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THE ROLE OF PORTFOLIOS IN BOOSTING YOUNG ADULT LEARNERS'

WRITING SKILLS

THESIS BY

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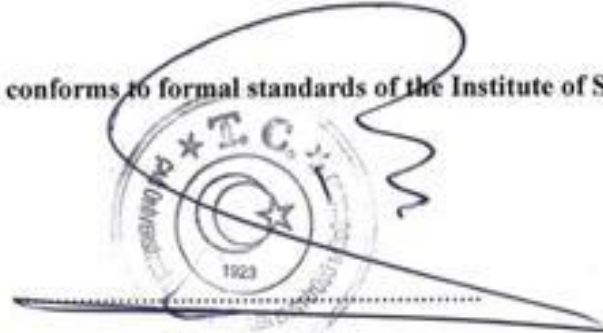Supervisor- Head of Examining Committee: Assist. Prof. Dr. Kim Raymond HUMISTON

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Mehmet Veysi BABAYİĞİT

ÖZET

GENÇ YETİŞKİN ÖĞRENCİLERİN YAZMA BECERLERİNİ GELİŞTİRMEDE DOSYALAMA TEKNİĞİNİN ROLÜ

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Genç yetişkin öğrenciler farklı amaçlardaki çalışmaları yapmak için harika bir içgüdü ya da kapasiteye sahiptirler. Düşüncelerimizi ya da mesajlarımızı iletmek için hepimizin etkili yazma becerilerine ihtiyacı vardır. Bu tezin amacı farklı çalışmaları içeren bir dosyalama tekniğini kullanarak genç yetişkinlerin yazma becerilerini geliştirmek ve yardım etmektir. Araştırmanın başında, İngilizcedeki problemlerle ilgili fikirleri için öğretmenlerle görüşmeler ve öğrencilerle ön-anketler uygulandı. Sonunda ise öğrenciler dosyalama tekniğinin kullanımı ile ilgili fikirlerini ifade etmek için son-anketler yaptılar. Bu çalışmanın diğer amacı öğrencilerin telaffuzunu, dil kullanımını, heceleme, noktalama ve grameri geliştirerek genç yetişkin öğrencilerin İngilizceyi etkili kullanmayı sağlamaktır. Bu çalışmaya Bismil Anadolu İmam Hatip Lisesinde yaşları on dört ile on beş arasında olan ve AA ile AB sınıfında olan altmış öğrenci katılmıştır. Süreç altı haftayı aldı. Sonuç olarak, genç yetişkin öğrencilerin analiz etme, muhakeme, sonuç çıkarma, öz farkındalık becerileri gibi kelimelerini, kritik ve yaratıcı düşüncelerini geliştirdiğini bulduk.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Genç Yetişkin Öğrenciler, Geliştirme, Yazma Becerileri,

Portfolyo, Öğretmenler

ABSTRACT

THE ROLE OF PORTFOLIOS IN BOOSTING YOUNG ADULT LEARNERS'

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Young adult learners have a great instinct or capacity to conduct tasks for different purposes. In order to convey our thoughts or messages we all need to have effective writing skills. The aim of this thesis is to help and improve writing skills of young adult learners by using a portfolio including different tasks .At the beginning of the study, interviews with teachers and pre-questionnaires with students were applied for their ideas about the problems in English learning. At the end, students had post-questionnaires to express their ideas on the role of portfolio usage. Another goal of this study is to make young adult learners use English effectively by improving their pronunciation, the use of language, spelling, punctuation and grammar. Sixty high school students who were in AA and AB classes and whose ages were between fourteen and fifteen .The duration took nearly six weeks. As a result, we have found that the young adult learners have boosted their vocabulary, critical and creative thinking as well as, analyzing, reasoning, deducing, self-awareness skills.

Key words: Young Adult Learners, Improve, Writing Skills, Portfolio, Teachers

ABBREVIATIONS

9th AA   : 9th Anatolian A class

9th AB   : 9th Anatolian B class

EFL   : English as a Foreign Language

L2   : Second Language

SLWAI   : Second Language Writing Anxiety Inventory

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background of the Study

Many social factors, demands and improvements in society, technology and science have affected education system a lot. These also change the way of teaching and assessment. As there is a different way of learning compared to the previous academic styles, this new type of learning is known as portfolio and has a significant role in assessment ways and techniques (Fourie& Van Niekerk, 2001). Generally, the former academic education had the aim of enabling students to have some specific knowledge on a domain but now, education tries to get rid of traditional ways of teaching. It aims to integrate both "learning" and "teaching" as individual. Students are aimed to learn on their own in order to become more autonomous by researchers. To achieve this, learners initially need to be guided in the process of learning so that they can consciously learn to become aware of their mistakes and correct them thoroughly. With regard of this aim, exercises with drills have a significant place in this process of education. Recently, most of the tasks are acted on students' interactive attendance to the tasks and activities.

Assessments of students are generally done by tests such as multiple-choice, true false, matching items and these are rather weak for getting clear ideas on students' development as this traditional way of this assessment causes learners to grasp basic information or schemas rather than conceptual understanding, and they mostly try to concentrate on minor, discrete components of the domain (Dochy, 2001).In addition, these tests have less convenient information on students' conceptions so they are not appropriate for evaluating higher cognitive skills such as finding solutions, thinking deeply and finding results (Romberg, 1993). They also cannot assess a learner's ability

to order suitable information which is mostly based on analytical thinking (Shepard, 1989). In addition to this, they may be good for getting some ideas on what is easy to test-memorization of procedures and rote learning which entails fast memorization with little information and conducting simple tasks (Mumme, 1991).Learners are required to get and built their ideas so the society always tries to make them use cognitive skills as problem solving, analyzing data, and presenting this data both in oral and written formats (Dochy, 2001).The processes and outcomes of learning can be mostly managed by using alternative assessments. One of them could be using portfolios for both assessment and improving learners' writing skills as portfolios have an important role in the assessment of the students' individual or group performance and boosting their writing skills during a period.

Writings skills are quiet important in terms of having a fruitful communication because effective writing skills let us convey our thoughts and messages more clearly and easily. The writing skills could be the use of language, grammar, punctuation, and spelling. Currently, writing skill has received significant interest and a considerable role in target and foreign languages teaching and learning but teaching writing is different from other skills of a language because writing is mostly used as a support skill (Reid, 2002). The way of teaching writing in English classes has been quite a traditional way of the end product to the process of creating writing. Students need more creative ways and emphasis to enlarge their writing skills. By such creative ways and focus on writing process, students would be able to learn how to boost their writing, how to find solutions to the problems and how to analyze. But it is always difficult for learners to assess their writings via traditional assessment ways as impromptu writing tests. As a result, new ways of assessment have been developed to indicate what students acquire and what they can manage with their own skills. These new types of evaluation are

named "authentic" or "alternative" measures. When taken all of the procedures of alternative assessment into consideration, it is clear that portfolio has been a very well known technique, recently. Students' success, evaluation and self–reflection in multiple areas can be showed via portfolios (Paulson &Paulson, 1991). Portfolio evaluation is not a complete process and it doesn't evaluate progress and performance of the learners through traditional ways. It does not allow instructors to evaluate their student's performances with a defined period of time, either.

Moreover, portfolios are often very effective and continuous in improving writing skills, writing assessment, having accurate decisions and being autonomous for both learners and teachers. Gosselin (1998) asserts that portfolio isn't a complete evaluation which is a learning process that shows and documents learner improvement at some specific times. The most important aims of portfolio evaluation are supporting learners to get more autonomous, taking the control of their own learning, making decisions, taking roles in the evaluation of their own work and working out the problems they may encounter individually. Epstein(2005) supports that portfolio assessment is effective in converting the role of the teacher away from forming comparative schemes of success and toward developing students' success via evaluation feedback and self-reflection. In addition to this, Neiman (1999) supports the idea that though students' active participation is substantial during the portfolio assessment process, the teacher is the real key to the accomplished use of portfolio assessment in order to have fruitful results but students always have the most active roles in conducting and managing the goals in a study.

This study deals with improving writing skills of young adult learners in Bismil Anatolian High School in Diyarbakır. Bismil Anatolian High School, founded in 2013

has approximately 400 students .This school is located in Bismil which is a district of Diyarbakır, in the south-east of Turkey. In addition, most of the students who attend this school are from rural areas. Both the students and their families have poor education as most of their parents are illiterate. Some of their families are rich while some are too poor. Also, the level of English almost all of the students have is so poor that they cannot even express themselves effectively. After three months of teaching, the researcher found out that students have some important problems in writing such as spelling mistakes, grammar errors, cohesion, coherence and the like. To overcome this problem, portfolio and its assessment have seemed effective as it let them think critically, write freely and get aware of what they have done in an ongoing process. So this research may be effective for evoking young adult learners' writing skills by using a portfolio with some writing tasks because a portfolio may work best and a portfolio is a purposeful collection of students work those exhibit students' efforts, progress and achievement in one or more areas(Paulson, F.Leon ; Paulson,Pearl P. ; Meyer, Carol A., 2003).

To sum up, this study was conducted for both improving students' writing, analyzing, critical thinking, reasoning and deducting skills .Also the assessment was for grading in order to both motivate and give responsibility to students. The type of the portfolio used in this study is mostly similar to showcase portfolio as students try to do their best to show some good pieces of works for their development in order to gain successful grades. Moreover, the type of the portfolio used in this study may be like Record-Keeping portfolio as students' portfolios were kept and the grades were given based on these collected files. The most significant fact about keeping the portfolios in this study is that it would be really beneficial for the young adult learners' development of writing skills and assessment.

1.2. Problem Statement of the Study

Young adult learners stated that they could not understand the skills of English such as speaking, reading and listening and they mostly had problems in writing as they could not use the sub-skills correctly. Students also could not form sentences with correct subjects, verbs, auxiliary verbs, prepositions and conjunctions. Some could not even spell the English words correctly and were faced with many problems in spelling. Some said that they were not aware of what they wrote during the writing classes. In other words, they did not know the functions of writing, they wrote only during English courses and they could not apply them to language skills in real life situations. As a result, boosting their writing skills through portfolios was thought would help these young adult learners with the writing problems they had been encountering in their English classes.

