

Developing writing skills based on writing portfolio in German as a foreign language: An empirical study for portfolio work

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ABSTRACT

In German as a Foreign Language Education, portfolios are used for different purposes. One of the most common areas of portfolio use is 'writing portfolios', which are prepared by instructors to plan students' writing processes and improve their writing skills by giving feedback, regular review and control. In this study, it was aimed to investigate the functionality of the portfolio work carried out within the scope of the writing course and its effect on writing success by receiving the opinions of the students. The study group of this research consists of 39 students who studied in the first year of the German Language Teaching Department of Education Faculty at Trakya University in the academic year 2022-2023. Since it was thought to be the most appropriate research method for the purpose of the study, the phenomenological research design, which is a qualitative research method, was preferred. In the study, a semi-structured interview form containing 4 questions was created by the researcher and used as a data collection tool. The study aimed to assess students' perspectives on various aspects, including the impact of their portfolio work in the writing course on their writing habits and achievements, feedback received, and the types of texts they composed for their portfolios. The obtained interview data were analyzed with content analysis which is a qualitative method for data analysis. According to the study findings, students were positively influenced by the portfolio assignments in general and expressed their desire for the constant implementation of this approach.

Keywords: Portfolio work, writing skills, German education, writing success.

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INTRODUCTION

Writing is one of the four basic language skills (reading, writing, listening and speaking) in foreign language education. Writing skill, which is a type of skill that the student should pursue actively and productively in German as a Foreign Language course, also affects other language skills. Writing is writing down what one knows, transferring the information, thoughts and experiences in one's head in writing (Dehn, 2005; Schreiter, 2002). Students who write in German as a foreign language also create their own texts and can write freely about themselves creatively (Kast, 1999). Writing also influences other language skills. In this context, productive and receptive skills should be seen as interdependent and partly simultaneous (Krumm, 2001). For this reason, in order to master a foreign

language, all four basic language skills should be developed. It is a known fact that these four language skills develop in interaction with each other (Arslan Çavuşoğlu and Tepebaşı, 2020). To effectively teach German as a foreign language, it's essential to employ diverse methods, techniques, and materials while tailoring them to the specific lessons. In this regard, staying updated with contemporary innovations is crucial (Rösler, 2012; Çelikkaya and Balkaya, 2020). In foreign language teaching, the development of writing skills is influenced by various factors, including individual differences (Kasap, 2021). To enhance these skills, different methods are employed, one of which involves the creation of a writing portfolio, a comprehensive and time-consuming process. Within this writing portfolio,

students compile a range of texts that are then reviewed by their teachers. This innovative approach complements traditional methods and is crucial for successful language education. Adapting portfolio practices to foreign language courses is a valuable strategy in this regard.

If it is necessary to define a portfolio, there are many definitions in the literature. Some of these portfolios can be used in a general sense and can be adapted and used in various fields of specialization. It can be defined as a collection of works in that field showing the quality of the participant's performance (Buttler, 1997; Williams, 1997; Atay, 2003; Brown, 2004). A portfolio is defined as "a structured collection of selected, reflective and collaborative best practices that demonstrate a student's achievement over time and in many contexts" (Chapman, Pettway and White, 2001). It is a fact that portfolio works to increase students' motivation, encourage them to be responsible, individualize learning on the one hand and learn to work in cooperation with their teachers and peers on the other hand (Brown, 2004; Kan, 2007). In addition, in foreign language education, it is very effective to evaluate students' portfolio work and provide feedback to them. This approach allows students to gain valuable experiences, including self-identifying and learning from their mistakes, as well as acquiring new knowledge. Furthermore, the portfolio serves as a crucial tool for students to monitor their progress, recognize challenges encountered during the process, and guide further work based on the application results (Öztürk and Çeçen, 2007; Erice, 2009; Ballweg and Bräuer, 2011; Kasap and Peterson, 2018). These portfolios can be effectively adapted to other areas of language education, not only in writing lessons as in this study. In addition, portfolios can be used as a measurement and evaluation tool instead of exams (Kan, 2007). In addition, it is also used as a material and method in lessons (Korkmaz and Kaptan, 2002; Öncü, 2009). It allows the total performance of the student throughout a semester to be revealed and measured.

