THE USE OF E-PORTFOLIO TO IMPROVE STUDENTS' MOTIVATION AND ATTITUDES TOWARDS LEARNING ENGLISH AT UNIVERSITY COLLEGE OF APPLIED SCIENCES, PALESTINE

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UNIVERSITI SAINS MALAYSIA

2018

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by

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**Thesis submitted in fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy**

August 2018

DEDICATION

To the most appreciated parents; "The soul of my father" DAWOUD"

Mercifulness from Allah upon him", and

"My respectful mother: Hajja AYSHA Al-JERJAWI"

To my beloved wife: "SUHEIR EISA"

To my three brothers and two sisters

To my dear KIDS

To the memory of my beloved Palestinians

And

To all those who respect knowledge

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

sincere thanks for those who have assisted me but have not been mentioned here. I am truly grateful for their contribution.

Finally, my heartiest thanks go to my wife and my children for their inexhaustible love, understanding, sacrifice, prayers, confidence, and unlimited support. Words are inadequate to express my gratitude for their sacrifice, support, and patience. May Allah reward and bless them all.

MAHMOUD DAWOUD SHAKFA

2018

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ABSTRAK

Dalam era globalisasi dan revolusi teknologi, penggunaan berleluasa teknologi dalam dan luar bilik darjah telah menggalakkan pendidik dan pembuat polisi untuk mencari kaedah-kaedah baru penilaian yang sesuai dengan generasi digital baru. Maka itu, tujuan kajian ini menjurus kepada empat isu utama; (1) untuk mengkaji kesan menggunakan e-portfolio ke atas motivasi pelajar UCAS terhadap pembelajaran Bahasa Inggeris, (2) untuk mengkaji kesan menggunakan e-portfolio ke atas sikap para pelajar UCAS terhadap pembelajaran Bahasa Inggeris, (3) untuk mengenalpasti faedah yang diperolehi oleh pelajar dari penggunaan e-portfolio dalam kelas EFL pelajar-pelajar UCAS, dan (4) mengenalpasti masalah-masalah dalam pelaksanaan e-portfolio dalam kelas EFL pelajar UCAS. Bilangan pelajar kerja sosial EL di bawah Jabatan Kemanusiaan di UCAS ialah 60 (30 lelaki dan 30 perempuan) yang secara rasminya mendaftarkan diri dalam kursus 'English Language' (DIPL 1303) dalam semester pertama tahun akademik 2014/2015. Namun demikian, Rekabentuk Eksploratori Turutan digunakan untuk mengumpul data kualitatif dan kuantitatif untuk semester satu. Keputusan kajian menunjukkan bahawa aras motivasi instrumental dan integratif pelajar UCAS semakin bertambah baik terhadap pembelajaran Bahasa Inggeris selepas menggunakan e-portfolio tersebut. Dapatan juga menunjukkan bahawa sikap pelajar terhadap bahasa Inggeris berubah dengan positif selepas menggunakan e-portfolio. Walaupun idea tentang e-portfolio masih baru dan tidak digunakan di Palestine, it adalah penting untuk meningkatkan

kesedaran tentang faedah dan masalahnya.   Keputusan dari data yang bersifat kualitatif menunjukkan bahawa pelajar-pelajar mendapat empat faedah dari menggunakan e-portfolio ini: Merangsang maklumbalas, memperbaiki kemahiran ICT, kualiti isi kandungan e-portfolio dan mengambil tanggungjawab dan berdikari dalam proses pembelajaran. Walaubagaimanapun, selepas menggunakan e-portfolio, para pelajar dilaporkan berdepan dengan masalah yang sama sewaktu pelaksanaan e-portfolio seperti: faktor masa, kurangnya kecekapan dan keberkesanan dalam menggunakan e-portfolio, kurang kemudahan infrastruktur, dan kegagalan bertutur dalam Bahasa Inggeris dengan lancar. Walaupun kajian ini hanya menggunakan enam puluh orang peserta, ia telah menjana beberapa implikasi teoretikal, pedagogi dan implikasi untuk tenaga pengajar, universiti dan pengkaji.   Oleh itu, dapat disimpulkan bahawa apa sahaja inovasi dalam merangsang dan mengintegrasikan e-portfolio pada aras tertiari, memerlukan potensi pengkaji dan pembuat dasar dalam mencipta perubahan sebenar dalam proses pembelajaran.

THE USE OF E-PORTFOLIO TO IMPROVE STUDENTS' MOTIVATION AND ATTITUDES TOWARDS LEARNING ENGLISH AT UNIVERSITY COLLEGE OF APPLIED SCIENCES, PALESTINE

