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**EFL TEACHERS' AND STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS TOWARDS THE USE OF
WRITING PORTFOLIOS IN LANGUAGE LEARNING PROCESS**

THESIS BY

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ÖZET

ÖĞRETMEN VE ÖĞRENCİLERİN DİL ÖĞRENME SÜRECİNDE YAZMA DOSYALAMA TEKNİĞİ KULLANIMI KONUSUNDAKİ GÖRÜŞLERİ

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Bu araştırmada Turgut Özal Üniversitesi'nde (TOU) Türkçe eğitim veren bölümlerin, yabancı dil olarak İngilizce yazma becerilerinin öğretildiği yazma sınıflarında “yazma dosyalama tekniği” kullanımına yönelik öğretmen ve öğrencilerin tutumlarının değerlendirilmesi amaçlanmıştır. Ayrıca, bu çalışma öğretmen ve öğrencilerin bakış açılarıyla üniversite ortamında “yazma dosyalama tekniği” kullanımının avantaj ve zorluklarını ortaya koymayı amaçlamaktadır. Bu çalışma 16 İngilizce okutmanı ve İngilizcenin yabancı dil olarak öğretildiği yazma sınıflarında okuyan 96 öğrenci ile yapılmıştır. Çalışma, öğretmenlerin ve öğrencilerin görüşlerini ölçen “yazma dosyalama tekniği kullanımı tutum anketleri” tarafından toplanan verilere dayanmaktadır. Bu iki anket bulguları sonucunda, Turgut Özal Üniversitesi'nde çalışan ve bu çalışmaya iştirak eden tüm İngilizce okutmanlarının ve bu çalışmaya katılan yazma sınıflarındaki öğrencilerin çoğunluğunun “yazma dosyalama tekniği” kullanımına yönelik olumlu tutumlara sahip olduğu görülmektedir. Ayrıca, öğretmen ve öğrencilere göre, İngilizcenin yabancı dil olarak öğretildiği yazma sınıflarında “yazma dosyalama tekniği” kullanımının bazı zorlukları olmakla birlikte çok sayıda faydası görülmüştür.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Yazma Dosyalama Tekniği, Yazma Süreci, Yapılandırıcılık

ABSTRACT

EFL TEACHERS' AND STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS TOWARDS THE USE OF WRITING PORTFOLIOS IN LANGUAGE LEARNING PROCESS

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Supervisor: Assist. Prof. Dr. Hülya YUMRU

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This research aims to determine the attitudes of teachers and students towards the use of portfolio in EFL writing classes at Turgut Ozal University (T.O.U). Also, it aims to reveal the advantages and challenges of using portfolio in a university context from the teachers' and the students' points of view. This study was conducted with 16 EFL teachers and 96 students studying at T.O.U who are taking EFL writing classes. The study was based on the data collected by portfolio use attitude surveys which investigated the opinions of teachers and students. As a result of the findings of two surveys, it is clear that all teachers and majority of students have positive attitudes towards the use of portfolio in EFL writing classes at T.O.U. Also, according to the teachers and students the use of portfolio in EFL writing classes has demonstrated a great number of benefits along with some challenges.

Key words: Portfolio, Process Writing, Constructivism

ABBREVIATIONS

EFL: English as a Foreign Language

ELT: English Language Teaching

SPSS: Statistical Package for Social Sciences

TOU: Turgut Özal University

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CHAPTER I

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Introduction

Chapter one starts with the description of the background of the study and continues with the purpose of the study and the research questions. The description of the significance, assumptions and limitations of the study is also dealt with, in addition to the operational definitions.

1.2. Background to the Study

In the last two decades, there has been a shift of focus toward learners in education with the advent of constructivist approach. Unlike teacher oriented and textbook based traditional teaching approach, “the constructivist approach to learning and teaching offers a student centered ways of teaching” that requires the active involvement of learners in the learning process (Baturay and Daloğlu, 2010, p. 413). In the constructivist point of view, learners are not seen as the passive receivers of knowledge and they are seen as the unique individuals who can construct their own ideas by using their initiatives. In constructivism, teachers also act as a guide and help the learners construct their own ideas “through problem-solving and inquiry-based learning activities” (Khalid and Azeem, 2012, p. 171).

This paradigm shift in teaching and learning redesigned the instruction in language classes and modified teachers’ and learners’ roles (Khalid and Azeem, 2012). Today, teachers are no longer the “sole information givers” and learners are no longer “passive recipient of knowledge” (Hanley, 1994, p.1). Today’s teachers prefer learners to become autonomous and be active participants of the learning process. Rather than sole transmission of knowledge, teachers advocate interactive learning environment for students to acquire the knowledge and skills, which they can use in real life (Yang, 2003). Thus, learner-oriented alternative teaching methods have increased in popularity to be able to facilitate more student centered language instruction and to get learners more involved in the learning process.

Portfolio, which is viewed as an alternative to traditional teaching and assessment method, is defined “as a purposeful collection of student work that shows student’s efforts, progress, and achievements in more than one area” (Paulson, Paulson and Meyer 1991, p. 61). While describing portfolios Yang (2003) states that:

Portfolios are collections of students’ work selected by the students (with the teacher’s guidance) to represent their learning experiences. Just as an artist or a designer gathers paintings and works in a portfolio to show prospective clients, portfolios usually involve students selecting and gathering samples of their second language use (such as compositions and video clips) into a folder to show peers, parents, and others (p. 294).

On the other hand, Rao (2003) regards portfolios not just as “a collection of materials stuffed into a folder (p.115).” He states that:

A portfolio should include information about the activities that produced the portfolio, the process of development (possibly including drafts and revisions), and a narrative in which the student reflectively describes the learning that took place. Materials in the portfolios can be direct or indirect evidence of the student’s use of a language. Examples of direct evidence for English students, for example, are their English reading portfolios, vocabulary logs they keep, weekly listening logs, weekly learning journals, etc. (2003, p.115).

Paulson, Paulson, and Meyer (1991) define “portfolios as an intersection of instruction and assessment” and they state that:

If carefully assembled portfolios become an intersection of instruction and assessment: they are not just instruction or just assessment but, rather, both. Together instruction and assessment give more than either gives separately (p. 61).

According to literature, using portfolios in education has been proved to have great benefits on learners in many aspects. For instance, Yang (2003) states that portfolios enable learners “to take more initiative and control of their learning, to become more autonomous, and to reflect on their learning over time” (p. 294). Also, Ghassan (2012) emphasizes the importance

of using of portfolios and states that they provide learners with responsibility for their own learning by motivating them to get involved in the subjects relevant to their own interests and encourage “lifelong learning experiences”(p. 269). Portfolios also provide an alternative way of assessment to traditional paper pen tests. Paulson, Paulson and Meyer view portfolios as “powerful educational tools” that enable learners to “take charge of their own learning” by allowing learners “to assume ownership in ways that no other traditional approaches allow” (1991, p. 61).

The use of portfolio in English language classes has a variety of benefits along with some challenges that are specific to context they are implemented. Portfolios in English language classrooms provide teachers with opportunities to be aware of learners’ capacities, preferences and learning styles and so they facilitate teachers to adopt a more learner-oriented teaching practice (Nunes, 2004). Teachers in language classes use portfolios because they believe that “portfolios enable student involvement and fit well into student-centered classes” (Callahan, 1995, p. 15). EFL teachers also use portfolios to evaluate and enhance student learning as the use of portfolios may encourage learners to take more initiative and control of learning and fosters learner autonomy (Rao, 2003).

1.3. Aim of the Study

This study has two main aims. The first aim of the study is to identify the opinions and tendencies of English language teachers towards the use of portfolios in EFL writing classes at Turgut Ozal University and reveal the advantages and challenges of using portfolio from the teachers’ points of view. The second aim of the study is to reflect the opinions of the students and reveal the advantages and challenges of using portfolio from their point of view.

Therefore, this study tries to find the answers to the following research questions:

- 1.** What are the opinions of teachers about the advantages of using portfolio in writing classes at the university context?
- 2.** What are the opinions of teachers about the challenges of using portfolio in writing classes at the university context?

3. What are the advantages of using portfolios in writing classes from students' point of view?

4. What are the challenges of using portfolios in writing classes from students' point of view?

1.4. The Significance of the Study

As it is clear in related literature, portfolios have demonstrated to have great contributions in education, especially in language instruction. The use of portfolio in education is something that is often taken for granted by many English teachers without thinking about the advantages and challenges. However, the use of portfolio bears various challenges along with a variety of advantages. Thus, the current portfolio implementation at Turgut Özal University is specific to its context and has its own challenges and advantages.

Even though the use of portfolio is quite beneficial in terms of motivating students to take part in the learning process, it requires the commitment and extra work of the teachers and students. In this study, the advantages and challenges of using portfolio in a university context and the extra work it brings to the teachers and students will be investigated from the teachers' and the students' points of view.

This study will be beneficial for students, staff and administrators at Turgut Özal University to be able to prevent the loss of energy, time and money. It might be a good sample study in EFL field together with the other studies that have been carried out on this subject. There are a variety of studies done on this subject; however this study will be specific to its context and will be beneficial for students, teachers and researchers in the field of ELT as it will examine the use of portfolio from the teachers' and students' points of view. The results obtained from this study might offer suggestions for the teachers using portfolio in their classes at universities or for the ones who intend to use it.

1.5. Limitations of the Study

This study has a number of limitations. First of all, this study is limited to the English language teachers working at the Turgut Özal University in Ankara. Secondly, the student participants of the study are the first and second year students from EFL writing classes at

Turgut Özal University. For this reason, there are only 16 English teachers and 96 students who can participate in this study. Thus, it is not possible to generalize the results of this study for all teachers and students.

In this study, two different surveys were used to collect data, which were adopted, from Yang's (2003) portfolio use attitude survey. Therefore, the results of this study are limited to these data collection instruments.

