Using Electronic Portfolio to Promote English Speaking Ability of EFL Undergraduate Students

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Abstract

This initial phase of the ongoing study, employing the e-portfolio to investigate the limitation of English speaking ability, probed into the strengths and weakness of Thai EFL nursing students' speaking ability. Also, their opinions towards the use of e-portfolio to enhance their speaking ability were investigated. The participants undertook four lessons to promote their communication skills according to the CEFR criteria. Throughout the semester, the participants videotaped themselves while completing the four speaking tasks. The videos were then uploaded onto the e-portfolio website, where the researcher provided them with the feedbacks. The video records were analyzed by the speaking rubric designed according to the CEFR 'can do' descriptors. Also, students were required to record self-reflections in video format and upload onto the same URL Students' oral self-reflections were coded to find out the perceptions towards the use of the e-portfolio in promoting their speaking ability. The results from the two research instruments indicated the limitation of the students' speaking ability. In addition, the oral reflection videos revealed positive opinion towards the tool.

Keywords: EFL communication, EFL speaking, E-learning, E-portfolio, speaking ability, Thai EFL learners, Thai EFL nursing learners

บทคัดย่อ

วัตถุประสงค์ของการศึกษาครั้งนี้มุ่งเน้นที่จะใช้แฟ้มสะสมงานอิเล็กทรอนิกส์ในการประเมินข้อจำกัด
ด้านความสามารถในการพูดภาษาอังกฤษของนักศึกษาพยาบาลผู้เรียนภาษาอังกฤษเป็นภาษาต่างประเทศและ
สำรวจความคิดเห็นของผู้เรียนต่อการใช้แฟ้มสะสมงานอิเล็กทรอนิกส์ กลุ่มตัวอย่างในงานวิจัยคือนักศึกษา
พยาบาลศาสตรบัณฑิตจำนวน 45 คน ซึ่งได้รับการเรียนการสอนเพื่อพัฒนาทักษะการสื่อสารด้านภาษาอังกฤษตาม
กรอบมาตรฐานความสามารถทางภาษาอังกฤษที่เป็นสากล ตลอดภาคการศึกษาผู้เรียนทำการบันทึกวีดีโอการพูด
ภาษาอังกฤษของตนเองจำนวนสี่ชิ้นงานและอัพโหลดชิ้นงานของตนเองในแฟ้มสะสมงานอิเล็กทรอนิกส์ในรูปแบบ
ดิจิทัลเว็ปไซค์ ซึ่งสามารถรับข้อมูลสะท้อนกลับจากผู้สอนเป็นรายบุคคล ผู้วิจัยได้นำชิ้นงานวีดีโอการพูด
ภาษาอังกฤษของผู้เรียนที่ถูกจัดเก็บในแฟ้มสะสมงานอิเล็กทรอนิกส์มาวิเคราะห์ตามเกณฑ์การวัดระดับภาษาซึ่ง
ออกแบบอ้างอิงเกณฑ์การวัดระดับภาษาของผู้เรียนตามกรอบมาตรฐานความสามารถทางภาษาอังกฤษที่เป็นสากล
นอกจากนี้วีดีโอการสะท้อนตนเองโดยรวมต่อความสามารถในการพูดภาษาอังกฤษของผู้เรียนถูกนำมาวิเคราะห์
เพื่อสำรวจความความคิดเห็นต่อการใช้แฟ้มสะสมงานอิเล็กทรอนิกส์เพื่อพัฒนาความสามารในการพูดภาษาอังกฤษ
ผลการวิจัยพบว่าแฟ้มสะสมงานอิเล็กทรอนิกส์เป็นเครื่องมือที่มีประสิทธิภาพในการพัฒนา
ความสามารถในการพูดภาษาอังกฤษนอกจากนี้ผลจากการวิเคราะห์วีดีโอการสะท้อนตนเองโดยรวมของผู้เรียนเผย
ให้เห็นถึงความเห็นในเชิงบอกต่อการใช้แฟ้มสะสมงานอิเล็กทรอนิกส์

Introduction

In the world of globalizations, the demand for speakers using English effectively has increased in number. In Thailand, English language has been regarded as the main foreign language used for the purposes of international medium of communication in various fields. To cope with the demands of global economics, English language teaching (ELT) has been improved continuously since English language teaching has introduced into Thai education in order to improve Thai learners' proficiency of English skills. Although English is offered to all levels of the Thai education (Basic Education Core Curriculum, 2008), there are still a lot of problems in using English.

