

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of The Study

Portfolio-based Assessment has an established history in L1 English, where English is used as the first language. While several studies have recognized the potential of Portfolio-based Assessment (*hereafter*, PBA) in ESL or EFL context, relevant literature reviews have concluded that most PBA studies relate to English L1, not in the context of ESL or EFL (Hamp-Lyons, 2001). Swicegood (2015) stated that Portfolios offer a viable alternative to the traditional practices that have been used to assess students from diverse backgrounds, the portfolio contains pieces of information systematically accumulated from the various domains within a comprehensive assessment process. PBA intends to assess students more holistically and to view their learning, as well as encourage meta-cognitive and an independent attitude to learning (Nezakatgoo, 2011). Liu (2003) also illustrates that PBA allowed student's to gain some control over the assessment process, to demonstrate more completely and in their own terms what they could do, and to set their own goals. Portfolios encouraged students to assess their progress and development concerning standards, to reflect on the work included in their portfolios, and to compare and contrast their earlier efforts with more recent work. Through reflective statements, students learned to evaluate their academic performance by explaining what was important about the evidence that was included and what it said about them

as learners. Reflective statements also revealed changes in attitudes, feelings that students had about their ability to succeed in an academic environment, or goals for future development. As a result, portfolios encouraged students to take more responsibility for their learning and to become autonomous learners.

The current Western education system encourages students' independence to set their own goals, reflect on, and take responsibility for their learning and become independent learners (Liu, 2003). In Indonesia, independent or student-centered learning has also been arranged in a curriculum setting as explained by Harosid (2019) that the learning objectives to be achieved by the curriculum are character quality, competence, and literacy. Students are guided by teachers to be able to adapt to the curriculum, think critically, creatively, communicatively, collaboratively, and improve literacy skills in various aspects.

Previously, other researchers have investigated PBA practices. A study in one French immersion classroom in writing program found important improvements in students' writing skill (Armstrong, 2011), increasing students' learning autonomy (Lam, 2014), stimulating student independent learning, and equipping students with skills in evidence-based assessment practice models (Sidebotham, Baird, Walters, & Gamble, 2018). Lam (2015) also assumes that PBA can be used by teachers as input to enhance teaching learning process, and by students as learning tools to monitor their growth. Bataineh & Obeiah (2016) examined the potential effects of PBA saving

teacher time in assessing, leading more interaction and negotiation and that is an influential way to communicate with students. Farahian & Avarzamani (2018) also examined that PBA stimulates students' metacognitive awareness in writing skills.

Empirically, number of notions have heard in the context of ESL in using portfolio as an alternative assessment tool. A research by Liu (2003) with portfolio in the United States focus on the reflective related components of the portfolio, some students stated that portfolios based on building student confidence in writing. Ozer (2016) also emphasized the importance of feedback in their product. On the other hand, there is still little study in EFL Context concerning PBA practice especially in the context of Indonesian EFL students.

In practice, an English teacher who has experience in teaching English regularly and consistently used PBA as an additional assessment tool. The teacher revealed that PBA had built the potential of individual student learning. The students became more focused and encouraged students' efforts in completing assignments to increase the achievement of students' learning goals. Therefore, the researcher intends to reveal the students' perception on the use of PBA. This current study seeks to delineate the perceptions of EFL students in Indonesia of their perceptions on the use of PBA.

1.2 Formulation of The Problem

Based on the background above, this study addressed the following research question: What are the students' perceptions on the use of PBA?

1.3 Operational Definitions

To avoid misunderstanding about the terms set out in this study, the researcher provides some definitions related to this study, as follows:

- 1.3.1 Portfolio-based Assessment (PBA) : Portfolio-Based Assessment in this study is an assessment that used by an English teacher who used portfolios as an additional assessment tool in an English class in one of junior high school in Tasikmalaya. This assessment aims to collect information and document the progress of students' learning in the English learning process within a certain period of time.
- 1.3.2 EFL Students : Students whose first language is not English and they are studying English as a foreign language.
- 1.3.3 Perceptions : Reactions that arise from someone in the form of beliefs, opinions, or an impression of an event.

1.4 Aim of The Research

In line with the problem formulation above, this study aims at exploring the students' perceptions on the use of PBA.

1.5 Significances of the Study

- 1.5.1 Theoretical Contribution : This study adds evidence to current theories about students' experiences of portfolio-based assessment in English learning.
- 1.5.2 Practical Contribution : This research is expected to contribute knowledge for teachers in managing portfolio-based assessments in English learning classes.
- 1.5.3 Empirical Contribution : This study complements the evidence and verifies previous research on the students' perceptions of Portfolio-based Assessment in English classes.