In German as a Foreign Language Education, portfolios can be used for different purposes. One of the most common areas of use is writing portfolios prepared to plan students' writing processes and to improve their writing skills by providing feedback, regular review and control. In foreign language education, the suitability of course materials for the course and student profiles and the functionality of methods and techniques are of great importance in achieving the goals and skills set at the beginning of the education. This study aimed to determine the functionality of the portfolio study carried out within the scope of the Writing Skills I course and its effect on writing success in line with students' opinions. The study group of this research consists of the first-year German Language Teaching students of the Department of Foreign Languages Education of Education Faculty at Trakya University in the 2022-2023 academic year. At the beginning of the semester, students were informed about what a portfolio is, how to prepare a portfolio file,

the assignments they should prepare within the scope of the Writing Skills I course, the process and feedback. For this purpose, a text type and its features, linguistic and formal structure (introduction, development, conclusion, title, formal or informal text type features, greetings, address forms, etc.) were explained in each lesson, and then an assignment in that text type was defined via Microsoft Teams. Students were asked to submit their assignments regularly every week both on Microsoft Teams and in written form for feedback. Feedback on the assignments written by the students was given regularly every week via Microsoft Teams and on the assignment sheets collected in class. The reason for the submission via Microsoft Teams was to enable the students to easily follow the assignment topics and to facilitate the readability of the written assignments. In the fall semester of the 2022-2023 academic year, students prepared seven different types of texts and were given regular feedback every week. In this way, at the end of the semester, the portfolio file prepared by each student including all seven different text types and subjects was collected and the end-of-semester evaluation was given as feedback. Data were collected through an interview form consisting of open-ended questions. Content analysis, a qualitative data analysis method, was used to analyze the data (Mayring, 2003). The opinions of the students were received about their writing success related to the effect of the portfolio they prepared in their writing courses.

Purpose and importance of the research

One of the most common uses of portfolios is to plan students' writing processes and to improve their writing skills and writing success by providing feedback, regular review and control. Working with writing portfolios in German as a Foreign Language class plays an important role in language classes and language education as it is based on process-oriented writing instruction and individual progress monitoring in the development of writing skills. For this purpose, the preparation of portfolios by students with instructor guidance and feedback is important in the context of foreign language education. This study aimed to determine the functionality of the portfolios carried out within the scope of the Writing Skills I course and its effect on writing achievement in line with students' opinions. For this purpose, a portfolio work was conducted in the Writing Skills I course to reveal how preparing a portfolio by writing texts in various genres for daily use improves students' writing achievement, how useful it is, and to what extent it motivates them.

Research questions

A review of the relevant literature reveals that while there are a limited number of studies on portfolio work in writing courses or German as a foreign language course

in Turkey (Karacabey, 2021), and in many other countries, portfolio work is frequently carried out at lower levels of education in the context of university courses. It is thought that the study is important in this sense and will contribute to the literature. In teacher education programs students develop portfolios to show their achievements. They can then present these portfolios in job interviews. In this sense, the ability to prepare a portfolio can be improved by applying it in different courses. Therefore, it is also important to prepare a portfolio for students of the faculty of education. Considering this issue, the problem statement developed for the implementation of portfolio works in writing lessons is "What are the students' views on the portfolio works carried out in the German writing courses?" In addition to this meta-problem question, answers to the following three sub-problems were sought. The questions of the study are as follows:

- What are the students' views on the effect of the portfolios in the Writing Skills I course on their German text writing habits and achievement?
- What are the students' views on the feedback they received about the portfolio work in the Writing Skills I course?
- What are their views on the types of texts and text topics they wrote for the portfolio in the Writing Skills I course?
- Have the students ever prepared portfolio work previously?