According to the ASEAN Framework Agreement on Services, the Thai government signed Mutual Recognition Arrangements (MRAs) to facilitate the movement of skilled labour in 8 standard occupations among the ASEAN nations, which nursing services are included (ASEAN, 2013). That Thailand has currently turned to be a Medical Tourism Hub for foreign medical visitors has affected healthcare providers in various aspects. Nonetheless, there is significant obstacle for this notion that is Thailand cannot produce adequate numbers of healthcare professionals to satisfy foreign customers' medical needs. Furthermore, most of these workers are not well prepared to face the language challenges that increased from the establishment of the AEC and globalization in general.

In relation to nursing profession, oral communication is one of the practical skills vital to all nursing students' preparation and training for nursing care in clinical placements. In clinical setting, nurses usually talk and take close care of patients and normally expand more time working with patients more than they perform any single nursing procedure. Thus, effective oral communication contributes to positive health outcomes of patients. Deficiency in English language skills, especially for speaking has become a major disadvantage for Thai nurses' career success (e.g. Chaoennit, 2013; Sornsriwichai & Yonwikai, 2013). The root of the poor English speaking skills amongst nursing students could be defined in detail to draw insight into the problem of this study.

In the crisis of the low of English proficiency of the Thai learners, the Thai Minister of Education (MOE) has adopted the CEFR to be the framework in designing the English teaching and assessment for the Thai learners. However, as indicated by several English teaching providers (e.g., Education First English Proficiency Index), Thais' English skills were the third from the bottom, among Southeast Asian countries. There are several factors contributing to the poor English of Thai EFL learners, hindering the development of Thai EFL learners' speaking skills. These problems have long been discussed amongst researchers and educators.

One problem in the Thai EFL context is the problem concerned with teacher and teaching strategies. Despite the communicative teaching approach has dominated Thai English language teaching, the majority of English Thai teachers of English mostly employed the Grammar-Translation and Audio-Lingual methods in English language classroom (Foley, 2005). That is to say Thai teachers emphasize on teaching grammar competence and provide the learner with the drill and rote memorization of an isolated sentence, leading to insufficient opportunities to create genuine interaction and authentic activities in the language classroom (Bruner et al., 2015; Foley, 2005; Khamkhien; 2010).

Following the adoption of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), the utilization of appropriate methods to assess students' language ability should be concerned (Ministry of Education, 2004 cited in Poonpon, 2010). Alternative assessment method seemed to be challenge Thai teachers of English since they are mostly familiar with traditional assessment. As stated by Sinwongsuwat (2012), traditional assessments of Thai EFL leaners' communitive abilities,

namely paper-and-pencil multiple choice tests still often used by teachers, especially in Thai large-scale EFL classroom. Consequently, some teaching and assessing methodology employed by the teachers could be problematic since the roles of teachers and their teaching strategies have a great influence on learners' learning (Phothomsunan, 1991 cited in Meksophawannagul, 2015; Sinwongsuwat, 2012).

Another problem is Thai EFL classroom environments. The large class of students with mixed-abilities in some Thai EFL classrooms gives students inadequate speaking practice using the target language (Noom-ura, 2013; Prasongsook, 2010) and limits teachers' capacity of giving students individual attention. As asserted by Noom-ura, 2013, Thai teachers has been facing with difficulty in preparing activities and materials to suit an individual student's need because of the differences found among group of EFL learners in a class. Bruner and co-researchers (2015) stated that the mixed ability of students in a Thai EFL classroom might lead to difficulties in classroom arrangement and monitoring of the communication activities. Additionally, limited hours of English instruction make it hard for the student to develop competence in English and for teachers to attain their goals to enable students to communicate in various situations and to use English to find information, attain employment, and further their education. These problematic factors leading to teachers ' heavy teaching loads resulting in the use of under standard teaching and learning materials in speaking classes (Bruner et al., 2015; Noom-ura, 2013).

