

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter discusses the background of the study, problem identification, study limitations, research questions, research objectives, and research significance.

The study focuses on how e-portfolio facilitates deep learning in the speaking course of second-semester EFL students. The e-portfolio serves as a documentation medium for students' work progress, where they are asked to create a video for each topic and follow it up with a self-reflection based on their peers' feedback.

1.1 Background of the Study

Among the four core language skills, speaking is seen as an important skill that is used to make communication effective and is often used as a key indicator to determine whether a person has successfully acquired language proficiency (Akhter, 2021). Speaking is not merely about producing words through our mouths, but most importantly, it is about conveying the message through those words (Leong & Ahmadi, 2017). Language is a tool for communication since English is widely spoken and considered an international language. Therefore, learning English needs to be done on a regular basis (Padmadewi et al., 2023). However, the majority of teachers still rely on teaching speaking skills through drill repetition or dialogue memorization (Rao, 2019).

Nevertheless, while technology has revolutionized the implementation of teaching speaking, its use alone is not sufficient to ensure successful

speaking outcomes, as students' performance remains hindered by various obstacles, such as a lack of vocabulary, a lack of motivation, and shallow learning (Amoah & Yeboah, 2021; Arifin, 2017; Khan et al., 2018; Kusumastuti & Utami, 2022; Putra et al., 2017; Ratnasari, 2020; Scouller, 1998; Sikandar et al., 2023). The data also shows that 68% of students are affected by emotional factors such as anxiety or fear of making mistakes, and lack of confidence (Aziez et al., 2024; Santosa et al., 2023).

Therefore, encouraging a deeper approach to learning, which is characterized by sustained concentration, critical engagement, and the ability to relate new information to existing knowledge, offers promising opportunities to deal with these problems. By learning more deeply, students are able to reflect, interpret, and apply concepts in a mindful, meaningful, and joyful manner.

Deep learning is a concept that involves extracting meaning by relating ideas and seeking patterns and evidence, which includes actively integrating new and old knowledge, as well as information acquired from other sources (Damanik & Muhammad, 2025; N. Entwistle, 2000). This concept is different from the concept of surface learning, where students only focus on rote memorization or "question-spotting" to prepare for a test (Chin & Brown, 2000; Dolmans et al., 2016). It motivates students internally to learn and understand a topic rather than simply study to pass an assessment (Schweder et al., 2025). The deep learning approaches are believed to be influenced by: the level of active cooperation, the level of deep processing, and the level of reflective evaluation (Blasco-Arcas et al., 2013; X. H. Zhang & Li, 2022).

To further understand the aspects of deep learning, it is crucial to consider how it is characterized by mindful, meaningful, and joyful learning, which work together to provide a more focused, relevant, and enjoyable learning experience. Furthermore, Entwistle (1998) stated that a deep approach can be implemented in the classroom only if the students have the intention to learn and understand more deeply. When students develop the intention, they are more likely to learn with sustained focus and awareness. This mindful engagement helps them to track their development, recognize their own mistakes, and reflect to improve. At the same time, their intrinsic need for a better understanding also pushes them to make connections between new and existing knowledge, making the learning meaningful. As a result, students not only gain a better understanding, but they also experience an increase in intrinsic motivation and satisfaction, which makes learning more enjoyable.

Since those three concepts are the characteristics of deep learning, it is crucial to clarify what each term means. Mindful learning is the process of actively engaging with the learning material by focusing on the here and now and being conscious of one's environment, thoughts, and emotions during learning (Langer, 2000). Meaningful learning involves gaining new meanings that are related to the learners' prior knowledge, which reflects an interaction between new information and preexisting cognitive structures (Ausubel, 2000; Ifenthaler et al., 2011). Joyful learning is a process in which enjoyment and personal development are intrinsically tied to learning, which also centers the learning process around the happiness and emotional engagement of the students themselves (Csikszentmihalyi, 2014). In recent years, a hallmark of

successful education has been the combination of these three concepts. These components work together, are interconnected, and aligned with what is more widely known, particularly in the Indonesian educational context, as the concept of deep learning (Feriyanto & Anjariyah, 2024).

