

THEORETICAL JUSTIFICATION OF USING LANGUAGE PORTFOLIO IN PRE-SERVICE ELT TRAINING

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Abstract: *the present study aims to reveal positive moments in the use of language portfolio in pre-service English language teaching. It focuses on the analysis of previous research in the field and on the values of portfolios with respect to the profile of effectively prepared novice teachers. The study illustrates the process of the development of language portfolios as a reflective tool for teaching English. The research results may represent a further step towards using language portfolios as a significant source of information. It also reveals that language portfolio would be a good alternative to report trainees' teaching experiences and a productive tool to promote reflection and career development.*

Keywords: *language portfolio, English, profile, alternative, pre-service, research.*

ТЕОРЕТИЧЕСКОЕ ОБОСНОВАНИЕ ИСПОЛЬЗОВАНИЯ ЯЗЫКОВОГО ПОРТФЕЛЯ В ПРЕДВАРИТЕЛЬНОЙ ПОДГОТОВКЕ УЧИТЕЛЕЙ АНГЛИЙСКОГО ЯЗЫКА

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Аннотация: *целью настоящего исследования является выявление положительных моментов в использовании языкового портфеля при предварительном обучении английскому языку. Основное внимание уделяется анализу предыдущих исследований в данной области и роли языкового портфеля в эффективной подготовке будущих преподавателей английского языка. Исследование иллюстрирует процесс развития языковых портфелей как рефлексивного инструмента для преподавания английского языка. Результаты исследования могут стать еще одним шагом к использованию языковых портфелей в качестве важного источника информации. Это исследование также свидетельствует о том, что языковой портфель является хорошей альтернативой для информирования об опыте преподавателей и продуктивным инструментом, обеспечивающим рефлексия и развитие карьеры.*

Ключевые слова: *языковой портфель, английский язык, профиль, альтернатива, предварительное обучение (подготовка), исследование.*

Introduction. According to Pink, “autonomy and self-reflection should be natural for all people no matter what they do and where they work” [12]. Self-reflection and ability to learn are the drives that move us forward, promote better understanding, the ability, help us to make progress, to improve and make our performance more efficient. Many education institutions all over the world including that of Tashkent and other cities in Uzbekistan, have a major goal of a better preparation of future teachers, especially English language teachers. Taking into consideration the fact, that autonomy, self-reflection and self-efficacy are the terms which are widely discussed in connection with humanistic approaches not only in in-service teaching but also in pre-service teachers' education, language portfolio is considered as a transitional stage that would enable trainees to articulate their theoretical background into practice.

On Definition and Classification. Portfolio as a tool for teaching has been discussed in numerous studies [5; 15]. The term itself covers the range of documents, information, materials, and activities. Portfolio is not a new term in educational sphere. A European language portfolio was piloted by the Council of Europe in 1998–2000. By 2004 there were about 65 different language portfolios. Since the declaration of its independence from the Soviet Union in 1991, education system of the Republic of Uzbekistan has been extensively reformed in line with the global movements. This is also evident in the field of learning foreign languages, which had previously been dominated by the Soviet-rooted traditions and principles and the Grammar-Translation method [6]. In 2013 the ELP has been introduced to Uzbek institutions. It can be defined, in the simplest way, as a document mapping a learner's language knowledge, contacts with different languages and culture, it also reflects on language learning, progress and a learner's self-evaluation and it is also a collection of a learner's work in the foreign language. ‘Uzbek Model of European Language Portfolio for PRESETT Students’ has been created [16]. There have also been some attempts to introduce teacher portfolios in in-service and pre-service courses, however it is still not fully implemented. Nevertheless, today, most teacher training institutions in Uzbekistan

have been using various forms of portfolios for collecting different documents: lesson plans, observations, original papers, evaluation criteria, etc.) Crow & Harrison suggest to classify portfolios according to their purpose: 1) assessment portfolios; 2) showcase portfolios; 3) development portfolio; 4) reflective portfolios; 5) hybrid portfolios [3].

Discussions in Theoretical Studies. The concept of “language portfolio” is, no doubt, based on the concept of “ELP” that has been developed in parallel with the CEFR. It is the “I can” checklists that are included in the ELP which makes it closely linked to the CEFR and which are the derivatives of illustrative scales given in the later. According to Little, the idea behind developing the ELP was to support and boost autonomy in language learning, intercultural awareness and communicate CEFR philosophy to learners of languages [8]. Since its first introduction, the ELP has proven to be very effective tool in fostering areas of language education. Stoicheva, Hughes and Speitz report very positive effect of the ELP on textbooks development. In terms of teaching, they also report that those teachers, who used the ELP in their teaching practice, stated total recognition of their way of teaching [14]. The implementation of the ELP in secondary schools enabled teachers to see what their students had done before in language learning, e.g. track their progress. Oscarson and Oscarson, in their research conducted in the context of Swedish secondary and upper secondary school system, revealed that those who used ELP as an alternative form of assessment reported helpfulness of the ELP in enhancing language awareness [11]. Mirici suggests that through self-reflection promoted by the ELP learners develop autonomy and responsibility for their own language learning [10]. Numerous studies outlined the benefits of the ELP in promoting self-assessment according to CEFR scales [1; 2]. Little is known about the benefits of the ELP for teachers. Relatively small number of studies report that ELP was useful for teachers in recognizing their way of teaching. So, there is no large scale study that supports the view that ELP has had impact on teaching methods used by teachers. Learning to reflect while doing teaching is an important component of many teacher education programs. Promoting reflective thinking has been the center of attention. Pre-service teachers are required to reflect on their practice through portfolio since it enables them to steer their own development as professionals [9]. When trainees reflect on their practice in portfolio themes, they will ask the ‘why’ questions and this will lead them to improve their understanding and promote further discussions with their supervisors about their own experiences as beginning teachers. A recent study by Hismanoglu has shown that among the effective professional development strategies that English language teachers prefer are teaching portfolios [7]. They can be very helpful for them in terms of lesson planning and preparation, actual teaching presentation, evaluation and feedback provision. Ever since portfolios are being used for the purpose of promoting pre-service teachers’ reflection. A number of studies have found that it is during the process of constructing the portfolio that they reflect on their development as novice teachers and establish learning objectives [4; 17]. In addition, teaching portfolios are considered to be a comprehensive form of performance-based assessment and are used to assess the readiness of pre-service teachers to receive the initial teaching license. When developing portfolios, trainees are involved in different assessment tasks which according to Sarivan consist of a set of experiential problem solving activities that the trainees perform in order to practise the very basics of teaching [13].

Conclusion. In conclusion, this research sheds light on the fact that developing teaching portfolios promote language trainees’ reflection on their teaching practice, and enhance their professional development. This study aimed to summarize many other research findings which focus on the importance of using language portfolios in teacher education. Portfolios involve student teachers in the direct monitoring and regulation of their own learning as they reflect on their achievements making judgements about the quality of their work in relation to specific professional standards. In order to reinforce reflective practitioners among pre-service teachers, teacher education programs should introduce the portfolio process in some courses. Portfolios reveal the pre-service teachers’ reflections and provide insights into their decision-making processes so their growth as professionals can be traced and documented.

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