

Effect of using Culture-Themed Documentaries on Guided Writing Skills in Teaching Turkish to Foreigners

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ARTICLE INFO

Article history

Received: June 25, 2023

Accepted: October 10, 2023

Published: October 31, 2023

Volume: 11 Issue: 4

Conflicts of interest: None

Funding: None

Note: This study was performed as a doctoral thesis completed by Mine ÖZÇELİK and supervised by Prof. Dr. Zekerya BATUR.

ABSTRACT

The present study aimed to determine whether using culture-themed documentaries in Turkish teaching of B2 level international students has effects on the development of guided writing skills. The study had an action-research design, which is one of the qualitative study approaches. The study group consisted of 12 international students at the B2 level who learned Turkish in the 2022-2023 academic year at the Turkish Teaching Application and Research Center of a state university in Turkey. The data collection process was performed under two headings as “developing an action plan” and “implementing the action plan”. During the developing an action plan stage, the themes and documentaries to be used in the activities were determined by receiving the opinions of the experts. In the next step, guided writing activities were prepared in line with the writing acquisitions by consulting experts. The pilot applications of the activities were performed at the Turkish Teaching Application and Research Center of a state university in Turkey. Quantitative and qualitative data collection tools were used and the developmental status of the students was monitored to interpret how the guided writing skill activities developed in the classroom environment progressed. The worksheets of the students were evaluated by using the “Guided Writing Scoring Key”, which was developed by the researchers. Students’ pre-test, application order, post-test, and permanency scores were determined with this key. Based on the findings obtained in the study, it was concluded that using culture-themed documentaries in Turkish teaching of international students improved the guided writing skill levels of the students.

Key words: Teaching Turkish to Foreigners, B2 Level, Guided Writing

INTRODUCTION

Based on the philosophy that the languages that are spoken by nations reflect their identities, Turkish, which has played important roles in the world history scene and is spoken in a very wide geographical area today, is among the well-rooted languages and represents the identity of the Turkish nation. As a rich language that started from Central Asia and expanded its sphere of influence by migrating to the West for different reasons, Turkish has become a language that needs to be learned by different nations for different reasons and needs. Based on this viewpoint, teaching Turkish as a foreign language covers a long historical process.

When the historical process of teaching Turkish was reviewed, the work “*Divan-ü Lügati-t Türk*”, which was written in Turkish and Arabic in the 11th Century by Kaşgarlı Mahmut to teach Turkish to the Arabian community came to the forefront. The work, which is described as the first Turkish Encyclopedia, the first folklore work, the first grammar book, and the first Turkish Anthology, is also the first work to teach Turkish dialects to foreigners (Durmuş, 2013, p. 96). Another important work on teaching Turkish as a foreign language

is Ali Şir Nevai’s “*Muhakemetü’l-Lügateyn*”, which was written in the 13th Century. The work, which was an important resource in terms of Turkish Vocabulary, can also be named “*the first onomastic and semantic study*” in Turkish (Aksan, 1978, p. 43). When the historical process of teaching Turkish as a foreign language was reviewed, another important work is the “*Codex Cumanicus*”, which means “*Kipchak Book*” written by Westerners. The book, which consisted of two parts, was compiled by the Italians and Germans of the Kipchak Turks who were living in the north of the Black Sea in the 14th Century in Latin letters as a work that conveyed the dialects and spoken language of that period rather than the written language (Ercilasun, 2010, p. 382).

When teaching Turkish to foreigners is considered, the “Turkish and Foreign Languages Research and Application Center of Ankara University” (TFLRAC), which was established in 1984 at Ankara University, comes to the forefront. After the establishment of TFLRAC, the studies in the field were transferred to this institution and, textbooks and supplementary course materials were developed as of 1984 (Hengirmen, 1993). Another institution that followed

TFLRAC, which was the first center opened to teach Turkish to foreigners, was TİKA, which was established in 1999 to increase educational activities abroad, among other activities. TİKA provided materials and faculty support to Turkology departments abroad and made it possible to expand Turkology Departments abroad to teach Turkish language and culture academically (www.tika.gov.tr). Yunus Emre Turkish Education and Training Center (YETEM) was another institution established in Yunus Emre Institute, and started its activities in 2009, to support this field together with the other institutions.

