writing performance in general. The students' use of writing processes was also improved. There was a significant difference between the portfolio and non-portfolio groups' use of each of the four writing stages of planning, drafting, revising and editing.

2.4 Related studies

Wang & Liao (2008) studied students' satisfaction of portfolio assessment for writing classes in the education system. After the treatment, they found that the experimental group under portfolio assessment method have greater satisfaction in writing class than the control group. Besides that, the findings from some interviews that involved portfolio assessment has a positive effect on the students' English learning process, specifically they liked being implicated the help of portfolios they could understand and go over their writing problems. This is evident when they described that the writing portfolio permitted them to understand their grammar and writing problems. A related study by Peasami (2006) investigated a research examining ESL students' performance with writing portfolios in college composition courses and their attitudes towards portfolios. Data analysis revealed that learners had different attitudes to their portfolio assignments. A few participants stated that they did see immediate effect from reviewing their portfolio work. Koç (2013) explored the attitudes of teachers and students towards the use of portfolio in EFL writing classes in Turkey. This study was conducted with 16 EFL teachers and 96 students in EFL writing classes. The findings showed that all the instructors and most of the EFL students have positive attitudes towards the use of portfolio assessment in EFL writing classes.

In Vietnam, there are also researchers who carried out studies on portfolio – based assessment. Duong, Cuc, and Griffin (2011) attempted to use portfolio assessment as the main method to build an evaluation framework for process-oriented writing competence for Vietnamese. The study was able to identify up to 6 levels of competency, 36 indicators, which are specifiable into 138 quality criteria, all meant to measure portfolio writing performance using the portfolio assessment technique. Specifically, for paragraph writing, these researchers listed six levels. This study is important as portfolio assessment differs much from the traditional Confucian culture that has major influence over Asian students.

In fact, in another paper, Thuy (2009), though not focus on portfolio assessment, but more the capability and reflection of teaching writing to Vietnamese students having difficulty in assessing writing skills. In Vietnam, most of the training programs still retains the traditional approach to assess students' writing ability including regular tests and teachers' subjective evaluation of individuals' writing work. This assessment methodology has many disadvantages. First, it is difficult to judge a writer's ability with just one test in 45 to 60 minutes. Given a limited time-frame, students have no time to draft the writing from the beginning till the end, no time to rewrite, and edit to suit a target audience. Second, a test is designed solely to assess the writer's ability to write in a tight schedule. There are many other different types of writings with varying scope and challenges. Different types of writing including letter and reports require different punctuation and design rule. These punctuation and design rule are normally non-transferable between languages and sometimes between types of writing. This shall create and devote to the necessary information and challenges in implementation of the portfolio assessment in the context of English writing class for high schools in Vietnam.

Research questions

For the aim of addressing this gap, this study was designed in questing for the answers for the following two questions.

> 1. To what extent does portfolio – based assessment affect students' writing performance?
> 2. What are students' perceptions toward the application of portfolio – based assessment in writing?

3. Methodology
3.1. Design of the study and instruments

This experimental method consisted of students' portfolio and the writing test, including pre-test and post-test to explore the impacts of portfolio - based assessment in writing on non-English majored students' writing performance. Then a qualitative method with the questionnaire and the interview were used to get a deep understanding on students' perceptions on the implication of portfolio assessment in teaching writing. The combination of various research instruments provides the researcher with more opportunities to examine the effects of portfolio – based assessment on students' performance and their perceptions. '

Table 3.1. Design of intervention

Groups	Pretest	Intervention	Posttest
Experimental	X	X	X
Control	X	O	X

3.2 The material and Portfolio Model
3.2.1 The material

The research materials were used in the study were the writing lessons in the book Life A1-A2 by Paul Dummett and John Hughes, from unit 1 to unit 12. The book was theme-based, including twelve units with twelve themes of various topics. In this experimental study, students covered the first six units for Basic English 1. In the current study, the instructional material was used the same in both groups. Each unit consisted of five 50-minute periods: Reading, Speaking, Listening, Writing and Language focus. Participants in this study were instructed the seven topics of the book: Write a personal description, write a short report about your class; write a description of a room in your house; write a description of your favorite town or city for a

website; write a short email; instruction writing; write thank you messages. To explain for the training, two lesson plans were designed in light of the process approach was implemented in the experimental.