1.3. Purpose of the Study

The most significant goal of the study was to contribute young adult learners' writing skills by using portfolios with different writing tasks. Students would have the chance of using and learning writing sub-skills thanks to these different writing tasks. Another aim was to let young adults learners use the language effectively and correctly in written language. Also, students' spelling, grammar, punctuation, cohesion and coherence would be improved in written language. These improvements were aimed to lead successful self-reflection and self-assessments throughout the study.

1.4. The Research Question

1. How can I use portfolios to improve the writing skills of young adult learners?

1.5. Operational Definitions

Writing skills can be thought as spelling, punctuation, grammar mistakes, coherence, and cohesion (as cited in skills you need, 2014, n.d.)

Rote learning is a way of memorization and generally avoids comprehension. It is mostly used for quick preparation for a task or an exam because it requires little memorization with simple tasks. It can be used in many domains as phonics in reading, multiplication tables in mathematics, the periodic table in chemistry, or any basic formulae in any science.

Writing anxiety is a real burden for students when it is not dealt with appropriate techniques effectively. It is defined as the 'fear of the writing process that outweighs the projected gain from ability to write' (Thompson, 1980, p.121).

Plagiarism is to copy someone's ideas or works and show them as their own ideas. Plagiarism is stealing information and the one daring this may be sentenced to prison.

A Portfolio is a collection of materials, products put together in a meaningful way to show the practice or skills and learning of an educational practitioner or a student. They are used for different purposes and these purposes vary on the way the portfolios are given, designed and constructed. Another definition is that a portfolio includes known collection of materials gathered during a period of time by the learners in order to provide information, skills in related area (Belanoff and Dickson, 1991;O'Malley and Pierce, 1992; Allaei, 1992; Hamp-Lyons *et al.*, 1992; Yancey, 1992; Markstein*et al.*, 1992; Hamp-Lyons and Condon, 1993; Moya and O'Malley,

1994). In a portfolio, Statement of originality, work philosophy, career goals, resume, and skill areas can be included (Retrieved from www.clarke.edu).

1.6. Significance of the Study

The present study is closely linked to my previous action research study on improving young adult learners' writing skills in EFL. I think that this close relationship between my action research and this current study is quiet fruitful because it contributes to the researcher in terms of professional development through self-observation. From an inexperienced novice English teacher towards becoming an experienced English teacher this study did open new insights and ideas about my professional development. Moreover, the study gave me a great chance to monitor the study and have accurate results on the application, the procedure and analysis processes of the study. Finding effective solutions and demolishing language learning barriers have been my greatest aims throughout the study.

During the investigation, application and analysis of the study, I have encountered many different studies, theories and applications of portfolio usage for developing writing skills. I hope my study to be useful for other English teachers who wants to develop the writing skills of their learners. In addition, I believe that this study will be a good sample for language teachers who seek effective and enjoyable writing activities. In addition, students may also get over their writing fears and language learning barriers thanks to this study.

1.7. Limitations

The main limitation of this study is that it was conducted with sixty beginner level students studying in Bismil Anatolian Religious High School in Turkey in Turkey. All of the students were bilinguals, some were the native speakers of Kurdish and the others were the native speakers of Arabic. Their second language was Turkish, and English was their foreign language. Their ages were between fourteen and fifteen. The study would be better if it had involved multiple participants with different characters.

The use of portfolios was rather beneficial for students to have developed writing skills for written language as portfolio usage was significant for demolishing language barrier in written language. The pre-questionnaires and post-questionnaires were also beneficial to have some ideas about students' feelings and reactions towards this study. Unfortunately, I had time management problems for applying many different tasks and also I had great problems with plagiarism as students tried to make exact copies from internet or Google translate. In this study, simple writing tasks were preferred to improve writing skills as difficult tasks might be both difficult and de-motivating for beginner level students.

In conclusion, it has been found that most of students have problems in learning the target language and these problems are multiple as in speaking, reading, writing and listening and the most significant one is certainly writing because students need to express themselves effectively by using writing skills and writing has an important role in communication. In order to overcome these writing barriers as spelling, grammar, cohesion and coherence, students and instructors are mostly on the idea of using portfolio in writing.

CHAPTER 2

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Portfolio usage in developing writing and assessment method of portfolio were aimed to be introduced in this study. Specific and clear ideas on portfolio usage and its assessments give a way to a successful application in this study. The followings show about portfolio's definition, developing process of a portfolio, portfolio types, selection of contexts. Also there are some ideas and studies on writing anxiety, writing skills and sample portfolio assessments.

2.1. What Is a Portfolio?

Portfolios are mostly used in the evaluation of student's performance or developing some language skills of them, however; this method has been used in many fields by many persons such as architects, painters, photographers and artists in showing their works. Of course, the usage of portfolios at schools for students is certainly different from the ones that artists do.

Portfolio shows students improvements in different areas during a period of time. The collection of the portfolios must contain student active participation in selecting criteria, correction and self-reflection (Paulson, Paulson and Mayer 1991: 60). This is correlated with the idea that the usage of portfolios is not restricted to only once or twice, it needs a period of time. Arter and Spandel (1991) define portfolio as a purposeful collection of a learner's work exhibiting to the student or others' efforts and achievement some areas. In addition, Grace (1992, p.1), defines as "portfolio is a record of the child's process of learning: what the child has learned and how she has gone about learning; how she thinks, questions, analyzes, synthesizes, produces, creates; and how she interacts--intellectually, emotionally and socially-with others". Actually there

are some similar definitions of portfolios and these similarities are generally among being systematic, purposeful, and meaningful collections. Collins identifies portfolio as an evidence collected in accordance with an aim and the evidence is the documents for one person or a group to show self-reflection (1992, p. 452).

Winsor and Ellefson also defines that portfolio a product showing the process of selection, reflection and evaluation (1995, p.68). Lastly Simon and Forgette-Giroux (2000, p.36) define it as an incomplete process done by the students to comment on the aimed task, the teacher and/or peers try to assess each other's progress.

2.2. The Order of Portfolio Content

A portfolio contains is students' work collected and done during a period of time. It is not based on random selection of tasks .Therefore, deciding its' purpose, evidence consisting of portfolio, and its' assessment criteria are rather important for a good organization (Barton & Collins, 1997). Determining the purposes for the portfolio is really the most significant start of portfolio preparation because it affects the process of the purposes, determining kinds of items, issues and demands of students during the learning period. This is also helpful self-assessment and to determine the students' weak .Therefore, it is important for the qualifications and the collections stills of items in the portfolio. Trying to define which evidence should be collected, who, how, how often they will be collected and assessed is also significant for enabling students have responsibility and possession feelings (Kuhs, 1994).Determining the assessment criteria for the portfolio has an important role because this lets students recognize, and select work which is thought high quality. Assessment criteria should be explicit and easy to understand as this is significant for students to define their weaknesses and act out for fulfill this. Therefore, rubrics may be beneficial for assessment. In addition, this

assessment may encourage discussions among teachers, students, and other concerning the results of the portfolio.

2.3. The Significant Factors in Portfolio Developing Process

It has always been a good idea to use portfolios in the courses in order to observe learners' improvement and have effective results. Asturias (1994, p.87) and De Fina (1992, p.14) gave some ideas to find solutions to the problem and make portfolio as an important learning and assessment tool. According to this study, Students should choose what to include in their portfolios and be responsible for keeping them up to date. Also, the portfolio should be made clear and its purposes should be understood correctly by students. The items that would be included in the portfolio are also very important as they need to be decided by teachers, students, parents and school administrations, also these items should be gathered as a purposeful, systematic, and meaningful. Portfolios should be reachable easily and shouldn't be a complete work; they should show students' efforts, progress, and achievements over a period of time. Portfolios should also be considered works enhancing students' learning. The portfolio activities should be suitable to students' level and the items should be multifunctional. Assessment has a sustainable factor as it must be defined clearly and be applied to the work. At the end of the applications, appropriate feedback by teachers should be given to students, parents on the usage of the portfolio.

2.4. Evaluation Criteria of Portfolios

There are different ways of portfolio evaluation. Some specific goals and ways are defined at the beginning, then the application and results with feedback on portfolios are taken into account. The aim of the portfolio has an important role for evaluation. For

instance, if you want to assess students' progress for a period of time, it will be better if you provide evidence for grades. A rubric may be used for grading. If the aim is to improve students' learning and define their needs, then, works or task need to be determined by the teachers and feedback should be given to students on tasks.

2.5. Portfolio Types

There are different types of portfolios and they are not restricted to an absolute description or content. So many researchers have defined the types of portfolios differently. According to Slater (1996, types of portfolios are showcase, open-format and checklist portfolio. In a showcase portfolio, students are restricted to show only a few things for evidence to support their learning; however, students are free to give anything they want to be thought as evidence learning objectives in an open-format portfolio. A checklist portfolio is composed of a predetermined number of items such as a course syllabus which will have a many tasks and works for students to complete. These tasks and works are generally defined beforehand.

Haladyn (1997) describes those five types of portfolios which are named as ideal, showcase, documentation, evaluation, and class portfolio. The ideal portfolio includes students' whole works and this portfolio doesn't give any mark which is important for students to assess themselves. The showcase portfolio stands for the best student's work and this may not be appropriate for grading or assessment as students need to choose and assess their works on themselves. The documentation portfolio contains works done over a period of time and these works mostly reflect improvement and growth based on students' outcomes of the portfolio. Quality and quantity data are involved in this type. There is another type of portfolio which is suitable for grading as it contains students' works determined mostly by the teacher and sometimes by

students. This type is the evaluation portfolio. The last one is the class portfolio or classroom portfolio which involves student's marks and teachers' ideas.

Melograno (2000, p.101),who is another researcher, had worked on portfolios in details and defined many types of portfolios. According to Melograne, there are nine types of portfolios. The followings are the types of the portfolios done by Melograne;

2.5.1. Personal Portfolio

This portfolio is suitable for self-reflection and sharing as it gives a holistic view about students and to celebrate their interests. Pictures, awards, videos, or other memorabilia items may be included in the portfolio.