1.6. Operational Definitions of the Study

Process approach to teaching writing

It is an approach to writing, which contends that learners should “focus on the process by which they produce their written products rather than on the products themselves” (Onozawa, 2010, p. 154). Tribble (1996, p.160) describes the process approach as “an approach to the teaching of writing which stresses the creativity of the individual writer, and which pays attention to the development of good writing practices rather than the imitation of models” (as cited in The University of Birmingham, 2011, p. 3).

Cycles of Process Approach

Pre-writing Phase

In this stage, the learners “develop a key understanding of the piece of writing they will need to create. Through this stage, students will develop a solid understanding of the craft of constructing the writing, the product that they will create, and features that will make it successful” (Donohue, 2009, p.10).

Drafting Phase

In drafting stage, learners can produce their own piece of writings and also they can use various ways to “explore with new forms of writing” (Donohue, 2009, p.12). In this stage, the teacher also helps the learners in different ways to be able to guide them for creating their own

piece of writing. This “gradual” drafting stage also helps learners to create more independent ways of working, by letting them to take more responsibility (Donohue, 2009, p.12).

Revising and Editing Phase

In this stage, when learners have explored ways of writing and created a draft of writing, the teacher provides them with a “descriptive feedback” (Donohue, 2009, p.12). This feedback has a significant role in this stage for students to be aware of their mistakes and modify and improve their piece of writing. The feedback can be in different forms but the most important thing is to get the feedback before the final draft (Donohue, 2009).

Publishing Phase

This is the last stage of writing process and it includes “sharing, reflection, and assessment of the students’ writings” (Donohue, 2009, p.13). In this stage teachers can evaluate students’ final piece of writings with “the success criteria that were initially established” (Donohue, 2009, p.14).

Portfolio

It is a “purposeful” set of learner’s work that shows the learner’s abilities, efforts, and performances in more than one area. The collection should also have some important features such as; “the objectives for selection, evidence for self-reflection, the criteria for judging merit” (Paulson, Paulson and Meyer, 1991, p. 60).

CHAPTER II

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

2.1. Introduction

In this chapter the review of relevant literature will be presented to be able to provide information about the theoretical framework of the study. In this chapter, we will review the literature and give background information about the use of the portfolio in ELT. First, the review of the traditional teaching method and constructivism to teaching and learning will be given. Then, the description of the portfolio, some essential guidelines and advantages and challenges of using the portfolio will be described according to the relevant literature.

2.2. Traditional Teaching Method

The significant impact that constructivism has on education is due to the fact that traditional approach to teaching and learning has failed to provide appropriate educational environments for creating “thinking students who can apply what they learn... to various and unpredictable situations that they might encounter over the course of their... lives” (Hanley, 1994, p. 1). Traditional teaching approach, that disregards the individual capacities of learners in terms of creative thinking, “involves the coverage of the context” and memorization of fixed facts (Azeem and Khalid, 2012, p. 170). Thus, classrooms, which are designed according to the traditional assumptions, are usually textbook based and teacher dominated. What learners are expected to do in a traditional classroom is to learn the “fixed world of knowledge” in a passive way without asking questions, using their initiatives and interacting with their friends and teachers. Teachers in a traditional environment are the only source of information and they transfer the knowledge to the passive learners as “pipelines” (Hanley, 1991, p. 1).

2.3. Constructivism

The idea of constructivism is quite old and it has a deep historical background in “philosophy, sociology, cognitive psychology and education” (Hanley, 1994, p.1). That’s why constructivism bears a variety of meanings for different areas of study and has many

implications to various subject matters (Powell and Kalina, 2003). In literature constructivism is defined as a “psychological and philosophical perspective” claiming that human beings can actively construct knowledge instead of receiving it in a passive way (Schunk, 2012, p. 229). Constructivism, which is also described as a “philosophical explanation about the nature of learning,” (Schunk, 2012, p. 230) formulates learning as “an active, contextualized, or constructive process” (Khalid and Azeem 2012, p. 170). Therefore, constructivist learning is a complex issue, which cannot only be explained with external factors.

With the help of constructivism there is a change of focus from environmental factors to human factors for explaining the learning process. Constructivism rejects the idea that “learning principles exist and needs to be discovered” (Schunk, 2012, p. 230). According to constructivism human beings make their own learning in their own ways. Constructivism also challenges the idea of learner as a “blank slate (*tabula rasa*)” and contends that learners are not free from their cultural backgrounds and “past experiences” (Khalid and Azeem 2012, p. 170).

Here are some essential basic premises of constructivism, which are based on the analysis of Taber (2006). These “core” ideas of constructivism provide us a sensible framework of constructivist claims:

1. Knowledge is actively constructed by the learner, not passively received from the outside. Learning is something done by the learner, not something that is imposed on the learner.
2. Learners come to the learning situation (in science etc.) with existing ideas about many phenomena. Some of these ideas are ad hoc and unstable; others are more deeply rooted and well developed.
3. Learner has their own individual ideas about the world, but there are also many similarities and common patterns in their ideas. Some of these ideas are socially and culturally accepted and shared, and they are often part of the language, supported by metaphors etc. They also often function well as tools to understand many phenomena.
4. These ideas are often at odds with accepted scientific ideas, and some of them may be persistent and hard to change.

5. Knowledge is represented in the brain as conceptual structures, and it is possible to model and describe these in some detail.
6. Teaching has to take the learner's existing ideas seriously if they want to change or challenge these.
7. Although knowledge in one sense is personal and individual, the learners construct their knowledge through their interaction with the physical world, collaboratively in social settings and in a cultural and linguistic environment (cited in Baker, McGaw, and Peterson, 2007, p. 3).

2.3.1. Constructivism and Its Implications to Teaching and Learning

Constructivism has recently gained a growing popularity and has been applied to learning and teaching (Schunk, 2012). Constructivism has provided educators to look at teaching and learning process from a different perspective and provided a change of focus in education from teacher dominated classes to student oriented ways of teaching. Some very basic principles of constructivism on the role of learners and teachers, the significance of individual experiences and initiatives has drawn the attentions of educators on the subject (Jones and Brader-Araje, 2002).

2.3.2. Constructivism and the Learner's Role

While constructivist approach to learning and teaching has provided educators to view learners as the unique individuals who have their own experiences and characteristics, it has also allowed the learners to be aware of the “applications of the real world” and let them understand how things function in their own ways (Hanley, 1994, p. 1). Learners who are once are “passive recipient of information” are transformed into active participants in the learning process. With the help of their teachers, learners “construct their knowledge actively, rather than just mechanically ingesting knowledge” from the teacher or the textbook (Khalid and Azeem, 2012, p. 171). In constructivist point of view knowledge is built on the learner's existing knowledge, either in a passive or in an active way. Therefore, for constructivism learners who passively receive information can also actively construct their own understandings (Khalid and Azeem, 2012).

2.3.3. Constructivist Classrooms

As Larochelle, Bednarz and Garrison (2010) stated, teaching in a constructivist way necessitates some very basic “conceptual shifts” together with some extra responsibilities in “teaching practices” (p. 191). For example, instruction in constructivist classrooms should be based on “active techniques such as experiments, real-world problem solving” (Khalid and Azeem, 2012, p. 171). In order to reach the information in a constructivist classroom, teachers should involve students more in the learning process and allow them think about what they have learned and what they are learning. In this way, learners will understand and judge how the knowledge changed their intellectual capacities. Teachers also in a constructivist classroom will understand their learners’ individual capacities and adapt the class activities relevant to their students’ interests and levels (Khalid and Azeem, 2012).

Despite various definitions and assumptions of constructivism in education, there are some basic characteristics of constructivist classrooms. The learning that takes place in a constructivist environment is described by Good and Brophy (1994). According to them, in a constructivist classroom:

- Learners construct their own meaning. Students are not passive receptacles. They do not easily process or transfer what they passively receive. In order to make knowledge useful in a new situation, students must make a deliberate effort to make sense of the information that comes to them. They must own it. They must manipulate, discover, and create knowledge to fit their belief systems.
- New learning builds on prior knowledge. In making an effort to make sense of information, students must make connections between old knowledge and new information. They must compare and question, challenge and investigate, accept or discard old information and beliefs in order to progress.
- Learning is enhanced by social interaction. The constructivist process works best in social settings as students have the opportunity to compare and share their ideas with others. Learning occurs as students attempt to resolve conflicting ideas. Although social interaction is frequently accomplished in small group activities, discussions within the

entire class provide students the opportunity to vocalize their knowledge and to learn from others.

-Meaningful learning develops through “authentic” tasks. This aspect of constructivism is frequently misinterpreted. Using authentic tasks does not mean that we wait until a frog hops by to seize the opportunity to teach metamorphosis. It simply means that activities are chosen to simulate those that will be encountered in real life or in an assignment (as cited in Cooperstein and Kocevar-Weidinger, 2004, p. 142).

2.3.4. Constructivism and the Teacher’s Role

Constructivism has led to several changes in the role of teachers and provided them to adopt a role as facilitators who guide learners to construct knowledge rather than to reproduce a series of facts. Thus, they provide students areas where they can “formulate and test their ideas, draw conclusions and inferences, and pool and convey their knowledge” (Khalid and Azeem, 2012, p. 171). A constructivist teacher, who has this idea in mind, integrates activities such as “problem-solving and inquiry-based learning activities” (Khalid and Azeem, 2012, p. 171). Constructivism, in this way, redefines the roles of the learners and the teachers and gives them chances to go beyond traditional roles.