MATERIALS AND METHODS

In this part of the study, information about the materials and method is given. Explanations were made about data collection tools and data analysis. This study aimed to examine the opinions of the students who participated in the writing course and prepared a portfolio file for this course and to reveal the functionality of portfolio in writing courses. For this reason, the qualitative research method, which is the most appropriate for the study, and phenomenology as a research design were preferred. Qualitative research is defined as a research method in which qualitative data collection methods such as unstructured observation or interview and document analysis are used, and facts and events are revealed realistically and holistically within their naturalness. It is defined as an examination method in which qualitative research is followed for this process. The phenomenological design, also called phenomenology, can be defined as focusing on the meanings that emerge after the participants in the research experience a certain event (Baker, Wuest and Stern, 1992; Tekindal, 2021). In other words, it is the description of the participants' momentary experiences (Edmonds and Kennedy, 2017; Ceylan Çapar and Ceylan, 2022). Phenomenological

studies examine the participants' perceptions, thoughts, and feelings about the event they experienced and their state of consciousness about their experiences as a result (Creswell, 2021; Jasper, 1994; Miller, 2003). For this reason, how the students participating in the writing course conveyed their experiences in the portfolio preparation process and what kind of perception this portfolio work created in them were examined.

Participants

The participants of the study consisted of 39 students of the Department of Foreign Languages Education, and the Department of German Language Teaching at Trakya University who attended the Writing Skills 1 course in the fall semester of the 2022-2023 academic year. Participants were selected according to the purposive sampling method (Patton, 2002). The study was conducted with the students who participated in the Writing Skills 1 course conducted by the researcher. Of the 39 students who participated in this study, 12 were male and 27 were female students. All of them successfully completed the preparatory class. Pseudonyms such as S1¹, S2, S3, etc. were used for the students in the study group in order to transfer the conducted questionnaire study to the research text and avoid data confusion and protect confidentiality. Since the participants of the study were humans, an ethics committee report was obtained.

Data collection instrument and process

A semi-structured interview form created by the researcher was preferred as a data collection tool in the study. This is an interview form including 4 open-ended questions. Interview is an effective method used especially in social sciences to obtain information about individuals' feelings, perceptions, thoughts and experiences (Yıldırım and Şimşek, 2018; Çepni, 2009; Merriam, 2015; Patton, 2002). While preparing the semi-structured interview form, the researcher first reviewed the literature on portfolio works. The theoretical and practical information obtained after the literature review was effective in formulating the questions of the interview form. The form was finalized by making the necessary corrections after the opinions of two experts working in the Department of Measurement and Evaluation in Education. Since the students were informed about the portfolios at the beginning of the semester, they were aware that their opinions about it would be taken at the end of the semester (7 weeks). Since the number of participants was high, the interview form with open-ended questions was given to each student in writing and collected. Since it is important for the validity and reliability of the data collection tool used in the study to be voluntary, it was stated before the forms were given that only voluntary students could participate in the study and that it was not compulsory to

¹ The pseudonyms mean the following: Student 1, Student 2, Student 3 etc.

write names on the forms. An objective attitude was displayed during the data collection and analysis process.

Validity and reliability

In this study, several measures (Yıldırım and Şimşek, 2018; Eroğlu and Bektaş, 2016) were taken by the researcher to reduce the factors that negatively affect validity and reliability. Two field experts were consulted for the preparation of the questions in the interview form. Students were informed about the process and it was explained that participation was based on the essence of voluntariness and confidentiality. Since the researcher was also the instructor of the course, it was ensured that the students gave transparent and clear answers to the questions since they were in a long-term interaction with each other. The students were informed about the process both at the beginning of the semester and during the delivery of the interview forms.

During the completion of the interview forms, the researcher answered the students' questions immediately and the process was completed transparently. In addition, in order to ensure reliability, all of the findings of the study were conducted in accordance with the characteristics of qualitative research and the researcher presented them to the other party without adding her own interpretation. In order to determine the reliability of the coding of the data obtained after the interview, the interview transcripts and the interview coding key were evaluated separately by an expert researcher. Then, the codes were compared with each other and the data were analyzed based on the agreed codes.

