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EFL Students' Perceptions of Reading Portfolios and Teacher Feedback on Reflective Writing

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Abstract
Portfolio assessment is widely regarded as a reliable tool for language evaluation, yet research on its long-term impact on students' linguistic and personal development remains limited. This study explores EFL students' perceptions of the benefits of reading portfolio assessment and the effectiveness of teacher-written and oral corrective feedback on reflective writing. Specifically, it investigates how reading portfolio assessment contributes to students' reading, writing, and personal development skills, as well as their preferences for different corrective feedback techniques. A total of 116 EFL students from two reading classes participated in the study, with 52 students in the pilot study and 64 in the formal study. Data were collected through a four-dimensional questionnaire, teacher feedback on reflective writing, and three open-ended questions. Analysis of pre- and posttest scores indicated that students perceived reading portfolio assessment as beneficial for improving their reading comprehension, writing skills, and personal development. In terms of corrective feedback, 60% of the responses preferred metalinguistic explanations, while 19% favored direct feedback. The findings highlight the pedagogical value of reading portfolios and the role of corrective feedback in fostering students' reflective writing skills. The study offers insights for educators seeking to enhance students' engagement with portfolio assessment and optimize feedback strategies. Future research should further explore how reading portfolios can be adapted to diverse EFL contexts to maximize their long-term effectiveness.
Keywords: English as a foreign Language, reading portfolio assessment, reflective writing, student perceptions, teacher corrective feedback

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Introduction

Assessment is an integral component of the teaching-learning process, guiding instructional decisions and evaluating student progress (Pereira et al., 2022; Shepard, 2019). However, although standardized testing has long been considered synonymous with assessment, it is increasingly being criticized for its emphasis on rote memorization rather than meaningful learning (Wiggins, 1990; Woolf, 2008). Traditional assessments primarily evaluate students' ability to recall decontextualized knowledge, which may not accurately reflect their actual language proficiency or higher-order thinking skills (Leon & Elias, 1998). Moreover, high-stakes testing often pressures educators to "teach to the test," narrowing instructional approaches and limiting opportunities for authentic learning (Nichols & Brewington, 2020). In response to these concerns, there has been a paradigm shift from a testing culture to an assessment culture, emphasizing alternative assessments such as portfolio assessment (Gipps, 1994; Birenbaum & Feldman, 1998).

Unlike traditional assessments, portfolio assessment provides a dynamic, student-centred evaluation framework that documents learners' progress over time. For example, in the current study, this was done through self-selected reading materials and reflective writing. This shift from traditional assessment limitations to portfolio benefits highlights portfolios as a more effective assessment tool. Portfolio assessment is grounded in constructivist learning theories, which emphasize knowledge construction through active engagement and reflection (Piaget, 1970; Vygotsky, 1978). By participating in portfolio assessment, students gain ownership of their learning through selecting reading materials, assessing progress, and revising their work based on teacher feedback. Furthermore, the Self-Regulated Learning (SRL) theory (Zimmerman, 2000) highlights how portfolios encourage goal-setting, progress monitoring, and metacognitive reflection, enabling students to take an active role in their learning (Butler & Winne, 1995).

One essential aspect of portfolio assessment is reflective writing, which enhances self-assessment and promotes deeper engagement with learning materials (Boumediene et al., 2018). Through reflective writing, students analyze their progress, refine their understanding of reading materials, and improve their writing skills based on teacher feedback. However, despite its significance, previous research has not sufficiently examined the role of reflective writing in portfolio assessment, creating a research gap that this study seeks to address.

Despite the growing body of literature on portfolio assessment, most studies have focused on its short-term effects, primarily examining students' immediate reactions to portfolios (Davis et al., 2009) or their role in enhancing specific language skills, such as writing or speaking (Cong-Lem, 2019). However, little research has explored the long-term impact of portfolio assessment on EFL learners' reading comprehension and reflective writing development. Additionally, although teacher corrective feedback plays a crucial role in language learning, few studies have examined students' perceptions of the effectiveness of written and oral feedback in a portfolio-based setting. Furthermore, existing research does not fully address how integrating self-selected reading and teacher feedback contributes to sustained improvements in reading comprehension, writing quality, and personal development skills over time. Given the increasing emphasis on alternative assessment methods in language education, there is a need to further examine the long-term impact of portfolio assessment on students' linguistic and personal growth, particularly in EFL reading classes.

This study aims to examine EFL students' perceptions of reading portfolio assessment and its effectiveness in developing reading, writing, and personal growth skills over time. Additionally,

it investigates how teacher-written and oral corrective feedback influences the quality of students' reflective writing.

The study seeks to contribute to the field by:

1. Examining the long-term impact of portfolio assessment on EFL students' reading comprehension and reflective writing skills.
2. Exploring students' perceptions of different types of teacher corrective feedback (written vs. oral) in a portfolio-based learning environment.
3. Highlighting the role of reflective writing in self-assessment and its implications for student engagement and metacognitive learning.

To achieve these objectives, the study addresses the following research questions:

1. To what extent do participants respond to statements regarding attitudes toward self-selected reading in portfolio assessment and perceptions of the benefits of reading portfolio assessment for improving reading, writing, and personal development skills?
2. Are there differences between the pre- and post-test scores of participants' attitudes toward self-selected reading in portfolio assessment and their perceptions of the benefits of reading portfolio assessment for improving reading, writing, and personal development skills?
3. What are participants' attitudes toward the use of reading portfolio assessment and teacher written and oral (i.e., teacher-student writing conferences) corrective feedback on their reflective writing, according to qualitative data (i.e., three open-ended questions)?
4.

Literature Review

This literature review examines portfolio assessment, its connection to constructivist learning and Self-Regulated Learning (SRL), as well as students' perceptions of teacher written corrective feedback and teacher-student writing conferences. Key studies are discussed, highlighting the potential benefits of these approaches in EFL contexts.

Portfolio Assessment and Its Connection to Constructivism and SRL

Addressing the mismatch between process learning and traditional testing, experts suggest portfolio assessment as a more suitable alternative (Moya & O'Malley, 1994). Traditional assessments, such as standardized tests and one-time written exams, often fail to "reveal students' true progress of what they can do with the knowledge they have acquired" (Asamoah, 2019, p. 29). In contrast, portfolio assessment "tests and strengthens the student's ability to reason and analyze, synthesize, and apply the knowledge acquired" (Asamoah, 2019, p. 29). A portfolio is a comprehensive, authentic record of a student's work over time, showcasing their efforts and growth (Brown, 2004; Gillespie et al., 1996), and portfolio assessment involves planning, collecting, and evaluating these data (Moya & O'Malley, 1994).