2.5.2. Group Portfolio

There should be a cooperative learning group and each member of this group gives some individual items such as samples, pictures, community project effectively to increase and support the function of the whole group.

2.5.3. Thematic Portfolio

This portfolio is generally related to a unit such as Rational Numbers, Force unit and the tasks mostly last from2 to 6 weeks. It may also reflect cognitive, affective skills and views of the students about these units.

2.5.4. Showcase Portfolio

Generally, students try to put their best works in this type of portfolio. And the works or tasks are limited. They show students' growth over a period of time. For instance, the portfolio being used in the new primary curriculum which was put into practice in 2004-2005 school years by Ministry of National Education in Turkey can be

seen as an example for this type. Another example was done in Vermont and Kentucky, at the beginning of the 1990 years to implement for mathematics and writing in grades 4 and 8. Of course, five to seven examples of best works of students reflecting high performance were included in the portfolio in both states.

2.5.5. Electronic Portfolio

They are made as a result of technological advances. But, if they are simply software databases such as storage for pictures, sound, or words, then they are similar to a hanging file. Thanks to current technology, we can have our information captured or storaged in the form of text, graphics, sound, and video. In addition, the learners can have the chance to save writing samples, solutions to mathematics problems, samples of art work, science projects and multimedia presentations in one coherent document (Lankes, 1995). It is clear that electronic portfolios have great advantages to gather, store and manage the information compared to traditional portfolios. In recent years, electronic portfolios are aimed to be used for improvement of students at schools thanks to development in technology.

2.5.6. Working Portfolio

This is a continuous type of portfolio. It is an ongoing portfolio and it includes collections of student work samples of unit work products forms over a time such as daily, weekly and monthly.

2.5.7. Record-Keeping Portfolio

There are written exams, proficiency tests, anecdotal notes, frequency index scales, narrative descriptors, behavior checklists usually kept by teachers. The portfolio offers necessary assessment samples and progress of students for teachers.

2.5.8. Integrated Portfolio

This portfolio is aimed to view the whole student from works in all disciplines which might be required or optional. This type can be used for all subjects or several subjects at schools.

2.5.9. Multiyear Portfolio

This type of portfolio should be kept at the schools as it can be used to follow students' progress from primary school until university education. Moreover, the learners could collect items from different levels over 2-, 3-, or 4-year intervals.

We cannot define some specific types of portfolios as there are different kinds of them described with various functions or purposes by many researchers. In addition, when the type of the portfolio of the study is thought, we cannot define a clear type.

2.6. Writing Skills

Writing skills are needed for effective communication. Without having fruitful tools it might be difficult to enable students make interaction effectively with written language. Written language works best when it is applied to the target language with suitable tools. It is important to conduct this learning of writing with familiar tasks: when learning new tools, use familiar tasks; when learning new tasks, use familiar tools (Barret, 1991). Writing also has a very important factor in educational testing because a great deal of educational testing that students experience happens via writing (Leki, 1999). According to Raisman, some students have the difficulty in writing to express themselves clearly and intellectually due to their limited knowledge of the second language and capacity or the dissatisfaction of expressing themselves appropriately in the target language. Silva (1993) asserts that having limited capacity and knowledge in

the target language impede their intellectual and complex thoughts to express in writing. Therefore, we can see that most of the problems stem from classroom practices. Instead of just focusing on correction of writing works, it will be better if we deal with decreasing anxiety in writing by using a portfolio. Leki (1999) suggests a non-punitive, non-judgmental, and non-mixed message process approach to teaching L2 writing by having a well-planned portfolio. Students need to know writing skills correctly and they should study harder to improve these skills.

2.7. Writing Anxiety

While writing, students may also have writing anxiety of the target language. Writing anxiety is peculiar to the writing skill of the language (Bline, Lowe, Meixner, Nouri, & Pearce, 2001; Bugoon& Hale, 1983). It is described as the 'fear of the writing process that outweighs the projected gain from ability to write' (Thompson, 1980, p.121). While taking these into consideration it is clear that we had better cope with writing anxiety before applying the tasks in the portfolio. Then it was realized that writing anxiety negatively affects writing performance of second language learners (Pajares& Johnson, 1994; Smith, 1984).

Another study on writing anxiety support the idea that students having writing anxiety are not so talented and their anxiety shows their interest in writing. Such students may not want to write and take actions in writing tasks. They may be less risk-taker in their writing and less straightforward and clear when they write (Smith, 1984). Daly (1979) also discusses on the relationship which is among less risk taking, being less straightforward and clear in writing that it should be conducted by putting forward a reciprocal interaction between skills and anxiety.

Another study by Faigley, Daly, and Witte (1981) was conducted on a hundred and ten first semester college freshmen and the aim of that study was to have some

specific ideas on writing apprehension and the final written product. In this study, participants were given tests to define their level of apprehension towards writing. Then they wrote essays in various genres. According to the results, most of the students having high writing apprehension made lower quality works as their papers were including shorter and less developed language with sentence structures. The researchers discuss that new methods are needed for assessing writing and they say that the more they evaluate students, the higher anxiety levels arouse. So they believe that conducting different types of writing with many students may cause students become a little alleviated. There is also a similar study done by Daly (1978).He asserts that people try to avoid some situations when writing is needed and assessed. He defines this as writing .He also tells that apprehensive writers tend to produce lower quality work. And as a result, Daly questions whether learners have lower quality of work due to the apprehension or negative feedback. He tries to answer the questions by searching the cycle between anxiety and poor writing.

Writing anxiety also arouses in business communication. Faris, Kay A., Steven P. Golen, and David H. Lynch (1999) tried to find whether written communication was important in the accounting profession so they conducted a study on six hundred and eighty four students. The researchers found that, accounting majors had the highest apprehension levels and marketing majors had the lowest apprehension in all the business degrees. They also suggested that students were required to be tested early in their college careers. The aim was to define the apprehensive writers and help them accordingly. They also said that it would be better for students to be aware of on how much writing they would need for their chosen career paths. There is also another similar study done by Marbrito, Mark (2000). He conducted this study in an online communication setting and the aim was to study how high anxious writers

operated in an online communication setting. For this study, two types of online learning environments were needed and searched: 1. global computer conferences that were internet based and 2. local computer conferences including a more familiar group of people. The data needed for this study was gathered more than six weeks. The students participating in the asynchronous global environment seemed to be more comfortable and also could start discussion and write longer responses. As a result, the ones with high anxiety reclaimed having anonymity.

Charney, Davida, John H. Newman, and Mike Palmquist(1995) made a study on the views of students' writings whose learning styles and attitudes were different. They conducted these researches in writing intensive courses with different students. It was found that the ones who were active learners were tend to see writing as they could handle and develop; however, the ones, passive learners tend to regard writing as something that a person was either good at or bad – a gift that could not be learned. These lead to the capacity of the students conducting tasks in writing intensive courses. Another similar research done by Kountz, Carol (1998) argues how people experience writing anxiety differently. The study was done through two student examples. The first student had anxiety as she defined too much with the topic and wanted to have something similar for writing or just as well as a regarded writer. The other student had anger towards writing, because he thought that his readers were not sensitive. Carol suggests that by accepting the multiple ways of anxiety, teachers can point out anxiety and they can learn how to make better responses to students' written samples and this will lead to alleviating anxiety level, even if just by a small degree.

There have been many studies on reducing writing anxiety. Petroskey, Anthony (1976) tried to alleviate writing anxiety. The aim of the study was to see how

instructors could work towards decreasing writing anxiety. For this aim, Petroskey did a random examination in some major writing apprehension studies. He investigated many tests such as the Daly and Miller Writing Apprehension Test, Sanders and Littlefield's study, Lim's analysis of teachers' attitudes toward students' writing, Smith's effects of class size and individualized instruction, and Mosheni's work on the grading of creative writing essays. As a result, it was found that the reactions and stability of both instructors and learners affected the anxiety in writing. Another study was done Rankin-Brown, Maria (2006). Maria aimed to find causes of writing anxiety and ways for reducing this anxiety. In that study, ten students whose ages were between eighteen and twenty eight were surveyed and interviewed on their level of writing anxiety. They said that they actively abstain from writing as they felt worried on evaluations such as self-evaluation, teacher evaluation, and peer evaluation. In addition, they stated that they were afraid of losing their identity and as a result writing caused them anxiety as they felt worried about making errors due to writing. As a result, these studies tried to find ways to reduce writing anxiety. After application of the works, the researchers tried to decrease the role of writing exercises in order to make learners feel relax.

Bizzaro, Patrick and Hope Toler (1986) also did some works for decreasing the role of anxiety in writing. They searched the relationship between writing center instructors with high anxiety and the methods those instructors used while dealing with and assessing students' writings. They investigated twenty graduate instructors at East Carolina University, and each of them was given an eighteen-item Teaching Methods Survey to define what their teaching approaches were and whether they used the process or product approach. The results showed that the instructors who felt anxiety themselves about being assessed could be impatient with students and so

they might wait for a while so as to make students discover about their writing on their own. The results also showed that a better training was needed for instructors as they could be more comfortable in the relationships among students via this training method. Bloom, Lynn Z. (1980) is also another researcher conducting surveys on reducing writing anxiety. Bloom aimed to define the categories of anxious writers. He conducted this research on students and found out that a great deal of writing anxiety was attitudinal because they mostly acted in accordance with their expectations. For instance, when students were aware of that they would put off or not do the work, they didn't bother. Bloom defined three types of anxious writers: the intransigents; the intermediate and the full responsive participant. Bloom discussed a probable solution for this, a large assignment may be broken down into manageable smaller chunks, and so it would be easier to finish an overall writing.

Fox (1979) searched for the treatment of writing apprehension and its effects on composition. Fox aimed to search two methods affecting the teaching of writing apprehension. The study was conducted for sixteen weeks. There were two groups having different methods. In the first method, students had criticism and feedback only from their teachers and this was mostly based on a traditional manner. The second method was taught in a workshop. It was more fashion and students received feedback from both their teachers and pairs. They were working in pairs and groups as cooperation was intended to be evoked. At the end of the study, the anxiety levels of both groups were defined and it was found that the ones participating in the workshop method had lower anxiety than the ones having a traditional manner.