The roles of English in Thailand have been one interesting issue discussed among educators. Since the status of English in the country is a foreign language, the Thai EFL learners' opportunities for exposure to English outside of class time is thus limited (Bruner et al., 2015; Noom-ura, 2013; Khamkein, 2010). In the same vein, the students are encouraged to learn English language but are hidden for using the target language in the authentic situations (Bruner et al., 2015; Noom-ura, 2013). As such, most students are not eager to use English in their daily lives (Meksophawannagul, 2015; Noom-ura, 2013).

It is also evident (e.g. Bruner et al., 2015; Noom-ura, 2013; Khamkein, 2010). That the Thai EFL learners' characteristics prostrates their English speaking ability. Lacking confidence in speaking, as stated by Noom-ura (2013), Thai learners trend to be norm-oriented. That is, they do not want to take risk in learning a new language. Similarly, Bruner and his co-researchers (2015) maintained that learning styles of Thai learners were affected by their cultural norm in which cooperation and group work were preferred over individual work. Thus, because of the fear of losing face, working in individual communicative tasks, for example, volunteering, asking questions and expressing opinions seemed to be avoided by Thai learners of English. Additionally, shyness, as stated by Khamkhien (2010), are one of common difficulties facing by Thai learners when they try to generate English speech. Thai learners are very shy when speaking with their classmates. They also feel unconfident to speak out as they are afraid there might be mispronounced words or phrases during speaking. From several researchers, it appears that confidence in one's speaking skills could be an important factor on their speaking performance.

Thus, among these problems, Thai EFL learners' speaking ability are not satisfying and becoming a greater concern in the competitive world. Considering that there are some factors, as discussed earlier, could be studied and improved for a better result. There are previous studies attempt to solve these problems to improve speaking skills of Thai EFL learners by using different teaching approaches (e.g. Boonkit, 2010; Janudom & Wasanasomsithi, 2009; Phuetphon et al., 2014). Yet, there are merely evidence on using e-portfolio to the developments of Thai EFL learners' writing skills (e.g. Kalra et al., 2017; Kongsuebchart & Suppasetseree, 2017). The researcher, therefore, would like to set up an experiment to maximize the Thai nursing students'

English speaking ability. With the accessibility of the ICT of the 21st century, the researcher looks into integrating the e-portfolio into the teaching of English speaking skill in an EFL class.

The CEFR has become a very influential basis for the design of language curricula and the assessment of learning outcomes, not only in Europe but well beyond in multiple countries throughout Asia. In Thailand, the Ministry of Education (MOE) wanted to set a basis for evaluating the knowledge and efficiency of teachers, students and learning, and wanted to reform the learning and teaching of English at the most basic educational level. Therefore, in 2010 the MOE considered adopting the CEFR to boost English language proficiency. The implementation of CEFR is a crucial step toward clarifying language goals and raising English language standards in Thailand. In regard to the policy, the framework has been used to benchmark communicative language abilities at three levels: basic users (Level A), independent users (Level B), and proficient users (Level C). According to the implementation, the MOE also proposed standards of English language proficiency for Thai learners: by the end of Grade 6, students should reach A1 proficiency; by the end of Grade 9, students should reach A2 proficiency; by the end of Grade 12, students should reach B1 proficiency.

According to the CEFR, the term communication skills is defined as a description of what a language user or learner is "able to do with a language, and what they should know in order to be able to act" (CEFR, p.43). For spoken modes, communicative activities are distinguished into four main types: reception, production, interaction or mediation (in particular, interpreting or translating) (CEFR, p.14). With regards to communicative activities, the CEFR breaks the skills of speaking down into subdivided activities, which are receptive, productive and interactive activities. As being an important language proficiency descriptor, this study adapted the CEFR "can do" statements as the guideline for the development of speaking practices materials and speaking assessment criteria. The researchers followed the CEFR oral "can do" descriptors to measure students' oral proficiencies with the essential components of accuracy and fluency. Consequently, the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) is regarded as the guidelines for the development of speaking practice materials and strategies for improving students' speaking abilities, emphasizing the development of leaners' oral production based on the CEFR "can do" descriptors.