3.2.2 Portfolio Model

The portfolio model utilized in this study was adapted from "Classroom portfolio model" recommended by Hamp-Lyons and Condon (2000), which is believed to be effective in both of learning and assessing purposes (Hirvela & Sweetland, 2005). Figure 3.1 depicts the portfolio model:
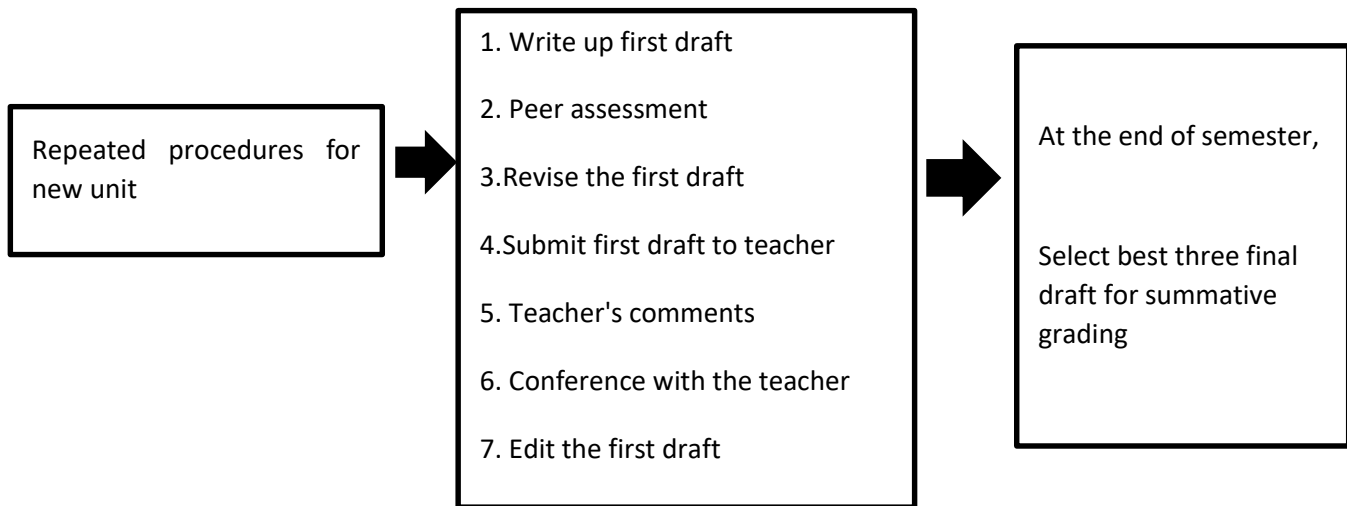
Repeated procedures for new unit →

1. Write up first draft

2. Peer assessment

3. Revise the first draft

4. Submit first draft to teacher

5. Teacher's comments

6. Conference with the teacher

7. Edit the first draft

→ At the end of semester,

Select best three final draft for summative grading

Figure 3.1 The portfolio model adapted from Hamp-Lyons and Condon (2000)

3.3 Participants

The target participants of this study included 70 non-English majored students at KienGiang University. They were from two intact classes namely B18TT1 and B18TT2. These students started to learn English from the sixth grade and almost no students from the two groups had good experience in learning English during their high school. Also, the students of these classes used the same text book "Life A1 – A2" by Paul and John (2015) for their English writing class. The writing classes met every week for 50 minutes. The participants had six writing sessions in each semester. Class B18TT1 was in the role of the experimental group, and underwent the treatment of formative assessment in their English writing lessons. Class B18TT2 was chosen as the control group which received summative procedure for assessment in their English writing class.

Table 3.2. Description of the participants in terms of number and gender

Class	Male		Female		Total
	Number	%	Number	%	
Experimental	19	57.6	14	42.4	33
Control	20	54.0	17	46.0	37

3.4 Data collection

Before the treatment, both groups did a pre-test. Then, B18TT1, the experimental group implemented Portfolio- based assessment, while B18TT2, the control group was kept in the traditional instruction. The treatment lasted for 14 weeks with 6 topics: People, Possession, Places, Free time, Food and Money. The treatment was implemented along with the topics in the official first semester curriculum of Basic English 1.

At the end of the treatment, the post-test was administered in both groups. Then, the portfolios of the experimental group were collected to employ portfolio- based assessment, the results replaced the traditional summative writing test in experimental group.

The following table was what was done during the treatment.