In this digital transformation era, technology integration in language learning has transformed how English is taught and learned, particularly in the development of speaking abilities (Ahmadi, 2018). To maximize this potential, it is crucial to explore novel, interactive, and technologically advanced methods for teaching speaking in English language learning that not only incorporate technology but also promote active, reflective, and meaningful learning, as the ability to speak fluently in the target language is becoming more prevalent (Madhavi et al., 2023). Deep learning can be implemented using interactive technology, especially one that stores students' activities, allowing them to track their progress over time while remaining flexible. One of the interactive learning methods to be integrated into speaking classes is the e-portfolio, which provides a structured yet flexible platform to support speaking development through self-reflection, goal-setting, and continuous feedback (Kwok & Hui, 2018).

A portfolio is a collection of work that students collect to show their learning progress over time (Davis & Ponnampuruma, 2005). As the technology advances, the portfolio has developed into an e-portfolio. An e-portfolio is a modernized version of a portfolio, which is an online virtual space where students can store and demonstrate their learning activities, where they are able to collect, store, and manage their artifacts effectively (Geoffrion-

Vinci et al., 2013; Huang & Hung, 2010). The artifacts can be essays, videos, presentations, etc. Creating an e-portfolio is not just about displaying what a student has learned, but also about the assessment, reflection, and the learning process itself (Carl & Strydom, 2017). Students can make their own learning objectives, where one objective can have multiple artifacts, and one artifact can be connected to more than one objective, as long as it is still related (Tosun & Baris, 2011). Besides, it also serves as a valuable tool in fostering self- and peer-assessment, where students can assess their own and others' work (Chang et al., 2018; Hanrahan & Isaacs, 2001; Hearn & McMillan, 2008; Panadero & Alonso-Tapia, 2013).

Educators have also increasingly recognized the potential benefits of Web 2.0 tools for their students' education (Madhavi et al., 2023). Moreover, studies have shown that e-portfolios can be implemented using Web 2.0 tools, such as podcasts, Weblogs, wikis, social bookmarking tools, social networking tools (Facebook, WhatsApp), social media sharing tools (YouTube, SlideShare, Google Sites), and collaborative writing tools (Google Docs, Canva) (Coutinho & Junior, 2008; Rodriguez-Donaire & García, 2011).

As e-portfolios and the use of digital tools enhance student learning and reflection become more popular, it is crucial to investigate how these tools might go beyond just helping students practice their speaking skills. Some studies have shown that e-portfolios can support mindful, meaningful, and joyful learning (Modise & Mudau, 2021; Narpaduita & Pratolo, 2024; Silvestro & Nadir, 2021). However, there is still limited research that has been

done on how these tools and the three elements, under the concept of deep learning, may work together, particularly in the context of speaking skills.

Given the challenges in speaking instruction and the need to promote deeper learning in English language classes, this study aims to explore how e-portfolios can facilitate deep learning to support students' speaking development. This research focuses on early-semester Indonesian EFL students. It is expected to give useful insights into how reflective digital tools like e-portfolios can be used to create a learning experience that is more student-centered, emotionally engaging, and cognitively stimulating.

1.2 Identification of the Problem

Previous studies have shown that the implementation of e-portfolios may promote mindful learning by raising awareness and focus during the speaking process and encouraging students to focus on their learning experience in the here and now (Ahmad et al., 2025; Baniyounes et al., 2024; Sultana et al., 2020). For instance, Silvestro and Nadir (2021) explained that the use of e-portfolios in EFL classes has helped students to gain reflective, deeper learning, development of self-knowledge, thinking critically, more confidence in their ability, and their self-awareness and self-discovery have developed significantly. Moreover, the integration of e-portfolios has been found to positively influence teachers' professional development by encouraging consistent, organized, and critically reflective thinking about their teaching methods (Ayaz & Gök, 2022).

Furthermore, several studies have found that e-portfolios may facilitate the implementation of meaningful learning by fostering critical thinking, self-directed learning, and lifelong learning, all of which are crucial elements of deep learning (Modise & Mudau, 2021; Song, 2021). The integration of e-portfolios in EFL classes can promote meaningful learning by offering a structured reflection-focused tool that motivates students to evaluate, synthesize their experiences in a variety of contexts, and connect existing knowledge with new insights through authentic questions and self-assessment opportunities (Yancey, 2023).