Definitions of an e-portfolio have been provided by different researchers and educators. An electronic portfolio, as defined by Barrette (2000), is also known as a digital portfolio or Webfolio. Barrette describes an e-portfolio as a systematic collection of works that learners have collected, reflected, selected, and presented to demonstrate growth and change over time, representing an individual's skills. Within the field of education, the literature suggests that the implementation and adoption of e-portfolios vary depending on their types. Along with the different definitions of e-portfolios, they can also have multiple purposes. In an educational context, an e-portfolio is mainly implemented as an assessment tool with the purpose of collecting, evaluating, and demonstrating learners' skills. In the following section the researcher aims to analyse in detail the features of an e-portfolio and its different components used for divergent purposes, focusing on the implementation of a portfolio for assessment.

1) Assessment of Learning Portfolio (Summative Portfolio)—as mentioned by Cooper and Love (2001), summative portfolios emphasize learning outcomes and contain evidence that illustrates learning progression. A summative portfolio intends to certify learning outcomes rather than the process of learning, assessing a student's quantity and accuracy of works with little direction for improvement (Barrette, 2005).

2) Assessment for Learning, or Learning Portfolio (Formative Portfolio)—a formative portfolio, designed to show the process of learning in which a student is engaged, is concerned

with the learning process in individual ways (Cooper & Love, 2001). Assessment for learning is the process of seeking and clarifying evidence for use by learners and their teachers to determine where the learners are regarding their learning goals and to gain insights into what they do well and areas needing improvement (The Assessment Reform Group, 2002 cited in Barrett, 2006).

With these structures, the use of an e-portfolio as an alternative evaluation scheme with different models of assessment could have various advantages. To enable effective e-portfolio use, there are different means of using e-portfolios involving certain elements, which determine the process of implementation of an e-portfolio.

The following section reviews the use of e-portfolio on improving EFL learners' language skills from different educators and researchers. The researcher purposely selected only the studies related to the e-portfolio implementation of speaking skills of EFL learners. Some previous studies had been conducted to investigate the effects of the use of e-portfolio on speaking skills. The following sections categorize the studies into groups according to the purposes of use.

E-portfolios, as an additional practice tool, were proved by previous studies to improve English language skills, especially speaking skills, in terms of language production. Research conducted by Huang and Hung (2010) examined the effects of e-portfolios in terms of language quantity, lexical richness, and syntactic complexity of EFL college students' oral performances in English conversation classes. The researchers used four instruments including an oral pre-and post-test, e-portfolios, blogs and an attitude questionnaire. The findings revealed that the students had better performances for two out of three of the indices, which were language quantity and lexical richness, however, the students failed to uphold such effects for syntactic complexity. As claimed by Huang and Hung (2010), in terms of language quantity, e-portfolios allow students to practice their own speaking before uploading their works onto their e-portfolio. This additional practice leads to a substantial increase in language production. Also, additional practices in their speaking enable them to speak more fluently by organizing their opinions in communicating their messages. In the aspect of lexical richness, e-portfolio treatment fosters students' speaking vocabulary by preparing them to make use of more diverse vocabulary in their uploaded recordings, presenting themselves in a better light online. Furthermore, the possibility of revising and resubmitting their spoken recordings as many times as they pleased facilitated learning.

Similarly, Cepik and Yastibas (2013) investigated the effects of e-portfolios on the speaking skills of Turkish EFL learners. Data for the study was obtained through web-based e-portfolios, two interviews, two self-assessment papers, and cover letters. For data analysis, the collection instruments were totally qualitative, so content analysis method was used to analyze them in a pre-determined order according to research questions. The study found that e-portfolios can improve students' speaking skills as it has done in writing skills. Cepik and Yatibas (2013) categorized difficulties in speaking as academic and affective improvement, respectively. Academic difficulties are generally related to grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation, while affective difficulties are related to anxiety, self-confidence, and motivation. The researchers stated that pronunciation and unknown words, which are categorized as academic difficulties, may create difficulties for students. Being nervous, excited and lacking self-confidence, which are categorized as affective difficulties, may cause difficulties in speaking as well. During e-portfolio treatment, students speak English more in the class that allows them to develop their vocabulary skills.