Brooks and Brooks describe common behaviors of a constructivist teacher and states that teachers who want adopt constructivist-teaching methods and become a constructivist teacher should demonstrate some essential behaviors. They state that constructivist teachers have many things in common (1999). For example, a constructivist teacher should:

- encourage and accept student autonomy and initiative,
- use raw data and primary sources, along with manipulative, interactive and physical materials,
- when framing tasks they use cognitive terminology such as classify, analyze, predict, and create,
- allow student responses to drive lessons and shift instructional strategies and alter content,
- inquire about students’ understanding of concepts before sharing their own understandings of those concepts,

- encourage students to engage in dialogue, both with the teacher and with one another,
- encourage student inquiry by asking thoughtful open-ended questions and encouraging students to ask questions of each other,
- seek elaborations of students' initial responses,
- engage students in experiences that might engender contradictions to their initial hypothesis and then encourage discussion,
- allow wait time after posing questions,
- provide time for students to construct relationships and create metaphors,
- nurture students natural curiosity through frequent use of learning cycle model (Brooks and Brooks, 1999, pp. 101-118).

2.3.5. Constructivism and Curriculum

Constructivism has also great influence on the design of curriculum and instruction and it enables learners to study a topic from multiple perspectives. As Schunk (2012) mentions in his article:

In constructivist classrooms, the curriculum focuses on big concepts. Activities typically involve primary sources of data and manipulative materials. Teachers interact with students by seeking their questions and points of view. Assessment is authentic; it is interwoven with teaching and includes teacher observations and student portfolios (p. 261).

2.3.6. Adopting a Constructivist Way of Teaching and Potential Problems

Becoming a constructivist teacher and adopting a constructivist way of teaching might be challenging for teachers. As it is stated in Hanley's article on constructivism;

Becoming a constructivist teacher may prove a difficult transformation since most instructors were prepared for teaching in the traditional, objectivist manner. It requires a paradigm shift and requires the willing abandonment of familiar perspectives and practices and the adoption of new ones (1994, p. 1).

Schunk also states that there are some other potential problems of adopting a constructivist way of teaching:

For example, school administrators and teachers are held accountable for students' scores on standardized tests. These tests typically emphasize lower-level, basic skills and downgrade the importance of deeper conceptual understanding. School cultures also may work against constructivism, especially if teachers have been teaching in the same fashion for many years and have standard curricula and lessons. Parents, too, may not be fully supportive of teachers using less direction in the classroom in favor of time for students to construct their understandings (p. 261).

Although there are many “potential problems” waiting for teachers who are on the way of becoming a constructivist teacher, they should be in commitment of integrating constructivist teaching and learning methods and be determined to get rid of traditional habits (Hanley, 1994, p. 1).

2.4. Definition of Portfolio

The literature is replete with a broad range of researches on the use of portfolio in English language teaching. That's why a variety of portfolio definitions have been developed so far that shows the increasing popularity and variety in use (Nunes, 2002). Johnson, Mims-Cox, and Doyle-Nichols define portfolio as the collection of students' work that has been collected “over a period of time” (2006 p.15). However, Paulson, Paulson and Meyer created the most commonly cited definition of portfolio. For them a portfolio:

... is a purposeful collection of student works that exhibits the student's efforts, progress, and achievements in one or more areas. The collection must include the criteria for selection, the criteria for judging merit and evidence of student self-reflection (1991, p. 60).

Portfolios are often perceived “as learning tools to understand and monitor development as well as a non-mechanistic, outcome-oriented collection of evidence on effort” (Smith and Tillema, 2003, p. 626). As a sign of “achievement”, portfolios serve as a means of “providing

feedback, assuming an active, even steering role of the learner in the assessment task” (Smith and Tillema, 2003, p. 626).

2.5. Types of Portfolio

According to Paulson, Paulson and Mayer (1994), the portfolio “concept” can be perceived in different ways and portfolios are “as varied as” the people who create them and as the context they are created (p. 61). Thus, there are different types of portfolios, which are used for different purposes for various groups of people (Üğüten, 2009). However, each portfolio collection has something specific about its creator and it gives particular information about its context (Darling, 2001).

In literature, there is a variety of described portfolio types. However, to be able to have a sensible discussion on *the nature* of portfolio, we need to separate portfolios into at least four types, which can be determined by taking some *major dimensions* of portfolios into consideration. For instance, portfolios can easily be categorized according to their “purposes as either being selection or promotion oriented or learning or developmentally oriented, or the setting of use, as either being mandated by external requirements or self-directed or voluntarily initiated for personal use” (Smith & Tillema, 2003, p. 626). Smith and Tillema (2003) describe these four core portfolio types in the following way:

1. **The Dossier Portfolio** is a record of achievement or a mandated collection of work for selection or promotional purposes required for entry to a profession or program; this is a detailed coverage of attainments. Establishment of standards and a precise specification of levels of competence are required.
2. **The Training Portfolio** is a required or mandated exhibit of efforts collected during learning or in a curriculum program. It highlights the core professional knowledge, skills or competencies a person has acquired and is collected during the time frame of a course as a representative sample of the students’ work. Some reflective comments in the training portfolio might explain the selected evidence. This portfolio type often has a fixed format to help the collector provide appropriate evidence.

3. The *Reflective Portfolio* is a purposeful and personally collected array of work providing evidence of growth and accomplishments to be brought forward for promotion and admission. The compilation of evidence reveals best practices or key competencies chosen to meet certain criteria along with a self-appraisal showing progress over time and understanding of accomplishments across different contexts. The annotation (the why and when) of evidence is as important as the evidence itself.

4. The *Personal Development Portfolio* is a personal evaluation and reflective account of professional growth during a long-term process. The collection itself is an opportunity to discuss and give value to the activities of the person who is building an identity. The importance of the collection lies in the opportunity for sustained conversation with peers or colleagues about experiences and in refining or restructuring one's growth (Smith & Tillema, 2003, p. 626).

Despite these four categories, there might be a variety of different *variations* of portfolios. The most important thing is that as a teacher you can choose the one that fits your learners' "needs and abilities" (Saskatchewan Professional Development Unit, 2013, p. 5). For different aims, "you can combine categories and may invent a category that is unique in responding to your needs and those of your students" (Saskatchewan Professional Development Unit, 2013, p. 5).

2.6. Contents of Portfolio

As it is in an artist's collection, portfolios generally include learners' samples and selections of their learning into a file to show their teachers and friends (Yang, 2003). However, Rao does not view portfolios only as a collection of students' work "stuffed into a folder" (2003, p. 61). He emphasizes the significance of portfolio contents by stating:

A portfolio should include information about the activities that produced the portfolio, the process of development (possibly including drafts and revisions), and a narrative in which the student reflectively describes the learning that took place (Rao, 2003, p. 61).

While Nunes (2004) is discussing the essential elements in a learner's portfolio in her article, she divides *the contents of the portfolio* into five categories:

1. Found samples, which refer to pieces done to fulfill class assignments,
2. Processed samples, or the students' analyses and self-assessment of a work previously graded by teacher,
3. Revisions or samples of student work that have been graded and then revised, edited, and rewritten,
4. Reflections, which are related to the processed samples but are applied to the portfolio as a whole, providing a chance for students to think about who they are, what their strengths and weaknesses are,
5. Portfolio projects, which cover work designed for the sole purpose of inclusion in student portfolios, and that can arise from a review of portfolios that reveals a particular interest or challenge to overcome (p. 327).

2.7. Guidelines for Portfolio

After years of experience and study on the subject, Rao states; "there is no single way of developing or implementing portfolios" (2003, p. 115). The design, contents and purposes of portfolios are as varied as their contexts and creators. They may be in different formats for different purposes (Rao, 2003). However, to be able to "preserve the aspects of portfolio that give the concept its power", Pauson, Paoulson and Meyer (1991) offer some essential guidelines (p. 61). Here are the some basic guidelines for proper implementation of portfolio in teaching and learning:

1. Developing a portfolio offers the student an opportunity to learn about learning. Therefore, the end product must contain information that shows that a student has engaged in the self-reflection.
2. The portfolio is something that is done by the student, not to the student. Portfolio assessment offers a concrete way for students to learn to value their own work and by extension, to value themselves as learners. Therefore, the students must be involved in selecting the pieces to be included.

3. The portfolio is separate and different from the student's cumulative folder. Scores and other cumulative folder information that are held in central depositories should be included in a portfolio only if they take on new meaning within the context of the exhibits found there.
4. The portfolio must convey explicitly or implicitly the student's activities; for example, the rationale, intents, contents, standards, and judgments.
5. The portfolio may serve a different purpose during the year from the purpose it serves at the end. Some material may be kept because it is instructional, for example, partially finished work on problem areas. At the end of the year, however, the portfolio may contain only material that the students is willing to make public.
6. A portfolio may have multiple purposes, but these must not conflict. A student's personal goals and interests are reflected in his or her selection of materials, but information included may also reflect the interests of teachers, parents or the district. One purpose that is almost universal in student portfolios is showing progress on the goals represented in the instructional program.
7. Portfolio should contain information that illustrates growth. There are many ways to demonstrate growth. The most obvious is by including a series of examples of actual school performance that show how the student's skills have improved. Changes observed on the interest inventories, records of outside activities such as reading, or on attitude measures are other ways to illustrate a student's growth.
8. Finally, many of the skills and techniques that are involved in producing effective portfolios do not happen by themselves. By way of support, students need models of portfolios, as well as the example of how others develop and reflect upon portfolios (Pauson, Paoulson and Meyer, 1991, pp. 61-62).

2.8. Advantages of Portfolio

There are a number of articles that discuss the advantages of using portfolio in English language teaching area. For Nunes, using portfolios are very beneficial in terms of providing active student participation, reflection and self-monitoring in the ongoing learning process

(2004). Also, as it is mentioned in the studies of Brown (1998), Paulson, Paulson, and Meyer (1991) and Yueh (1999) the use of portfolio has a number of advantages such as:

“offering students a concrete way to value their work, reflect on their performance, enhance their learning and autonomy, alter their views of the teacher’s role and their own role, encourage themselves to take responsibility for their learning, and involve themselves in the assessment process (as cited in Yang, 2003, p. 295).