ABSTRACT

In the era of globalization and technological revolution, the widely spread usage of technology inside and outside of classrooms has encouraged educators and policymakers to look for new methods of assessment that suit the new digital generation. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to focus on four core issues; (1) to examine the outcome of using e-portfolio on the motivation of University College of Applied Sciences (UCAS) students' towards English language learning, (2) to investigate the outcome of using e-portfolio on UCAS students' attitudes towards English language learning, (3) to identify the benefits that the students are able to gain from utilizing e-portfolio among UCAS students' in an English Foreign Language (EFL) class, and (4) to identify problems in implementation of e-portfolio in UCAS students' EFL class. The total number of students in English Language social work classes under the humanitarian department at UCAS is 60 (30 males and 30 females). Those that are officially enrolling in English Language course (DIPL 1303) on the second semester of 2014/2015 academic year. A Sequential Exploratory Design was used to collect qualitative and quantitative data for a semester. The results of this study showed that instrumental and integrative motivation levels of UCAS students towards learning English after utilizing e-portfolio improving. The findings also revealed that the students' attitude towards learning English changed positively after utilizing e-portfolio. Although the idea of e-portfolio is still fresh and not yet utilized in Palestine, it is essential to broaden the awareness of its benefits

and challenges. The results from the qualitative data indicated that students gain four benefits from utilizing e-portfolio: Promoting feedback, improving ICT skills, enhancing quality of e-portfolio's content and holding responsibilities as well as independence in the learning process. However, the students were reported to have faced some problems during implementation of e-portfolio namely: time factor, lack of efficiency and effectiveness of utilizing e-portfolio, lack of infrastructural facilities, and inability to speak English fluently. This has generated several theoretical, pedagogical and policy implications for instructors, universities and researchers. Therefore, it can be concluded that integrating e-portfolio at the tertiary level would improve the potentialities of researchers and policy makers to create a real change in the learning process.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

In the era of globalization and technological revolution, the widely spread use of technology inside and outside classrooms has encouraged educators and policy makers to look for new methods of assessment that suit the new digital generation. Accordingly, there is an urgent need to integrate new alternative assessments in classroom environment to unleash students' potentialities and develop their cognitive skills.

In addition, there is no doubt that this new generation favours technology unlike previous generations. This differentiation is not limited to fashion, clothes, or accent, but also comprises of education and assessment. Therefore, current university students can be described as digital natives who spend most of their time using computers for videogames, digital music players, cell phones and all other instruments of the digital age (Prensky, 2001). Moreover, Alquraan, Bsharah, and Albustanji (2010) also showed that teachers who use different assessment methods to assess students' learning provide their students with more oral and written feedback.

As a result from the dependence on technology, it is important to find new methods of assessment to engage and motivate students to continue their learning English. To create such changes, there is a pressing need to use new alternative methods in our educational institutions. Integrating of this new alternative method in

learning gives students the chance to show their real abilities in creating and designing their own work.

1.2 Background of the study

This section presents some related facts that are directly related to the current investigation of this study. Accordingly, three sub-sections are restricted to provide a summary on the Palestine and Gaza strip and the status of English language in Palestinian educational system, and UCAS as an educational institution.

1.2.1 Geographic, historic and demographic facts about Palestine

Palestine is one of the twenty-one Arab countries, located in the south-western area of Asia, and it is 27,000 square kilometers in size. It is bordered by Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, Red Sea, Sinai in Egypt, and the Mediterranean Sea, respectively, from the north, northeast, east, south, southwest, and from the West (DFLP, 2010). During the last six decades, the Palestinian community has suffered severely from the Israeli imperialism. The result of this continued colonization, the majority of the Palestinian people, that is, 50% live in the Diaspora. Palestinians numbered themselves up to 12.4 million, of which more than 6.2 million live in the Diaspora, and around 4.8 million are residing in the West Bank and Gaza (2.9 million in The West Bank & 1.9 million in The Gaza Strip). Over 1.4 million Palestinians live within the Green Line Area (PCBS, 2016).

According to Jalambo (2012) Gaza Strip, the study platform, located in the south-west of Palestine is 360 kilometers along the Mediterranean Sea and about 8 kilometers wide. The Gaza Strip area is mainly classified into four governorates: The North, Gaza City, Middle area, and The South governorate. Eventhough the Israeli

occupation forces withdrew from inside the Gaza Strip in 2005, the Gazian boundaries, sea, and airspace are still under the control of the Israeli occupation. Basically, Palestine is still an occupied country (please see Figure 1.1).

Figure 1.1 Map of Palestine.

1.2.2 The English Language Status in the Palestinian Educational System

Arabic Language in Palestine is the mother tongue of all Palestinians. Therefore, English language is considered to be the only foreign language that is being taught to all Palestinian students either at schools or universities. It is essential to observe that after imposing the siege and closure on Gaza in 2006, the use of English language as a lingua Franca is evident between Palestinians and all delegations around the world. Furthermore, Mourtaga (2005) confirmed that English is only used to communicate

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with foreigners such as journalists or others who have other interests in Palestine; even if those foreigners are not native English speakers. Additionally, Amara (2003) pointed out that English nowadays is the first foreign language of the Palestinians. It is taught in all public and private educational institutions and centers throughout the West Bank and Gaza.

There are several reasons to teach English at the Palestinian universities. English is a required subject for all universities and colleges students. English is also the medium of instruction in some faculties such as medicine, engineering, nursing, business and political science and cultural studies. Furthermore, English is a basic requirement for employment. In other word, students in Palestinian universities must pass the English language course.

Nevertheless, students must pass English course at university level as one of the graduation's requirements regardless of their majors and specializations. In addition, several higher institutions use English language as the medium of interaction. Amara (2003) confirmed that after long decades of conflicts and wars, since Balfour Declaration on the 2nd of November, 1917 when the British Government gave the Jews the right to establish a Jewish National home in Palestine. The Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) signed the Oslo Accord with the so called Israel in 1994. As a result, the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) has the right to control the Gaza Strip area.