Previous studies have suggested the benefits of using portfolio assessment. For example, the EFL students in Barootchi and Keshavarz's (2010) research had a positive attitude towards portfolio assessment and took responsibility for monitoring their own progress. The effect of portfolios on improving students' reading skills and proficiency was also confirmed by Göksu (2015) and Zhang (2010). In addition, Bataineh and Obeiah (2016) reported that regarding writing performance, the portfolio-based assessment group outperformed the control group. More recent research continues to support these findings. Punyapratheep and Wudthayagorn (2022) found that Thai EFL students viewed portfolio assessment favorably and exhibited marked improvements in their writing after engaging in a process that involved compiling eight drafts in a classroom-based

setting. Consequently, they asserted that "*portfolio assessment can be an effective alternative choice in a classroom-based setting*" (p. 435)

Since Danielson and Abrutyn (1997) stated that one of the key characteristics of portfolios is the learner's reflections on each work, the current action-research study therefore incorporated reflective writing into portfolio assessment. Reflective writing is central to portfolio assessment, as highlighted by Ross et al. (2024), whose systematic review revealed that reflective writing in higher education is mainly incorporated into broader assessment frameworks within professional degree programs to enhance employability and promote professional self-reflection. According to Boumediene et al. (2018), students' reflective writing was improved in the aspects of process and product after using the portfolio assessment method. Farahian et al.'s (2021) research also suggested that portfolio writing can be integrated into EFL courses to promote EFL writers' reflections on their writing.

The integration of portfolio assessment is grounded in constructivist learning theories (Piaget, 1970; Vygotsky, 1978) and Self-Regulated Learning (SRL) theory (Zimmerman, 2000). Portfolios align with constructivist principles by allowing students to construct knowledge through active engagement and reflection, thereby taking responsibility for their own learning. This process encourages deeper engagement with the material and facilitates the development of higher-order thinking skills. The SRL model further supports this process by highlighting how learners monitor and regulate their cognitive and behavioral processes, enabling them to set goals, self-monitor, and reflect on their learning journey (Butler & Winne, 1995). Recent studies have shown that e-portfolios can enhance self-regulation by promoting skills such as intrinsic goal orientation, metacognitive self-regulation, and effort regulation (Nguyen & Ikeda, 2015). Furthermore, these portfolios serve as structured, task-oriented tools that align assessment with students' objectives, providing feedback that encourages the development of critical thinking and writing skills over time (Lam, 2022). According to van der Gulden et al. (2020), e-portfolios also support self-regulated learning (SRL) processes by documenting key aspects such as reflection, feedback, goal-setting, and monitoring. However, their study highlighted the need for careful implementation, as SRL documentation requires significant introspection and writing skills. By offering students continuous feedback and opportunities for self-assessment, portfolios can more effectively foster SRL and lead to both cognitive and linguistic growth. Schumann and Baraka (2024) found that e-portfolios facilitate reflective thinking, which is an important metacognitive skill in education, and more training in reflective writing is needed to make students more reflective. A recent study by Do (2023) found that Vietnamese students valued portfolio assessment as a formative approach, as it provided insights into their grammatical errors and improved their ability to organize ideas logically. This aligns with Baharom and Shaari's (2022) findings that portfolio assessment promotes learner autonomy by encouraging students to identify their strengths and weaknesses in writing and fostering the psychological dimensions of autonomy, including self-confidence and motivation.

Students' Perceptions of Teacher Written Corrective Feedback and Teacher-Student Writing Conferences

Teacher written corrective feedback (WCF), defined as an intention to draw a learner's attention to different kinds of errors regarding accuracy, fluency, and appropriateness (Ellis, 2009), plays a critical role in portfolio assessment, particularly in enhancing students' reflective writing skills (Hamp-Lyons & Condon, 2000). Despite the ongoing debate regarding its overall

effectiveness (Mohebbi, 2021; Truscott, 1996), Ferris (1999, 2004) strongly supported the continued use of WCF, highlighting its benefits in terms of student preference and improvements in writing accuracy. Empirical evidence supports Ferris' position, indicating that WCF leads to significant improvements in writing accuracy (Bitchener et al., 2005; Chandler, 2003; Hartshorn & Norman, 2015), is valued by learners (Ferris et al., 2012), enhances self-editing skills (Ferris & Roberts, 2001), and effectively guides students in revising their work (Ferris, 2006). This evidence underscores the importance of WCF in the writing process, and its potential to improve student outcomes in language learning.

The teacher WCF techniques used in the current research included direct feedback (i.e., providing the correct linguistic form; Ferris, 2006) and indirect feedback (i.e., using error codes and metalinguistic explanations; López, 2021; Sheen, 2011). Previous studies have examined the effects of these techniques. For instance, Varnosfadrani and Basturkmen (2009) found that direct feedback was more effective than indirect feedback in improving writing accuracy, whereas Ferris (2006) reported that indirect feedback contributed more to the long-term development of students' writing skills. Similarly, Sherpa (2021) found that students who received indirect WCF demonstrated significantly greater improvement in grammatical accuracy than those in both the direct WCF and control groups in posttest assessments.

In contrast, Shintani and Ellis (2013) highlighted the benefits of Metalinguistic Explanations (ME), showing that students who received ME developed stronger L2 explicit knowledge and were able to apply it effectively when revising their drafts. Extending this line of research, Wondim et al. (2024) found that learners who received direct WCF combined with metalinguistic explanations outperformed those who received only indirect WCF. However, despite its advantages, indirect feedback may cause frustration for students who struggle to identify and correct their errors independently (Boggs, 2018, as cited in Boggs, 2019).

Another practice emerging from the shift to process-oriented writing instruction since the 1970s is teacher-student writing conferences, which involve personalized interactions between teachers and students to address writing challenges (Liu, 2009; Sperling, 1991; Tompkins, 1990). Their impact on L2 writers, while beneficial, has not been fully quantified (Hyland & Hyland, 2006). Studies have highlighted several advantages, such as enabling student agency, facilitating understanding of feedback, and improving writing skills (Eckstein, 2013; Shin, 2003). Writing conferences cover a variety of topics, and the teacher can adapt communication approaches "considering their difficulties and needs (Yang, 2022, p. 1)", making the conferences more personalized and effective. Other advantages include enabling meaningful negotiation and effective revisions (Alfalagg, 2020; Hamlaoui & Fellahi, 2017; Telçeker & Akcan, 2010; Yang, 2022), and students also valued discussions on strengths and weaknesses, relationship-building, idea development, and revision planning, with idea development being the most beneficial aspect (Suthipiyapathra, 2021).