The great virtue of building portfolio for Nakayama is the active participant of learners in learning and assessment process (n.d.). Nakayama lists some advantages of using portfolios in his article and he states that portfolios:

- Can be efficient tool for demonstrating learning
- Can develop awareness of own learning
- Can improve motivation and involvement in learning
- Can give a profile of various learner abilities
- Can provide opportunities for student-teacher dialogue
- Can match assessment to instruction (n.d., p. 304, 305).

2.9. Challenges of Portfolio

According to the literature, portfolios have some challenges along with many advantages. As Ghassan (2012) states, one who intends to integrate and use portfolios in language learning process is likely to face some challenges such as; “explaining this approach to students, defining the goals and rationale of approach, giving feedback and grading, and devising an organizational structure for the whole project” (p. 269).

2.10. Approaches to Writing

There are a variety of approaches for teaching writing skills. As a teacher, what we are supposed to do is to select the appropriate one for our purposes and for our students. As Harmer (2010) states teachers should make a clear decision about the focus of their writing practice. Are they going to focus more on the product of writing or on the writing process? If they pay attention to the product, they will only care for “the aim of a task and in the end product”.

However, if they focus more on the process approach to writing, they will be dealing with different stages that any piece of writing goes through” (Harmer, 2010, p. 257).

2.10.1. Product Approach

A good description of product approach is created by Pincas (1982b). Pincas views writing “primarily about linguistic knowledge, with attention focused on the appropriate use of vocabulary, syntax, and cohesive devices” (as cited in Badger and White, 2000, p. 153). According to Pincas, (1982) product approach to teaching writing can be divided into four stages such as; “familiarization; controlled writing; guided writing; and free writing” (as cited in Badger and White, 2000 p.153). Pincas (1982) also describes these four stages and states that:

The familiarization stage aims to make learners aware of certain features of a particular text. In **the controlled and guided writing sections**, the learners practice the skills with increasing freedom until they are ready for **the free writing section**, when they 'use the writing skill as part of a genuine activity such as a letter, story or essay' (as cited in Badger and White, 2000, p. 153).

2.10.2. Process Approach

In process approach, the writing skill is regarded “as predominantly to do with linguistic skills, such as planning and drafting, and there is much less emphasis on linguistic knowledge, such as knowledge about grammar and text structure” (Badger and White, 2000, p. 154).

According to Tribble (1996, p. 39) the processes of typical writing consist of these four phases: “prewriting; composing/drafting; revising; and editing” (as cited in Badger and White, 2000, p. 153). Also, Tribble, (1996, p. 39) explains these four stages in this way:

A typical **prewriting** activity in the process approach would be for learners to brainstorm on the topic of houses.

At the **composing/drafting stage** they would select and structure the result of the brainstorming session to provide a plan of a description of a house. This would guide the first draft of a description of a particular house. After discussion, learners might **revise** the first draft working individually or in groups.

Finally, the learners would **edit** or **proofread** the text (as cited in Badger and White, 2000, p. 153).

CHAPTER III

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1. Introduction

In this chapter, the methodology of this study will be presented in detail. First, the description of the research design, the participants and the instruments of the study will be presented. Then, research procedures will be described in a chronological order.

3.2. The Design of the Study

The aim of this study was to determine the perceptions of teachers and students towards the use of portfolio in EFL writing classes at Turgut Ozal University (T.O.U.). That is why; this study provides us with an overview about the advantages and the challenges of using portfolio at a university context from the teachers' and the students' points of view.

In light of constructivist theory of learning which views learning as a process of constructing knowledge, this study aimed to determine the attitudes of teachers and students towards the use of portfolio in the process of teaching and assessing writing skills. In this study, quantitative research method was used to be able to “adopt objective, rigorous, and systematic strategies for generating and refining knowledge” (Sousa, Driessnack and Mendes, 2007, p. 1).

Sousa, Driessnack and Mendes (2007) define research design as a process of “planning, implementation, and analysis of a study to answer the research questions and hypothesizes of the study” (p. 1). Studies, which have different aims and purposes, will require different kinds of research designs. In a general sense, there are two main research designs quantitative and qualitative. As Hopkins (2008) explains

A quantitative research is all about quantifying relationships between variables. You express the relationship between variable using effect statistics, such as correlations, relative frequencies, or differences between means. Studies aimed at quantifying relationships are of two types: **descriptive** and **experimental**. In a descriptive study, no attempt is made to change behavior or conditions--you measure things as they are. In an

experimental study you take measurements, try some sort of intervention, and then take measurements again to see what happened (p. 1).

Taking the features of this specific research and the context of this study into consideration, a quantitative research design will serve the aim of this study in an effective way. Two adopted versions of portfolio attitude survey developed by Yang (2003) will provide us with quantitative data which possibly will determine the teachers' and the students' perceptions on the advantages and the challenges of using portfolio at a university context (see Appendix: 1 and 2).

3.3. Participants

The study was conducted at Turgut Özal University (T.O.U) with 16 teachers and 92 first and second year students who were taking EFL writing courses. In order to choose the participants, convenience sampling strategy was used. According to Ross (2005) a convenience sampling strategy is used to:

describe a sample in which elements have been selected from the target population on the basis of their accessibility or convenience to the researcher. Convenience samples are sometimes referred to as 'accidental samples' for the reason that elements may be drawn into the sample simply because they just happen to be situated, spatially or administratively, near to where the researcher is conducting the data collection. The main assumption associated with convenience sampling is that the members of the target population are homogeneous. That is, that there would be no difference in the research results obtained from a random sample, a nearby sample, a co-operative sample, or a sample gathered in some inaccessible part of the population (p. 3).

3.4. Data Collection Tools

As it is in the study of Yang (2003), this study collected data through the portfolio use attitude surveys. The portfolio use attitude survey that was designed by Yang (2003) was adopted into two different formats: one was for the teachers and the other one was for students.

The adopted versions of portfolio use attitude surveys both for the teachers and the students included 32 items to be rated on a 5-point scale from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5).

3.4.1. Portfolio Use Attitude Survey for Teachers and Students

The portfolio use attitude survey was originally developed by Yang (2003) with the aim of “assessing students’ attitudes and reactions toward the use of portfolios” (p. 299). It has 32 items in four areas that aim to determine the attitudes of the students “in actual practice in preparing portfolios (e.g., Items 5, 9, 15, 25), advantages and disadvantages of portfolios (e.g., Items 3, 8, 10, 11, 12, 16, 18, 22, 23, 26, 27, 28, 30, 31, 32), the portfolio sharing activities (e.g., Items 2, 6, 14, 21), perception or understanding about the portfolio (e.g., Items 1, 4, 7, 13, 17, 19, 20, 24, 29)” (Yang, 2003, p. 299).

A five point Likert scale portfolio use attitude survey was adopted by the researcher into two different formats from the study of Yang (2003) to identify the perceptions of the teachers and the students towards the use of portfolio in EFL writing classes. Each survey contains 32 statements that questions the students’ and the teachers’ attitudes and perception towards the use of portfolio in four areas as it was in the study of Yang; *actual practice in preparing portfolios* (4 items), *advantages and challenges of portfolios* (16 items), *portfolio sharing activities* (5 items) and *the perception or understanding of the portfolio* (9 items).

The survey was adopted from the study of Yang (2003), and its internal consistency reliability was recomputed. As a result, its Cronbach’s alpha value was defined as 0.71, which is quite acceptable. The obtained Cronbach’s alpha value revealed that the adopted versions of the survey also have greater internal consistency reliability, as the value in Yang’s study was 0.81.

3.5. Data Collection Procedure

Turgut Özal University offers two different language-learning programs for students to learn English. One is compulsory preparatory language program for students who are going to study in English in their fields. The second one is intensive language courses for the ones who are going to study in Turkish in their fields. The study was conducted with the first and second year students who are taking intensive language courses in EFL writing classes. Portfolio has

already been in use at T.O.U in EFL writing classes since 2011 for assessing and teaching language skills, especially writing skills. Participants had five hours of EFL writing classes in a week and one separate portfolio hour for individual meetings for individual feedback. After the implementation of portfolio in EFL writing classes in fall term of 2012-2013 academic year, the data were collected through portfolio use attitude surveys that were administrated to the teachers and the students at the end of the term for determining the perceptions of the teachers and the students towards the use of the portfolio. After completion of portfolio activities and tasks, the survey was administered to 16 teachers and 96 students working and studying at T.O.U. The total administration time was estimated to be 15 minutes. The participants were given the survey forms by the researcher and their teachers during regular class hours.

3.6. Data Analysis

The data obtained from the portfolio use attitude surveys was analyzed by using SPSS 20 software program. We entered the data into SPSS 20 computer software program and calculated their means and standard deviations to be able to analyze the data. The data obtained from Five point Likert scale portfolio use attitude surveys was interpreted using a five point rating scale from strongly disagree (S.D), disagree (D), natural (N), agree (A) and to strongly agree (S.A). In the interpretation of the findings of the portfolio use attitude surveys, the percentages of the responses to “strongly disagree (S.D) and disagree (D)” were added together and the percentages of the responses to “agree (A) and to strongly agree (S.A)” were added together.

CHAPTER IV

4. DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

4.1. Introduction

This chapter will present the findings and the discussion of the statistical analysis of the data obtained from portfolio use attitude surveys. In order to answer the research questions, the results and the findings of the analysis will be discussed under the following titles:

- ✓ the opinions and tendencies of English language teachers towards the use of portfolios in EFL writing classes at Turgut Ozal University and the advantages and challenges of using portfolio from the teachers' points of view (research questions 1 & 2),
- ✓ the opinions of English language students towards the use of portfolios in EFL writing classes at Turgut Ozal University and the advantages and challenges of using portfolio from the students' points of view (research questions 3 & 4).