Data analysis

The data obtained were analyzed by content analysis, one of the qualitative analysis methods. The findings obtained in content analysis are categorized and interpreted as themes and sub-themes. The basis of the content purpose is based on establishing a relationship by bringing together similar themes and interpreting them in a way that the reader can understand (Mayring, 2003; Patton, 2014; Yıldırım and Şimşek, 2018). In this study, the data obtained from the German Language Teaching Department students who prepared a portfolio file for a semester in the writing course were analyzed by content analysis, thus the pattern of the research was tried to be obtained within the framework of the problem situation. The path followed in content analysis is as follows: Coding the data, finding themes, defining the data by organizing them according to the codes/themes and interpreting the findings (Yıldırım and Şimşek, 2018). Following this order, the data were coded, analyzed and interpreted.

FINDINGS

In the interview form with the students, student opinions about the portfolio works carried out in the German writing course were categorized and presented separately. It was aimed to evaluate the effect of the portfolio work carried out in the writing course on students' writing success in different dimensions. Thus, the details of the findings related to the sub-problems are given below under the headings respectively.

Student opinions on the effect of the portfolios in the Writing Skills I course on German text writing habits and achievement

In the interview form with the students, students' opinions were taken about the effect of the portfolio work done in the Writing Skills I course on their German text writing habits and achievements, and they were asked to evaluate the portfolio work in this respect. As a result of the content analysis, the data obtained for this theme are given in Table 1.

When the information in Table 1 is examined, the theme of the effect of the portfolio work on text writing habits and achievements was expressed with a total of 21 sub-themes in line with the expressions of the students. The sub-theme expressed intensively by the students is "positive influence" with a frequency of 16. The opinions of the students coded S8, S18 and S28 on the subject are as follows:

"It was effective for me in a good way. I learned the grammar rules and vocabulary that I need to use while trying to make sentences myself." (S8)

"The assignments I prepared every week within the scope of Writing Skills 1 positively affected my writing habits and writing skills." (S18)

"It affected me positively. Thanks to the writing assignments, not only my habits but also my skills in grammar rules improved. It also helped me learn the spelling rules of many texts." (S28)

After this sub-theme, the sub-themes most frequently mentioned in the students' statements are Learning New Words / Improving Vocabulary, Helping to Understand Mistakes / Making Fewer Mistakes, and Reinforcing the Subject, respectively. Again, some of the opinions obtained from the findings related to these sub-themes are presented below:

"It contributed a lot to my writing a text in another language, it helped me learn new vocabulary or grammar rules by constantly researching while doing homework." (S5)

"It improved my vocabulary and made me realize the mistakes I made in sentence order." (S6)

"Thanks to the homework I did, I saw the mistakes I made and corrected them." (S11)

"I improved the spelling of words and the use of

Table 1. Frequency values and data coding regarding the effect of portfolio work on German text writing habits and achievement.

Theme	Sub-theme	Students	f
Portfolio work text writing habits and impact on their success	Positive influence	S3, S5, S7, S8, S12, S13, S16, S18, S19, S20, S22, S24, S28, S35, S36, S38	16
	Learning new words / improving vocabulary	S5, S6, S8, S14, S16, S17, S19, S21, S29, S30, S31, S34, S35, S36	14
	Helping to understand mistakes/ making fewer mistakes	S4, S6, S10, S11, S14, S21, S27, S36, S39	9
	Topic reinforcement	S7, S9, S10, S17, S31, S39	6
	Help with sentence building	S22, S29, S30, S35, S38	5
	Learning grammar rules	S5, S8, S16, S17, S28	5
	Motivating / enjoying writing	S2, S15, S29, S30	4
	Success in exams and preparation for exams	S26, S33, S37, S39	4
	Ensuring retention of subjects	S20, S26, S33	3
	Developing writing skills	S1, S16, S26	3
	Faster typing	S23, S36	2
	Learning writing techniques	S3, S26	2
	Gaining experience, a new experience	S13, S14	2
	Useful for practice	S15, S18	2
	Orientation to research	S5	1
	Experiencing discipline problems	S14	1
	Recognizing their shortcomings	S25	1
	Gaining the habit of keeping homework organized	S25	1
	Learning text writing rules	S28	1
Ensuring productivity	S29	1	
Improving knowledge of correct spelling	S32	1	

punctuation marks." (S32)