Table 3.3 Procedure of treatment

3.5 Data Analysis

Week	Activities	Techniques	Groups
1	-Pre- test		Both groups
2	State the objectives clearly. - Give guidelines on writing Portfolio - Communicate assessment criteria to students. - Train students how to use the rubrics for both self-assessment and peer assessment. - Designate time within the curriculum for portfolio development - Establish periodic schedules for review and conferenceing. - Guide student how to keep portfolio.	Guidelines for portfolio assessment (Brown, 2004)	Experimental group
3	Topic 1: PEOPLE (Basic English 1, Life A1-A2)	Portfolio model (Hamp-Lyons and Condon, 2000)	Experimental group
4	Topic 2: POSSESION (Basic English 1, Life A1-A2)	Portfolio model (Hamp-Lyons and Condon, 2000)	Experimental group
5	Topic 3: PLACES (Basic English 1, Life A1-A2)	Portfolio model (Hamp-Lyons and Condon, 2000)	Experimental group
6	Topic 4: FREE TIME (Basic English 1, Life A1-A2)	Portfolio model (Hamp-Lyons and Condon, 2000)	Experimental group
7	Topic 5: FOOD (Basic English 1, Life A1-A2)	Portfolio model (Hamp-Lyons and Condon, 2000)	Experimental group
8	Topic 6: MONEY (Basic English 1, Life A1-A2)	Portfolio model (Hamp-Lyons and Condon, 2000)	Experimental group
9	Post-test		Both groups
10	- Portfolio- based assessment (the result was replaced to the score of summative timed writting test in the official score system	Portfolio model (Hamp-Lyons and Condon, 2000) - Score on 3 best final draft chosen by student.	Experimental group

| 11 | -Giving back portfolio to the students.
- Giving comments on student's progress | | Experimental group |
| 12 | - Gathering, comparing and analyzing the results
- Concluding | | Both groups |

3.5.1 Portfolio

The collected data from students' portfolios were statistically analyze by using the software SPSS version 26. Particularly, the first research question 1: *To what extent does portfolio – based assessment in writing impact on students' writing performance?* aimed to find out whether the application of portfolio – based assessment had impact on 1st year non – English majored students' writing performance. Comparing the score of 6 final writing drafts of students in experimental group would tell the researcher the effect of her assessment method. The score of students made in their writing performance were increasing after treatment. The adjustments method that the researcher made in her following lesson improved students' writing in the next topic were the researcher's main concerns when analyzing portfolio .

3.5.2 Writing tests

The collected data from the pre-test and the post-test were statistically analyzed by using the software SPSS 26 version. To answer the research question 1 "To what extent does portfolio – based assessment affect student writing performance?" the researcher collected data from the pretest and posttest, the scores of these tools were used in order to compare the quality of the writing paper tests from 2 groups. The statistical analysis was employed follow the steps below to seek for the answer.

Before treatment, **Independent – sample t – test** was conducted to examine the level of writing performance in two group.

After the treatment,

A paired – sample t-test was also conducted to compare the mean score of pre-test and post – test of experimental group.

A paired – sample t-test was also conducted to compare the mean score of pre-test and post – test of control group.

An Independent – sample t – test was conducted to compare the mean score of post – test of control group and post – test of the control group.

3.5.3 Questionnaire and Interview

To answer the research question "What are students' perception about the use of portfolio – based writing assessment?", the researcher collected data from questionnaires and interview.

4. Finding and Discussion

4.1 The impacts of Portfolio – based assessment on non – English majored students' writing performance

4.1.1 Portfolio

Table 4.1 Students' scored of final writing drafts with portfolios in the experimental group

| Experimental group | Intervention with portfolio | | | |
| | N | Mean | Std. Deviation | Std. Error Mean |

Unit 1	33	3.867	.8926	.1554
Unit 2	33	3.979	.8268	.1439
Unit 3	33	3.912	.9151	.1593
Unit 4	33	5.021	5.6258	.9793
Unit 5	33	4.085	1.0004	.1741
Unit 6	33	4.479	.8982	.1564

Table 4.1 indicated that the students' writing ability in the experimental group was gradually improved after 14 weeks of each of the intervention through the portfolio method. The researcher gave students feedback twice for the intervention in each lesson, which based on their scores including five components organization, content, grammar, vocabulary and spelling in their handwritings. The results illustrated that the students' score in their writing performance was strongly increased after 6 lessons (From Unit 1 to Unit 6). In addition, the total of the students' score in their handwritings was dramatically increased as well. It could be concluded that the student's writing ability was improved after intervening with portfolios in teaching and learning writing.