The researcher conducted two portfolio use attitude surveys. One was for determining the opinions and the tendencies of English language teachers towards the use of portfolios in EFL writing classes and to investigate the advantages and challenges of using portfolio from the teachers' points of view (see Appendix 1). The second one reflected the opinions of English language students and at the same time revealed the advantages and challenges of using portfolio from the students' point of view (see Appendix 2).

Each survey included different versions of the same 32 items. The main difference between the surveys was that the first survey was for investigating the teachers' perceptions about advantages and challenges of using portfolios in EFL writing classes. On the other hand, the second survey was for determining the students' opinions about the advantages and challenges of using portfolio in EFL writing classes. All of the 32 items in each survey aimed to determine the attitudes of the teachers and the students in four areas; *actual practice in preparing portfolios* (e.g., Items 5, 9, 15, 25), *advantages and disadvantages of portfolios* (e.g., Items 3, 8, 10, 11, 12, 16, 18, 22, 23, 26, 27, 28, 30, 31, 32), *the portfolio sharing activities* (e.g., Items 2, 6,

14, 21), *perception or understanding about the portfolio* (e.g., Items 1, 4, 7, 13, 17, 19, 20, 24, 29).

4.2. The Teachers' Opinions towards the Use of Portfolios in EFL Writing Classes

In order to answer research questions 1 and 2, the researcher used the portfolio use attitude survey for teachers. With the help of the findings and the results of the portfolio use attitude survey, the researcher tried to answer these research questions: “What are the opinions of teachers about the advantages of using portfolio in writing classes at the university context?” and “What are the opinions of teachers about the challenges of using portfolio in writing classes at the university context?”

According to the findings of the first portfolio use attitude survey, teachers think that their students have a clear perception or understanding about the portfolio. Table 4.1 summarizes the teachers' opinions about students' awareness of the portfolio.

Table 4.1. Teachers' Opinions about the Students' Awareness of Portfolio

Item description	SD	D	N	A	SA	No.	Mean	SDev.
1. Compiling a portfolio requires a clear organizing concept.	0	0	0	50	50	16	4.50	0.516
4. I feel the appearance of the portfolio (including its cover and art design) is important.	0	25	31.3	31.2	12.5	16	3.31	1.014
7. My students have a clear concept about how to compile a portfolio.	0	6.3	25	68.7	0	16	3.63	0.619
13. I feel the content of the portfolio (including its organization and details) is important.	0	0	0	25	75	16	4.75	0.447
17. Preparing a portfolio requires good computer skills and artistic talent.	0	12.5	43.8	25	18.7	16	3.50	0.966
19. I think reflection and self-evaluation is the most important part of the portfolio.	0	0	0	43.7	56.3	16	4.56	0.512
20. The handout's introduction to the portfolio was not clear enough.	12.5	56.2	31.3	0	0	16	2.19	0.655
24. Looking at previous students' portfolio samples gave my students a better idea about portfolios.	0	0	12.5	43.8	43.7	16	4.31	0.704
29 My students still don't understand why we needed to compile a portfolio.	25	56.3	18.7	0	0	16	1.81	0.655

SD = Strongly disagree, D = Disagree, N = Neutral, A = Agree, and SA = Strongly agree.

As seen in Table 4.1, all teachers (M=4.50, 4.75) are very sure that compiling a portfolio requires a clear organizing concept and they believe that the content of the portfolio is very important (Item 1, 13). They also state that reflection and self-evaluation is the most important part of portfolio (Item19, M= 4.56). Item 7 in Table 4.1 shows that most of the teachers (M=3.63) think that their students know how to compile a portfolio. Only two teachers state that their students do not have a clear concept about how to compile a portfolio. Also, as seen in Item

29 nearly all teachers (M=1.81) challenge the idea that their students still do not understand why they need to compile a portfolio, and only 3 of them state that they have only slight idea about their students' understandings.

According to the portfolio survey for teachers, most of the teachers are sure that portfolio-sharing activities have contributed to the language learning process of their students. Table 4.2 sums up the teachers' opinions concerning the portfolio sharing activities.

Table 4.2. Teachers' Opinions on the Portfolio Sharing Activities

Item description	SD	D	N	A	SA	No.	Mean	SDev.
2. The portfolio sharing activities offered my students chances to learn good English learning methods from other classmates.	0	0	12.5	56.3	31.2	16	4.19	0.655
6. During the portfolio sharing activities, my students were able to share useful English learning resources with their classmates.	0	0	25	56.3	18.7	16	3.94	0.680
14. Portfolio sharing can increase cooperative learning and mutual growth in English.	6.2		0	50	43.8	16	4.38	0.619
21. The portfolio sharing activities were helpful to my students' understanding of the portfolio.	0	0	0	75	25	16	4.25	0.447

SD = Strongly disagree, D = Disagree, N = Neutral, A = Agree, and SA = Strongly agree.

For instance, Item 2 in Table 4.2 shows that almost all (M=4.19) teachers believe the contribution of portfolio sharing activities to their students learning's and they claim that portfolio sharing activities offer their students great chances to learn good English learning methods from their friends. Also, Item 6 has parallel findings and it shows that all participants (M=3.94) believe that portfolio-sharing activities provide their students to share useful learning resources with their classmates. Accordingly, in Item 14, the majority of the teachers (M=4.38) believe that portfolio-sharing activities can increase cooperative learning and mutual growth in

English. Finally, the responses to Item 21 (M=4.25) show that teachers have a positive attitude towards portfolio sharing activities in terms of helping students to understand the portfolio.

Table 4.3 below summarizes teachers' opinions in terms of students' attitudes towards the actual practice in preparing the portfolio. The items below in Table 4.3 indicate that teachers have positive attitudes towards the use of portfolio in their EFL writing classes.

Table 4.3. Teachers' Opinions on Actual Practice in Preparing Portfolio

Item description	SD	D	N	A	SA	No.	Mean	SDev.
5. My students reflected on and evaluated their learning in each aspect when compiling the portfolio.	0	0	6.3	75	18.7	16	4.13	0.500
9. My students have completed most of the learning goals they set up in their portfolio.	0	0	0	93.7	6.3	16	4.06	0.250
15. The goal my students originally set up in the portfolio was too difficult and my students couldn't reach it.	25	75	0	0	0	16	1.75	0.447
25 My students added appropriate explanations to the samples or records, which they included in the portfolio.	0	0	43.7	56.3	0	16	3.56	0.512

SD = Strongly disagree, D = Disagree, N = Neutral, A = Agree, and SA = Strongly agree.

As clear in Item 5 from Table 4.3, most teachers (M= 4.13) think that their students have reflected on and evaluated each aspect while compiling the portfolio. Also for Item 9, a great number of teachers (M= 4.06) state that their students have completed most of the learning goals they set up in their portfolio. As a parallel to those items above, in Item 15 all the teachers (M=1.75) disagree with the idea that the goal their students originally set up in the portfolio was too difficult and their students couldn't reach it. It is also clearly implied from Item 25 in the survey that most teachers (M=3.56) think that their students added appropriate explanations to the samples or records, which they included in the portfolio.

Items in Table 4.4 assess the teachers' opinions about the advantages and challenges of using portfolio as a learning and assessment tool in EFL writing classes and provide us a clear understanding about the advantages and challenges of using of portfolio in a university context.

Table 4.4. Teachers' Opinions on Advantages and Challenges of Using of Portfolio

Item description	SD	D	N	A	SA	No.	Mean	SDev
3. It takes a lot of time to compile the portfolio for my students.	0	6.2	12.5	62.5	18.8	16	3.94	0.772
8. The portfolio helped my students to organize and arrange their learning.	0	0	0	50	50	16	4.50	0.516
10. The portfolio increased the burden of my students' study.	0	6.2	6.2	68.8	18.8	16	4.00	0.730
11. The portfolio allowed my students to choose what they like to read or listen to according to their personal interests.	6.2	25	37.5	31.3	0	16	2.94	0.929
12. The portfolio increased my students' willingness to learn actively.	0	0	0	25	75	16	3.75	0.447
16. The portfolio allowed my students to choose how to plan and learn their English according to their learning style.	0	0	12.5	62.5	25	16	4.13	0.619
18. The portfolio helped my students understand their strengths and weaknesses in English.	0	0	6.2	43.8	50	16	4.44	0.629
22. The portfolio will be of great help to my students' future independent learning.	0	0	0	50	50	16	4.50	0.516
26. I feel the portfolio can present my students' learning results.	0	0	0	43.8	56.2	16	4.31	0.479
27. The portfolio made my students realize that they can learn anytime and anywhere, not just in the classroom.	0	0	6.2	56.3	37.5	16	4.31	0.602
28. Portfolios can show my students' efforts in learning English outside of the classroom.	0	0	6.2	50	43.8	16	4.37	0.619
30. When compiling the portfolio, my students had a chance to reflect on their learning.	0	0	0	81.2	18.8	16	4.19	0.403
31. I feel the portfolio is not helpful to my students' learning.	62.5	37.5	0	0	0	16	1.38	0.500
32. The portfolio helps my students to keep the habit of listening to, reading, or writing English	0	0	12.5	62.5	25	16	4.13	0.619

SD = Strongly disagree, D = Disagree, N = Neutral, A = Agree, and SA = Strongly agree.

As seen from Item 8 in Table 4.4, all teachers (M=4.50) believe that portfolio helped their students to organize and arrange their language learning process. Also, Item 12 reveals that all teachers (M=3.75) think that portfolio has increased their students' willingness to learn English in an active way. In addition to these, Item 18 indicates that teachers (M=4.44) have a positive attitude towards portfolio and they assume that it helped their students to understand their strengths and weaknesses in English. Especially, Item 31 demonstrates that teachers all (M=1.38) disagree with the idea that the portfolio is not helpful in terms of promoting their students' learning. Similar findings are also found in other items in Table 4.1. For instance, Item 16 shows that teachers are all (M=4.13) aware of the advantages of using portfolio in their EFL writing classes and they all agree with the idea that portfolio allowed their students to choose how to plan and learn their English according to their learning style. Additionally, the teachers' responses (M=4.50) to Item 22 reveal that the portfolio will be of great help to their students' future independent learning. Moreover, Item 27 shows that teachers believe (M=4.31) in portfolio as a means of providing their students to realize that they can learn anytime and anywhere, not just in the classroom.