According to Ministry of Education & Higher education, MOEHE (2016), there are seven main universities in the Gaza Strip, namely, Islamic University of Gaza, Al-Azhar University – Gaza, Al-Quds Open University, Al-Aqsa University, University of Palestine, Al-Sraa University and Gaza University. While there are 17 colleges is

seventeen colleges in Palestine, the University College of Applied Sciences in Gaza is considered to be the biggest college in Palestine. Overall, general English (DIPL1303) is a three credit hour course as one of the university requirements that students must pass within the university level as one of the graduation requirements regardless of their majors and specializations. It consist of six (6) units and is designed to enhance the students' fluency and accuracy in English language.

1.2.3 The University College of Applied Sciences (UCAS)

According to the official website of UCAS (2016), University College of Applied Sciences (UCAS) is one of the most distinguished Palestinian academic institutions of higher education in Palestine. It was founded in 1998 as a technical and vocational College. Although UCAS Started with only 200 students studying in three majors, there are currently over 8,500 students pursuing their technical education in eight departments offering more than 64 different, distinguished as well as technically and technologically-oriented programs and 13 departments in 2016. With the continuing growth and high demand for its graduates, the newly-established college eventually moved to a new campus in 2003. The college expanded dramatically to the new campus besides establishing another in southern Gaza under the name of Gaza Polytechnic Institute (GPI) in 2006.

Regarding the academic system, an academic year consists of two sixteen-week semesters along with an optional intensive eight-week summer semester. UCAS also uses the credit-hour system, in which students are allowed to add and drop courses. In brief, UCAS exerts sincere effort and do its best to be internationally renowned in scientific research, vocational and technical education within the period of ten years.

1.3 Statement of the problem

The provenance of the problem in this study resides in the absence of utilizing new assessment methods in teaching English language in the Palestinian community. It is obvious in the National Exams conducted every 2 years from the 4th to 10th grades in Science, Arabic, and Mathematics. The results indicate that there is no improvement or positive trends but rather a decline. This problem encourages many researchers to exert efforts in diagnosing the assessment methods in the learning process. This is to integrate new alternative methods and enhance English language learners' motivation and change their attitudes towards learning English (see El-Helou, 2010; Jalambo, 2012; Mourtaga, 2005; Sobeh, 2007).

Unfortunately, in spite of the great attention given to teaching English language, exams and tests are still the permanent traditional assessment methods in schools and universities. Moreover, according to the state wide assessment conducted by the Ministry of Education in Palestine, the achievement of student in local schools is not encouraging (Al-Serhani, 2007). Therefore, classroom portfolio is intended to enhance teaching and learning in a learning centered framework (Hirvela & Sweetland, 2005). The absence of new alternative methods of teaching and learning deprives students from enjoyment and engagement. This will affect their motivation and attitudes towards the English learning process (Klenowski, 2002; Nunes, 2004).

In this regard, Mourtaga (2005) explained that the important issue and the only motivation for students in studying English language are to pass the final exams in order to advance to the next level. To do so, students would memorize questions and answers and successfully regurgitate them word by word in the final exam.

Furthermore, Sobeh (2007) in his study concluded that most teachers still rely on the traditional methods in assessing their students' writing and he also recommended to adopt the contemporary methods of assessment that suit the context in Gaza. Moreover, El-Helou (2010) also found that one of the problems that occurred in Palestinian English language teaching and learning is the absence of interaction or engagement between the learners in the English language. Learners study the language just to pass exams.

Accordingly, using traditional methods of assessment indicates that students may have low motivation towards learning English (Klenowski, 2002; Nunes, 2004). They attend their English language classes not for enjoyment or engagement but with the goal of passing tests. Students are usually given numerical grades for their end of term writing assignment, which may not be the accurate indicators of their writing ability (Ghoorchaei, Tavakoli, & Ansari, 2010). Therefore, there is a pressing need to integrate alternative assessment in the learning process to motivate students in their learning and change their attitudes towards English language. In this respect, McDonough (1983, p. 142) stated that "motivation of the students is one of the most important factors influencing their success or failure in learning the language". In addition, motivation is the force that inspires and empowers individuals to perform activities and it plays a large part in the interest and enjoyment of study to reinforce them to do their best (Atta & Jamil, 2012; Axton, 2012; Martin, 2003).

Gardner (1985) considered attitudes as one of the components of motivation in language learning. According to him, "motivation ... refers to the combination of effort plus desire to achieve the goal of learning the language plus favourable attitudes toward learning the language" (p.2). However, Wenden (1991) gives a

broader definition on the concept of attitudes. He states that the term attitude includes three components namely, cognitive, affective and behavioural. A cognitive component comprises of beliefs and ideas or opinions about the object of the attitude. The affective component refers to the feeling and emotions that one has towards an object, 'likes' or 'dislikes', 'with' or 'against'. Finally, the behavioural component refers to one's consisting actions or behavioural intentions towards the object.

It is obvious that students' motivation in language learning is influenced by their attitudes towards learning the language. In this sense, Atta and Jamil (2012) stated that motivation has a major importance to students' success as it helps individuals to overcome inaction and laziness, and reinforces students' attitudes towards the learning process. Thus, this study will try to solve the said problem by utilizing e-portfolio in enhancing students' motivation and change their attitudes towards the English language.