When the literature was reviewed in the context of teaching Turkish as a foreign language, it was seen that more studies are conducted in recent years compared to previous years on teaching and developing writing skills (Selvikavak, 2006; Güvercin, 2012; Tok, 2012; Varışoğlu, 2013; Takil, 2014; Hamarathlı, 2015; Şimşek, 2017; Taşdemir, 2017; Abukan, 2018; Kaplan, 2018; Yıldırım, 2018; Aydoğdu, 2019; Erkan, 2019; Mutlu, 2019; Altay, 2020; Çangal, 2020; Güngör, 2020; Yılmaz, 2021; Bekdaş, 2022; Durmuş, 2022; Karşı, 2022; Sakoğlu, 2022; Harmankaya, 2023; Özşavlı, 2023). Considering the results of studies on the acquisition of four basic language skills in foreign language learning, it can be argued that the use and acquisition of writing skills, which require time and knowledge, are difficult skills (Batur & Ellialtı, 2018).

Based on the literature review and the opinions of experts, the most effective and widely used and recommended methods in writing education, in which students have difficulties and problems in the process of learning a second language, are free writing, controlled, and guided writing. Raimes (1983) described controlled writing, guided writing, and free writing activities as three basic activities employed to develop writing skills. Guided writing, which is the basis of the present study, is very effective in improving students' abilities to express their knowledge, opinions, and feelings about a subject effectively. Using guided writing exercises, students are asked to use the words they have learned and the sentence patterns they have learned in a controlled manner and to produce a meaningful paragraph (Demirel, 2004, p. 104; Yılmaz, 2014, p. 41; Temel, 2015, p. 173). Similarly, according to Dinç and Ünal (2020, p. 375), after students are informed about a certain subject in guided writing, they are asked to express their opinions and feelings about that subject in written form. Briefly, Şimşek (2017, p. 26) expresses the purpose of guided writing as students' use of all the structures they have learned in a controlled manner for a certain purpose. According to Raimes (1983), guided, controlled, and free writing, are a complete transition style as a very important writing activity in this respect.

Like in controlled writing method, the guided writing method is also very useful for students to realize the rules of punctuation and spelling. However, as stated previously by Dyan (2010), guided writing supports the development of the oral skills of students by contributing to their development in listening skills. Students notice the words they misspell with the help of guided writing activities and focus on learning the correct ones. Also, regarding vocabulary teaching,

Şimşek (2017) stated that controlled writing techniques are suitable for exercises and applications, and the use of guided writing techniques is more accurate and effective in context and vocabulary teaching. Hartanti (2011) stated that guided writing is useful for various teaching purposes, allowing students to take into account the choice of target audience, purpose, topic, and text type when they plan to write on something. It also allows students to focus on spelling and punctuation rules and can be used to encourage students to revise and edit their writing.

Also, one of the indispensable elements in the acquisition and development of language skills is cultural transfer, based on the view that language teaching is supported by cultural elements. In activity-based studies, using course materials, which also contain language-specific cultural elements, is very important and effective. Based on this viewpoint, the present study was designed to determine whether using documentaries as visual and auditory materials in the teaching of B2 level international students' Turkish language teaching, which is one of the most difficult and most recently acquired skills, improves the guided writing skills of students.

Based on this viewpoint, the purpose of the present study was to uncover whether using culture-themed documentaries in Turkish teaching of B2-level international students affects the development of guided writing skills. For this purpose, answers to the following questions were sought.

1. What were the guided writing skill levels of the study group before the application?
2. What were the views of the study group on Turkish culture before the application?
3. What were the views of the study group on Turkish culture after the application?
4. How did using culture-themed documentaries contribute to guided writing?
 - 4.1. What were the guided writing skills of the study group after the application?
 - 4.2. What was the contribution of culture-themed documentaries to the permanence of the learning acquisition?
5. What were the opinions of the students about the application?
6. What were the views of the trainers on the application?

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The present study, which aimed to improve the guided writing skills of international students who come to Turkey for university education through cultural-themed documentaries, was conducted by using the "action research" pattern of the qualitative research model. Yıldırım and Şimşek (2005) defined qualitative research as a field in which qualitative data collection methods such as interviews, observations, and document analysis are preferred, and a process of determining perceptions and activities realistically and holistically in their natural process and environment is followed.