4.1.2 Writing tests
a. Pre - test
To know whether the two judges scored the writing pre-test for the two groups using the same criteria, a Pearson correlation coefficient was run on SPSS and its results were imported and presented in tables 4.2 and 4.3.

Table 4.2 Correlations of two sets of writing pre-test marks scored by 2 judges for experimental group

Correlations			
		Judge1	Judge2
Judge1	Pearson Correlation	1	.995[**]
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	33	33
Judge2	Pearson Correlation	.995[**]	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	33	33
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).			

Table 4.2 above shows the correlation of the two sets of the experimental group students' writing scores marked by the two judges using the Pearson correlation coefficient. It is obvious from the SPSS output in this table that the r value of .995 for the two sets of score given by the two judges was strong as the Sig. reached up to the level of significance of .000, much greater than the probability level set up at the start of the study.

Table 4.3 Correlations of two sets of writing pre-test marks scored by 2 judges for control group

Correlations			
		Judge1	Judge2
Judge 1	Pearson Correlation	1	.995[**]
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	37	37
Judge 2	Pearson Correlation	.995[**]	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	37	37
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).			

Similarly, Table 4.3 shows the correlation of the two sets of the control group students' writing scores marked by the two judges using the Pearson correlation coefficient. It is obvious from the SPSS output in this table

that the r value of .995 for the two sets of score given by the two judges was strong as the Sig. reached up to the level of significance of .000, much greater than the probability level set up at the start of the study.

Table 4.4 Results of Independent – samples t – test of two groups' score in the Pre-test

Group Statistics								
Pretest	Group	N	M	SD	SE	Sig (2.t)	T	Df
	Experimental	33	3.867	.8926	.15554	.808	.244	32
	Control	37	3.819	.7412	.1218			36

An Independent sample t –test was conducted to compare the pre – test's score between the experimental group and control group. The result presented that there were no statistically significant differences between the mean score of pre – test between the experimental group (M = 3.867, SD = .8926) and the control group (M= 3.819, SD= .7412). The Sig.(2 tailed) was .808 which wá bigger than .05. Thus, the results indicated that the control score in the pre – test of experimental group and the control group were nearly the same. The students in two groups had no significant differences in term of writing performance before treatment. This result was shown in *Table 4.4*.

b. Post - test

The score in the post-test for each student given separately by the two ratters could be seen in Appendix 14. To know whether the two judges scored the writing post-test for the two groups using the same criteria, a Pearson correlation coefficient was run on SPSS and its results were imported and presented in the two tables of 4.5 and 4.6.

Table 4.5 Correlations of two sets of writing post-test marks scored by 2 judges for experimental group

Correlations		Judge1	Judge2
Judge 1	Pearson Correlation	1	.996**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	33	33
Judge 2	Pearson Correlation	.996**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	33	33

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 4.5 above shows the correlation of the two sets of the experimental group students' writing scores marked separately by the two judges using the Pearson correlation coefficient. It is apparent from the SPSS output in this table that the r value of .996 for the two sets of score given by the two judges was statistically significant as the significance level reached up to the level of significance of .000, much greater than the probability level set up at the start of the study.

Table 4.6 Correlations of two sets of writing post-test marks scored by 2 judges for control group

Correlations		Judge 1	Judge 2
Judge 1	Pearson Correlation	1	.997**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	37	37
Judge 2	Pearson Correlation	.997**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	37	37

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Similarly, Table 4.6 above shows the correlation of the two sets of the control group students' writing scores marked separately by the two judges using the Pearson correlation coefficient. It is apparent from the SPSS output in this table that the r value of .997 for the two sets of score given by the two judges was statistically significant as the significance level reached up to the level of significance of .000, much greater than the probability level set up at the start of the study.

Once the correlations in the marks between the two judges had been confirmed, the final result for each student in both groups was obtained by averaging each pair of scores from the two markers. All individual scores can be found in Appendix 15.

An Independent sample t-test was conducted to compare the post – test's score between the experimental group and control group. The result showed that there were significant differences between the post – test's mean score of experimental group (M = 4.673, SD = .8519) and the control group (M = 4.195, SD = .9655). The results indicated that the mean score in the post – test of experimental groups had substantial differences in term of writing performance after treatment. This result was reported in Table 4.7.