"The homework assignments helped us to reinforce the subject matter and prepare for the exams. Seeing and correcting our mistakes also improved this skill." (S39)

As it can be understood from the statements above, students mostly gave expressions directly related to writing success such as contribution to vocabulary learning, making fewer mistakes, learning grammar and spelling rules, helping to form sentences, and learning writing techniques. In addition, they also included noteworthy statements such as motivating and enjoying writing, being successful in exams, gaining experience, realizing their deficiencies, gaining the habit of doing homework regularly, and increasing capacity. The opinions of S1, S23, S26 and S29 on the subject are presented below:

"I think my writing capacity increases as I write." (S1)

"Homework the teacher gave every week helped me write faster, it was very effective." (S23)

"I can say that my writing skills have improved more compared to previous years. I realized that I was more successful in writing exams." (S26)

"It was an enjoyable process. It expanded my vocabulary. I started to construct sentences more accurately. I became more productive in terms of writing something." (S29)

The most striking sub-theme among these sub-themes is the statement of having discipline problems. One student stated that he had discipline problems while doing the writing assignments prepared for the portfolios. This statement is as follows:

"I had discipline problems in preparing the assignments, I hope I will correct this in the second semester." (S14)

Student opinions on the feedback received by the students about the portfolio work in the writing course

In the Writing Skills I course, a total of 19 sub-themes were identified in line with the students' expressions on the theme of opinions about the feedback they received about the portfolio work.

The sub-theme most frequently expressed by the students is the sub-theme of recognizing mistakes. Students stated that they were able to identify where they made the most mistakes with the writing activities they did for the portfolios. Some of the students' views on this sub-theme are as follows:

"The deficiencies or mistakes in the writings I created showed me how to write better. I saw where I made mistakes." (S1)

Table 2. Students' opinions on the feedback on students' portfolio work in the writing course.

Theme	Sub-theme	Students	f
Portfolio work impact of relevant feedback	Recognizing mistakes	S1, S2, S3, S4, S6, S10, S12, S14, S16, S17, S20, S22, S23, S24, S25, S26, S28, S29, S31, S35, S36, S37, S38, S39	24
	Good, positive influence	S7, S9, S15, S16, S18, S20, S27, S30, S33, S37	10
	Gaining writing skills on their own	S7, S10, S34, S37, S38	5
	Seeing deficiencies	S1, S4, S10, S11	4
	Helping to write better	S1, S2, S27	3
	Helping to be more attentive	S14	1
	Contribution to learning grammar	S32	1
	Correcting mistakes	S5	1
	Pathfinder	S8	1
	Ensuring to follow the lesson	S13	1
	Contribution to development	S13	1
	Writing words correctly	S14	1
	Ensuring memorability	S19	1
	Encouraging writing	S20	1
	Helping to prepare for exams	S24	1
	Learning spelling rules	S14	1
	Ensuring discipline	S29	1
Having positive experiences	S38	1	
Vocabulary development	S38	1	

"It helped me see all the mistakes I made and work on them." (S6)
 "It helped me see my mistakes. I think it is a good way of preparing for exams." (S24)
 "I identified my mistakes, I managed the process, so it helped me to be a little more disciplined." (S29)

The second sub-theme most frequently expressed by the students is good, positive influence. They stated that the portfolios affected them positively. The opinions of S7 and S20 among the students who expressed this view are as follows:

"In a good way. It improved my ability to write on my own." (S7)
 "It improved me in a good way. Seeing my mistakes helped me correct my mistakes and seeing my correct ones encouraged me to write more." (S20)

Apart from these opinions, there are also statements such as that the portfolio guides them, gives them the ability to write on their own, helps them write better, helps them realize their deficiencies, helps them be more careful, etc. Some of these opinions of the students are as follows:

"Seeing my mistakes on paper every week along with the correct ones guided me on where I made mistakes." (S8)
 "I grasped the spelling of words more easily and realized the mistakes I made in grammar." (S14)
 "Sometimes we do not dwell on the same topics at all, so we can forget what we have seen before. With portfolio work, if there is a subject that we dwell on even

twice at most, it helps us remember it more." (S19)
 "The feedback was satisfactory. Having learned my mistakes made me more careful in the next assignment than the previous one." (S28)
 "I had positive experiences. I was able to write something about the topics myself, my vocabulary improved. It helped me to see my mistakes." (S38)

Students' opinions on the types and subjects of texts they wrote for portfolio in the writing course

In this part of the study, the findings obtained in line with students' views on the text types and text topics they wrote while preparing a portfolio in the Writing Course are presented. In this framework, the third theme obtained as a result of the content analysis of the research is the theme of Text Types and Text Topics for Portfolio Work. In this theme, it was tried to reveal the opinions of the students about the text types and text topics they wrote in the process of preparing a portfolio file. The data obtained for the theme are presented in Table 3.

When Table 3 is analyzed, it is understood that 13 sub-themes emerged. In this framework, the most frequently expressed by the students is learning the features of different types of texts with a frequency of 16. They stated that they learned and distinguished the features of different types of texts such as formal and informal text types, letters used in daily life, and CV writing. Some student statements related to this sub-theme are given below:

Table 3. Students' opinions on the types and topics of texts they wrote for the portfolio in the writing course.

Theme	Sub-theme	Students	f
Text types for portfolio work and topics	Learning the characteristics of different types of texts	S1, S2, S10, S14, S17, S18, S19, S21, S26, S27, S28, S32, S34, S35, S38, S39	16
	Text types in daily and business life	S1, S4, S7, S9, S14, S18, S21, S23, S24, S26, S27, S31, S32, S37, S38	15
	Writing different types of texts	S6, S7, S11, S12, S16, S33	6
	Level appropriate texts	S13, S30, S35	3
	Uniform text types	S15, S22, S24	3
	Simple and comprehensible text types	S25, S29, S36	3
	Learning introduction, development and conclusion sections of the text	S1, S8	2
	Using writing strategies actively	S3	1
	Understanding the integrity of texts (grammatical and semantic)	S3	1
	Learning new vocabulary with different types of texts	S5	1
	Experiencing the ability to write different types of texts	S7	1
	Using punctuation according to text types	S20	1
	There should be more fun text types	S22	1

"Writing in various text types gave me information about the writings I will need in the future. I think I was able to really grasp the features of text types." (S10)

"I think I have learned a different text type and subject in each lesson very effectively. I was able to comprehend the features of text types. However, when I am on my own, there are points where I get stuck." (S28)

"We have seen various types of texts and I feel developed with these texts. When I become a teacher, I am thinking of doing such a portfolio for my students. And I am sure that this portfolio will come my way in my professional life." (S39)

Another sub-theme that was mentioned the most was the sub-theme of texts that can be used in daily and business life with a frequency of 15. Therefore, they also emphasized that such texts are useful. The opinions of the students coded S1, S7, S9 and S31 on the subject are as follows:

"I think that the types of texts we write in almost every aspect of our lives can help us because they are the types of texts that we can encounter in daily life and business life. I learned to distinguish between formal and informal text types. I learned that the introduction, development and conclusion sections should be separated." (S1)

"It is suitable for what we use in our business life and daily life. I learned the writing layout that should be followed when writing a letter, an invitation letter, and how the CV we can use when we start our business life should be." (S7)

"I think the topics are very useful because they cover my daily life." (S9)

"I think it is very useful because there are texts that we are likely to write in daily life (complaint text, CV, etc.)." (S31)

When we look at the table again, the other prominent sub-themes are writing different types of texts, texts appropriate to the level, and simple and comprehensible text types. In addition, the fifth sub-theme with a frequency of 3 draws attention to uniform text types. With this statement, it can be interpreted that students think that all texts are the same. With the view that there should be more entertaining text types in the last row, it can be interpreted that this student also accepts all text types as the same type. Some of the opinions related to other sub-themes in the table are as follows:

"It enabled me to actively use the writing strategies I learned. Yes, I was able to comprehend. I learned that texts should be grammatically or semantically coherent." (S3)

"I think the text types are rich. I can write formal and informal letters easily now because it is easy once I know the patterns." (S12)

"I think there are simple and understandable text types." (S25)

DISCUSSION

In this study, the opinions of the students about the portfolio carried out with the first-year students in the writing course of the German Language Teaching program were examined. When the findings obtained are examined, it is observed that the students are satisfied with the portfolios.

The first finding of the study was analyzed under the theme of "the effect of portfolio work on students' text writing habits and achievements". According to this theme, 21 sub-themes were identified from the students' expressions. The most frequently expressed sub-theme is the positive sub-theme with a frequency of 16. From

the students' statements, it was observed that portfolio affected them positively in the writing course and that they developed a positive attitude towards portfolio works. The other two sub-themes with the highest number of opinions were improving students' vocabulary and making fewer mistakes. As can be understood from these themes, portfolio work contributed to students' vocabulary learning in writing success, and at the same time, they started to make fewer mistakes by realizing their mistakes through writing activities. The findings of this study support the findings of some research studies on portfolio (Buttler, 1997; Ersin, 2005; Genesee and Upshur, 1996; Karacabey, 2021; Kennedy, 1997; Öztürk and Çeçen, 2007; Williams, 1997). The second finding is the theme of the Effect of Feedback on Portfolio Work with 19 sub-themes. According to this theme, the highest frequency of students' opinions is the sub-theme of recognizing mistakes with 24 frequencies. Students stated that they realized their mistakes related to writing the most from the feedback they received on their portfolio work. This finding of the study is supported by the results of Ballweg (2021), Karacabey (2021) and Öztürk and Çeçen (2007). According to the findings, the third theme is Text Types and Topics for Portfolio Work with 13 sub-themes. The sub-themes with the highest number of opinions in this theme are "Learning the Characteristics of Different Types of Texts with 16 frequencies and Text Types in Daily and Business Life" with 15 frequencies. According to this result, they expressed positive opinions about the text they wrote while creating a portfolio. They stated that they learned the features of different types of texts and that it was useful because there were texts suitable for daily and business life.

In addition, students were asked whether they had done portfolio work or not. Most of the students (32) stated that they had not done portfolio work before and that they experienced it for the first time in the writing course. They stated that portfolio works affected them positively and should continue. A mere seven students reported having experience with portfolio work during their high school or preparatory class studies. This observation aligns with the research findings of Atay (2003) and Soruç (2011).

In general, when the effect of portfolio work on students' writing success is evaluated according to the students' statements, it is understood that portfolio work is motivating and positively affecting work. Apart from this, students actively participate in the writing process. They have to make an application about the type of text covered in the lesson. In addition, the portfolio file allows students to make fewer mistakes by realizing where they make mistakes with the feedback given to the texts they write. With this kind of work, students learn to work collaboratively with their friends and teachers. Furthermore, a significant finding of this study is that it serves as a crucial didactic tool for enhancing writing success (Karacabey, 2021; Kasap and Pashayeva, 2020). The research focused on assessing the impact of portfolio work on German writing achievement within

writing lessons and could potentially serve as a model for exploring the effects of portfolio preparation in reading, listening, and speaking lessons as well.

Limitations of the study

One limitation of this study is its focus on a specific aspect of portfolio use in German as a Foreign Language Education, namely writing portfolios. While this approach provides valuable insights into the impact on writing success and student perspectives, it does not encompass the broader range of potential uses of portfolios in language education, such as reading, listening, and speaking portfolios. Therefore, the findings of the study may not be generalizable to other language skills or contexts where portfolios serve different purposes. Additionally, the study's sample size is relatively small, consisting of 39 students from a single academic year at a specific university, which may limit the generalizability of the findings to a broader population of language learners.

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