In addition, previous studies indicated that e-portfolios have the potential to facilitate joyful learning by promoting motivation and positive emotions in learning (Kusuma, Mahayanti, Gunawan, et al., 2021; Lam & Tsang, 2025). The integration of e-portfolios in EFL classes helps students feel less worried about making mistakes, which creates a more positive classroom atmosphere and increases their enthusiasm for learning (Narpaduita & Pratolo, 2024).

Although these studies highlight the benefits of e-portfolios in supporting mindful, meaningful, and joyful learning, most of them have not specifically and explicitly examined how these concepts are implemented in teaching speaking in the EFL context. This gap highlights the need for a deeper investigation into how e-portfolios can foster these three learning experiences as a whole concept of deep learning within the specific domain of speaking performance.

Despite the promising findings from previous studies, the actual practice of teaching speaking in many EFL classrooms still shows signs of superficial learning. Speaking learning is not yet meaningful when it focuses on the accuracy rather than the comprehensibility of the language (Crowther et al., 2015; Panduwangi, 2021). As a result, speaking instruction tends to be task- and grade-oriented, instead of building deeper understanding, which shows a lack of meaningful reflection, connection, and engagement that are central to deep learning.

In line with this, previous studies have shown that the integration of e-portfolios into EFL speaking classes may improve various elements of students' speaking skills and educational experience (Kusuma & Waluyo, 2023; Narpaduita & Pratolo, 2024). E-portfolios have been proven to enhance students' interactive communication, fluency, and pronunciation while encouraging critical thinking and active engagement in speaking courses (Cabrera-Solano, 2020; Liping et al., 2023).

Studies have also demonstrated the potential of e-portfolios to support deep learning by fostering reflective thinking, critical reflection, self-awareness, and meaningful engagement with peers and learning materials (Ayaz & Gök, 2022; Silvestro & Nadir, 2021). These tools have been found effective in encouraging active participation, enhancing motivation, and helping learners make sense of their experiences through structured reflection and interaction (Dayag & Abdalla, 2023). However, these findings have not yet explored how e-portfolios facilitate mindful, meaningful, and joyful learning as a whole concept of deep learning in speaking courses.

Additionally, speaking anxiety causes many students to struggle at various levels while expressing themselves, and they are often reluctant to speak (Ersanlı & Ünal, 2022). Moreover, the learning process most likely emphasizes grades, not students' deep understanding of the topic. When the learning atmosphere is monotonous, the students often experience a lack of motivation, engagement, and enthusiasm, which results in them playing with their cellphones, talking with their friends, or even sleeping in the classroom (Yanti & Putra, 2022). Students' enthusiasm and speaking confidence remain low, which may be influenced by psychological issues and poor academic performance brought on by low self-esteem and lack of confidence (Alghamdi et al., 2023).

The aforementioned issues were identified among Ganesha University of Education's second-semester students in class F. The subjects were chosen because they are at an early stage of their academic journey, where the foundational speaking skills and learning habits are still being formed, making them an ideal group to be observed on how e-portfolios can shape their learning.

In line with this, preliminary observations indicate that a large number of pupils have restricted vocabulary, frequently read scripts when speaking, and rely on memorization rather than understanding texts. Furthermore, their engagement and desire to take chances are further diminished by their poor self-esteem and fear of making errors, which eventually hinder the development of communicative skills in speaking. Given this context, it is crucial to investigate how e-portfolios can support more mindful, meaningful,

and joyful learning experiences, especially in local classroom settings when students are still developing their foundational speaking skills. By focusing on these aspects, teachers may be able to create a more student-centered and empowered learning environment that supports critical thinking, emotional well-being, and language proficiency.