Table 4.7 Results of Independent – samples t – test of two groups' score in the **Post-test**

Posttest	**Group Statistics**							
	Group	**N**	**M**	**SD**	**SE**	**Sig(2t)**	**T**	**Df**
	Experimental	33	4.673	.8519	.1483	.032	2.185	32
	Control	37	4.195	.9655	.1587			36

Table 4.8 Results of Paired samples t – test of writing performance in the experimental group in the Pre – test and the Post – test

Pair 1	**Paired Samples Statistics**							
		Mean	N	SD	SE	Sig(2t)	T	Df
	Pre - test	3.867	33	.8926	.1554	.000	-10.473	32
	Post – test	4.673	33	.8519	.1483			

A paired sample t – test was conducted to check whether the participants' writing performance of the experimental group in the pre – test was statistically differences from that in the post – test. The result showed that there were statistical differences between the results of the pre – test (M = 3.867, SD = .8926) and the post – test (M = 4.673, SD= .8519). The Sig. (2 - tailed) was .000. The result indicated that portfolio – based assessment had significant impacts on non – English majored students' writing performance. This result is reported in Table 4.8

A paired sample t – test was conducted to check whether the participants' writing performance of the control group in the pre – test was statistically differences from that in the post – test. The result showed that there were statistical differences between the results of the pre – test (M= 3.819, SD= .7412) and the post – test (M= 4.195, SD= .9655). The Sig. (2 - tailed) was .001. Therefore, the result indicated that traditional techniques of assessment had impacts on non – English majored students' writing performance. This result is reported in Table 4.9

Table 4.9 Results of Paired samples t – test of writing performance in the control group in the Pre – test and the Post - test

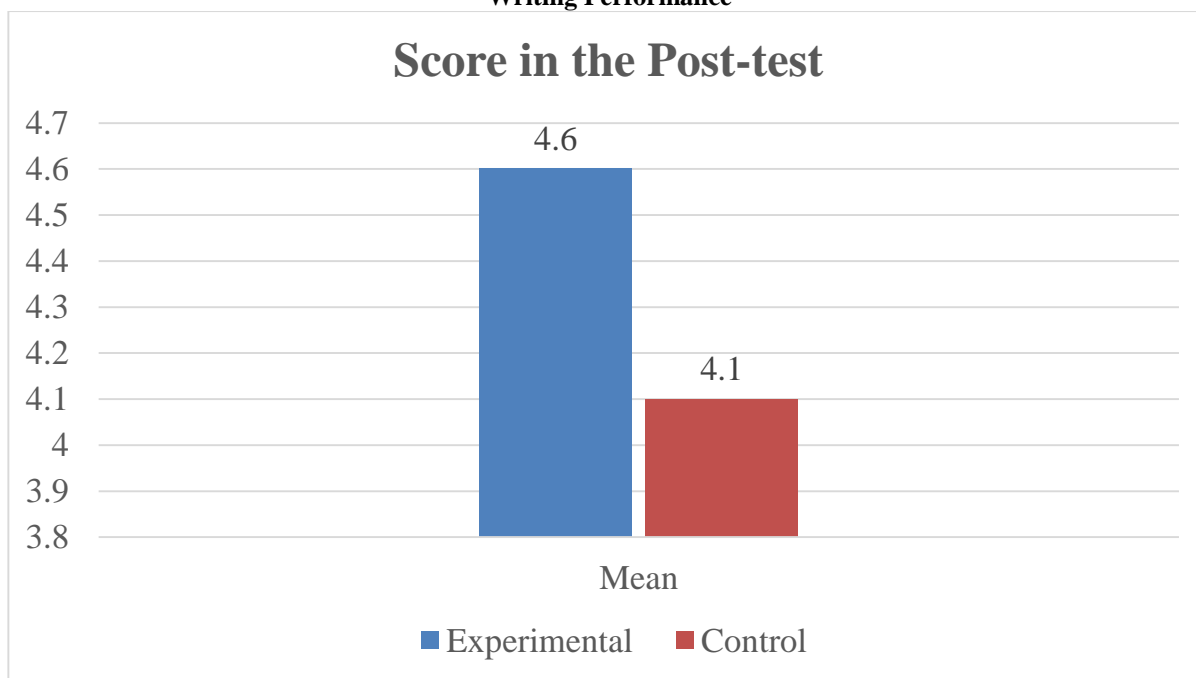|	Paired Samples Statistics							
Pair 2		Mean	N	SD	SE	Sig(2t)	T	Df
	Pre - test	3.819	37	.7412	.1218	.001	-3.692	36
	Post–test	4.195	37	.9655	.1587			