However, as Yang (2022) suggested, successful conferences require careful preparation on the part of both students and teachers, as well as ongoing, focused interaction. Challenges include potential stress for some students and varying effectiveness based on individual student differences, such as linguistic ability or learning goals (Ferris, 2003; Eckstein, 2013). To optimize these conferences, initial instruction on their purpose, roles, responsibilities, and discussion topics, as implemented in this study, is crucial.

Despite the growing literature on portfolio assessment, most existing studies, such as Davis et al. (2009) and Cong-Lem (2019), have focused on the short-term effects of portfolios or their

role in improving specific language skills like writing or speaking. Moreover, research has often overlooked how the integration of self-selected reading materials and teacher feedback can contribute to sustained improvements in reading comprehension, writing quality, and personal development over extended periods. Unlike previous studies that primarily examine the impact of portfolios in isolation, this study takes a more holistic approach by integrating teacher corrective feedback and reflective writing tasks within a structured portfolio framework. Additionally, it extends the discussion beyond immediate linguistic gains to explore how portfolio assessment fosters long-term self-regulated learning and metacognitive development through reflective writing and teacher feedback, while also enhancing personal growth in EFL learners. By addressing these gaps, this study offers new insights into the enduring benefits of portfolios in language education.

Methodology

This section outlines the design of the school-year-long action-research study, including participants, data collection, and analysis methods. Both quantitative and qualitative data were collected through questionnaires and portfolio assessments to explore students' perceptions of reading portfolio assessment in an EFL context and the effectiveness of corrective feedback on their reflective writing.

Participants

This study was conducted in an EFL reading class (the Reading 1 and Reading 2 courses) for freshmen from an English-related department at a college in northern Taiwan. The participants included approximately 35% males and 65% females, with an average age of slightly more than 18 years. They were required to take both Reading 1 and Reading 2 during the fall and spring semesters, respectively. All students in these courses were invited to participate, and participation was voluntary. At the start of both semesters, the teacher-researcher explained the purpose and details of the action-research study, including participants' rights, confidentiality, and data integrity. Consent was obtained from the students, with 52 of 61 students participating in the pilot study and 64 of 69 in the formal study. All participants had been studying English as a foreign language for at least 9 years (starting from Grade 3). The courses incorporated reading portfolios as a key learning component, requiring students to engage in regular portfolio assignments, self-reflection, and teacher feedback activities throughout both semesters. This structured approach ensured sustained exposure to reading portfolios in an authentic learning context.

Data Collection

The questionnaire was first administered to the participants of the pilot study at the end of the fall semester for Reading 1. To develop and validate the scales used in the formal study, IBM SPSS Version 20 was employed to analyze the reliability and validity of 52 valid questionnaires using item analysis and Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA).

In addition, 47 portfolio files/folders were collected and used for analysis, as these were completed by the 47 students who attended both the fall and spring semesters and finished all the portfolio articles as requested. The formal study's participants filled out the questionnaire at the end of the spring semester. After accounting for invalid responses, participant attrition, and the identification and removal of outliers through data cleaning, a total of 40 valid questionnaires from

first-year English majors who participated in both the pilot (used as the pretest) and formal studies (used as the posttest) were retained for further analysis.

Instrumentation

Based on theoretical arguments and previous research findings (Barootchi & Keshavarz, 2010; Bataineh & Obeiah, 2016; Boumediene et al., 2018; Cong-Lem, 2019; Davis et al., 2009; Göksu, 2015; Rolheiser et al., 2000; Yildirim, 2013), the teacher-researcher designed a survey with four scales to assess students' perceptions of and attitudes towards reading portfolio assessment. The scales used in this study were the Students' Attitudes Towards Self-Selected Reading in the Portfolio Assessment (SASRAS), the Students' Perceptions of Benefits of Reading Portfolio Assessment for Improving Reading Skills Scale (SPBRRS), the Students' Perceptions of Benefits of Reading Portfolio Assessment for Improving Writing Skills Scale (SPBRWS), and the Students' Perceptions of Benefits of Reading Portfolio Assessment for Facilitating Personal Development Skills Scale (SPBRPS).

Each scale was measured using a 6-point Likert-type scale (1 = *strongly disagree* and 6 = *strongly agree*). The rating schemes, adapted from Pimentel (2019), classified responses into six categories: 1.00-1.82 (*strongly disagree*), 1.83-2.65 (*disagree*), 2.66-3.48 (*slightly disagree*), 3.49-4.31 (*slightly agree*), 4.32-5.14 (*agree*), and 5.15-6.00 (*strongly agree*). Participants were provided with complete instructions during both the pilot and formal studies to ensure clarity in responding to the survey items.

Validation of the Scales

Given that the scales were developed for this study, exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was chosen as the primary method for examining the validity of the research instruments. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure was employed to assess the sampling adequacy for factor analysis. Despite the relatively small sample size (N = 61 in the pilot study), the KMO values for all four scales exceeded the recommended threshold of 0.60 (Kaiser, 1974), indicating sufficient sampling adequacy for factor analysis.

Each scale underwent item analysis and exploratory factor analysis in the pilot study. The results are summarized below:

- **SASRAS**: This scale consisted of three items. The EFA revealed a one-factor solution, accounting for 87.27% of the variance (KMO = .76, χ^2 = 112.75, df = 3, p < .001).
- **SPBRRS**: The EFA for this scale, which consisted of six items, identified a one-factor solution accounting for 74.06% of the variance (KMO = .84, χ^2 = 236.99, df = 15, p < .001).
- **SPBRWS**: This scale included four items, and the EFA revealed a one-factor solution, accounting for 70.82% of the variance (KMO = .79, χ^2 = 89.01, df = 6, p < .001).
- **SPBRPS**: This five-item scale produced a one-factor solution accounting for 63.73% of the variance (KMO = .74, χ^2 = 110.60, df = 10, p < .001).

The reliability of each scale was evaluated using Cronbach's alpha, with coefficients of .91 for SASRAS, .90 for SPBRRS, .81 for SPBRWS, and .83 for SPBRPS, indicating high internal consistency across all scales. Additionally, skewness and kurtosis were examined to assess the normality of the data, and both measures fell within acceptable ranges for inferential statistics (George & Mallery, 2001; Kline, 1998).