According to Item 28 in Table 4.4 teachers (M=4.37) view portfolios as a means that can show their students' efforts in learning English outside the classroom. Item 30 investigated teachers' opinions in terms of students' reflections on their English learning during this semester while compiling portfolio activities. All teachers (M=4.19) stated that when compiling the portfolio, their students had a chance to reflect on their English learning during this semester. Above all, Item 32 reveals most teachers' (M=4.13) beliefs about the benefits of the portfolio on helping their students to establish the habit of listening to, reading, or writing English regularly.

All these Items above, except from Item 3 to 10 in Table 4.4, show that the use of portfolios in EFL writing classes have great advantages from teachers' points of view. However, Item 3 shows that most of the teachers (M=3.93) believe that portfolio activities took a lot of time to compile for their students. Only two teachers do not agree with the idea that compiling portfolio takes too much time for their students. According to Item 10, twelve teachers out of sixteen (M=4.00) believe that the portfolio increased the burden of students' study and portfolio assignments and drafting process caused extra work for students.

4.3. The students' Opinions towards the Use of Portfolios in EFL Writing Classes

In this part, the researcher attempted to find answers to these research questions; “What are the advantages of using portfolios in writing classes from the students’ points of view?” and “What are the challenges of using portfolios in writing classes from the students’ points of view?” In this part of the study, a portfolio use attitude survey for students was used to answer these questions.

Portfolio use attitude surveys for students were conducted with 96 students studying at T.O.U who are taking EFL writing classes. Fifty-four percent of the whole participants were female and forty-six percent of them were male. The participants were first year and second year students who were taking EFL writing classes. There were 45 students from first year and 51 of them were in their second year. Twenty-two participants were studying in the Law Department, 23 students were studying in the Business Administration Department, 28 students were from the International Relations Department and 23 of them were studying in the Computer Engineering Department. Table 4.5 below describes the participants of the study.

Table 4.5. Demographic Information of Students

<u>Gender</u>	Frequency	Percentage
Female	44	47.8
Male	52	52.2
<u>Department</u>		
Law	22	23
Business Administration	23	24
International Relations	28	29
Engineering	23	24
<u>Year at School</u>		
1	45	47
2	51	53

According to the findings of the second portfolio use attitude survey, students have a clear understanding about the portfolio activities. Table 4.6 below summarizes the students' awareness of the portfolio activities and content.

Table 4.6. *The Students' Awareness of Portfolio Activities*

Item description	SD	D	N	A	SA	No.	Mean	SDev.
1. Compiling a portfolio requires a clear organizing concept.	0	2	20	65.6	12.4	96	3.89	0.630
4. I feel the appearance of the portfolio (including its cover and art design) is important.	5.2	14.5	28.3	38.5	13.5	96	3.41	1.062
7. I have a clear concept about how to compile a portfolio.	0	2.0	31.2	52.3	14.5	96	3.79	0.710
13. I feel the content of the portfolio (including its organization and details) is important.	0	3.2	21.8	56.3	18.7	96	3.91	0.727
17. Preparing a portfolio requires good computer skills and artistic talent.	5.3	41.7	27.0	21.8	4.2	96	2.78	0.986
19. I think reflection and self-evaluation is the most important part of the portfolio.	0	7.3	18.7	43.7	30.3	96	3.97	0.888
20. The handout's introduction to the portfolio was not clear enough.	3.3	44.7	37.5	11.4	3.1	96	2.67	0.842
24. Looking at previous students' portfolio samples gave me a better idea about portfolios.	0	1.0	11.5	60.5	27.0	96	4.14	0.643
29 I still don't understand why we needed to compile a portfolio.	32.3	60.4	4.1	0	3.2	96	1.81	0.786

SD = Strongly disagree, D = Disagree, N = Neutral, A = Agree, and SA = Strongly agree.

As seen in Item 1 in Table 4.6, seventy-eight percent of the students state that compiling a portfolio requires a clear organizing concept. On the other hand 20 % of participants state that they have no positive or negative ideas about portfolio compiling procedures and only 2 % of

participants disagreed with the idea claiming that compiling portfolio requires a clear organizing concept. Also, Item 7 serves in terms of revealing students' understandings of portfolio and 67 % of the students claim that they have a clear understanding about how to compile a portfolio. A great number of students also (32 %) respond that they neither agree nor disagree with this idea. Only 2% of participants declare that they do not have a clear concept about how to compile portfolio. Parallel findings are also received in Item 13 and 75 % of the students claim that they are aware of the importance of content in portfolio. Twenty-two percent of the students declare that they have no idea about it and only 3 % of the students state that the content of portfolio activities is unnecessary. As for Item 19, seventy-four percent of the students state that reflection and self-evaluation is the most important part of portfolio. On the other hand, 18.7 % of the students declare that they have only a slight idea about reflection or self-evaluation part of portfolio and 7.3 % of participants state that reflection and self-evaluation is not the most important part of portfolio. In Item 24, students are questioned about the contribution of previous students' portfolio samples and nearly 88 % of the students' state that looking at samples gave them a better idea about portfolios. Also, from the responses to Item 29, it is also so clear that (93%) nearly all of the participants state that they understand why they need to compile the portfolio. All these items above show that students have a clear understanding about portfolio.

According to the second portfolio use attitude survey for students, most of the students think that portfolio-sharing activities have contributed to their language learning process. Table 4.7 below summarizes the students' opinions about portfolio sharing activities.

Table 4.7. *The Students' Opinions about Portfolio Sharing Activities*

Item description	SD	D	N	A	SA	No.	Mean	SDev.
2. The portfolio sharing activities offered me chances to learn good English learning methods from other classmates.	1.0	3.1	22.9	46.8	26.2	96	3.94	0.844
6. During the portfolio sharing activities, I was able to share useful English learning resources with my classmates.	0	8.4	29.2	45.8	16.6	96	3.71	0.845
14. Portfolio sharing can increase cooperative learning and mutual growth in English.	3.1	15.6	44.7	33.4	3.2	96	3.18	0.846
21. The portfolio sharing activities were helpful to my understanding of the portfolio.	1.0	6.4	15.6	64.5	12.5	96	3.81	0.772

SD = Strongly disagree, D = Disagree, N = Neutral, A = Agree, and SA = Strongly agree.

According to Item 2 in Table 4.7, seventy-three percent of the students state that portfolio sharing activities offered them great opportunities to learn good English learning methods from their friends. On the other hand, 23 % of the students have neither negative nor positive tendency and only 4 % of the whole population state that portfolio did not offer them chances to learn good English learning strategies. Also, Item 6 indicates that, 62 % of the students believe that portfolio sharing activities provided an opportunity them to share useful learning resources with their classmates. Thirty percent of the students think that they have no idea about it and 8 % of the students believe that portfolio-sharing activities did not provide them an opportunity to share useful learning resources with their classmates. For instance, in Item 14 which questions whether portfolio sharing activities could increase cooperative learning and mutual growth in English or not, 33 % of the students believe that portfolio sharing activities has a great contribution in the promotion of cooperative learning and mutual growth in English.

Forty five percent of the students state that they have no idea about the contribution of portfolio in promotion of cooperative learning and mutual growth in English and 19 % of the students claim that portfolio-sharing activities did not increase cooperative learning and mutual growth in English. A parallel result is found in Item 21 and responses to this Item show that 77 % of the students assume that portfolio sharing activities were helpful to them understand the portfolio. Fifteen percent of students have a neutral feeling about the Item and only 7 % of students state that they do not find it helpful in terms of understanding portfolio.

Table 4.8 below summarizes students’ opinions towards the actual practice in preparing portfolio. The Items below in Table 4.8 indicate that students have positive attitudes towards including portfolio into their EFL writing classes in English learning processes.

Table 4.8. *The Students’ Opinions towards the Actual Practice in Preparing Portfolio*

Item description	SD	D	N	A	SA	No.	Mean	SDev
5. I reflected on and evaluated my learning in each aspect when compiling the portfolio.	0	0	18.7	48	33.3	96	4.15	0.711
9. I have completed most of the learning goals I set up in my portfolio.	2.0	11.4	17.7	57.1	11.3	96	3.65	0.906
15. The goal I originally set up in the portfolio was too difficult and I couldn’t reach it.	14.5	51.0	11.5	17.7	5.3	96	2.48	1.105
25. I added appropriate explanations to the samples or records, which I included in the portfolio.	1.0	2.0	43.7	45	8.3	96	3.57	0.722

SD = Strongly disagree, D = Disagree, N = Neutral, A = Agree, and SA = Strongly agree.

For example, Item 9 from Table 4.8 questions whether students’ have completed their learning goals they set up in their portfolio activities or not. A great number of the students (69 %) think that they have completed most of the learning goals they set up in their portfolio activities. On the other hand, 14 % of students state that they haven’t completed most of the learning goals they set up in their portfolio. Also, 18 % of the students’ responses show that they are not really sure about failure or success of their goals. In a similar way, Item 15 shows that 65

% of the students do not agree with the idea that the goal they originally set up in the portfolio was too difficult and they couldn't reach it. However, 23 % of the students state that they could not reach their goals because they were too difficult. Finally, Item 25 illustrates students' opinions about the self-reflection part of the portfolio activities. This Item shows that 53 % of students believe that they added appropriate explanations to the samples or records, which they included in the portfolio. On the other hand, 44 % of students are neutral and only 3 % of students' state that they did not write enough explanations to the samples or records, which they included in the portfolio.