In the present study, the needs and existing situations of international students who came to Turkey to receive

a university education in terms of writing skills were determined by the researcher. To solve the deficiencies and problems of the students in writing skills, the writing skill acquisitions were determined by considering the B2 level, the course contents including the determined acquisitions were determined, and guided writing activities were developed. Quantitative and qualitative data collection tools were used and the developmental status of the students was monitored to interpret how the guided writing skill activities that were developed in the classroom environment progressed. The “action research” model was preferred in the study to ensure an accurate follow-up of the entire process, create and implement a detailed action plan for the identified problem, and take into account that action research will enable both qualitative and quantitative data to be used.

Study Group

The study group consisted of 12 international students at the B2 level who learned Turkish in the 2022-2023 academic year at the Uşak University Turkish Teaching Application and Research Center (TÖMER). The gender distribution of international students learning Turkish at the B2 level at Uşak University TÖMER was 3 females and 9 males. The numerical distribution of the countries of origin of the international students was Gabon (4), Kazakhstan (2), Indonesia (2), Turkmenistan (1), Syria (1), Iraq (1), and Afghanistan in the study group (1). Convenience Convenient case sampling, which is one of the purposeful sampling methods, was preferred in the selection of the study group participants. The real identities of all students in the study group were kept confidential and students’ names were abbreviated as S1, S2, S3, S4, and S5.

Data Collection Tools

Some of the data collection tools that were used in the study were employed in the “action plan development” stage and some in the “action plan application” stage.

Data Collection Process

The data of the study were collected under two headings (“developing the action plan” and “implementing the action plan”).

Action Plan Development Process

In this part of the study, the stages of the action plan development process are included in the module that was prepared for the development of guided writing skills.

a) Determining the Themes to be Used in Activities

To determine the themes of the study, national and international literature on the themes used in foreign language teaching was reviewed by the researcher. Then, the B2 level course materials were examined and a list of the themes used

in these materials was created and presented to the opinion of 7 field experts and the themes were determined.

b) Determination of Documentaries to be Used in Activities

An official application has been made to the TRT Archive Department for the selection of documentaries that were suitable for the themes. The documentaries shared with the researcher by TRT were presented to the opinion of 3 experts. All usage permissions of 6 documentaries determined by experts were obtained from TRT and used in activities.

c) Determining the Targeted Writing Acquisitions by Obtaining Expert Opinions

The writing achievements in the national and international literature were reviewed by the researcher, the writing achievements were listed and the list was examined by a total of 6 field experts. The writing acquisitions determined by the experts were sent back to 3 field experts and 8 acquisitions suitable for the “guided writing” skill were identified.

d) Preparing the Activities According to the Determined Acquisitions and Determining the Expert Opinions

The 6-week guided writing activities and lesson plan that were prepared by the researcher were presented to the opinions of 5 field experts. As a result of the feedback from the experts and the evaluations, the lesson planning was performed by giving the final form to the activities. All activities were piloted at the Uşak University Language Center.

Application Process of the Action Plan

a) Determining pre-test scores

A pre-test application was performed in the study to determine the guided writing skills pre-test scores of the students. After the students completed the writing process, the worksheets of the students were scored by using the “Guided Writing Scoring Key” that was prepared by the researcher and 2 field experts.

b) Application stage

The application stage of the study and the students’ curriculum were examined and the days when the writing skills were taught were determined. The application was completed in 6 weeks.

c) Interim evaluation stage

To determine the progress of the students, an “interim evaluation” was performed in the 4th week of the application plan, which lasted for 6 weeks. The students’ midterm evaluation test results were determined by using the “Guided Writing Scoring Key” prepared by the researcher. Scoring was performed by the researcher and 2 field experts.

d) Determining post-test scores

The post-test application was performed at the end of all applications to complete the application stage of the action plan in an accurate way. The students' papers were scored by the researcher and 2 field experts by using the "Guided Writing Scoring Key".

e) Determining Permanence Test Scores

A permanency test was applied to the students 25 days after the last application was completed. As in the process of determining the pre-test and post-test scores of the students, the "Guided Writing Scoring Key" was used to determine the permanency test scores of the students. The evaluation was made by the researcher and 2 field experts. Also, semi-structured interviews were conducted with the students about the study aims.