There are also many researchers defining different alternative ways for reducing writing anxiety. Harris, Muriel (1993) argues how a tutorial interaction can help students feel comfortable to write in writing centers. According to Harris, students

may be helped for the writing process and asking questions by tutors. The tutors help them better interpret assignments and teacher comments. They are helpful to decrease anxiety, and also they are mostly more knowledgeable than a roommate or a friend. They can evoke students to cope with personal writing issues and strategies. Heller, Dana A. (1998) also asserts some ideas on decreasing writing apprehension. Heller discusses that teachers don't do well when they write too many comments and suggest on a part of students' papers as students mostly rely on the teachers comments and they act in accordance with what their teachers tell them do to improve their papers. This is not beneficial for them because they cannot express their ideas and take actions on their own. To overcome this problem, it may be better for teachers to write a paragraph and attach it to the front of the each draft. Any comments we provide for students should also be on an attached sheet of paper. This technique will help students write on the wished effect and let them go back and make some changes on their own. McLeod, Susan (1987) also makes an argument on the link between emotions and writing and tries to find some possible ways to decrease anxiety in writing like the other researchers. She discusses that these emotions can be allocated into three classifications such as writing anxiety, motivation, and beliefs about one's ability to write. She is on the idea that it is more effective when instructors can cooperate with students in finding whatever is impeding students' progress. Because students could get over these barriers and work in collaboration with their emotions towards a positive outcome. To exemplify, students can use and control their emotions to learn how to better devote their power and have needed breaks so as fruitfully to use their time. However, there is another researcher arguing that writing and self-efficacy are not necessarily linked in terms of anxiety. Reeves, LaVona (1997) puts forward the idea that writing anxiety is not

directly connected to self-efficacy. She asserts that there are other possible factors triggering this such as socio-economic status and past experience. She also tells that even professional writers can feel anxious at times and this is perfectly normal. She provides some possible steps to overcome writing anxiety. Recommended steps are writing more and helping students discourage appropriation of voice. Then make students listen to coward writers and have conversations on their past experiences. It is also better to define sample in students' incorrect writings. It is another good step to have discussions and collaboration on drafting stages with students. Evaluation criteria should be defined with students. Interpersonal and intrapersonal tasks should be evoked among students. Students should get aware of gender differences, tell about their favorite writers and finally attend public readings and share their own writings with the class. Smith, Michael (1984) supports that there is writing anxiety with most of learners and he tries to find some possible solutions to reduce this writing anxiety. He tells about the role of writing apprehension in classes. Like Reeves, he also puts some strategies for to apply for diminishing writing anxiety. According to Smith, writing should be taught as a process and directions, grading criteria are needed to be explicit. Peer cooperation or group works are also emphasized as assigning some unmarked written works among students' pairs or groups may alleviate students' anxiety levels about their papers. These researchers are all on the idea of the availability of writing anxiety and they all assert different possible ways for overcoming this anxiety.

Writing anxiety is available within most of target language learners. This anxiety is mostly come into the open with fear of learners. This fear generally leads to failure of learners in writing. In order to overcome this failure, it is always the best to apply alternative ways in diminishing writing anxiety.

2.8. Portfolio Assessments

It is beneficial to have some ideas on the origin of portfolio assessments while taking portfolios in developing writing skills of young adult learners. It contains different kinds of assessment procedures and ways such as student designed tests, learner- centered assessment, portfolio assessment and self-assessment that the teacher and students can collaboratively select and use successfully and effectively in language courses. When taking all of these into consideration, portfolio assessment is absolutely the most effective, interesting and popular alternatives to standardized tests.

In addition, it is dramatically known and used in many areas of EFL/ESL writing. Portfolio is mostly defined as a collection gathered purposefully in an area (Genesee and Upshur, 1996). It is also beneficial to mention that portfolio assessment is a type of portfolios; whereas a portfolio is a collection of student assignments, samples, portfolio evaluation is the process of creating, collecting, and evaluating contents of the portfolio (Moya& O'Malley, 1994).

Weiser (1992) asserts that nowadays most of teachers try to have process-oriented technique in writing instruction during the courses. By having such techniques, they try to have their students spend time to choose the topics, gather data about the topics, write about the topics. Also before submitting a final piece of writing, they draft, revise and edit it. This new trend in teaching writing aims to have a certain product, therefore, it is important to have an application of an assessment technique to boost and encourage learners. Portfolio assessment, as an authentic innovative technique of assessment we can see that it gives the chance of assessing writings. It is a way of improving students' writing performance. Students are asked to choose their best pieces of writing or write on the given tasks to be put in their portfolios to have assessments. In addition, Students can have those samples of writing that stand for the development of writing process

covering planning, drafting, revising and editing. Portfolio assessment can also develop students' autonomy, critical thinking and linguistic competence. Moreover, it props the notion that writing is process that involves growth, development, learning and lastly a product.

In writing in literature, there are a great number of studies, researches that discuss about and deal with the improvement of portfolio assessment and the students' attitudes and thoughts toward using a portfolio but it has not been so largely investigated by quantitative research in using portfolio with EFL learners. There have been some experimental studies conducted in last decade coping with portfolio assessment that report technical information and employ accepted research techniques (Herman & Winters, 1994). In an experimental study, Aly (2002) tried to use a writing process approach to improve students' writing skills. This experiment was conducted at the English Department, Faculty of Education, in Shams University. There was an experimental group formed by forty, second year male and female students randomly assigned. The data collection tools of the study were a student questionnaire and a pre-post writing composition text. Discussion was an important part of the workshop in teaching writing as an attempt to create interaction between the teacher and the student. Results showed that using writing workshop approach developed the students' writing. It is accurate that such approaches were very helpful to students to have some more sense of responsibility towards both group and individual works.

Marefat (2004) aimed to gather information on students' thoughts towards portfolio usage. So he investigated students' portfolio use in an email-based EFL writing class. Students were given some tasks to conduct during writing classes and the study resulted that the majority of the students in using different subjects with portfolios found that the portfolio technique was a positive opportunity for their writing. In

addition, some students improved a intrapersonal understanding of their learning process. Apple and Shimo (2004) were other researchers studying on portfolio and rather helpful in testing students' perceptions of portfolio creation in an EFL context in Japan. There were sixty one participants comprised students in two different universities attending English writing class. As the elementary means of assessment, a student-selected portfolio work was used. Tests were not for assessment. They were included in the process. A self-report questionnaire was used to measure the responses of the learners which showed that they rigidly relied on the idea that portfolio techniques were so beneficial and trustful for them to improve expressive and compositional writing ability.

Hirvela and Sweetland (2005) defined two case studies with portfolios in two ESL writing classes to w investigate students' experiences. The findings showed that young adult learners really liked the idea of portfolios but they did not support their use as applied in those writing courses. Paesani (2006) also did a research on a writing portfolio Project and the aim of the research was to join the learning of skills, content and language competences via literary study. The reactions of the students to the portfolio writing Project suppressed the perceived value of the project in improving the development of the students' grammatical competence and writing skills.

Another research was conducted to establish whether portfolio assessment helped English as a foreign language (EFL) learners' achievement and their feeling of responsibility towards monitoring their progress. It also aimed to find the probable correlation between the scores of portfolio assessment and those of teacher-made tests. There were 60 Iranian 16-year-old female high-school sophomores in this study divided into group; one was control group and the other one was experimental group. Data collection tools were a Nelson English Language Proficiency Test, portfolio assessment,

a teacher-made achievement test and a satisfaction questionnaire. Both teacher-made tests and portfolios were for the experimental group, while teacher-made tests were only for the control group to define assessment of the achievement. Some Procedures such preparing portfolios and a number of relevant goals were set. By these goals, grading checklists were rated. There were core and optional items, as well as written and recorded tasks, selected by the students to display their best work in the portfolios. Also reflection of each work was attached. At the end of the experiment, a teacher-made test with reasonable psychometric indexes was administered to both groups. Also, the participants were asked to fill in the satisfaction questionnaire to show their attitudes towards their learning experiences. The findings showed that portfolio assessment contributed to Iranian EFL learners' achievement and their feelings of responsibility towards monitoring their progress positively. The portfolio assessment scores were more reliable than those of the teacher-made achievement test because it was suggested that portfolio assessment can be a promising testing and teaching tool for teachers in EFL classes by providing the continuous, ongoing measurement of students' growth needed for formative evaluation and for planning instructional programs (Barootchi, Nasrin & Keshavarz, Mohammad Hossein, 2000).

It is also asserted that there has been a growing body of research which documents the importance of portfolios in foreign language teaching (Öztürk, Hande & Çeçen, Sevda ,2007). The researchers also suggest that writing anxiety has a very important role in not having correct and well-expressed writing products. These researchers are two lecturers, working collaboratively aimed to overcome the writing anxiety of their students. They conducted a research on a class of fifteen prospective teachers of English who were juniors as they were in their preparatory year in a foundation university, in Istanbul, Turkey. Data in this research were gathered by means

of the Second Language Writing Anxiety Inventory (SLWAI) (Cheng, 2004) with a background questionnaire and two reflective sessions. The Second Language Writing Anxiety Inventory (SLWAI) measures the degree to which an individual feels anxious when writing in an L2. It contains 22 items that are answered on a five-point Likert Scale, ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree. They tried to ensure methodological triangulation, by having both qualitative and quantitative analysis as data collection and analysis were done with regard to both qualitative and quantitative procedures (Denzin, 1978; Lynch, 1991).Findings of this study confirmed that portfolio keeping is beneficial in terms of overcoming writing anxiety. The results also showed that the ones having experience with using portfolios in writing may also may effects in their future teaching practices positively. Therefore; this study suggests that portfolio keeping deserves to be taken into consideration in the program of Foreign Language Education Departments. They also found that portfolios have the evidence of knowledge, dispositions, and skills. They offer authentic information about the progress of students. In addition to these aforementioned benefits, the findings of this study suggest that portfolios can be used as a means of helping students to overcome their writing anxiety in L2.