In addition, e-portfolios use a form of valued assessment and promote self-reflection and self-assessment. An e-portfolio is regarded as an effective tool for empowering self-monitoring leading to an improvement in the learning process. With an emphasis on fostering

self-monitoring, Wang and Chang's (2010) research focused on the effect of students self-monitoring their speaking performance to provide useful guidance for instruction; they used e-portfolios, CDs, and VCDs as research instruments. The objective was to investigate the effects of e-portfolios on college students' speaking performances. To collect the data, observation reports, checklists, and videotaping were used throughout the semester. T-test was then used to analyze the pre- and post-test scores.

During the e-portfolio cycle, Cepik and Yatibas (2013) employed two self-assessment papers and cover letters for Turkish EFL leaners. The results were concordant with Wang and Chang (2010) in the sense that the self-assessment contained in e-portfolios enabled students to realize the mistakes they make while speaking, and work towards speak more fluently by trying to improve it. Moreover, e-portfolios allow students to self-assess their learning process in terms of what they did well and what they could improve. Safari and Koosha (2016), using e-portfolios as an alternative assessment, examined the effects of speaking portfolios on Iranian EFL learners. The participants were randomly selected based on an Oxford Placement Test and were assigned to four groups, which were intermediate and advanced experimental groups, and intermediate and advanced control groups. For data analysis, both quantitative and interpretative approaches were adapted to make claim about the efficacy of speaking portfolios for speaking assessment of the intermediate and advanced EFL students. Safari and Koosha (2016) proved that the employment of e-portfolios allows students to learn from themselves and their peers, since e-portfolios provide the opportunity to evaluate themselves through self-assessment. The students analyze how well they have learned and what they need to work on next. Speaking portfolios make students become autonomous learners because it fosters their awareness of crucial factors, procedures, and attitudes of their learning process. During this process, students understand that they make some grammar mistakes and utilize incorrect use of some basic words. As a result, students could observe their improvement and correct their mistakes by recording, watching or listening to their speech on their speaking e-portfolio.

In addition to earlier benefits, e-portfolios facilitated the exchanges of ideas and feedback. In an EFL class, it is useful to give feedback since it could help the students recognize their own strengths and weak points by observing their peers' performances. As asserted by Wang and Chang (2010), a speaking portfolio provides students with the opportunity to learn from their peers. This implies that students attempt to learn from their peers' performances and notice their own strong and weak points by observing their peers' audio recordings on e-portfolios. Consequently, students can improve their speaking through self-reflection and feedback. In other words, when an e-portfolio is implemented in a speaking class, it can facilitate peer-feedback and promote professional development (Safari & Koosha, 2016).

Apart from serving as a good tool in an EFL class, the students feel the e-portfolio process motivates them to better engage in the effective practice of their own learning. As a result, a previous study aimed at exploring students' opinions towards the employment of e-portfolios, indicated that e-portfolios could promote good attitudes toward learning English (e.g. Safari & Koosha; 2016, Huang & Hung; 2010). The students' attitudes toward the use of e-portfolios in speaking were positive because they thought that e-portfolios could improve their speaking in terms of grammar, pronunciation, and vocabulary. Additionally, it also reduced their anxiety during speaking (Cepik & Yatibas, 2013). From these studies, it can be concluded that e-portfolios can take an assessment role with possible advantages in improving learners' skills. E-portfolios not only allow instructors to assess learners' skills, but also allow learners to assess how well they did in their learning. It engages learners in their own learning through its essential components, such as self-reflection, self-assessment and feedback to foster language proficiency among EFL

students.