Data Analysis

During the data cleaning process, boxplots and Z-scores were used to identify and handle potential outliers, defined as values exceeding ±3 standard deviations from the mean (Agresti et al., 2018). Subsequent analysis included descriptive analysis and inferential analysis (i.e., paired samples t-tests and the Pearson correlation coefficient).

Additionally, three open-ended questions were included in the formal study's survey. The qualitative data from these questions were analyzed using a thematic approach to gain deeper insights into participants' attitudes and suggestions.

The Reading Portfolio Assignment

At the beginning of both the pilot and formal studies, the teacher-researcher explained the expectations for the reading portfolio. Under the guidance of the teacher-researcher, each student was required to select and read at least 12 articles (minimum 600 words each) throughout the semester, covering a wide range of topics such as cultural observations, career advice, social issues, and scientific explanations. In addition, they were tasked with completing a writing assignment titled '*What is my life's dream?'* for the fall semester and '*What are my goals for this semester?'* for the spring semester, with this assignment placed at the beginning of their portfolio folder. Students were encouraged to design personalized covers and a Table of Contents, with the articles chosen reflecting their life goals and interests, making the portfolio both personal and meaningful. To fulfill the reading assignment requirements, students underlined unfamiliar words in each article, looked up their meanings, and noted them in the margins and in the tables they created (Appendix A). They could also identify and induct grammatical rules from the articles, deepening their understanding of language structures. After reading, they wrote a reflective paragraph (at least 50 words), summarizing their thoughts and insights, thereby promoting both their critical thinking and writing skills.

As for the rubrics for the portfolio assessment, they evaluated the portfolios based on four main criteria: organization (5%), which focused on the layout and structure of both the portfolio and each article; quality of work samples (25%), assessing vocabulary work and comprehension of the articles; variety of work samples (10%), ensuring that students selected articles from diverse topics and sources; and reflection (35%), which measured the depth, grammar, and clarity of their reflective writing.

Throughout the semester, the teacher-researcher provided regular written and oral feedback, highlighting grammatical and structural errors using correction symbols (e.g., verb tense, article usage) (see Appendix B). Additionally, teacher-student writing conferences were offered upon students' request, providing them with personalized feedback to help refine their writing. At the start of the second semester, instructions were provided for the teacher-student conferences, outlining their purpose, the roles of both parties and the key topics to be addressed. These sessions enabled students to engage more actively in improving their writing skills with targeted guidance.

Findings

This section provides an overview of the key findings from the survey data and qualitative responses, addressing each research question. The results highlighted students' perceptions of the reading portfolio's impact on their reading, writing, and personal development skills, as well as their views on teacher feedback and writing conferences.

Survey Results

Survey data highlights students' perceptions of the reading portfolio's benefits for improving reading, writing, and personal development skills. Descriptive and inferential analyses were used to assess changes in attitudes and skills before and after the portfolio.

Addressing RQ 1:

As shown in Table One, participants generally slightly agreed that the reading portfolio assignment had a positive impact, with an overall mean score of *M* = 4.23 **(***SD* = .91**)**, which falls in the "*slightly agree*" range according to the rating scheme. Specifically, participants slightly agreed that the reading portfolio assignment enhanced their motivation to read English extracurricular materials (Item 1: *M* = 4.28**,** *SD* = 1.09), and also slightly agreed that it increased their interest in reading English extracurricular materials (Item 2: *M* = 4.25**,** *SD* = .93). Furthermore, they slightly agreed that the assignment helped them develop a habit of reading such materials (Item 3: *M* = 4.15**,** *SD* = 1.00). These findings are consistent with previous research that highlighted the benefits of portfolio assessment for promoting student engagement and motivation (Davis et al., 2009; Elias & Schwab, 2006; Lam & Lee, 2010; Schoonen, 2019).

Table 1. *Descriptive analysis of all participants' responses to the SASRAS*

	M	*SD*	Skewness		Kurtosis	
			Statistic	SE	Statistic	SE
The whole scale	4.23	.91	-.90	.37	3.58	.73
Item 1	4.28	1.09	-.59	.37	1.11	.73
This reading assignment in the English reading portfolio, where I can choose articles that interest me, has enhanced my motivation to read English extracurricular materials.						
Item 2	4.25	.93	-.94	.37	3.69	.73
This reading assignment in the English reading portfolio, where I can choose articles that interest me, has increased my interest in reading English extracurricular materials.						
Item 3	4.15	1.00	-.48	.37	2.03	.73
This reading assignment in the English reading portfolio, where I can choose articles that interest me, has helped me develop a habit of reading English extracurricular materials.						

Note: SASRAS = the students' attitudes towards self-selected reading in the portfolio assessment.

In line with Göksu's research (2015), participants generally agreed that the reading portfolio assignment helped them improve their reading skills (*M* = 4.46**,** *SD* = .68), as shown in Table Two. Specifically, they agreed that it enhanced their vocabulary skills **(**Item 2: *M* = 4.63**,** *SD* = .81) and improved their reading comprehension (Item 1: *M* = 4.60**,** *SD* = .93**)**. Furthermore, they agreed that the assignment allowed them to observe their own progress in reading ability (Item 4: *M* = 4.65**,** *SD* = .70).

Table 2. *Descriptive analysis of all participants' responses to the* SPBRRS

	M	*SD*	Skewness		Kurtosis	
			Statistic	SE	Statistic	SE
The whole scale	4.46	.68	.35	.37	.35	.73
Item 1	4.60	.93	-1.32	.37	4.66	.73
This assignment, which requires intensive reading of one article each week, has improved my English reading comprehension skills.						

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Item 2	4.63	.81	.19	.37	-.54	.73
This assignment, which requires intensive reading of one article each week, has enhanced my English vocabulary skills.						
Item 3	4.18	.81	.57	.37	.20	.73
This reading assignment in the English reading portfolio, where I can choose articles that interest me, has helped me develop an appreciation of English articles (e.g., elegant sentence structure and word choice).						
Item 4	4.65	.70	.14	.37	-.27	.73
Completing this weekly reading assignment in the English reading portfolio has allowed me to see improvements in my English reading ability.						
Item 5	4.33	.94	-.33	.37	.59	.73
This assignment, which requires intensive reading of one article each week, has enhanced my ability to analyze English grammar and sentence structures while reading.						
Item 6	4.40	.74	.36	.37	.01	.73
This assignment, which requires intensive reading of one article each week, has improved my understanding of the organizational structure of English articles.						

Note: SPBRRS = the students' perceptions of the benefits of the reading portfolio assessment for improving the reading skills scale.