A different research was also conducted on students' usage of portfolio in writing courses. They support the idea that writing is very important recently as it plays a considerable role in converting knowledge and learning .It also fosters creativity. They also say that when acquiring a language the skills are important as well as writing. The aim of the study is to investigate the effect of portfolio assessment technique as a teaching, learning and assessment tool on writing performance of EFL learners. There are also writing sub-skills taken into account during the study. There were forty Iranian

EFL learners who were all English teaching majors chosen randomly and divided into two groups: experimental whose number was 20; and control whose number was also 20. While the control group underwent the traditional approach of writing assessment, the experimental group received the treatment i.e. portfolio assessment. The findings showed that the students in experimental group outperformed the students in control group both in their writing performance and its sub-skills of focus, elaboration, organization, conventions and vocabulary. The results recommend that portfolio assessment technique improves writing ability of the students with having some more implications for assessment, teaching and learning of L2 writing (Tabatabaei, Omid&Assefi, Farzaneh, 2012).

Since learning approach is changed, it affects assessment procedures and approaches (Fourie& Van Niekerk, 2001). Most of the learners can have writing tasks freely and easily with portfolios because they work a lot when integrated with tasks. In a portfolio, originality of a task, work philosophy, career aims, review, and skill areas of a subject can be included (Clark, 2004). Portfolios can also be useful for assessment as they are form of alternative evaluation where development of learners are evaluated with the target language based over a period of time, progress and conditions. These will help validity and reliability a lot. Cognitive skills are needed for our new generation, so society asks for students who have cognitive skills such as problem solving, critical thinking, analyzing data, and presenting them orally and written format and so on (Dochy, 2001). The necessity of using portfolios is emphasized by many researches (Birgin, 2003; De Fina, 1992; Gussie, 1998; Micklo, 1997; Mumme, 1991; Norman, 1998). Portfolios give reliable and effective information about students' progress to both the researcher and students. Using portfolios as assessment tools will help students a lot to understand define their weaknesses and progresses.

Another researcher having made many investigations on improving writing skills of young adult learners is Colorín Colorado. She states that by getting a head start with some simple activities, you can help your child begin to develop her writing skills at an early age. By doing so you will be contributing to her future success as a student and as an adult while teaching her how to express herself. She also tells that writing is an important skill for people of all ages, as well as a list of suggestions that will help your child become a stronger writer. She finds that the more a child does a wring task or activity, the better she will be in writing and explaining the thoughts effectively (Colorado, Colorin, 2008).

It is also stated that writing involves multiple representations and processes, with limitations in working memory constraining skill development. Advanced writing skills require systematic training as well as instruction so that executive attention can successfully coordinate multiple writing processes and representations. Finally, the principles of deliberate practice and cognitive apprenticeship offer writing educators the means to train writers to use their knowledge effectively during composition. Therefore, practice is quiet significant in order to improve writing skills as stated by him(Kellogg, Ronald T.).

To sum up, having effective writing tasks included in a portfolio will develop learners a lot in many ways as critical thinking, analyzing, deducing and interacting.

CHAPTER 3

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1. Introduction

Portfolio usage is always an effective way to improve writing skills in written language. By using portfolios and their assessment techniques, it is easier to motivate students to learn the target language effectively, give adequate feedback to students and increase efficacy of students' learning process. It is also learner-centered as a learner has the active role during the application and assessment process. In this study, data collection tools were interviews, a video camera, questionnaires, a narrative, and a diary. The data was collected quantitatively because the ideas from students and the process of their progress during the application were really needed in order to conduct a real and fruitful research. The implementation process of the study was to collect, draft, rewrite and analyze. The other reasons of choosing these tools are briefly explained in this chapter.

3.2. Research Design

The goal of this study is to develop young adult learners' writing skills by the implementation of writing portfolio. The most significant theory behind this study is constructivism as it is a learning process of producing new information with the existed one. Learners were coping with improving writing with producing new writing artefacts. Also, demolishing writing anxiety and having prosperous portfolio assessments have important place behind this study.

Thanks to this implementation, we had a chance to make learners' ideas clear and get ideas on learners' writing development. A mixed-methods design was used for

this study because the results were obtained qualitatively and then they were just converted into percentages by defining the mostly stated ideas. Creswell (cited in Fraenkel & Wallen, 2006, 443) asserts that there are three types of mixed-methods designs:

— Triangulation design requires both quantitative and qualitative data, checks the results, and then uses the findings to validate them.

— Explanatory design first collects and analyzes quantitative data, then includes qualitative data to follow up and clarify the quantitative results.

— Exploratory design first collects qualitative data, then uses these findings to have quantitative data.

When taking the features of mixed-type research design into consideration, it can be thought that this study is mostly suitable for mixed-type research because we used different data collection tools for collecting our data: qualitative and quantitative but mostly qualitative data was used. Our qualitative data came from questionnaires, diary, narrative and interviews we did. The analysis of the open-ended answers in the questionnaires by defining the percentages was our quantitative data.

3.3. Participants

All of the students in this research were bilinguals, some were the native speakers of Kurdish and the others were the native speakers of Arabic. The ages changed between fourteen and fifteen. Their socio-culture status was not high, most of their family members were illiterate but most of their economic statuses were high as they had many miles of fields. This study had been conducted on sixty participants in 9th AA and AB classes whose ages were near to each other changing from fourteen to

fifteen. All of the students were male as the classes were made of only male students. Students had been learning English for six years but their English level was very poor because they hadn't thoroughly learnt the language. Most of their language teachers were not English teachers; the teachers of other departments had taught them English which means that they had no English. It can be thought that their English level might be elementary or starter because some cannot tell their ages, names, countries and nationalities in English, while some students had really improved their English a lot in describing some minor things such as introducing themselves or their families.

3.4. Data Collection Tools

3.4.1. Data Collections Tools Used with TS

3.4.1.1. Interviews and Videotapes

Interviews are quite important as they really help us to explore ideas and ways we need for our research. It is noted that interviews are among the most familiar strategies for collecting qualitative data (DiCicco-Bloom, Barbara & Crabtree, Benjamin F., 2006). The different qualitative interviewing strategies in common use emerged from diverse disciplinary perspectives resulting in a wide variation among interviewing approaches. In this study, eight interviews were done with English teachers in order to conduct a fruitful study. All of the interviews were recorded in a video camera as it was unique perspective for keeping and analyzing the important facts of this study. As a starting point of the study, interviews were done with eight teachers teaching English to different students in different schools. Getting different ideas of learners' problems in English was aimed during the interviews. Therefore, a videotape was used in accordance with interviews with my colleagues. This videotape

was not used professionally as it was used as a lower production quality and it was really effective in getting accurate and reliable works for this study. Videotaping is a very effective technique to have observational date on a study. At first questions were written on a sheet of paper, then each of teachers were asked individually and the conversations were recorded by the video camera individually. Then, each of the interviews was scheduled and then the questions were asked during the recording. When the questions were finished, some extra ideas were given except for the interview questions. The duration of the recordings changed between two and five minutes (Please see the Appendix F for interview questions).

3.4.2. Data Collections Tools Used with SS

3.4.2.1. Questionnaires

Questionnaires are generally used research instrument to gather data in a study. They are mostly used for statistical analysis in a study but they can also be used for qualitative analysis. The instrument includes questions, statements, and ideas on a related domain.

It is believed that designing and having an effective questionnaire is always difficult because researchers need to think very carefully and clearly to form what they wish to have in their questionnaires (Peachy, 2008).

In this study, questionnaires worked a lot in terms of defining the goals of the study. Questionnaires were applied to only students. In these questionnaires, some basic and simple questions were included and the questions were both in Turkish and English because it is thought that students might not understand everything clearly in English as their level was elementary level and they had poor English. Also open ended questions

were used so as to make students tell their ideas freely. By questionnaires the main aim was to find the problems of students towards English and in what ways they had difficulties in English and how they felt after they had prepared a portfolio. Two different questionnaires were applied in this study at different times. These questionnaires were prepared by the researcher at the simplest way because students had great difficulties in understanding conceptual terms in the target language. Each item was designed by the need of students to learn the target language effectively and wishfully. Defining the problem, the possible ways of coping with the problems and learning feelings of the participants for the study were also aimed throughout the study. The pre-questionnaire was applied at the beginning of the study but the post-questionnaire was applied at the end of the study (Please see the Appendix A for the pre-questionnaire and Appendix B for post-questionnaire).

3.4.2.2. Narrative

A narrative requires a great deal of hand writing, personal recordings, sincere and a prosperous plan , in this study my narrative really helped me a lot as I made a plan in a narrative way before each task and lesson. In the narrative, the sequence of the tasks was available. Also it let us follow an accurate way of task applications. One of the main aims was to make all students do the tasks completely as they really lacked motivation. For motivation, grades about English lesson were given to each student. This grade was given as a performance mark. What is more, all of the students' common mistakes were enrolled in this narrative and after each task; these mistakes were corrected by the teacher in the class.

3.4.2.3. Diary

Diary is used to keep the weakness and strengths of students with the portfolio day by day. In addition, a diary works best when it is kept regularly. Narrative gives a way to a prosperous plan of conducting the tasks but the diary had an important role for enrolling the mistakes and dealing with error correction. In this study, I tried to keep a diary so as to enroll all kinds of the mistakes that my young adult learners made. The mistakes were kept day by day, and then they were discussed in the class. Students worked collaboratively in order to suggest possible solutions to the data kept in the diary.

3.5. Procedure

The implementation of the study took six weeks. In this study, there were five tasks for students to do. The application of the five tasks took five week and one week was for the general assessment of the portfolios. Each portfolio task was given to students to write on Thursday and participant students were required to bring their tasks to the researcher in the following week which was on Monday. Then each task was checked and given back to the students as drafts. The mistakes were pointed with a red pen in order to let students see the mistakes and correct them. Then students were required to write down the task again in a correct way and put each task into their portfolios. The drafts were on the front pages and the correct rewritten forms of the tasks were on the back pages in the portfolios. As Jean Chandler (2003) noted that students feel that they learn more from self-correction, and simple underlining of errors takes less teacher time on the first draft. The tasks were the followings:

1. Writing thirty sentences using different subjects, verbs and time expressions in the Simple Present Tense

2. Telling your school day in the Simple Present Tense

3. Describing five prestigious jobs in the Simple Present Tense

4. Describing and discussing six jobs that they had listened from the interview and learnt in their books.

5. Writing on an official day or celebration in Turkey using the Simple Present Tense and Simple Present Continuous Tense.