While e-portfolios seem to be a useful teaching tool, there is only a limited number of works done in EFL speaking combining e-portfolios in formative and summative assessments, especially in a Thai EFL context. The researcher aimed to integrate and combine the components of different e-portfolio types with the objective of enhancing and assessing students' speaking abilities using the CEFR as a guideline for designing speaking materials. The digital web-based e-portfolio adapted for use in this research can be categorized as a combination of a learning and assessment portfolio, which provided formative and summative assessments; to assess the students at intervals as well as to link assessment and learning encouraging the students to be active learners their learning, by using teacher feedback and self-reflection. Thus, the study aims to investigate the students' strengths and weakness of their speaking ability. Also, the opinions of Thai EFL nursing students about the use of the e-portfolio on improving their speaking ability was included in this study.

2. Method

2.1 Participants

The study included 45 undergraduate nursing students at, a Thai College of Nursing, who enrolled in English for Everyday Life course in the second semester of the 2017 academic year. The 44 nursing students were selected by using the purposive sampling method. According to CEFR, recently adopted by the Ministry of Education, these students should be at B1 language users. However, they have similar educational background and English abilities since all of them didn't pass the English standard test in their early year. As a result, for the purpose of English classroom communication, these participants could be qualified samples for the study aiming at developing speaking ability to non-English speakers.

2.2 Research Instrument

There are two main types of researcher instrument used to acquire data from the finding of the study.

To find out what are Thai EFL nursing students' strengths and weakness in English speaking, the researcher employed the e-portfolio to asses and collect participants' speaking performance. The procedures were initiated by the teacher who gave constructed speaking lessons with the accompanied exercises in an e-portfolio, speaking tasks called monologic speaking tasks, and guidance for all participants for their self-study.

To elicit the participants' opinion about the use of e-portfolio on promoting their speaking ability, oral overall self-reflection was developed. They were required to complete the oral self-reflection on the process of doing their speaking assignments after completing each speaking task weekly, what they have learnt from, and the perceptions towards the use of e-portfolio in promoting their speaking ability by videotaping their own oral self-reflection videos.

2.3 Data Collection

The data was collected during 2 months of the course. It was done both during and after the treatment. The speaking task was distributed to the students to examine their strength and weakness in their speaking performance.

The students were required to complete the speaking tasks weekly as additional out of class English speaking practice by uploading to their own e-portfolio to the researcher. During the e-portfolio process, the students could be able to rerecord their speaking tasks as much as desired, and they had additional practice and rehearsal of the speaking performance before uploading to their own e-portfolio and submitting them to the researcher.

2.4 Data Analysis

The speaking tasks were transcribed to be analysed to search for the answers to the first research question. After submitting each speaking task, teacher feedback in electronic form was to be provided to the students via e-portfolio individually so that they know about their speaking ability, allowing them to learn from their mistakes and find way to improve.

For the answers to the second research question, the students were required to describe their self-reflection on their speaking ability according to the speaking competence (e.g. accuracy, fluency, pronunciation). Besides; the overall reflection of their opinion towards the use of e-portfolio on promoting their speaking ability was submitted to the researcher for descriptive data analysis.

3. Results

The major finding was presented based on the two research questions. The first area focuses on students' strengths and weaknesses of their speaking ability. The second one addresses students' opinion towards the use of e-portfolio on enhance their speaking ability. The findings in this section were obtained from the recordings of videos speaking tasks and oral self-reflection videos, and the information was categorized.

To provide an account for these findings, the data was categorized in terms of accuracy, fluency, and pronunciation. The findings in this section derived from speaking tasks gathered through e-portfolio revealing that weaknesses were found in accuracy, fluency, and pronunciation.

In regard to accuracy included the vocabulary use and grammatical structure of the sentences, the students used a limited range of appropriate vocabulary to talk about the topics. Focusing on grammatical structure, the students produced incorrect tenses although they used simple of grammatical forms.

Another weakness was speaking fluency. The students produced responses which were characterized by short phrases and frequent hesitation such as "er" or "ah". In oral production, only some of them could be able to use basic cohesive devices and discourse markers. Additionally, although contributions are mostly relevant, some repetition was produced.