As Table Three displays, participants agreed that the reading portfolio assignment could enhance their writing skills (*M* = 4.51**,** *SD* = .67), a finding similar to Starck's (1999), especially due to the requirement of composing a reflective text. Participants agreed that the assignment, which required intensive reading followed by a 50-word reflection, improved their writing skills (Item 1: *M* = 4.63, *SD* = .74). They also agreed that completing the weekly reading assignment allowed them to see improvements in their writing ability (Item 2: *M* = 4.40, *SD* = .71), and that the teacher's written corrective feedback on their reflections helped improve their writing (Item 3: *M* = 4.63, *SD* = .90). Lastly, participants agreed that the assignment enhanced their ability to structure and organize their writing in English (Item 4: *M* = 4.40, *SD* = .74).

Table 3. *Descriptive analysis of all participants' responses to the* SPBRWS

	M	*SD*	Skewness		Kurtosis	
			Statistic	SE	Statistic	SE
The whole scale	4.51	.67	.61	.37	-.15	.73
Item 1	4.63	.74	.34	.37	-.47	.73
This assignment, which requires intensive reading of one article each week followed by a 50-word reflection, has improved my English writing skills.						
Item 2	4.40	.71	1.06	.37	.53	.73
Completing this weekly reading assignment in the English reading portfolio has allowed me to see improvements in my English writing ability.						
Item 3	4.63	.90	.17	.37	-.83	.73
The teacher's written corrective feedback on my reflections has helped improve my writing skills.						
Item 4	4.40	.74	.36	.37	.01	.73
This assignment, which requires intensive reading of one article each week, has enhanced my ability to structure and organize my writing in English.						

Note: SPBRWS = the students' perceptions of benefits of reading portfolio assessment for improving writing skills scale.

Lastly, participants agreed that they benefited from the reading portfolio assignment in terms of fostering their personal development skills (*M* = 4.48**,** *SD* = .63) as shown in Table Four.

They agreed that the assignment helped them identify which topics they were interested in (Item 1: *M* = 4.75**,** *SD* = .81) and expanded their extracurricular knowledge (Item 5: *M* = 4.75**,** *SD* = .78). Additionally, participants agreed that the assignment helped them develop critical thinking skills (Item 2: *M* = 4.40**,** *SD* = .84), problem-solving skills (Item 3: *M* = 4.28**,** *SD* = .72), and creativity (Item 4: *M* = 4.23**,** *SD* = .95) through extensive reading and exposure to different types of information. These findings echo Brown's (2004) and Brown and Hudson's (2007) arguments regarding the benefits of portfolio assessment.

Table 4. *Descriptive analysis of all participants' responses to the SPBRPS*

	M	*SD*	Skewness		Kurtosis	
			Statistic	SE	Statistic	SE
The whole scale	4.48	.63	.29	.37	-.61	.73
Item 1	4.75	.81	-.12	.37	-.45	.73
This reading assignment in the English reading portfolio has helped me identify which topics I am interested in.						
Item 2	4.40	.84	.20	.37	-.41	.73
The weekly intensive reading of self-selected articles has helped me develop my critical thinking skills.						
Item 3	4.28	.72	.42	.37	.34	.73
The weekly intensive reading of self-selected articles has helped me develop my problem-solving skills.						
Item 4	4.23	.95	.09	.37	-.14	.73
This reading assignment in the English reading portfolio, through extensive reading and exposure to different information, has helped me develop my creativity.						
Item 5	4.75	.78	-.22	.37	-.17	.73
The weekly intensive reading of self-selected articles has expanded my extracurricular knowledge.						

Note: SPBRPS = the students' perceptions of the benefits of the reading portfolio assessment for facilitating personal development skills scale.

Addressing RQ 2:

As mentioned earlier, different numbers of students took the Reading 1 (for the pilot study; used as the pretest) and Reading 2 (for the formal study; used as the posttest) courses due to some students dropping the courses; invalid questionnaires were also excluded. Therefore, only data from 40 first-year English majors were retained for the paired samples *t* tests. As illustrated in Table Five, between the pretest and posttest scores, the differences were significant for students' perceptions of the benefits of the reading portfolio assessment for improving their reading skills (pretest: *M* = 4.18**,** *SD* = 0.66; posttest: *M* = 4.49**,** *SD* = 0.68**;** *t* = -2.93, *p* < .01**,** Cohen's *d* = 0.35, small effect; Cohen, 1988), writing skills (pretest: *M* = 4.11**,** *SD* = 0.64; posttest: *M* = 4.56**,** *SD* = 0.66; *t* = -3.83, *p* < .001, Cohen's *d* = 0.49, medium effect), and personal development skills (pretest: *M* = 4.31, *SD* = 0.61; posttest: *M* = 4.51, *SD* = 0.62; *t* = -1.97, *p* < .05, Cohen's *d* = 0.23, small effect). In other words, participants agreed that after completing the reading portfolio assignment for two semesters, they saw improvement in their reading, writing, and personal development skills.

Table 5. *The results of differences between the pre- and posttest scores for the tested variables*

Variables	Pretest		Posttest		*t*	Cohen's *d* (Effect Size)
	M	SD	M	SD		
SASRAS	4.15	.80	4.25	.93	-.72	--
SPBRRS	4.18	.66	4.49	.68	-2.93**	.35
SPBRWS	4.11	.64	4.56	.66	-3.83***	.49
SPBRPS	4.31	.67	4.51	.62	-1.97*	.23

Note: SASRAS = the students' attitudes towards self-selected reading in the portfolio assessment. SPBRRS = the students' perceptions of the benefits of the reading portfolio assessment for improving reading skills scale. SPBRWS = the students' perceptions of the benefits of the reading portfolio assessment for improving writing skills scale. SPBRPS = the students' perceptions of the benefits of the reading portfolio assessment for facilitating personal development skills scale. * = $p < .05$. ** = $p < .01$. *** = $p < .001$.

Qualitative Results

Qualitative data from the open-ended questions provided additional insights into participants' views on the portfolio and the teacher's feedback on their reflective writing.