To sum up, there were sixty participant students and eight instructors to conduct this study in an appropriate order of task cycle. There were data collections tools in this study as interviews, videotapes, questionnaires, a diary and narrative in order to have fruitful results. The data collection cycle's duration was five weeks and one week was for assessment. Participant students had effective participation and provided reliable results for this study.

CHAPTER 4

4. ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

4.1. Data Analysis

Most of the provided data were qualitatively analyzed but the answers of the questionnaires were converted into percentages and analyzed quantitatively. To start with, some important information and solutions had been found out based on students' ideas. Before starting the study, general language barriers among students of all schools were investigated via interviews done with English teachers from different schools. Then a pre-questionnaire was applied to learn specific problems of the participants and during the implementation, a diary and narrative were kept in order to have fruitful results. Analysis of these data tools were quite effective for probing ways to take actions on whether students really had problems in writing skills or not, and what ways were needed to overcome the barriers of writing skills.

4.1.1. Interviews and Videotapes

Thanks to interviews, great thoughts, solutions and results were obtained. Each of the interviews was taped via a video recorder so as to go back and forth easily for analyzing the ideas of teachers. After the interviews done among colleagues were taken into consideration, the problem of writing skills occurred as the main domain that we all needed to deal with for boosting students' English because almost all of the participants stated the writing problems of students during the portfolios.

The interviews results showed that most of students had writing problems at their schools as they had great difficulties in writing skills such as spelling, punctuation and capitalization (Please see the Table 1. for demographic information).

Table 1. Information about the Participant Teachers and Their Ideas from Interviews

	Male	Female	Total %
The number of the participants	5	3	100
The number of instructors supporting reading problems	1	-	12,5
The number of instructors supporting listening problems	1	-	12,5
The number of instructors supporting speaking problems	1	-	12,5
The number of instructors supporting writing problems	2	3	62,5

According to Table 1, the number of the participants is eight consisting of three female participants and five male participants. It is clear that the participant teachers are on the idea of availability of writing problems as five out of eight have stated writing problems and the three of them have stated other problems.

4.1.2. Questionnaires

There were two questionnaires as pre-questionnaire and post-questionnaire in this study. The questions were asked both in English and Turkish. In both questionnaires, the questions were open-ended in order to get students' ideas. In addition, the questions were quiet simple as students were not able to perceive complex

and conceptual questions on language learning. Moreover, the results showed that questionnaires were quiet significant in defining the weaknesses and strengths of young adult learners toward English. They were also effective in determining the solutions to the problems of learners in written language.

4.1.2.1. Pre-questionnaires

Questionnaires were very effective in analyzing the study. Based on the answer in the pre-questionnaire, Students' unwillingness towards both English and English courses was found as they couldn't find the instinct to act in English effectively and freely. In addition, students could not understand spoken English as they had not improved their speaking abilities but when both questions and answers were written on the board, it became easier for them to grasp the ideas.

In addition, total of the students had problems in writing sentences and paragraphs in correct order with appropriate grammar rules and punctuation. According to the answers to the questions, most of the students liked English. The ones liking English generally stated that speaking, writing and understanding a language correctly gave them a priority in a society, however; the other ones said that learning English would give them no benefit and they wouldn't live abroad, as a result they didn't like English. In addition, they supported the idea of teaching their language to English speaking countries instead of learning their language.

Most of the students answered the third question that they didn't understand English because they had had no good background of learning in English in their previous educations. Therefore, they couldn't understand English when the teacher

spoke English fast. They wanted their teacher to speak Turkish instead of English and write English sentences on the board.

Also, almost all of students stated that they had really great problems in writing skills of English in the fourth question. But some said that they had problems in speaking and listening skills. When the fifth question was analyzed, it was found that games such as hangman, puzzles or pair& group work writing activities were the most liked ones during the lessons. Most of the students said that they got bored with English lessons because they couldn't understand both writing and speaking in English as a result they couldn't find the instinct to attend and learn activities effectively.

For the seventh question, students answered that they couldn't memorize and learn vocabulary in English because learning vocabulary was both difficult and exhausting. Also, almost all of the students stated that they had great problems in memorizing English words.

For the eighth question, half of the students said that they didn't want to learn English because they found learning English very difficult and time consuming. In addition, they stated that instead of learning English, they wanted to learn another language; however, the other half said that they wanted to learn English because they supported the idea that learning a foreign language is a really good attribution in a modern society. Also, they said that they might have prosperous futures thanks to English in the ninth question. For the last question, they nearly told similar thoughts with ninth question. They said that English is a world language and wherever you go in the world, it is the best way for communication (Please see the Table 2. for demographic information of pre-questionnaires).

Table 2.Information about the Pre-questionnaires

	Male	Female	Total %
The number of the participants	60	-	100
The number of students liking English	42	-	70
The number of students disliking English	18	-	30
The number of students having speaking problems	9	-	15
The number of students having writing problems	34	-	57
The number of students having listening problems	8	-	13
The number of students having reading problems	9	-	15
The number of students wishing to learn English	30	-	50
The number of students not wishing to learn English	30	-	50
The ones thinking that English is important to learn	47	-	78

According to table 2 the total percentage of the perceptions of young adult learners towards English can be seen easily. According to the table, the pre-questionnaires were done with sixty male students as the classes were formed with only male students. The table shows that 70% of the students like English and 30 % of them don not like English. In addition, it is clear from the table that 57 % of students have

writing problems compared to the other domains. Also, half of students are wishful to learn English but the other half is not. The most significant fact about the table is that all most all of students think that English is beneficial to learn.

4.1.2.2. Post-questionnaires

There were also post-questionnaires to have ideas of students towards both English and portfolio usage for written language. In the post-questionnaires, I have found out the benefits and burdens of the portfolio preparation on students.

When the first two questions were analyzed, we have found that some liked portfolios a lot as they really believed that they had boosted their writing skills and they could write appropriately with correct grammar, spelling and punctuation but some said that they didn't like it as they thought that preparing a portfolio was a real burden and very difficult. In total, nearly all of them liked portfolio preparation as they really developed their writing skills a lot which was our main aim in this study. In the third question, some said that portfolio preparation was difficult as they didn't have enough grammar and vocabulary; this showed that they didn't do the tasks appropriately. Almost all of the students believed that portfolio preparation developed them a lot as they thought that they were aware of what they had written and could tell their wishes freely and correctly. As a result they wished to prepare a portfolio again as it was really beneficial for learning the target language in the fourth and fifth questions. Most of the students pointed to the idea that they could apply portfolio to the other lessons as it is really helpful for developing in a domain. They said that they could collect, draft, rewrite and analyze their domains easily thanks to using a portfolio in the sixth question. In addition, in the seventh question, a few students said that it was unimportant to have seen their mistakes in portfolios because they still couldn't

understand the mistakes. These ones were unsuccessful nearly in all lessons. But most of the students said that it was very important to have learnt their mistakes in the tasks thanks to the portfolios, because they believed that these mistakes boosted them and it was clear that they wouldn't repeat the mistakes again. For the last two questions, only a few students found the tasks difficult but most of them thought that they were both easy and functional as they could use the tasks in their daily life by effectively using the language.

Table 3. Information about the Post-questionnaires

	Male	Female	Total %
The number of the participants	60	-	100
The number of students liking portfolio usage	50	-	83
The number of students disliking portfolio usage	10	-	17
The number of students considering portfolio fruitful	50	-	83
The number of students considering portfolio unnecessary	10	-	17
The number of students considering portfolio tasks difficult	5	-	8
The number of students considering portfolio tasks easy	55	-	92
The number of students wishing to use portfolio in other domains	51	-	85

Table 3 shows that almost all of the students liked portfolio as there is 83 % of participants liking portfolios; however, there were still some students disliking portfolio. When the results are compared, it is clear that the number of students liking

portfolio and the number of students considering portfolio usage beneficial are the same. This shows that most of students found portfolio usage effective. Also, the number of students disliking portfolio and the number of students considering portfolio usage needless are the same. The significant fact is that most of students found portfolios tasks easy and wished to use them in other domains. When the questionnaires are compared, it was clear that students' wish to learn English changed a lot as they were not clear whether to learn and like the target language or not at first, but then it showed they liked the target language and would like to improve it.

4.1.3. Narrative

The narrative being used in this study was really helpful because after applying the aims defined in the narrative, the researcher got beneficial results in having a correct order of task applications. This narrative acted as a course plan and task plan for me. The defined procedure was done after each task during the lesson.

4.1.4. Diary

Thanks to the diary, the researcher was able to come to the class and discuss over the mistakes with young adult learners. We tried to overcome the language barriers in mistakes together and the diary gave the exact list of the mistakes made by the students. We were able to deal with each mistake and missed none but at the first applications, there were many grammar, spelling mistakes enrolled in the diary and it became to decrease after each application of different task.

4.2. Findings

It was found that there has been a significant change between the beginning and end of the study. Students experienced many techniques and methods during the study and there was a dramatic switch from beginning to the end.

At the beginning of the study, most of students didn't feel motivated to take English lesson. They didn't like the activities and get very bored during the lessons. Mostly, they were checking their watches for break times. When they were asked about the reasons of not loving English lessons, they stated that six hours of English in a week was too much and they couldn't bear them. In addition, they also said that they had been always having lower marks in English lessons and couldn't do better in English as they lacked appropriate English teachers in primary and secondary schools.