Figure 4.1 Comparison of students' score of the post-test for two groups

In summary, the participants' writing performance of the experimental group and the control group were at the same level before the treatment. Although both the experimental and the control group had improvement on writing performance, participants' writing performance in experimental group was better than that of the control group after the treatment. The results designated that the use of portfolio – based assessment had positive impacts on non – English majored students' writing performance.

4.2 Students' perception toward the application of portfolio – based assessment in writing
4.2.1 Questionnaire

To measure participants' perceptions towards the application of portfolio - based assessment in writing, the researcher used a twenty-two-item questionnaire on participants' perceptions on portfolio. The questionnaire was delivered to participants in experimental groups after the post-test. The participants marked their responses to catch item on a five-point scale ranked from strongly disagree to strongly agree. The result shows that the reliability coefficients of the questionnaire were relatively high (α = .929). Table 4.10 below shows the result of the Cronbach's Alpha calculated by SPSS.

In the following sections, the results of participants' perceptions on portfolio were presented.

Table 4.10 The reliability of the scale

Cronbach's Alpha	N of items
.929	**22**

The results of the questionnaire were analyzed according to the three clusters of (1) Perceptions towards the use of writing portfolio in writing performance, (2) The advantages of portfolio – based assessment on students' writing performance, (3) Students' emotion with portfolio – based writing assessment.

a. Perceptions towards the use of writing portfolio in writing performance

Table 4.11 The participants' perceptions toward the application of portfolio – based assessment in writing

Feature	Qs	Content (Students' perceptions)	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Content	1	I am aware of the content of my English writing drafts are relevant to the topics	3.82	.769	33

	2	I present main idea clearly and have well-supported ideas for each main idea	3.48	.667	33
organization	3	I follow the format	3.52	.834	33
	4	I can use linking words accurately.	3.03	.847	33
Grammar	5	I can mainly use simple structures in my writing.	3.48	.795	33
	6	I can mainly use complex structures in my writing.	3.67	.854	33
	7	I can use simple and complex structures in my writing equally	3.61	.704	33
Vocabulary	8	I can use both common and less common words in my writing portfolio	3.67	.645	33
	9	I can use correct forms of word (Noun, Adjective, Verb, Adverb)	3.52	.667	33
Spelling	10	I hardly make spelling mistakes	3.7	.810	33
	11	I can avoid common spelling mistakes	3.52	.788	33

As presented in Table 4.11, the average of students' responds through eleven questions was at a high level (*M=3.54*). This shows that students had positive perceptions towards portfolio – based assessment in writing. In term of Content, most of students agreed that the content of their writing was relevant to the topics that teacher gave (*item 1, M = 3.82; SD = .769*). Most of students thought portfolio helped them build up their main ideas and well- supported idea for each main idea more effectively (*item 2, M = 3.48; SD =.667*). In addition, as for "Organization" students stated that they followed the format when writing (*item 3, M = 3.52; SD =.834*). They also agreed that they could use linking words accurately (*item 4, M = 3.03; SD =.847*). As for "Grammar", participant considered that portfolio helped them use simple structures (*item 5, M = 3.48; SD =.795*) as well as mainly using complex structures in their writings (*item 6, M = 3.67; SD =.854*). They also believed that it was easy to use simple and complex structures in my writing equally (*item 7, M = 3.61; SD =.704*). As for "Vocabulary" respondent agreed that they mainly used basic and common words in their writing (item 8, M = 3.67; SD=.704). Meanwhile, the proportion of students answer that they used correct form of words including Noun, Adjective, Verb, Adverb (item 9, M = 3.52; SD =.667). With regard to Spelling, the great part of respondents agree that they hardly make spelling mistakes (item 10, M = 3.7; SD =.810) and a lot of surveyed participants indicated that they can avoid common spelling mistakes (item 11, M = 3.52; SD =.788).

b. The advantages of portfolio – based assessment on students' writing performance and its' impacts on their perception

The following section reveals the advantages of portfolio – based assessment on students' writing performance.