Addressing RQ 3:

To address this question, a thematic analysis was specifically applied to the responses from the first open-ended question (*What are your thoughts on this reading portfolio assignment and suggestions for improving it?*). Participants expressed diverse opinions about this assignment. In general, a majority of students in the formal study had a positive attitude towards this assignment in terms of pushing them to study and to know more about current events, helping them to improve their vocabulary, reading, and writing skills, assisting them in developing a reading habit and obtaining teacher WCF or oral feedback on their writing skills from teacher-student writing conferences. However, they also put forward some suggestions, including (a) increasing the word count of the reflective writing (from 50 to 80 or even 150 words), (b) not asking students to use the designated format to finish this assignment because of different students having different learning styles, (c) not compiling the papers already read into a paper or digital folder, (d) the teacher-researcher sharing writing techniques via feedback, and (e) reflective writing needing to consist of two parts: summary (50 words) and reflection (50 words). Some students also suggested that in some weeks, the teacher-researcher could designate a topic for students to find relevant reading materials, so they could discuss this topic or their reflective writing with each other in class. Another crucial suggestion was that this assignment could be adjusted in a way that could allow students to read articles on odd weeks and to watch and transcribe meaningful and thought-provoking videos on even weeks (e.g., *TED Talks* and *English Speeches* on YouTube).

The second question (a multiple-choice question) was: *"Of the three teacher-written corrective feedback techniques (direct feedback and indirect feedback [using error codes and metalinguistic explanations]), which ones do you think are more helpful for improving your writing skills? Please provide reasons."* The results showed that 60% (38 responses) of the participants opted for metalinguistic explanations, 19% (12 responses) for direct feedback, 10% (6 responses) for both of the above, 6% (4 responses) for error codes, 1% (1 response) for a combination of error codes and direct feedback, and 3% (2 responses) for both indirect feedback techniques.

The third question was related to providing oral feedback: *"Are teacher-student writing conferences helpful for improving your writing skills? Please provide reasons";* 78% (50 students) of the participants said yes, 3% (2 students) said a little, 3% (2 students) said no, and 12% (8 students) said that they had not yet arranged a meeting with the teacher-researcher to discuss their writing.

Discussion

Crucial findings discovered in the present study are further discussed below.

First, participants in the current study reported a positive attitude towards the use of reading portfolio assessment. To be specific, because they could choose the articles they liked, this assignment heightened their reading motivation and their interest in reading extracurricular materials. In fact, there is no need to discuss how productive portfolio assessment is if students are amotivated (Burner, 2014), because measuring students' interests and attitudes is one of the requirements of a good portfolio (Cohen & Wiener, 2003). This finding aligns with previous research indicating positive student perceptions of portfolio assessment (Punyapratheep & Wudthayagorn, 2022). However, compared to other instructional activities, creating a reading portfolio folder is relatively rare in EFL reading courses. For example, only 23% (15 out of 64 students) of the participants in the current formal study had prior experience in creating a reading portfolio folder. Therefore, teachers must explain to students the benefits and also the limitations of this pedagogical task so that their positive attitudes towards it can be developed and their confidence in its usefulness can be enhanced. Notably, students' portfolio performance remained consistent across both semesters, with nearly identical average scores and no significant differences (fall semester: M = 86.10%, spring semester: M = 86.28%, t = -.08, p = .94). This suggests consistent application of evaluation criteria and stable student work quality throughout the year, highlighting the portfolio's reliability as an assessment tool (Brown, 2004).

Second, the study participants perceived that this portfolio assignment was able to enhance their reading comprehension skills in aspects of, for example, improving their abilities to understand words in a text and comprehending the grammatical and organizational structures of a text. This might be because of two requirements in this reading portfolio assignment: reading interesting articles and doing it intensively. The study's participants were allowed to choose reading materials that interested them. Cambria and Guthrie (2010) argued that reading interest is an individual's excitement about engaging in reading written materials and delight in finding new information, and this factor has proved to play a crucial role in reading comprehension (Springer et al., 2017). As Belloni and Jongsma (1978) stated, "students comprehend better when they are interested in what they are reading" (p. 107). Another requirement of this assignment was that students needed to read articles intensively by looking up the meanings of unfamiliar words/phrases and fully understanding sentence structures (Macalister, 2011). The benefits of intensive reading for improving reading comprehension have been confirmed in previous research (e.g., Miftah, 2013; Göksu, 2015; Zhang, 2010). Therefore, it is suggested that with proper guidance, students be allowed to take charge of finding reading materials that interest them and read those materials intensively as a part of meaningful classroom reading activities.

Third, participants also reported that intensive reading in the reading portfolio assignment benefited the development of their writing skills, for example, improving the abilities of structuring and organizing their writing. They also considered that composing a reflective text regularly could improve their writing skills, which corresponds to previous research (Boumediene et al., 2018).

According to Giles (2010), aside from elevating writing skills, another essential function of reflective writing is to nurture a habit of self-reflective thinking. Harmer (2004) also suggested that teachers should spend more time helping students develop writing habits so that they can feel more comfortable writing in English and be more engaged in extended writing activities. Hence, to further improve students' writing skills, reflective writing needs to be integrated into the reading portfolio assignment.

Fourth, the reading portfolio assignment was found to significantly enhance students' personal development skills, particularly in helping them identify their areas of interest, gain extracurricular knowledge, and develop critical thinking, problem-solving skills, and creativity. This finding highlights the importance of allowing students to engage with materials that are meaningful to them, which in turn promotes a deeper sense of responsibility for their own learning (Zimmerman, 2000; Butler & Winne, 1995). With proper guidance, students who are tasked with choosing their own reading materials and submitting assignments regularly are more likely to develop self-regulation, as argued by Nguyen & Ikeda (2015), which is an essential component of continuous learning.

Fifth, although no statistically significant difference was found in the students' attitudes towards reading portfolio assessment between the pre- and posttest scores, as shown in Table Three, this factor was highly correlated with the students' perceptions of the benefits of this task in improving their reading ($r = .77$, $p < .001$), writing ($r = .69$, $p < .001$), and personal development skills ($r = .80$, $p < .001$), which further highlights the importance of developing students' positive attitudes towards this authentic pedagogical activity in the first place. The significant differences found in the other three variables between the pre- and posttest scores illustrate the sustained benefits of the reading portfolio assessment if carried out in the long run.