Items in Table 4.9 portray the students' opinions about the advantages and challenges of using portfolio as a learning and assessment tool in EFL writing classes and it provides us a clear understanding about the advantages and challenges of using of portfolio in a university context.

Table 4.9. *The students' Opinions about the Advantages and Challenges of Using Portfolio*

Item description	SD	D	N	A	SA	No.	Mean	SDev
3. It takes a lot of time to compile the portfolio.	1.0	9.5	14.5	49	26	96	3.90	0.934
8. The portfolio helped me to organize and arrange my learning.	0	5.2	20.8	59.3	14.3	96	3.83	0.735
10. The portfolio increased the burden of my study.	0	9.4	12.5	36.5	42	96	4.10	0.957
11. The portfolio allowed me to choose what I like to read or listen to according to my interest.	2.0	15.6	37.5	38.5	6.4	96	3.31	0.886
12. The portfolio increased my willingness to learn actively.	4.0	26	39	29	2.0	96	2.99	0.900
16. The portfolio allowed me to choose how to plan and learn my English according to my learning style.	0	12.5	41	38	8.5	96	3.42	0.816
18. The portfolio helped me understand my strengths and weaknesses in English.	0	0	23	59	18	96	3.94	0.646
22. The portfolio will be of great help to my future independent learning.	2.0	6.0	27	44	21	96	3.75	0.929
26. I feel the portfolio can present my learning results.	0	3.1	26	59.4	11.5	96	3.79	0.679
27. The portfolio made me realize that I can learn anytime and anywhere, not just in the classroom.	0	1.0	52	42	4.1	96	3.48	0.634
28. Portfolios can show my efforts in learning English outside of the classroom.	0	2.0	34	57.5	8.5	96	3.73	0.624
30. When compiling the portfolio, I had a chance to reflect on my English learning of this semester.	0	7.0	22	59.5	11.5	96	3.75	0.754
31. I feel the portfolio is not helpful to my learning.	33.3	54	6.2	2.0	4.1	96	1.89	0.905
32. The portfolio helps me to keep the habit of listening to, reading, or writing English regularly	4.1	5.3	38.5	36.4	15.7	96	3.54	0.962

SD = Strongly disagree, D = Disagree, N = Neutral, A = Agree, and SA = Strongly agree.

According to Item 8, in Table 4.9, the majority of students (74%) respond that portfolio activities helped them to organize and arrange their language learning process. On the other hand, 21% of the students have a neutral feeling and only 4 % of them have negative attitudes about the contribution of portfolio on their language learning process. The responses to Item 11 reveals that, 44 % of the students believe that the portfolio activities allowed them to choose what they like to read or listen to according to their personal interest and a great number of students (37.5%) also respond that they have no positive or negative opinion about this Item. However, 17 % of the students state that portfolio activities did not allow them to select what they would like to read or listen to according to their personal interest. Item 16 also serves in terms of revealing students' opinions about the contribution of portfolio for providing chances for students to plan and learn their English according to their learning styles. In this Item, 46.5 % of the students state that portfolio gave them a chance to select how to plan and learn their English according to their learning styles. Also, 41 % of the students state that they have only slight positive or negative ideas about portfolio' contribution in terms of providing students an opportunity to choose how to plan and learn their English according to their learning styles, but 12.5 % of the students think that the portfolio did not allow them to choose how to plan and learn their English according to their learning style. Item 12 which assess students' opinions about how portfolio increased their willingness to learn English actively, 32 % of the students respond that they agree with this idea. However, 30 % of participants state that they do not agree with this idea and they think that the portfolio did not increase their willingness to learn English. Also, 38 % of the students have neutral feeling and they do not state a negative or positive response. Also, Item 18 questions whether the portfolio helped students to understand their strengths and weaknesses in English. Most of the students (77 %) declare that portfolio activities helped them to see their weakness and strengths. None of the students declare a negative response for this Item and the other participants (33%) were neutral about this Item. According to the Item 31, nearly all students believe that (88%) the portfolio activities were helpful to their English learning. Only a small portion (6%) states that the portfolio activities were not helpful in terms of learning language skills. Also, Item 27 shows that 46 % of the students think that portfolio made them realize that they can learn anytime and anywhere, not just in the classroom. A majority of the students (52 %) state that they have no opinion about that. For Item 22, 65 %

of the students believe that the portfolio will be of great help to their future independent learning. Only a few participants (8 %) state negative ideas about benefits of the portfolio for future independent learning. As for Item 28, a great number of students (66 %) respond that portfolios could show their efforts in learning English outside of the classroom. The other participants state that they have no positive or negative attitudes except from a very small population (2 %). Accordingly, responses to Item 31 show that, 52 % of the students stated that the portfolio helped them to establish the habit of listening to, reading, or writing English regularly. In a general sense, students are positive in terms of using portfolio in their writing classes. However, Item 3 questions whether compiling portfolio takes much time for students or not and 75 % of the students believe that the drafting process of portfolio activities was time consuming and it took too much time. On the other hand Item 10 assess students' opinions whether the portfolio increased the burden of their study or not and 79 % of the whole participants respond that the portfolio activities increased the burden of their study.

CHAPTER V

5. CONCLUSION

5.1. Introduction

In this chapter, we will present a summary of the study, discussion of the findings in relation to the research questions, and suggestions for further study.

5.2. Summary of the Study

In this study, we tried to determine the teachers' and the students' attitudes towards the use of portfolio in EFL writing classes at Turgut Özal University (T.O.U) and reveal the advantages and challenges of using portfolio in a university context from the teachers' and the students' points of view. In general, we determined the attitudes of the teachers and the students and we found out that the teachers and the students have positive attitudes towards the use of portfolio in EFL writing classes at T.O.U. According to the teachers and the students at T.O.U, portfolio activities have demonstrated a variety of benefits in terms of helping students understand their strengths and weaknesses, offering opportunities for organizing and arranging their learning and establishing the habit of writing, reading and listening to English regularly according to their interests. However, in some aspects it created extra work for students and also the portfolio drafting process was time consuming for students and it took too much time for students to compile portfolio activities.

5.3. Research Questions and Findings of First Survey

The first and second research questions were to determine the attitudes of teachers at T.O.U towards the use of portfolio and discover the advantages and challenges of using portfolio at university context from their perspectives. The findings and the results of the first portfolio use attitude survey obtained from sixteen teachers at T.O.U indicate that all of the teachers have positive attitudes towards the use of portfolio in EFL writing classes at T.O.U. In light of the findings of the first portfolio use attitude survey, the teachers all believe that the use of portfolio in EFL writing classes has demonstrated a variety of benefits along with some challenges.

Teachers at T.O.U are aware of the benefits and advantages of use of portfolio in EFL writing classes. For instance, they all (M=1.38) challenge the idea of the portfolio is not helpful to the students' learning and they all claim that the portfolio helped their students in terms of promoting their learning. Also, they all believe in (M=3.75) the contribution of the portfolio in terms of increasing their students' willingness to learn English actively. Also they think that (M=4.13) the portfolio allowed students to choose how to plan and learn their English according to their learning style. Moreover, the teachers emphasize that (M=4.44) the portfolio helped their students to understand their strengths and weaknesses in English. Additionally, the teachers claim that (M=4.50) the portfolio will be of great help to their students' future independent learning and they feel that (M=4.31) the portfolio can present their students' learning results. Furthermore, the teachers consider that (M=4.31) the portfolio made their students realize that they can learn anytime and anywhere, not just in the classroom and also it helped their students to establish the habit of listening to, reading, or writing English regularly. However in some aspects portfolio activities created some challenges for students in teachers' points of view. For instance, the majority of teachers (M=4.00) believe that portfolio activities can bring extra work to the shoulders of students. Also, teachers are all aware that portfolio activities can sometimes take a lot of time to compile for students.

As a consequence of all these findings, we assume the use of portfolio has demonstrated a great number of advantages, which can support students' learning in a variety of ways. However, taking some possible challenges into consideration the teachers state that use of portfolio caused a burden on students' study and compiling portfolio took a lot of time.

5.4. Research Questions and Findings of Second Survey

The third and fourth research questions were to describe the attitudes of students in EFL writing classes at T.O.U towards the use of portfolio. Also, these research questions were for determining the advantages and challenges of using portfolio at university context from students' points of view. The findings of the second survey obtained from ninety-six students studying at T.O.U indicate that most of the students have positive attitudes towards the use of portfolio in EFL writing classes. Also, the findings of the second survey show that the majority of students believe the use of portfolio in EFL writing classes has contributed to their learning in a number

of ways along with some challenges. Figure 5.1 below describes the advantages of the use of portfolio in EFL writing classes at T.O.U from students' points of view.