Table 4.12 The advantages of portfolio – based assessment on students' writing performance and its' impacts on their perception

Qs	Content (Advantages)	Mean	Std. Deviation	N

12	Portfolio exposure helps me enrich the content of texts	3.48	.870	33
13	I can organize better my writings through writing portfolio	3.55	.666	33
14	Using portfolio can be a way to improve my vocabulary	3.64	.699	33
15	Portfolio positively influences my language use	4.15	.712	33
16	Mistake related to writing structures can decrease thanks to using check – list of peer - assessment	3.76	.614	33
17	Portfolio helps me to write better overall	3.76	.936	33

As presented in Table 4.12, when asked what advantages students got when participating in portfolio - based assessment (from item 12 to item 17), the average of students' responds through six questions was 3.715. This showed that students had high evaluation towards the advantages that portfolio supported them. Most of students thought portfolio helped them enrich content of task (*item 12, M = 3.48; SD =.870*) and they can organize better their writing through writing portfolio (*item 13, M = 3.55; SD =.666*). In addition, students stated that using portfolio can be a way to improve their vocabulary (*item 14, M = 3.64; SD =.699*). They also strongly agreed that portfolio positively influences my language use (*item 15, M = 4.15; SD =.712*). They thought the mistake related to writing structures can decrease thanks to using check – list of peer - assessment (*item 16, M = 3.76; SD =.614*). They considered that portfolio helped them to write better overall (*item 17, M = 3.76; SD =.936*).

  c. Students' emotion with portfolio – based in writing assessment
  The following section presents Students' emotion with portfolio – based in writing assessment.

Table 4.13 Students' emotion with portfolio – based in writing assessment

Qs	Content	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
18	I like doing portfolio in writing classroom	3.73	.839	33
19	Using portfolio is easy	3.45	.711	33
20	Portfolio is helpful in learning English writing skill	3.45	.794	33
21	The portfolio makes me comfortable	3.64	.929	33
22	I feel confident when writing with portfolio	3.52	.795	33

It is obvious from the table above that contained 5 items, the students agreed with all the statements from the third theme of the students' emotional attitude towards portfolios in writing assessment as the means for all the items were above the middle point of 3.55, ranging from the lowest value of 3.45 to the highest one of 3.72: Learner agreed that they like doing portfolio in writing classroom (*item 18*, M = 3.73, SD = .839), they can use portfolio easily (*item 19*, M = 3.45, SD = .711); they though portfolio is helpful in learning English writing skill (*item 20*, M = 3.45, SD = .794); they were always feel comfortable when they used portfolio (item 21, M = 3.64, SD = .929); they would be confident when they were writing with portfolio (item 22, M = 3.52, SD = .795).

It could be concluded from the questionnaire data analysis above that generally speaking, the students had a quite positive emotional attitude towards their learning of writing after the researcher implemented the method of teaching in which portfolios were introduced into the teaching and learning of writing.

4.2.2 Interview

After taking writing post-tests, six participants in the experimental group were required to take an interview. The purpose of the interview was to gain more insights into participants' perception towards the application portfolio – based assessment in writing. Six participants were asked to answer the questions which were designed to focus on their perception towards portfolio – based assessment in writing. The interview was conducted in the similar condition (in Vietnamese language).

All of the participants expressed their preference for portfolio – based assessment in writing. They reported that portfolio – based assessment in writing classroom was an effective writing assessment. They felt more motivated in writing with the support of the comments from teacher and friends. Besides, they admitted that portfolio – based in writing helped them facilitate their writing and they thought it was very interesting to use portfolio in writing classroom. Participant 2, and 3, for instance, expressed,

> ...I felt very interested and motivated when writing lesson that use portfolio because portfolio get immediate comment from partners through peer - assessment and had some proper adjustment for my writing… (Participant 2, interview)
> …I felt very interested in learning by using portfolio in writing classroom because I could receive some comment from teacher and friend immediately. I wrote my writing performance again and completed it better... (Participant 3, interview)

Moreover, they admitted that it was a good chance for them to check their mistakes as well as give comments, and they believed that they would have a good opportunity to practice writing Participants 1, 3, 4, for instance, respectively answered,