In supporting and reinforcing the problem statement of this study, the researcher conducted a preliminary study to substantiate the urgent need to integrate alternative techniques in the learning process. The results in table 1.1 indicates that the main method of assessment is still the paper and pen oriented tests. Thus, UCAS students have never experienced alternative assessment as a part of their learning process and therefore, have no knowledge of other meaningful assessment such as the portfolio, real life tasks and peer assessment, which will enhance their motivation and improve their attitude towards learning English.

Table 1.1 Students' questionnaire about the assessment methods used in UCAS

Item	N	Min	Max	Mean	%
Observing students' attendance	**50**	**.00**	**5.00**	**4.42**	**0.88**
Traditional paper-and-pencil tests	50	.00	5.00	4.30	0.86
Writing true or false questions	50	.00	5.00	4.24	0.85
Observing students' performance	50	.00	5.00	4.22	0.84
Quizzes	50	.00	5.00	4.06	0.81
Real-life tasks	50	.00	5.00	2.42	0.48
Teachers give you written feedback to your assignments and homework	50	.00	5.00	2.38	0.48
Training students to assess the work of other students	50	.00	4.00	2.18	0.44
Using Portfolio	50	.00	4.00	1.92	0.38

As shown in Table 1.1, it is clear that traditional assessments such as the traditional paper and pencil test, answering true or false questions, observing the students' attendance, observing the students' performance, quizzes, and answering multiple choice questions recorded the highest mean and percentage. In the meantime, using alternative assessment such as portfolio, real life tasks and peer assessment as the assessment methods in English language learning has the lowest mean and percentage according to students' responses to the questionnaire.

This indicates that exams and tests are the main traditional assessment that represents the real dilemma for students in higher education institutions. In this regard, Weinbaum (2004) confirmed that while scores on standardized tests may capture some aspects of student learning, they can never reveal learning in all its complexity, nor offer enough detail and context to help teachers improve their practice. Under such circumstances, integrating alternative assessments in higher

education may fill this gap to enhance students' motivation and improve their attitude towards English language.

Therefore, one of the greatest changes in the field of assessment is integrating alternative assessments in the learning process and it is seriously lacking in the Gaza education system. In this regard, Hung (2012) mentioned that portfolios today are at the center of many discussions on classroom pedagogy and assessment. Moreover, Thang, Lee, and Zulkifli (2012) added that since the Internet boom and the mushrooming of web technology, there is a growing body of literature on the use of electronic portfolios (e-portfolios) in various education and employment situations. Consequently, many researchers in different countries in the new millennium start using e-portfolios in education and higher education to support the learning process and new methods of assessments. In Canada (Meyer, Abrami, Wade, & Scherzer, 2011); in united States of America (Fakir, 2010, Barrett, 2007); in Australia (Le, 2012); in Taiwan (Hung, 2012, Chen, 2012); in Turkey (Baturay, 2015, Birgin, 2011, Erice and Ertaş (2011); in Malaysia (Kabilan and Khan, 2012; Mobarhan, Rahman, and Majidi, 2015, Thang, 2012); in Iran (Tabatabaei, 2012); in Scotland (Gordon et al, 2009); in Jordan (Alquraan, 2012).

Most of the literature on the use of portfolios comes from the first language writing and there is little literature on the use of portfolios for L2 learners either in teaching and learning or the assessment domains (Hamp-Lyons & Heasley, 2006). Moreover, with regard to the use of e-portfolio, there has been little research on exploring the students' responses regarding the use and value of e-portfolios. Consequently, the absence of sufficient and practical alternative assessment in Palestinian universities motivates the researcher to conduct such a study to examine

the impact of e-portfolio in enhancing UCAS students' motivation and improve their attitude towards English language.

1.4 Research objectives:

The overall aim of this study is examine the role of e-Portfolio in improving the UCAS students' motivation and attitude towards English Language. Therefore, there are four main objectives in carrying out this study namely:

1. To examine the outcome of using e-portfolio on UCAS students' motivation towards English language learning.
2. To examine the outcome of using e-portfolio on UCAS students' attitude towards English language learning.
3. To identify the benefits students gain from utilizing e-portfolio in UCAS students' EFL classes.
4. To identify the problems in the implementation of e-portfolio in UCAS students' EFL classes.

1.5 Research Questions

Derived from the objectives of this study and to achieve the purpose of the study, the research will address the following research questions:

1. What are the learners' motivational outcome to learn English language before and after utilizing e-portfolio?
2. What are the outcome of learners' attitude to learn English language before and after utilizing e-portfolio?

3. What are the benefits that students gain from utilizing e-portfolio in UCAS students' EFL classes?

4. What are the problems that occur in the implementation of e-portfolio in UCAS students' EFL classes?

1.6 Rationale of the study

The need for this study arises from four main factors. The literature review on e-portfolio and its importance in facilitating English language learning, the preliminary study about the assessment methods used in the University College of Applied Sciences that revealed the urgent need in changing the traditional assessment methods at UCAS, discovering the impact of e-portfolio on students' motivation and attitude; and the personal experience of the researcher in this regard.

First, having reviewed the current literature, it is discovered that this study is considered to be the first in the field of alternative assessment in higher education in Gaza. Sobeh (2007) reported that a few studies conducted in the Arab countries did mention briefly on the area of e-portfolio and its impact on students' motivation and attitude. Studies on such subject are still relatively rare, particularly, in the developing countries in which other researchers are invited to conduct more studies in this subject.