Participants regarded WCF by the teacher-researcher as being useful for enhancing their writing abilities, aligning with Ferris' (1999, 2004) argument that WCF plays a critical role in writing accuracy. With respect to their preferences for teacher WCF techniques based on the findings of the second open-ended question, 60% of the responses preferred metalinguistic explanations, 19% favored direct feedback, but only 6% opted for another form of indirect feedback, that is, using error codes. There were some similar reasons for them to choose metalinguistic explanations. For example, Student A wrote: *"I can obtain enough information about my errors and how to fix them."* Student B said: *"This feedback-giving technique can let me know what mistakes I have made and help me not to make the same mistakes again."* Student C expressed a similar opinion: *"It is the right method to help students think how to fix their errors."* Only a few students considered using error codes effective in terms of helping them improve their writing skills. As Student D said, sometimes, he might forget what some codes stood for. However, Student E still thought: *"The method of using error codes can help me find the errors on my own."* Student E further compared metalinguistic explanations and using error codes: *"Metalinguistic explanations let me know the errors I have made without directly tell [sic] me the answer, but it's more clear [sic] than codes."* In addition, considering the benefits of direct feedback, Student F said: *"Receiving direct feedback can help me know how to revise and make my writing better and can also help me apply what I have learned in next writing assignments."* Student G preferred direct feedback, saying: *"Directly pinpointing my errors is more useful for me because sometimes I really don't know where my errors are."* Although more than a dozen participants in the study preferred direct feedback, this technique has proved to be not as effective as indirect feedback in

terms of improving students' writing skills in the long run (Ferris & Helt, 2000; Lalande, 1982; Lee, 1997).

Regarding the usefulness of teacher-student writing conferences, 78% of participants (50 students) reported that this oral feedback-giving technique was of use to them in enhancing their writing skills. For example, Student H said: *"Yes, it's useful. I will read the teacher's written corrective feedback first in order to get a better idea about how to discuss and fix my writing errors when having a teacher-student writing meeting."* Student I wrote: *"It is very useful because I can listen to the teacher analyze my writing objectively and know how to improve my writing."* More importantly, Student J said: *"Yeah, very useful. In this one-on-one meeting, I don't need to worry about how other classmates think of me…[there is] relatively no pressure and [it is] more focused on improving my own writing abilities."* Based on the above discussion, it is suggested that teacher-student writing conferences be held regularly, even though they are time-consuming, so that they can function as a rapport-building arena for individualized instruction and goal setting (Eckstein, 2013), and students can also take part in the interactive process, clarify teachers' suggestions, and negotiate meaning with teachers (Shin, 2003). Direct and indirect feedback (i.e., metalinguistic explanations) are given according to students' levels of writing skills—that is, generally, direct feedback is provided for lower-level writers and indirect feedback for higher-level writers.

Lastly, the results of the first open-ended question indicated that a majority of students had positive attitudes towards the reading portfolio assignment in aspects of, for example, prodding them to study, assisting them in developing a reading habit, and enhancing their vocabulary, reading, and writing skills. As mentioned previously, an integral suggestion from a participant was that in addition to reading articles that interested them on even weeks, they could alternatively watch and transcribe informative and inspirational videos on odd weeks. The positive effect of watching authentic English videos on English skills has been confirmed in previous research (e.g., Metruk, 2018). Therefore, it is also suggested that video-watching tasks can be included as a part of the reading portfolio assignment.

Conclusion

This study critically explored the role of reading portfolio assessment and teacher feedback in shaping EFL students' perceptions and enhancing their writing quality. While the findings indicated that students responded positively to this approach, the study's context-specific nature limits the generalizability of the results (Coghlan & Brannick, 2005). This limitation is especially pertinent due to the homogeneity of the participant group and the potential for selection bias. Future research should broaden its scope to include a more diverse range of student populations to increase external validity. Additionally, future studies could benefit from analyzing students' selected articles and reflective writing tasks to provide deeper insights into their engagement and reflective learning processes. Moreover, researchers should consider integrating affective factors, such as anxiety, which may be influenced by the participants' homework workload, to offer a more holistic understanding of the impact of portfolio assessment. Despite these limitations, the study offers valuable insights into L2 reading pedagogy. It highlights the effectiveness of reading portfolios in terms of fostering students' reading and writing skills while promoting personal growth. The findings suggest that incorporating portfolio assessments in EFL classrooms can significantly contribute to both linguistic and personal development.

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Appendices
Appendix A
Two Examples of Students' Vocabulary Work

Example 1:

In the past two years, of the 231 people sponsored by the plan, one-sixth were from abroad. Most of them have already shared their "round the island" experiences in Yang's blog and written their own island biking stories.
This seemingly simple wish has, in fact, helped make Taiwan's wondrous bike travel popular with foreign visitors.
奇妙的 adj.

Rural Villages: Enchanting Pastoral Landscapes
迷人的 adj.
Chihshang in Taidong County. Yuli in Hualian County. Dapi in Yunlin County. Houbi in Tainan County. These destinations all showcase pastoral landscapes that are so poignant, they evoke deep emotions in many ethnic Chinese. Community-building efforts have generated a vitality similar to that of the spring planting season, when the soil is broken up and new seedlings germinate, yielding unique green sightseeing opportunities.
田園的 adj.
淒美的 adj.
喚起 V.
發芽 V.

Independent travelers can shuttle between these pastoral paradises, while tour groups flock directly into Taiwan's appealing recreational farms.
穿梭 V.
仙境 n.
In recent years, Taiwan's leisure farms have even developed strong name recognition in Singapore and Malaysia, drawing many ethnic Chinese families from the two countries.
draw from 從...中得到

More than 140,000 foreign nationals have already visited Taiwan's recreational farms this year, according to statistics from the Taiwan Leisure Farming Development Association, signs that a 20-year campaign to build tourism around local agriculture is having some success. The initiative first positioned farms as tourist orchards, and then they slowly evolved into integrated recreational areas complete with restaurants, accommodation and DIY farming experiences.
協會 n.
倡議 n.
定位 n.
果園 n.
整合 V.

Now, these leisure farms combine a service standard that is more refined than in Malaysia with an atmosphere that is more relaxed and natural than in Japan. They are better suited for a family travel experience than those in Australia or New Zealand, where visitors are limited to simply enjoying the scenes of the farms or livestock operations.
精緻的 adj.
合適的 adj.

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Example 2:

Phrase

1. become/be obsessed with…:(變得)深深著迷於…/對…過分擔心
2. drive/push sb over the edge:將某人逼至瘋狂
3. wash ashore:被沖上岸
4. let go of…:放下/放開…
5. make a point of Ving:特別去做某事
6. wind up +分詞:最後/到頭來…

Grammar

He starts to feel as if he has broken ties with humanity.