> ...The language knowledge like grammar, vocabulary that I used in my text were incorrect, but my friend gave me some comments about these errors that helped me remember longer... (Participant 1, interview)
> ...It was really easy to compare the first draft with the final piece. Grammar errors were reduced significantly, vocabulary errors or expressions could be avoided after rewriting… (Participant 3, interview)
> ... When I wrote the first draft, I didn't realize all the grammatical mistakes, but my friend gave some feedback through peer-assessment check list, I recognized and corrected these errors. After that, it would be better to rewrite the complete writing... (Participant 4, interview)

Among six participants were required to answer this question, most of them agreed that portfolio – based assessment needed to be applied in other skills due to its effect. It was demonstrated that most participants had a positive attitude towards portfolio – based assessment. They said,

> ... I would apply portfolio in other skills. Because of its' effective on my writing quality ... (Participant 2, interview)
> … I thought I need to use portfolio when study another skill. Because I would have an English writing collection and my writing techniques could be improve through using portfolio… (Participant 4, interview)

The result from the interview also stated that most participants believed that they got many benefits from portfolio – based assessment in writing. Participant 3 stated that she got many benefits from portfolio in her writing classroom. That was the first draft I have been commented by my teacher and my friends, I would recognize my mistakes which I made while writing. Then I rewrote a complete version. Compared to the first draft, my writing was improving in the same topic. 4 shared the same view that the thing they liked most was getting quick comments in order to have some appropriate adjustments for their writing. Participant 4 said that using portfolio in learning writing helped me collect my writing and I could remember related vocabulary and grammar. Participant 5 also admitted that she can have more ideas when he received feedbacks directly from her friends.

Most of the interviewees explicitly stated their preference for the peer-assessment check list. They described that the specific and constructive evaluation from multiple peers helped them revise their first draft and encourage them to learn from each other. They remarked that the lecturer's editing checklist guided them how to give feedback to their peers' writing and that they themselves also benefited from this activity: Learning through self-exploration and negotiation of meaning in the peer-evaluation stage could lead to their

improvement in writing and establish the habit of becoming responsible for their own learning. Participant 4 he thought that the peer assessment stage allowed for peer writer-reader interaction and helped us refine our first draft by diagnosing our own mistakes with the help of a checklist on content. Organization, vocabulary, language use, ... This enabled them to revise their writing and helped reduce our mistakes in the final draft... Participant 1, also said that peer - assessment gave her and her friends more chances to revise their writing. Based on their peers' comments in the check list, they could reflect on the meanings of their written texts, make writing clearer in terms of content and more relevant to the topics provided. Besides, that their peers pointed out the type of their mistakes (e.g., spelling, verb tenses, word choice etc.) enabled them to recognize their mistakes and avoid making the similar ones; therefore, the revising activity helped improve the quality of their written text.

Through peer - assessment check list, the participants had opportunities to learn from each other by generating, sharing and shaping ideas together. The evaluation helped them recognize, remember and learn from their own mistakes. From the results mentioned above, three findings come up. First, there was a strong interaction between learners' writing performance and the implementation of portfolio - based assessment in writing. Second, portfolio - based assessment in writing should be considered in teaching and learning writing in the teaching context at Kien Giang University according to participants' perception.

5. Recommendations

Based on the results of the empirical study, two recommendations for further studies are suggested. First, it is recommended that in the future, studies of this nature should be conducted to investigate the impact of portfolio - based assessment in writing on the participants' writing performance and their perceptions over a longer course of time. Second, to make sure that the results could be generalized, further research should be conducted on a larger number of participants.

6. Conclusion

The findings responded to previous research, in that students benefited from portfolio - based assessment in writing. The results of the current study showed that there was a significant progress in their writing performance through applying portfolio - based assessment in writing classroom. Portfolio - based assessment in writing provides an avenue for students to use language and reflects on their language use in their learning process. Therefore, Portfolio - based assessment in writing can be regarded as a form of mediation for facilitating second language writing. Moreover, through Portfolio - based assessment in writing students can construct new ideas, since students' peer - assessment in writing classroom generate and refine the ideas. Besides, students may elicit challenging questions and provide constructive feedback to promote knowledge development. The feedback in turn often motivates students to evaluate their learning processes. Lastly, through interactive process with portfolio, students can obtain a broader scope of their own problems to refine their writing. The study was an important contribution to the growing field of the applied of alternative assessment like portfolio - based assessment in writing skills at Kien Giang university contexts.

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