Second, the preliminary study about the assessment methods used in the University College of Applied Sciences revealed the urgent need in changing the traditional assessment methods at UCAS, it is apparent that the main method of assessment is still the paper and pen oriented tests and also little to awareness on the alternative assessments such as e-portfolio. Therefore, the responsibility of

universities at tertiary level these days is to prepare their students for the new digital era. This is to face the new changes by integrating alternative assessment in the learning process to give students the opportunity to excel.

Third, although alternative assessment is an effective tool for learning and assessment, but no research particularly on the implementation of e-portfolio assessment for students of the higher education in Gaza has been reported. The main focus in universities is still on the traditional assessment, particularly, paper and pen exams. Therefore, there is an urgent need to explore new alternative assessment such as e-portfolio to improve English language learning. Thus, the purpose of this study is to examine the impact of e-portfolio on the UCAS students' motivation and attitude towards the English language learning.

Fourth, as a lecturer of EFL at UCAS, throughout the observation, it is believed that the majority of students at UCAS agonizes and faces difficulties in paper and pen tests. Therefore, students should be exposed and engaged in new alternative assessments to ease their experience in learning English. Throughout the research, students were asked about their perception towards the English language. They expressed that they did not feel enjoyment or satisfaction in learning English as they would just study for exams and tests.

1.7 Significance of the study

This study paves the way for a future vision of e-portfolio. It can contribute in providing policy makers at UCAS with the effectiveness of e-portfolios for further implementation in Palestinian universities. Particularly, as the government looks for a sustainable future in higher education (MOEHE, 2016). Results of the current study

can help to reform the assessment process in which universities can implement and integrate a new alternative assessment such as e-portfolios in the learning process.

As we live in the technological era, integrating alternative assessment supports students' technological skill development in the learning process. However, to date, few Palestinians studies have been conducted on the utilization of e-portfolios and about the effect of e-portfolios on students' attitudes or motivation (Khales, 2016). As a result; this research could be a guide and an essential step for future researchers to discuss such new alternative assessments in the learning process. Moreover, this study also contributes in introducing evidence that the social context has a significant influence on the learning process of UCAS students as it can provide a practical suggestion about how to motivate students in the learning process and engage them in the community of practice. The concept of e-portfolios is still an unpopular phenomenon in Gaza. Thus this study will find out the impact of e-portfolio on improving the students' attitudes and motivation within the context of community of practice. Since, there is no research in Gaza on this subject , this study at UCAS is considered to be the first in Gaza.

It is noted that there are a lot of studies about e-portfolio in the developed countries. So, one of the significances of this study is that it is conducted at Palestine, which is not only a developing country but also under occupation. Consequently, the results of this research could be a guide and an essential step for future researchers to discuss such new alternative assessments in learning process. The findings of this study will enhance the traditional method of English language assessment in Palestine by using e-portfolio.

1.8 Limitations of the Study

In this research, it is essential to shed light on a number of limitations including the context, sample, and data in order not to overgeneralize the findings in this study. This study is limited only to English language students who enrolled in the second semester of the academic year 2014-2015 at UCAS who participated in the current study. In this vein, only 60 student comprising of equally 30 male and 30 female students were considered as the sample of this study. Furthermore, data collection period is limited within the frame of one semester. Consequently, generalization of this study on the larger populations with different academic background is limited to English language students in UCAS.

The questionnaire of the study was limited to attitude and motivation in English language learning in UCAS Palestine. The self-report questionnaire is structured with 60 questions in total. The questionnaire consists of two parts, with the first part mainly for demographic information. While the second part is divided into, instrumental motivation, interactive motivation, attitude toward English as a foreign language, attitude towards English language learning and attitude toward English language assignments.

As stated before, it is important to shed light on a number of limitations including context, sample, and data in order not to overgeneralize the findings in this study. Only English language students who enrolled in the first semester of the academic year 2014-2015 at UCAS participated in the current study. In this vein, only 60 male and female students equally who registered General English (DIPL 1303) considered as the sample of this study. Furthermore, data collection period is

limited within one semester. Because of such limitation, generalization to the larger populations with different academic background is not within the scope of this study.

Fundamentally, the overall aim of this study was to investigate the impact of e-portfolio on students' motivation and attitude towards English language learning. Indeed, this study is apparently the first in Palestinian universities introducing integrating e-portfolio at tertiary level. As a result, more questions about e-portfolio will surface hence, provoking researchers for further research to improve the assessment process in the developing countries.

1.9 Operational Definitions of Terms

The operational definitions of the key-terms in this study are described below:

1.9.1 Portfolio:

Barrett (2002) defined Portfolios as a purposeful collection of student's work that shows effort, progress and achievement. In a similar note, Norton and Wiburg (1998, p. 237) defined a portfolio as "a systematic and selective collection of student work that has been assembled to demonstrate the student's motivation, academic growth, and level of achievement". Simon and Forgette-Giroux (2000, p. 87) also defined a portfolio as "a cumulative and ongoing collection of entries that are selected and commented on by the student, the teacher and/or peers, to assess the student's progress in the development of a competency".