Lastly, in terms of pronunciation, the speech gendered by the students showed phonological feature errors of both utterance and word levels. The finding suggested that the utterances generated by the students were with little pitch movement, in a monotone voice. The pronunciation, especially, word stress and the final sounds of some English words such as / ɪz /, / s / or / z /seemed to be the common weakness. However, the use of e-portfolio as an additional practice tool eventually led to their English speaking improvement. In addition, electronic teacher feedback played an important role in raising awareness, enabled the students to realize their mistakes they made while speaking.

Results of the items coved in the self-reflection questions are presented in this section. The categorizations were developed depending on the content of the overall oral self-reflection: the students' perception of the use of e-portfolio, advantages and disadvantages of the use of e-portfolio, and the students' suggestions and requirements.

Table 1: *Descriptive statistics of the students' opinions on the use of e-portfolio*

Content	Strongly Agree 4	Agree 3	Disagree 2	Strongly Disagree 1

The electronic portfolio improved students' speaking ability	74%	26%	0%	0%

Based on the students' opinion towards the use of e-portfolio on enhancing their English speaking ability, more than half of them (74% strongly Agree and 26% Agree), reported that e-portfolio became a good and useful additional practice tool to help them enhance their speaking ability in terms of accuracy (42%), fluency (30%), and pronunciation (28%) respectively. This proves that the students had positive opinions towards the use of e-portfolio on improving their speaking ability.

As additional out-of-class practice tool, the e-portfolio provides the students with positive English speaking practices. Because of the possibility of revising and resubmitting their speaking recording as many times as they desired, the e-portfolio enables them to learn.

Student 3: *I find the use of e-portfolio very useful in improving English speaking. Normally, I not speak English at all, but the e-portfolio allows me to practice English speaking that I can apply them to use in my real life.*

Student 29: *I get a chance to practice speaking English. When I find my mistakes, I can revise and resubmit my speaking tasks.*

Comparing the traditional speaking assessment and face-to-face speaking, the e-portfolio treatment fostered self-confidence of the students, and could be able to decrease their anxiety while speaking. Additionally, the findings revealed that the e-portfolio motivated them to speak English more with the use of correct grammatical sentences and pronunciation. No students considered the use of e-portfolio as an alternative tool to improve their speaking ability as drawback, implying that the students embraced this tool with open arms.

Student 5: *Thanks to the e-portfolio, I spent my out-of-class time on English speaking practices. It decreases my shyness of speaking. It makes me more confident as well.*

Student 17: *E-portfolio motivates me to speak English because in e-portfolio, I can track my English speaking progresses that encourage me to improve my speaking more and* more. Although I speak with grammatical errors, I do not fear of making these mistakes because there is a teacher who give me feedback that guide me to improve my speaking.

With regard to students' requirements, the response from one of the student indicated during the e-portfolio process, if there were more instructors or teachers in a course providing the students with teacher feedback individually, it would be better for them to realize and find way to improve their speaking as there was only one teacher per 44 students in the e-portfolio treatment. In other word, teacher feedback has an important role when learning a foreign language in e-portfolio process. Also, teacher feedback help learners to aware of their learning.

Student 28: *I think it would be better if there are more teachers in the class with a small group of students such as a teacher per a group of 10 students. That is because one teacher with a large class size, teacher does not have time to give students feedback for each student.*

With the speaking practices, one of the students reported stated that English speaking practices in monologic tasks were insufficient to apply to use in daily life.

Student 14: *It would be better if I get a chance to practice English conversations as well.*

The results above suggest that students should have opportunity to practice English speaking in vary situation, both monologic and dialogic speaking tasks.

4. Discussion and Conclusion

The current study conducted to investigate the strengths and weaknesses of Thai EFL nursing student as well as to explore their opinion towards the use of e-portfolio on enhancing their English speaking ability to understand the problematic factors hindering the development of their speaking. Following the qualitative examinations, the two major results emerged for the initial phase of the ongoing study. English speaking difficulties in Thai nursing learners of English as a foreign are problematic classroom teaching and learning practices. The additional English speaking practices for Thai EFL nursing student should be supported. Based on the nursing student's opinion towards the use of the e-portfolio, suggestions and some practical recommendations for the employment of e-portfolio to promote classroom practices ability in an attempt to help Thai EFL nursing learners covered strengthening their self-confidence and motivation to speak English

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