FINDINGS AND INTERPRETATIONS

The findings and interpretations made within the scope of the study are given below.

Findings and Interpretations on the First Research Question

The first Research Question of the study was "What were the guided writing skill levels of the study group before the application?" The findings and interpretations regarding this question are given Table 1.

When the descriptive statistics of the pre-test results of the students were examined, it was found that the average of the group was 47.5 points out of 100. However, the lowest pre-test score of the students was 20 out of 100 in the study group, and the highest score was 60 out of 100. Considering that the pre-test mean score of the students was 47.5, it can be argued that the guided writing skill levels of the group were found to be low.

Table 1. Guided writing skill levels of the study group before the application

Student Code	Pre-Test Score (Total 100 Points)	Class Average Score
S1	50	47.5
S2	50	
S3	45	
S4	60	
S5	45	
S6	55	
S7	60	
S8	50	
S9	30	
S10	20	
S11	55	
S12	50	

When the fact that the class average obtained as a result of the evaluation of the pre-test scores of the international students in the study group was 47.5 out of 100 is considered, the student with the lowest score (20 points) in the group was S10. In the interview with T10, he stated that he had difficulties and problems in writing as "My writing skills are not sufficient, I have a hard time writing. I also have difficulties with letters and vowels in writing". The student with the second lowest pre-test score in the study group was S9, which said, "I am inadequate in writing. I find grammar difficult, I can't spell words correctly. I cannot connect the sentences."

The Findings and Interpretations on the Second Research Question

The second Research Question of the study was "What were the views of the study group on Turkish culture before the application?". The findings and interpretations regarding this question are given below.

When the interviews and the datasets obtained were examined, it was found that international students did not have sufficient knowledge about Turkish culture. On the other hand, except for three students in the study group (S3, S10, S11), the students said that their stay was eight months in total in Turkey. As a result of the observations, it can be argued that the students spent most of their time between the school and the place where they lived. It can also be argued that their opportunities to learn Turkish culture are limited to school, teachers, daily life, and individual efforts because they spend more time with groups of friends from their own countries and cannot make sufficient Turkish friends.

The Findings and Interpretations on the Third Research Question

The third Research Question of the study was "What were your views on Turkish culture after the application?" From the interviews made with the students to answer this question, it was concluded that the students had sufficient knowledge about Turkish culture at the end of the activities. In general, as a result of these activities, students argued that they found traditional Turkish weddings different and interesting. Similarly, the students also argued that they learned the rules of the traditional Turkish game, Cirit, and how it was played. However, they argued that Cirit was a different and fun traditional game. Regarding Turkish handicrafts, they expressed their appreciation of the glass art and the resulting products. The students shared in the interviews that they learned about Turkish cuisine, which they had never known before, and that they had information on how some Turkish foods were prepared. However, they also argued that they were pleased to know different cities in Turkey other than the city they lived in as students and they wanted to see these cities. Finally, they argued that they learned about the life of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, the founder of the Turkish Republic, and the heroism he did for the country and that they were impressed by his achievements.

The Findings and Interpretations on the Fourth Research Question

“How were the guided writing skills of the study group after the application?” The findings and interpretations regarding this question are given below.

A total of six guided writing practices were performed to determine the students' guided writing skills. The writing scores of the students received from each writing activity are given in the Table 2.

In the table, when the activity scores of the students in the study group were examined out of a total of 100 points (6 activities in total), it is seen that the student with the lowest score (59 points) in the group was S10. During the interviews with S10 in the study, S10 said that he had problems and difficulties with writing skills. Also, when the pre-test scores of the students (out of 100 points) were examined and the class average of 47.5 (See Table 1) was taken into account, it was determined that S10 got the lowest score (20 points).

When the observation forms and diaries kept by the researcher for each student's six activities were evaluated, it

was determined that S10 was the student who had the most difficulty in writing and had problems. It was also found that there were problems with the correct use of uppercase and lowercase letters, correct spelling of words, correct use of vowels, and forming sentences in line with the rules in S10's writings.