For early-semester university students who are still developing their speaking skills, it is important to adopt a learning approach that not only focuses on final performance but also promotes self-awareness and ongoing development. With its features that support ongoing documentation, feedback, and reflection, the e-portfolio shows a strong potential to meet this demand. However, existing data remain inconclusive, as the previous studies did not specifically or directly focus on mindful, meaningful, and joyful learning. Moreover, little is known about how successfully e-portfolios facilitate those three deep learning concepts, specifically in speaking classes. Existing studies tend to focus on reading and writing skills, or only cover the use of e-portfolios generally, rather than on speaking skills. Therefore, this study aims to investigate how e-portfolios can effectively facilitate deep learning in the context of speaking performance among university students in their first semesters.

1.3 Limitations of the Study

While the focus of this study was on investigating the potential of e-portfolios in facilitating deep learning in the speaking courses of second-

semester students, some limitations must be acknowledged. This research explored how e-portfolios facilitate the deep learning concept, mindful, meaningful, and joyful learning, by examining students' 1) fluency, 2) grammar, 3) pronunciation, 4) vocabulary, and 5) comprehensibility.

The study relied on the data of students' interviews and self-reflections over time, which may be affected by the participants' characteristics and experience level. The participants were asked to make videos to fulfill their speaking course tasks, which were later used as one of the artifacts of the e-portfolio. Then, after each video, students were asked to self-reflect based on their peers' comments. In the end, the interview sessions were conducted using semi-structured questions.

The study was conducted in the 2F Class for at least 6 months at Ganesha University of Education, located in Singaraja, Bali. The choice of this research site was based on accessibility and relevance to the topic. Therefore, the results might not be the same as those of other schools or educational institutions due to these specific characteristics.

1.4 Research Questions

Based on the research backgrounds and the identification of the problem stated above, the study's research question could be stated as follows:

1. How does the use of e-portfolio facilitate deep learning through mindful, meaningful, and joyful learning in a speaking course among second-semester EFL students?

1.5 Research Objectives

Based on the research questions stated previously, the research objectives can be addressed as follows:

1.5.1 General Objective

The general objective of this study was to investigate the potential of e-portfolios in facilitating deep learning in the speaking courses of second-semester students of 2F Class at Ganesha University of Education.

1.5.2 Specific Objective

The specific objective of this research is stated as follows:

1. To explore how e-portfolio facilitated mindful, meaningful, and joyful learning in a speaking course among second-semester students.

1.6 Research Significance

The study has theoretical and practical significance for a variety of stakeholders in the educational landscape.

1.6.1 Theoretical Significance

In theory, this study filled a gap in previous research by investigating how e-portfolios facilitate mindful, meaningful, and joyful learning as a comprehensive concept, specifically in the context of deep learning, within the 2F Class at Ganesha University of Education. It

helped us deepen our understanding of how e-portfolios might facilitate deep learning in a speaking course.

1.6.2 Practical Significance

In practice, the findings have positive implications for the following beneficiaries:

1. The Students

The research will assist in shaping how students learn topics by creating their own e-portfolios to track their progress over time.

This way, this study will help students learn not in a superficial way, but in a deeper way, to gain a more profound understanding.

As a result, it will enhance students' grammar, pronunciation, and comprehension in future learning experiences. By investigating how e-portfolio can facilitate deep learning, this study might highlight the positive influence this strategy can have on students' speaking proficiency in speaking course settings.

2. The EFL Teachers

Understanding how e-portfolio can facilitate deep learning in the speaking courses can equip EFL teachers to develop and implement new techniques in teaching to manage the difficulties students may face in learning to speak more efficiently. Moreover, the findings of this study will help EFL teachers to choose whether to use video, audio, or text as students' artifacts

in the e-portfolio, which later will be used to track their progress, resulting in a more effective teaching and learning process.

3. Further Researchers

The research design and methodology employed in this study can be modified by future researchers who want to investigate how e-portfolios facilitate deep learning in speaking, or in different courses. The findings of this study can serve as a starting point for further research on the application of e-portfolios in language learning environments. It could lead to further investigations into the particular strategies or circumstances that promote mindful, meaningful, and joyful learning in speaking courses. Building on these findings, future researchers may investigate further how e-portfolios and other digital tools might be customized to enhance learning outcomes and student engagement in EFL contexts.