Jones and Shelton (2011) gave a comprehensive definition of portfolios as:

Rich, contextual, highly personalized documentaries of one's learning journey. They contain purposefully organized documentation that clearly demonstrates specific knowledge, skills, dispositions and accomplishments achieved over time. Portfolios represent connections made between actions and beliefs, thinking and doing, and evidence and criteria. They are a medium for reflection through which the builder constructs meaning, makes the learning process transparent and learning visible, crystallizes insights, and anticipates future direction. (p. 21)

In this study, portfolio denotes the collections of the students' work that show their progress, effort, achievement, and all documentations of the English Language subject within the period of one semester which influence positively on the students' attitude and motivation. Thus, it is essential to look at its content thoroughly as a distinguished work and not just haphazardly.

1.9.2 Electronic Portfolio:

Carmean and Christie (2006) mentioned that electronic portfolios (also known as e-portfolios) contain the same type of information as the traditional, paper-based portfolios; but the information is collected, stored, and managed electronically. This enables the student to acquire artifacts of different media types such as electronic documents, multimedia presentations, graphics, or videos. Pimentel (2010) also defined e-portfolio as a purposeful collection of student work that exhibits the student's efforts, progress, and achievements in one or more areas. The collection must include student's participation in selecting contents, the criteria of selection for the judging merit, and evidence of the student's self-reflection. In line with the previous definition, Balaban, Mu, and Divjak (2012) defined e-portfolio as a personal digital record that supports formal, informal and non-formal learning and

contains the evidence about one's accomplishments in the form of artifacts and reflection on learning which can be provided to whomever the owner has chosen to grant permission to.

In this study e-portfolio donates the collection of the students' work that indicates their progress, effort, achievement, and all documentations of the English Language subject within the time frame of one semester which affects positively on the student's attitude and motivation. However, the information is collected, stored, and managed electronically via Facebook.

1.9.3 Motivation

Motivation is defined by Gardner (1985) as "the extent to which the individual works or strives to learn the language because of a desire do out so and the satisfaction experienced in this activity." (p. 10). Motivation is what moves us to carry out an act. It involves the energy and drive to learn, work effectively, and achieve potential. Motivation also plays a huge part in the interest and enjoyment of study (Martin, 2003). In this study, motivation implies the instrumental, the integrative factors and desires that encourage and move learners to work effectively in learning the English language as measured by the instrument.

1.9.4 Attitude:

It is a mental predispositions or tendencies to respond positively or negatively towards a certain entity, such as a person, events, or subject (McMillan, 2010). In this study, attitude refers to the beliefs, opinions, feelings and behaviors of the English language learners at UCAS towards the English language learning as measured by the instrument.

1.9.5 Community of Practice:

Recent definition is more comprehensive, "Communities of practices are groups of people who share a concern, a set of problems, or a passion about a topic, and who deepen their knowledge and expertise in this area by interacting on an ongoing basis" (Wenger, McDermott, & Snyder, 2002, p. 4). A community's effectiveness as a social learning system depends totally on three aspects: domains, community, and practice.

In this study, the domain of the CoP is the six units of the English language course DIPL (1303). The students who registered the English language are the members of the community who were asked to use Facebook to form CoP among them. Therefore, students are required to share and discuss ideas through Facebook (practice). The CoP consists of three aspects; which are community, domain and practice. In this study, CoP is a group of UCAS student, which is the community, the English language course (DIPL1303) is the domain and Facebook represents the practice.

1.10 The Conceptual Framework of study

Based on the research questions, theoretical and other topics reviewed in the literature and described methods of settings, a conceptual framework was developed for this study (Fig 3.4). Accordingly, in this study, Community of practice is a group of UCAS students who share the common passion or feelings about a topic of "the domain" which consists of six units of the English language course "Touchstone" DIPL (1303). Therefore, the UCAS students are required to share, discuss, and wide

their ideas and knowledge in this study by interacting on an ongoing basis such as Facebook which represents the practice.