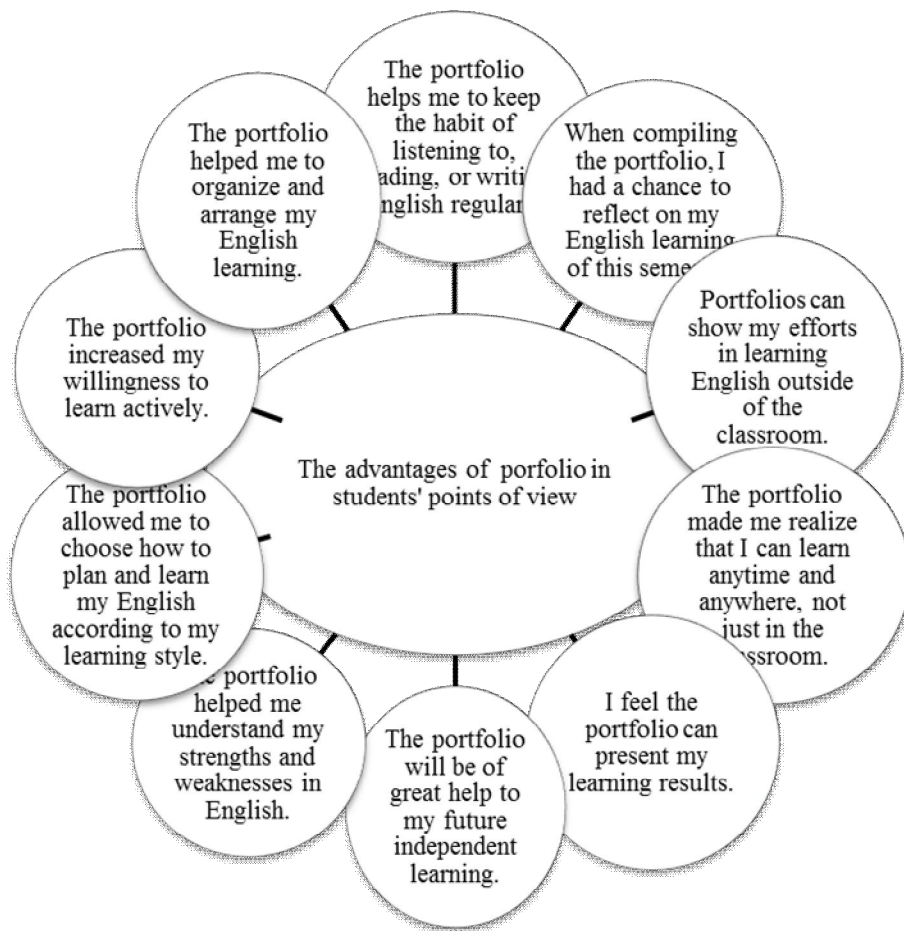


Figure 5.1. Advantages of Portfolio in Students' Points of View

The findings of the second survey indicate that the majority of the students believe that use of portfolio in EFL writing classes has created several advantages. For instance, 85 % of the students think that the portfolio is helpful to their learning. Also, 74 % of the students believe that the portfolio helped them to organize and arrange their English learning. Seventy-seven percent of the students regard portfolio as a beneficial tool in terms of helping them to understand their strengths and weaknesses in English. Meanwhile, 67 % of the participants of the second survey view portfolio as an advantageous tool that will be of great help to their future independent learning. Also, 66 % of the students find portfolio activities beneficial and they claim that portfolio activities can show their efforts in learning English outside of the classroom. Seventy-one percent of the students feel that the portfolio can present their learning results and 47 % of the students think that the portfolio allowed them to choose how to plan and learn their

English according to their learning style. In a similar way, 71 % of the students think that while compiling the portfolio, they had a chance to reflect on their English learning during this semester and 52 % of the students think that the portfolio helps them to establish the habit of listening to, reading, or writing English regularly. However, the students find the use of portfolios challenging in some aspects. Figure 5.2 below summarizes the challenges of portfolios from the students' points of view.

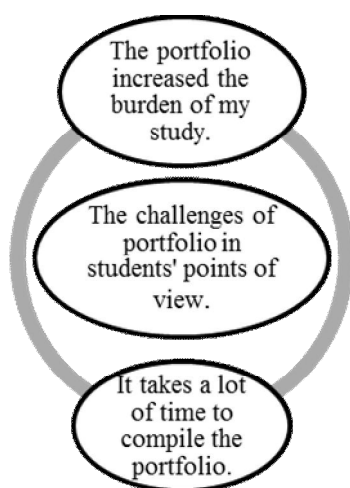


Figure 5.2. Challenges of Portfolio in Students' Points of View

Seventy-nine percent of the students think that portfolio increased the burden of their study and 75 % the students think that it takes a lot of time to compile the portfolio. As a consequence of all these findings we observe that students strongly believe the use of portfolio has demonstrated a great number of advantages, which can support students' learning in a variety of ways despite the challenges it creates. In this study, we used portfolio as a learning and assessment tool in EFL writing classes and determined perceptions of teachers and students in terms of advantages and challenges of portfolio. The results obtained from the data show us that all teachers and a majority of students have positive attitudes towards the use of portfolio and they view portfolio as an advantageous learning and assessment tool. Despite the extra work that it brings to students and teachers, they were aware of the importance of using portfolio in EFL writing classes.

5.5. Suggestions for Further Research

First of all, this study was conducted at T.O.U in EFL writing classes where portfolio had been in use for nearly two years. In general, the teachers and the students at T.O.U have clear understandings about the use of portfolio, because they have already had some positive experiences on its use. That is why; conducting this research with this group of participants who already had a positive experience on the use of portfolio made the study easier for the researcher. Secondly, this study explored both the teachers' and the students' the opinions so it gives the researcher a chance to view the issue from different perspectives. However, the data is limited to the portfolio use attitude surveys, which collected only quantitative data. Future researchers can collect and interpret the data both in quantitative and qualitative ways. This may provide them the chance to handle the research findings in a more flexible way. Another point is that, this study is limited to the teachers working at T.O.U and first and second year students from different majors at T.O.U. For this reason, there were only 16 teachers and 96 students who participated in this study. Thus, future researchers may work with larger groups, which may provide them the opportunity to generalize the results for other teachers and students in similar contexts.

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7. APPENDICES

7.1. APPENDIX 1: Portfolio Use Attitude Survey for Teachers

Name:	1	2	3	4	5
Answer the questions given below.	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1. Compiling a portfolio requires a clear organizing concept.					
2. The portfolio sharing activities offered my students chances to learn good English learning methods from other classmates.					
3. It takes a lot of time to compile the portfolio for my students.					
4. I feel the appearance of the portfolio (including its cover and art design) is important.					
5. My students reflected on and evaluated their learning in each aspect when compiling the portfolio.					
6. During the portfolio sharing activities, my students were able to share useful English learning resources with their classmates.					
7. My students have a clear concept about how to compile a portfolio.					
8. The portfolio helped my students to organize and arrange their English learning.					
9. My students have completed most of the learning goals they set up in their portfolio.					
10. The portfolio increased the burden of my students' study.					
11. The portfolio allowed my students to choose what they like to read or listen to according to their personal interests.					
12. The portfolio increased my students' willingness to learn actively.					
13. I feel the content of the portfolio (including its organization and details) is important.					
14. Portfolio sharing can increase cooperative learning and mutual growth in English.					

15. The goal my students originally set up in the portfolio was too difficult and my students couldn't reach it.					
16. The portfolio allowed my students to choose how to plan and learn their English according to their learning style.					
17. Preparing a portfolio requires good computer skills and artistic talent.					
18. The portfolio helped my students understand their strengths and weaknesses in English.					
19. I think reflection and self-evaluation is the most important part of the portfolio.					
20. The handout's introduction to the portfolio was not clear enough.					
21. The portfolio sharing activities were helpful to my students' understanding of the portfolio.					
22. The portfolio will be of great help to my students' future independent learning.					
23. I feel some practices (like listening or speaking) could not be easily presented in the portfolio.					
24. Looking at previous students' portfolio samples gave my students a better idea about portfolios.					
25 My students added appropriate explanations to the samples or records, which they included in the portfolio.					
26. I feel the portfolio can present my students' learning results.					
27. The portfolio made my students realize that they can learn anytime and anywhere, not just in the classroom.					
28. Portfolios can show my students' efforts in learning English outside of the classroom.					
29 My students still don't understand why we needed to compile a portfolio.					
30. When compiling the portfolio, my students had a chance to reflect on their English learning of this semester.					
31. I feel the portfolio is not helpful to my students' learning.					
32. The portfolio helps my students to keep the habit of listening to, reading, or writing English regularly.					

7.2. APPENDIX 2: Portfolio Use Attitude Survey for Students

Answer the questions given below.						
Name:	Class:	1	2	3	4	5
Choose 1 from lowest score to 5 the highest score.		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1. Compiling a portfolio requires a clear organizing concept.						
2. The portfolio sharing activities offered me chances to learn good English learning methods from other classmates.						
3. It takes me a lot of time to compile the portfolio.						
4. I feel the appearance of the portfolio (including its cover and art design) is important.						
5. I reflected on and evaluated my learning in each aspect when compiling the portfolio.						
6. During the portfolio sharing activities, I was able to share useful English learning resources with my classmates.						
7. I have a clear concept about how to compile a portfolio.						
8. The portfolio helped me organize and arrange my English learning.						
9. I have completed most of the learning goals I set up in my portfolio.						
10. The portfolio increased the burden of my study.						
11. The portfolio allowed me to choose what I like to read or listen to according to my personal interests.						
12. The portfolio increased my willingness to learn actively.						
13. I feel the content of the portfolio (including its organization and details) is important.						
14. Portfolio sharing can increase classmates' cooperative learning and mutual growth in English.						

15. The goal I originally set up in the portfolio was too difficult and I couldn't reach it.					
16. The portfolio allowed me to choose how to plan and learn my English according to my learning style.					
17. Preparing a portfolio requires good computer skills and artistic talent.					
18. The portfolio helped me understand my strengths and weaknesses in English.					
19. I think reflection and self-evaluation is the most important part of the portfolio.					
20. The handout's introduction to the portfolio was not clear enough.					
21. The portfolio sharing activities were helpful to my understanding of the portfolio.					
22. The portfolio will be of great help to my future independent learning.					
23. I feel some practices (like listening or speaking) could not be easily presented in the portfolio.					
24. Looking at previous students' portfolio samples gave me a better idea about portfolios.					
25. I added appropriate explanations to the samples or records, which I included in the portfolio.					
26. I feel the portfolio can present my learning results.					
27. The portfolio made me realize that I can learn anytime and anywhere, not just in the classroom.					
28. Portfolios can show my efforts in learning English outside of the classroom.					
29. I still don't understand why we needed to compile a portfolio.					
30. When compiling the portfolio, I had a chance to reflect on my English learning of this semester.					
31. I feel the portfolio is not helpful to my learning.					
32. The portfolio helps me to keep the habit of listening to, reading, or writing English regularly.					