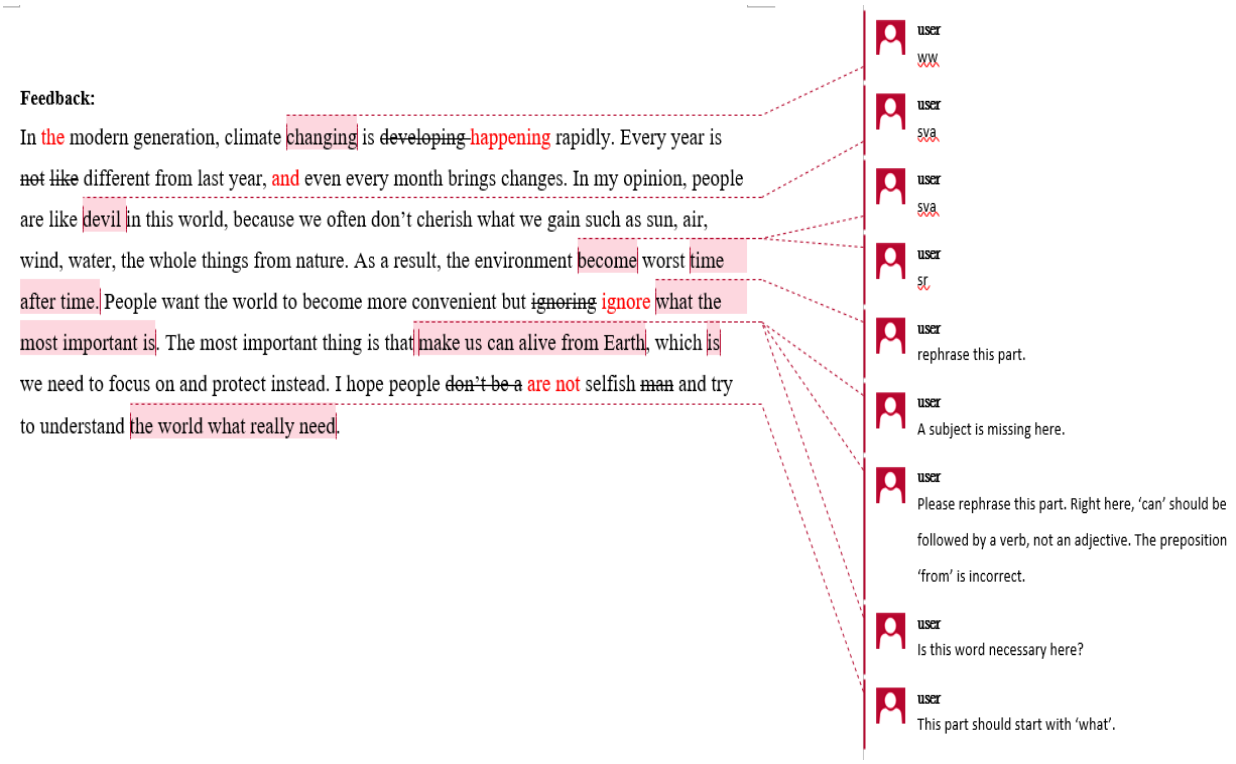
as if 表「彷彿、好像」之意，為副詞連接詞，引導副詞子句修飾主要子句，亦常接在 seem、look、smell、sound、feel 等動詞之後，使用時有三種時態:

- 表示事實、接近事實或單純表示情況和極大的可能時，後面的子句用直說法表示，亦即動詞如實反應動作發生的時間
- 表與現在事實相反或不可能發生的情況時，動詞即用過去式
- 表與過去事實相反時，動詞用過去式或過去完成式。

Appendix B

Two Examples of Students' Journal Writing Feedback

Example 1:



Feedback:

In the modern generation, climate changing is ~~developing~~ happening rapidly. Every year is ~~not like~~ different from last year, and even every month brings changes. In my opinion, people are like devil in this world, because we often don't cherish what we gain such as sun, air, wind, water, the whole things from nature. As a result, the environment become worst time after time. People want the world to become more convenient but ~~ignoring~~ ignore what the most important is. The most important thing is that make us can alive from Earth, which is we need to focus on and protect instead. I hope people ~~don't be a~~ are not selfish ~~man~~ and try to understand the world what really need.

user
ww

user
sva

user
sva

user
sr

user
rephrase this part.

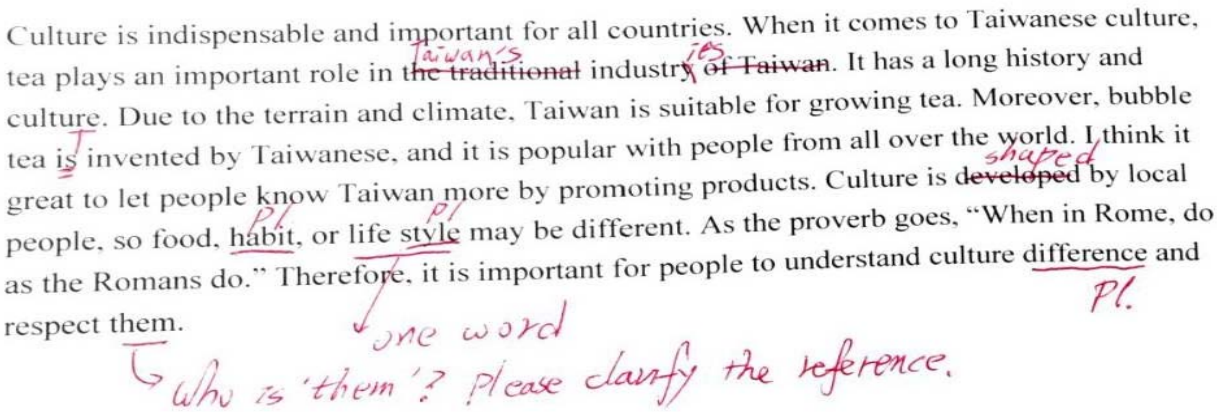
user
A subject is missing here.

user
Please rephrase this part. Right here, 'can' should be followed by a verb, not an adjective. The preposition 'from' is incorrect.

user
Is this word necessary here?

user
This part should start with 'what'.

Example 2:



Feedback:

Culture is indispensable and important for all countries. When it comes to Taiwanese culture, tea plays an important role in ~~the traditional~~ Taiwan's industry ~~of Taiwan~~ its. It has a long history and culture. Due to the terrain and climate, Taiwan is suitable for growing tea. Moreover, bubble tea is invented by Taiwanese, and it is popular with people from all over the world. I think it great to let people know Taiwan more by promoting products. Culture is ~~developed~~ shaped by local people, so food, habit, or life style may be different. As the proverb goes, "When in Rome, do as the Romans do." Therefore, it is important for people to understand culture difference and respect them.

Pl. Pl. Pl.

one word

↳ Who is 'them'? Please clarify the reference.

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