The UCAS students started utilizing e-portfolio via Facebook. In this study e-portfolio means the collection of the students' work that shows their progress, effort, achievement, and all documentations of the English Language subject within the time frame of one semester which affects positively on the student's attitude and motivation.
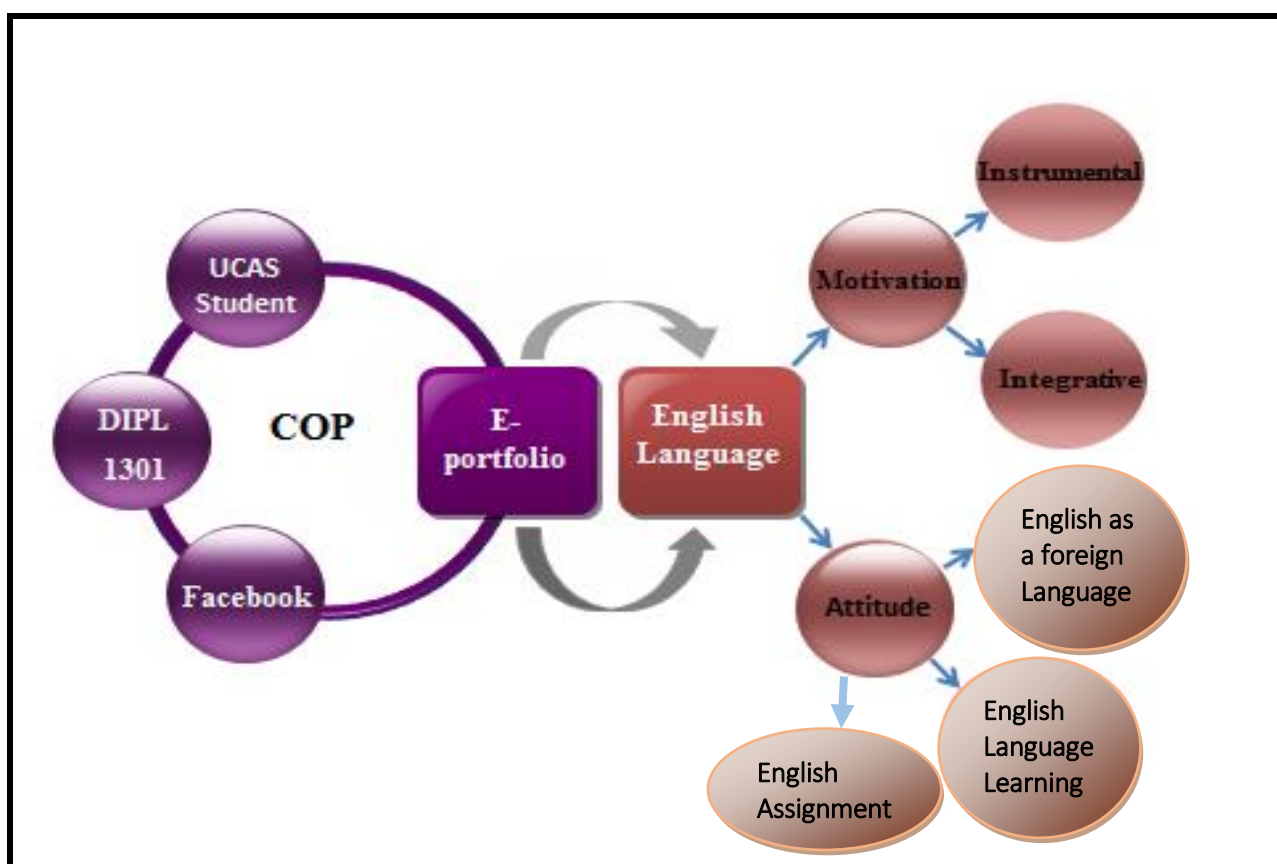
Figure 1.2 Conceptual Framework of the Study, designed by the researcher

1.11 Summary of the Chapter

This chapter presents the background, problem statement, research question, objective, rationale, significance, and limitation of the study. Furthermore,

operational definition of key terms such as portfolio, e-portfolio, motivation, alternative assessment, online platform was defined. Finally, the chapter ends with the conceptual framework of the study.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

The aim of this study is to enhance students' motivation and attitude towards learning English by using e-portfolios. This chapter provides a critical evaluation of what other researchers have done to develop a comprehensive understanding on e-portfolio and its influence on students' motivation and attitude.

This chapter also demonstrates the history of e-portfolio as an alternative assessment, and elaborates on its definition, characteristics, types, merits and demerits, challenges and the entire procedures. Secondly; this part also provides a critical evaluation of what other researchers have achieved, and identifies the gap in the literature that the proposed research intended to fill. It is also to introduce a theoretical framework which will lead to a comprehensive understanding of the study.

2.2 Alternative Assessment Versus Traditional Assessment

The terms alternative assessment, authentic assessment, or performance-based assessment are often used synonymously "to mean variants of performance assessments that require students to generate rather than choose a response" (Herman, Aschbacher, & Winters, 1992, p. 2). The term 'alternative assessment' is also referred to as 'authentic assessment', 'holistic assessment' and 'outcome-based assessment' with some minor overlapping of definition and meaning (Kabilan & Khan, 2012). The first appearance of the term itself" authentic assessment" just

emerged in the field of education since 25 years ago. According to Frey, Schmitt, and Allen (2012) the term *authentic* as applied to tests appears to have been used first by Archbald and Newman in 1988 in a book about the weaknesses of standardized testing and the difficulties in measuring "authentic" academic achievement in high schools.

Traditional assessment approaches mostly focus on products rather than the progress and process (Brown, 2003). In traditional assessment, the metaphor of "empty vessel" is often used to talk about learners. Students are treated as if they do not possess prior knowledge about a topic. The instructor's role is to fill their minds with true knowledge. Furthermore, De Fina (1992) confirmed that the traditional assessment methods with a multiple choice format and limited time restriction do not provide valid data about the student's individual achievement and that the resulting scores do not convert into information that is helpful for classroom instruction.

Nowadays, traditional assessment such as paper and pencil assessment is the most commonly used method in higher education courses (Alquraan, 2012; Frank & Barzilai, 2004; Sobeh, 2007). Paper-and-pencil assessment refers to multiple-choice, true-false, matching, fill-in-the-blank, and restricted response. A paper-and-pencil test is usually administered in one setting and the grade in a given subject is mainly based on a final test. In addition, Weinbaum (2004, p. 4) confirmed that, while scores on standardized tests may capture some aspects of student learning, however, they can never reveal learning in all its complexity, nor offer enough detail and context to help the teachers improve their practice. In this context, Bahous (2008) claimed that the failure of the traditional assessment approaches has led to the investigation of a

range of alternative assessment methods that could be fairer to all students, reduce students' anxiety, and lessen teachers' burden while grading the learners' work.