To overcome the language barriers, an effective study was vital for young adult learners. Based on this study, a research question was defined. With regard to the research question, the findings of this study show that young adult learners were able to contribute a variety of observations concerning their writing skills development. According to the findings, after the pre-questionnaire was applied to the young adult learners, it was found that almost all of the students loved English in this study. The ones who liked English said that knowing a foreign language was a priority in a society because they were able to transform ideas and information in all around the world. The other ones stated that learning a language was pointless because they thought that they wouldn't live in a foreign country or have important status. In addition to this, most of students said that they could not understand English as the teacher spoke very fast and it was better for them to write English on board instead of speaking.

With regard of pre-questionnaires and observations done in accordance with the research question, some students even said that speaking Turkish by both teachers and students in English lessons would be better as they could not understand what was told in English. Students also stated that they could not memorize English words easily and had great problems in vocabulary. Therefore, some basic memorization games or ways might work well for students. The most significant result in the pre-questionnaire was that almost all of the students had great difficulties in writing. They said that they could not write the spelling of the words correctly, they had great difficulties in capitalization, the use of grammar in writing skills. Some even stated they could not understand what they had done in writing classes as they did not understand to make the difference between the subjects and verbs.

After the pre-questionnaires were conducted to student participants, teacher participants were interviewed to gather information on specific student problems in learning the target language. The teacher participants focused on specific and accurate ideas on the process of language learning and possible solutions to these writing problems. The interviews were done with eight English teachers teaching in different schools. Almost all of the teacher participants stated that the most difficult domain in language learning was writing. This showed that teacher participants were on the idea that many students were weak in writing thoroughly and they all wanted to do some applications for writing.

With regard of the research question, some ways were investigated to overcome writing barriers in written language and it was found that keeping a portfolio for duration might work best for boosting their writing skills of English. For this study, reaction, perceptions of students were taken into consideration to have clear and valid

results. It was found that students reacted in a variety of ways to the use of portfolios. It was discovered that average of the students had great confidence in acting writing tasks. The results of observations showed that there was a great improvement in their writing skills because students were able to understand that keeping portfolios with draft, rewritten and assessments forms were quiet effective and beneficial for having improved skills of writing.

Based on the portfolio usages, there have been many the findings of this study related to misusage of the vocabulary, grammar and spelling in the tasks. In order to have accurate and specific findings based on their writings, their first writing artifacts were compared to the last ones by using a diary and a narrative observation. These techniques really worked well for getting real results.

After each task, some ideas and suggestions were given to students. When students mostly used internet tools to do the tasks, the mostly given feedback as a suggestion was "Please, don't copy exact information from the internet". When they used Google Translate, the feedback was "Please don't use Google Translate". Another feedback was "Please don't use internet." When students made errors in grammar, the feedback was "Be careful". If the errors were related to spelling, the general suggestion was "Care spelling". Another most common problem among students in portfolio usage was that students copied each other sentences and were not able to write original sentences. The feedback was "Please use your own sentences". These feedbacks were really effective to direct students and motivate them.

In the first tasks, many students had spelling mistakes especially in writing "every", they generally wrote "evry" instead of "every" (See some examples of misspelling of "every" in sentences in Appendix C).

Another most common mistake in the first and second tasks is that they could not define the time expressions appropriately as they didn't know both ordinal and cardinal numbers correctly. Most of the students had problems in writing "first" , they just wrote "fist", "frst", "fst", first" for "first". Another problem is that they wrote "scnd", "sacond", "secnd" ,"secd" for "second". They also wrote "thrd", "thrid", "trd" for "third". These are specific examples of misspelling of cardinal numbers in time expressions. In addition, they had problems in correct spelling of ordinal numbers. They couldn't write the numbers correctly. For example, they wrote "elavan" for eleven, "twolve" for "twelve", "nin" for nine" , "eght" for "eight". Of course, these common mistakes aroused during the first drafts, but after the correction process of the duration, most of the students seemed to stop repeating these mistakes. After defining these mistakes, some extra exercises were applied and then they were collaboratively assessed. The assessments showed that students had a great development in writing as a result of using portfolios. Administering portfolios seem to have favorable effects on students learning and attitudes towards English (Aschbacher, 1993; Brandt, 1989; Shepard, 1989; Wolf, 1989).

In addition, most of them were not capable of using "s,es,ies" in affirmative sentences in the Simple Present Tense. They couldn't understand the difference between plural and singular subjects easily. Even some students didn't define where to add these suffixes as they could not make the difference among subject, noun and verb. Some of them added these to the end of the nouns. For example, some wrote as "breakfasts" for "breakfast", "footballs" for "football", "schools" for "school" and even some added these to the subjects such as "my fathers" for "my father" , "Johns" for "John". But these mistakes were not common; they were very minors and were mostly common

among some non-attendance students. What is more, they made many mistakes in plural and singular subjects with the usage of "s,es,ies" in the sentences of their portfolios. They couldn't understand whether a subject is singular, plural or uncountable (See some common mistakes in Appendix D).

What is more, there were many mistakes in writing subjects correctly. For instance, they wrote "fathr" for "father", "methor" for "mother" or "brother" for "brother" , "antin" for "aunt". Also, when they described some jobs from the interviews they had big problems in terms of spelling. For instance, they wrote "tocher" for "teacher", "lawyear" for "lawyer" and "cabunkruv" for "cabin crew" , "curnalis" for journalist, these examples showed me that we needed to study a little bit more on the spelling and jobs as they wrote exactly in the way they pronounced them. In addition, they were not good enough to catch the coordinal numbers appropriately in their paragraphs because they started each of their paragraphs writing "first" and sometimes they wrote "fist" for "first" which shows me that they again have spelling mistakes. After they repeated the numbers, then I saw a great improvement in differentiating between ordinal and coordinal numbers. Another reason related to coordinal numbers is that they cannot make sentences with them; however, they only could say ordinal numbers while writing their paragraphs and sentences. What else, they had some important problems in subject-verb agreement in simple present continuous tense. They couldn't use the correct helping verb for the defined subject. For instance, "she" is singular and they used "are" instead of "is". Another example is that when there were two subjects like "john" and "Jamie", they just used "is" instead of "are". Another common mistake was with the correct usage of the helping verb "am", when the subject was "my father and I", they used "am "instead of "are" as helping verb. They also had

spelling mistakes in adding "ing" to the verbs; they just added "ing" without deleting some syllables. For instance, they just wrote "rideing" instead of "riding" (See some common mistakes in Appendix E).

After these results were analyzed qualitatively, it was found that not taking all the actions and tasks seriously leaded our students to get involved in cheating especially using internet tools. So some punishment techniques were applied such as threatening to give them low marks, then it revealed that students started to experience good improvement in writing correct tasks, but they still had problems in writing correctly in all of the tasks. When the tasks were checked clearly, nearly half of the sentences for each student were the same and this decreased the real potential of the study. The grammar and spelling mistakes of the tasks were corrected with a red pen and students were required to correct each pointed mistake. In addition, in some tasks, students were able to write paragraphs in the simple present tense and tried to use correct spelling mistakes and right coherence and cohesion. After completing all the tasks, nearly most of the students had really great capacity in improving writing skills in terms of grammar, spelling and punctuation mistakes compared to coherence and cohesion. But for the some students, it was really difficult to conduct the tasks and write them appropriately. Plagiarism was a big problem throughout the study as they got the exact copies from the internet or some related web pages and the happy thing is that they were even practicing their writings and improving their spelling because they needed to write down the tasks.

After the application of the portfolios, there were post-questionnaires applied to the young adult learners, the pos-questionnaires were rather effective for getting accurate ideas about students reactions for this study. According to post- questionnaires,

students reacted in a variety of ways to the use of portfolios as some students loved portfolio usage in developing writing skills because they were able to write with correct grammar, spelling and punctuation. But some stated that they didn't love portfolio usage because it was difficult as they said that they still didn't love English and had great problems in grammar and vocabulary.

To sum up, it was clear that most of them liked portfolio application and wished to use the same technique in the other subjects and domains because they stated that they could collect, draft, rewrite and analyze their domains easily thanks to using a portfolio. The most significant fact on the post-questionnaires was that students liked tasks very entertaining and effective in developing their writing skills and they mostly wanted to have same applications again. Teachers said that the portfolio usage was rather beneficial and effective in improving writing skills because there had been some improvements in writing skills with regard of portfolio usages.

CHAPTER 5

5. CONCLUSION

5.1. General Review of the Study

The research of the study is on the idea of improving writing skills by portfolios. It has been found that portfolio usage can boost students' capacity to learn the target language and help them to have experiences from an inadequate learning environment to a fruitful process. Portfolio usage cannot be limited to only a domain, foreign language education system is trying to apply portfolio system in its education process so most of educators adopt portfolio usage into their courses as they all believe in the idea of using portfolios. Portfolio usage in this study supports that learning activities can be prepared in accordance with effective usage of portfolio and portfolio usage is considered a very rich source that can be integrated in language learning.

This study was conducted in a small district of Diyarbakır in Turkey in order to demolish the language barriers that students had during English lessons. For defining an effective way to overcome students' writing problems, interviews were done with colleagues. Pre-questionnaires were applied for defining students' weakness and strength, and Post- questionnaires were applied to gather students' perceptions about portfolio usage. It was certain that almost all of students had great problems in learning the target language, the most important problem was related to writing skills as they could not use these skills correctly. The portfolio process was for six weeks, each of students had a portfolio with five tasks. They wrote each task for a week and the last week was for assessment. The portfolio cycle was as collect, draft, rewrite and analyze.

The study shows that most of the student participants liked the study and thought that they improved their writing skills in terms of punctuation, spelling, the use of language and grammar. It was also supported that the young adult learners had augmented their vocabulary, their critical and creative thinking. Another perception of young adult learners and teachers is that they had great instinct to conduct the tasks with thinking, analyzing, reasoning, deduction, self-awareness skills but the problem was that we could not reach the whole aim which was to improve all of students' writing skills because some of the students were not able to improve their writing skills.

5.2. Discussions and Suggestions for Further Studies

The studies about portfolio usage are increasing day by day and it is clear that there have been some problems that needed to be taken in account both by teachers and students. The first problem is that most of the teachers don't motivate students to take actions in having portfolios in writing classes as teachers still haven't understood the importance of portfolio usage for increasing writing skills in English. Another problem is that students mostly find portfolio usage to be a time-consuming activity.