2. “How do cultural-themed documentary practices contribute to permanence?” The findings and interpretations regarding this question are given Table 3.

It is seen in the table that the pre-test scores of the students before the application were 20 out of 100, and the highest score was 60. Similarly, it is also seen that the lowest score out of 100 in the permanence test scores made 25 days after the application was 95 points. Based on these data, in the semi-structured interviews conducted with the students, all of them said, “*I don't know guided writing*”, and although the majority of the students said “*I find my writing skills insufficient. I'm having trouble writing*”, it can be argued that the students' writing skills increased their success levels after the application was completed.

Table 2. The guided writing skills of the study group after the application

Student Code	1 st Event Points (Total 100 Points)	2 nd Event Points (Total 100 Points)	3 rd Event Points (Total 100 Points)	4 th Event Points (Total 100 Points)	5 th Event Points (Total 100 Points)	6 th Event Points (Total 100 Points)	Average Scores
S1	56	74	72	73	74	70	69.83
S2	52	52	56	67	72	70	61.5
S3	52	50	50	70	70	87	63.16
S4	76	70	30	78	70	85	68.16
S5	62	65	55	88	68	70	68
S6	72	79	74	80	75	90	78.33
S7	68	78	82	80	75	80	77.16
S8	67	65	80	82	70	80	74
S9	66	60	60	75	75	75	68.5
S10	53	60	56	60	65	60	59
S11	73	82	80	92	80	92	83.16
S12	67	64	60	68	70	80	68.16

Table 3. Pre-test, application order, post-test, and permanency scores

Student Code	Pre-application (Pre-test) score	Application order point average	Post-application (Post-test) score	Permanency score
S1	50	69.83	80	85
S2	50	61.5	70	70
S3	45	63.16	85	95
S4	60	68.16	70	80
S5	45	68	65	75
S6	55	78.33	90	95
S7	60	77.16	90	95
S8	50	74	70	85
S9	30	68.5	70	65
S10	20	59	60	55
S11	55	83.16	80	85
S12	50	68.16	80	90

The Findings and Interpretations on the Fifth Research Question

During the interviews conducted with the students in the study group, the question was asked what their opinions were about the practices. After the interviews conducted with the students, it was found that the opinions of the students about the application were positive. The observation notes kept by the researcher, the researcher's diaries, and the trainer's opinions support this conclusion. In general, the students' answers to the question "What are your views on the applications?" are as follows.

S1's opinions about the applications were as follows "My writing has improved. I make fewer mistakes and typos now. I have learned many new words that I did not know before." S2's answer to the same question was "I have learned a lot and improved my writing. I have learned especially Turkish culture very well. My vocabulary has improved and I can make better sentences." S3 expressed his views on this question as "It was very difficult for me to write before the applications. Now, my writing has improved. I have corrected my typos. I have learned new words. I have learned Turkish culture." S4's views on the application were "I think guided writing practices have improved my writing. They were very useful for my friends. Before the apps, I didn't write much. Now, I love the writing lesson. I have also learned Turkish culture very well. You need to know the culture well because if you do not learn the culture, you cannot learn the language correctly." S5's interpretations were "The lessons were very good. I improved my writing in punctuation and vocabulary. I have learned new information and words." S10 said, "I had a lot of difficulty in writing. I had a hard time coming up with ideas while writing. I have no difficulty now. My writing has improved. I have heard and learned new words. Now, my typing scores are better."

Researcher diaries and observation notes that were kept by the researcher in the application support the opinions of the students about the applications. Students expressed positive opinions about the writing activities after the application and added that they improved their writing skills after the application. They also stated that they acquired new information during the writing practice stage and they no longer made the mistakes they made before after they saw their mistakes. The shares of the students on this subject support the opinions of Trainer 1, Trainer 2, and Trainer 3, who stated that the writing skills of the students improved and spelling errors (e.g., spelling rules, using punctuation marks correctly, using dotted sounds correctly, and dividing syllables correctly) decreased after the applications. Students also stated that they learned new words that they did not know the meaning of before with the help of the applications. The opinions of the students about the practices and the notes in the researcher diaries that were kept by the researcher support each other; "At the end of the course, the students came to me and stated that their writing had improved and they learned where they made mistakes. This feedback from the students increased my belief in my work and made me happy" (Researcher Diary - 22.05.2023).