Evidently, there are many differences between the traditional assessment and the alternative assessment practices. In this regards, Anderson (1998) summarized the main differences between traditional and alternative assessment. Figure 2.1 shows the comparison of the philosophical beliefs and theoretical assumptions of traditional and alternative assessments.

It is clear in Figure 2.1 that alternative assessments have the following merits and assumptions over the traditional assessments: The beliefs and assumptions are as follows:

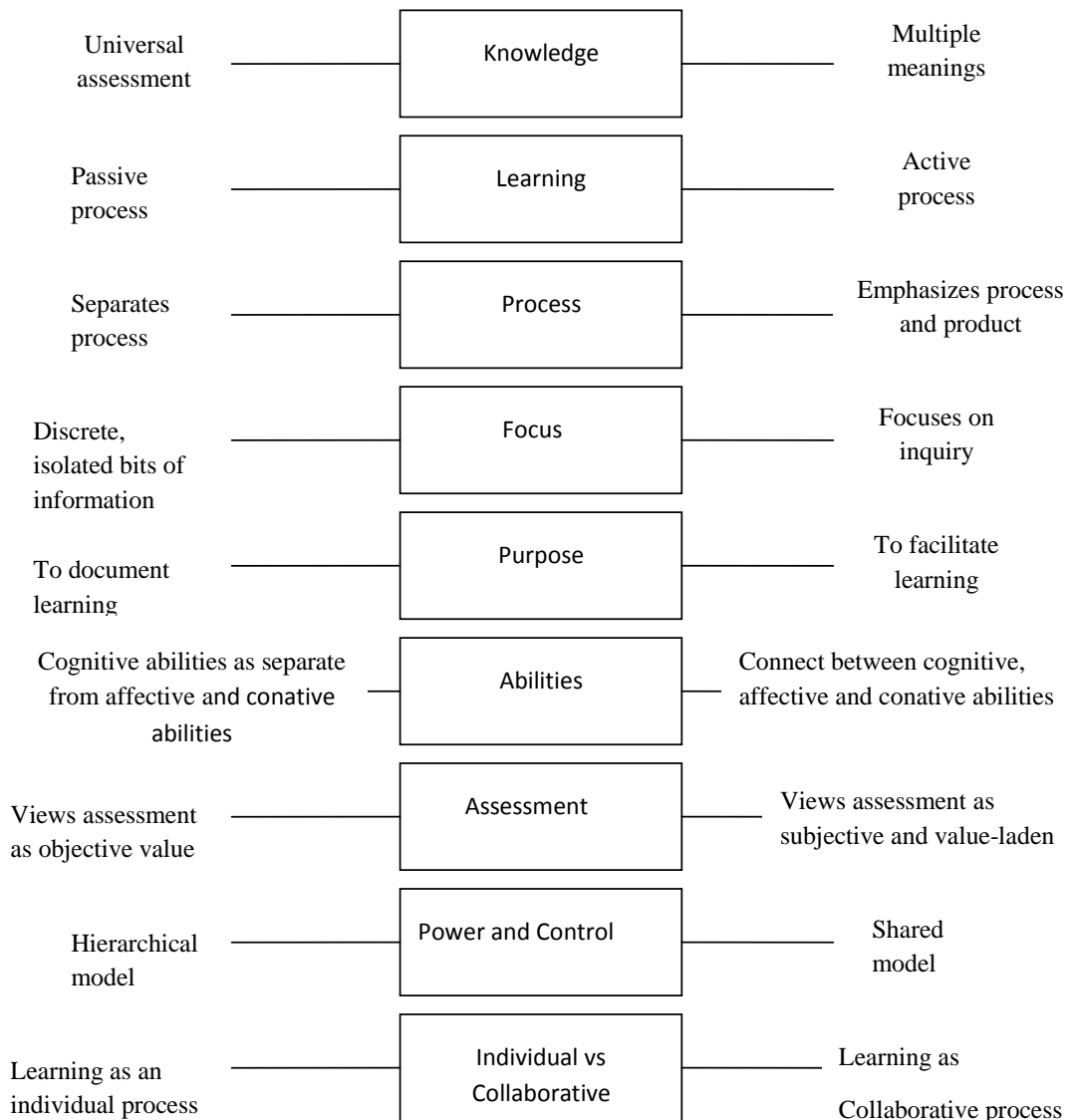Traditional Assessment   alternative Assessment

Universal assessment	Knowledge	Multiple meanings
Passive process	Learning	Active process
Separates process	Process	Emphasizes process and product
Discrete, isolated bits of information	Focus	Focuses on inquiry
To document learning	Purpose	To facilitate learning
Cognitive abilities as separate from affective and conative abilities	Abilities	Connect between cognitive, affective and conative abilities
Views assessment as objective value	Assessment	Views assessment as subjective and value-laden
Hierarchical model	Power and Control	Shared model
Learning as an individual process	Individual vs Collaborative	Learning as Collaborative process

Figure 2.1 Comparison of Philosophical Beliefs and Theoretical Assumptions of Traditional and Alternative Assessment

2.2.1 Knowledge

In traditional assessments, knowledge has a universal meaning, it is acceptable for students to present the unanimity about the meaning because knowledge has "the same meaning for all individuals everywhere" (Berlak, 1992, p. 13). In contrast,