When portfolios are assigned as homework, students try to do their best as they can receive high marks. There should certainly be awards for good portfolios but it is not right to do portfolio applications for only giving grades. The real aim should be to develop students' language skills. Portfolio is not only limited to increase writing skills, it can also be used in other areas of language teaching. We can also apply portfolio in other domains.

In addition, if the same research is applied, we will try to conduct them as group works because group works really improve peer cooperation and student centered tasks.

Group and peer works give the chance of checking different kinds of mistakes and this is rather useful for students not to have same mistakes about a topic. The study suggests that attachment of comments about drafts on front pages might be more beneficial, so it might also be more fruitful to attach the comments about papers on the front pages instead of just correcting the mistakes with red pen. Portfolio usage is always suggested as they are mostly effective in increasing the capacity of the participants in any domain.

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7. APPENDICES

7.1. APPENDIX A: The Pre-Questionnaire

1. İngilizceyi seviyorum çünkü……………………………………………

   (I love English because……………………………………………….)

2. İngilizceyi sevmiyorum çünkü…………………………………………..

   (I don't love English because………………………………………….)

3. İnglizce derslerini anlamıyorum çünkü………………………………….

   (I don't understand English lessons because……………………………)

4. İngilizce derslerinde zorlandığım alanlar…………………………………

   (The domains that I have difficulties in English………………………….)

5. İngilizce dersinde en çok sevdiğim aktiviteler ve alanlar………………………

   (The activities and domains that I love most in English……………………….)

6. İngilizce derslerinden sıkılıyorum çünkü……………………………….....

   (I am bored with English lessons because…………………………………)

7. İnglizce kelime ezberleyemiyorumçünkü………………………………..

   (I cannot memorize English words because……………………………….)

8. İngilizce öğrenmek istemiyorum çünkü……………………………………

   (I don't want to learn English because……………………………………)

9. İngilizce öğrenmek istiyorum çünkü…………………………………….

   (I want to learn English because………………………………………….)

10. İngilizce önemlidi rçünkü ……………………………………………..

    (English is important because……………………………………………..)

7.2. APPENDIX B: The Post-Questionnaire

These were some questions asked to young adult learners after conducting the portfolio:

1. Her hafta ingilizce dersinde yazma aktivitesi yapmayı <u>sevdim</u> çünkü…………

   (I liked conducting a writing activity every week because…………………)

2. Her hafta ingilizce dersinde yazma aktivitesi yapmayı <u>sevmedim</u> çünkü………

   (I didn't like conducting a writing activity every week because……………)

3. Portfolyo hazırlamak zordu çünkü……………………………………….

   (Preparing a portfolio was difficult because…………………………………)

4. Portfolyo yazmak benigeliştirdi çünkü……………………………………

   (Writing a portfolio has developed me because……………………………)

5. Tekrar portfolyo hazırlamak isterim çünkü……………………………..

   (I would like to prepare a portfolio again because…………………………)

6. Portfolyo hazırlamayı diğer derslere de uygulayabilirim çünkü………………

   (I can apply portfolio application to the other lessons because………………)

7. Portfolyo kullanarak hatalarımı görmek önemli değildi çünkü ………

   It was not important to see my mistakes by using a portfolio because…………)

8. Portfolyo kullanarak hatalarımı görmek önemliydi çünkü ………………..

   (It was important to see my mistakes by using a portfolio because…………)

9. Portfolyodaki haftalık çalışmalarım zordu çünkü ……………………..

   (My weekly tasks in my portfolio was difficult because …………………)

10. Portfolyodaki haftalık çalışmalarım kolaydı çünkü ……………………….

    (My weekly tasks in my portfolio was easy because …………..……………

7.3. APPENDIX C: The Samples of Misspelling of "Every"

The followings are the examples of misspelling of "every" in portfolios.

-I brush my teeth **vry** morning.

-I have breakfast **evry** morning.

-I watch TV **evry** night.

-She goes to School **evry** day.

-My father drives **vrye** day.

-My mother cooks dolma **vrye** week.

-I ride a bike **vrye** weekend.

7.4. APPENDIX D: The Samples of Mistakes in Plural and Singular Subjects with the Usage of "s,es,ies" in Sentences

The followings are some common mistakes that students make in plural and singular subjects with the usage of "s,es,ies" in the portfolios:

-I **haves** breakfast at 7:00 every morning.

-She **haves** breakfast at 7:20 every morning.

-My father **drive** a car every day.

-We **goes** on a picnic every weekend.

-Jane and Tamara **visits** their parents every summer.

-She **cook** dolma every week.

-Our cat **drink** milk every morning.

- My father **have** a bath every week.

7.5. APPENDIX E: The Samples of Subject-Verb Agreements in Simple Present Continuous Tense in Sentences

The followings are some common mistakes that students make subject-verb agreements in simple present continuous tense in sentences in the portfolios:

-My father and mother **is coming** home.

-My uncle **is visit** us now.

- We **are celebrate** Ramadan Festival today.

-She **is cooks** pasta now.

-We **are rideing** a bike at the moment.

-My sister and brother **is sleeping** now.

7.6. APPENDIX F: The Interview Questions

Following questions were asked to my colleagues:

1. How can you define the problems of my students towards English?

2. How can you apply some activities to my students effectively in English lessons?

3. What can be done for a fruitful learning classroom atmosphere?

4. What is the most effective way of teaching English?

7.7. APPENDIX G: Records of the Teachers' Responses to the Interview Questions

Instructor 1:

1. How can you define the problems of your students towards English?

   Well, most of our students could not write appropriately and they were not aware of what they had written and there had been no subject-verb agreement in students' sentences. Also they don't like English as they think that English is rather boring.

2. How can you apply some activities to your students effectively in English lessons?

   It might be beneficial to use alternative assessment techniques such as portfolios for teaching English as I did the same techniques for young learners and got quite effective results.

3. What can be done for a fruitful learning classroom atmosphere?

   It would be more appropriate to teach English with entertaining activities.

4. What is the most effective way of teaching English?

   The modern usage of language teaching techniques such as student centered activities is always the best.

Instructor 2:

1. How can you define the problems of your students towards English?

   Nearly all of my students don't care English. They say that they come to school due to their families' force and in fact they hate both the school and its subjects. In addition, the most difficult domain for learning English is writing as students cannot write correctly and they have great problems in spelling, subject-verb agreement, coherence and cohesion.

2. How can you apply some activities to your students effectively in English lessons?

   When students learn the activities with group works, they feel more motivated so I generally prefer tasks with groups.

3. What can be done for a fruitful learning classroom atmosphere?

   Peer cooperation among groups may develop a fruitful learning.

4. What is the most effective way of teaching English?

   The most effective way is not make students feel bored and make them love

Instructor 3:

1. How can you define the problems of your students towards English?

   The level of my students is well, they can write appropriately but they are not aware of what they do as they lack coherence and cohesion in their writings. They can spell correctly but they don't know how they start and finish their writings.

2. How can you apply some activities to your students effectively in English lessons?

   I generally try to make my students do writing tasks regularly and want them to keep these tasks.

3. What can be done for a fruitful learning classroom atmosphere?

   It is always the best to engage all students in the tasks.

4. What is the most effective way of teaching English?

   There is a nice proverb for teaching. Don't give fish to students, make them have fish.

Instructor 4:

1. How can you define the problems of your students towards English?

   My young learners have great problems in listening as they can't understand some native recordings during English lessons correctly

2. How can you apply some activities to your students effectively in English lessons?

   I generally use written scripts of listening tasks as they are good to make learners understand the language tasks effectively.

3. What can be done for a fruitful learning classroom atmosphere?

   Keeping an effective portfolio with suitable tasks for duration may be be the best idea as making students keep a short-term portfolio with basic scripts will give them high motivation.

4. What is the most effective way of teaching English?

   Whatever you do, always try to teach in a funny atmosphere.

Instructor 5:

1. How can you define the problems of your students towards English?

   Almost all of my students have significant problems with speaking.

2. How can you apply some activities to your students effectively in English lessons?

   I let my students write scripts for speaking as they may work effectively.

3. What can be done for a fruitful learning classroom atmosphere?

   I usually try to make my students free during the activities , I give them a task and some time and wait time for conducting the tasks. Then I receive their answers.

4. What is the most effective way of teaching English?

   Students should have a right to express their ideas freely.

Instructor 6:

1. How can you define the problems of your students towards English?

Based on my experiences, most of my students tell that they are fed up with English and They see English as time-consuming. They don't understand what they read and they have great problems in reading.

2. How can you apply some activities to your students effectively in English lessons?

I usually start reading activities with brainstorming on title and pictures. Then I let my students skim the text and finally we read together and answer the questions about the text.

3. What can be done for a fruitful learning classroom atmosphere?

Letting students to have ideas on different reading samples may help them a lot. We can just categorize the texts in accordance with students levels..

4. What is the most effective way of teaching English?

Instructor 7:

1. How can you define the problems of your students towards English?

Up to now, I mostly face with writing problems in my teaching as students cannot spell the words correctly and I really have great difficulties with punctuation.

2. How can you apply some activities to your students effectively in English lessons?

I usually try to make my students do as many writing activities as possible so as to improve their writing skills.

3. What can be done for a fruitful learning classroom atmosphere?

Evoke peer cooperation among my students as I think that they can share their power with each other.

4. What is the most effective way of teaching English?

Students should know what to do and follow the directions during the classes.

Instructor 8:

1. How can you define the problems of your students towards English?

   The most difficult domain in English that come across is absolutely writing because my students can even not write the English names correctly.

2. How can you apply some activities to your students effectively in English lessons?

   I try to choose activities from the simplest to the most difficult ones and check each activity clearly.

3. What can be done for a fruitful learning classroom atmosphere?

   Students should not feel afraid of English and they need to know the importance of learning the target language.

4. What is the most effective way of teaching English?

   It is to choose the best way such as alternative assessment techniques. We may use portfolio as an alternative technique to develop their writing skills.