Students also stated that they learned cultural elements that they did not know before with the applications and they did not have difficulty in generating ideas when they wrote their articles. The opinions of the students on this subject are supported by the diaries and observation notes that were kept by the researcher for each activity. "After this final activity, the students shared with me that they could generate ideas when they wrote and made sentences easily while writing" (Researcher Diary - 01.06.2023).

As stated by S10 and S12 regarding the final activities in the study, they said S10: "My writing scores are better now" and S12: "My writing scores have increased". These opinions of the students support each other with the opinions of Trainer 2 and Trainer 3 regarding the application. The opinion of Trainer 2 was "A significant improvement was detected in the students' writing scores" and Trainer 3 said, "The writing scores of the students increased in the exams."

In summary, students argue that the activities improved their writing skills and were useful. Also, the negative thoughts of the students about writing lessons changed and their self-confidence and motivation increased in writing. It was concluded that the students agreed that the writing skill, which they had difficulty with before and experienced problems with while writing, was not as difficult a skill as they considered.

The Findings and Interpretations on the Sixth Research Question

It was found that the views of the trainers about the activities in the study were positive. In general, the opinions of the trainers were that the activities improved the writing skills of the students. Similarly, as argued in the researcher's diaries and observation notes for all applications, positive improvements were observed in the writings of the students after the applications. In general, improvements were detected in the students in terms of using punctuation marks correctly and obeying the spelling rules. Improvements were observed especially in students' use of uppercase and lowercase letters and positive developments were recorded in students' correct use of dotted sounds and correct division of syllables. Also, as Trainer 3 argued, the time for students to think and write on the given topic was shortened. In the diaries kept by the researcher, "It was observed that there was a significant decrease in the answering time for the questions on the students' worksheets." However, as Trainer 1 stated, it was found that the students' writing became better in terms of form and content. Similarly, as argued by Trainer 1 and Trainer 3, it was also found that the scores of the students in the writing exams increased. However, as argued by Trainer 3, it was found that some students' problems in forgetting to write a title in their writing were also resolved. Finally, it was determined that the study question arguing that *students had problems in transferring the ideas they wanted to convey to their writings "completely and accurately"*, which was recorded by the researcher, could not be solved completely in all students. However, a significant decrease was detected in the number of students who had problems in this regard.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

When the findings of the study were evaluated, it was found that the students had difficulties and problems with writing skills. Aktaş (2021) reported a similar result regarding writing skills in a study he conducted. In his study in which the success and errors of writing skills of international students learning Turkish were examined in terms of different variables, Aktaş (2021) concluded that students' written expression success levels were "weak". On the other hand, there are many studies in the literature reporting that writing skill pre-test success levels of international students learning Turkish as a foreign language were weak and insufficient (Hamaratlı, 2015; Kaplan, 2018; Yıldırım, 2018; Mutlu, 2019; Aydoğdu, 2019; Çangal, 2020; Durmus, 2022; Harmankaya, 2023). Based on the writing studies in the literature and the results of this study, it can be argued that the most difficult skill is the writing skill in learning the mother tongue and the foreign language. Based on the findings, it can be concluded that the process of acquiring writing skill, which is one of the productive skills, must be followed with care and more applied studies must be included in developing writing skills.

Based on the interviews and findings, it was concluded in the study that the international students in the study group did not have sufficient knowledge of Turkish culture. The students were also asked, "What are the cultural elements of Turkish society that draw your attention?" Based on the answers to this question, it was concluded that different elements attracted their attention in Turkish culture and that they were willing to learn it. Also, based on the findings and observations, it was concluded that the duration of the students' stays in Turkey (except for 3 students S3, S10, and S11) was less than one year (eight months) as the reason for their lack of sufficient knowledge about Turkish culture.

Based on the interviews conducted with the students, it was also concluded that the students had "adequate" knowledge about Turkish culture after the application. After the application, it was concluded that the students had sufficient knowledge about "traditional Turkish weddings, traditional Turkish games, traditional Turkish handicrafts, traditional Turkish food, cities and Atatürk's life. However, it was also concluded in the interviews that the students found the elements of Turkish culture that they learned for the first time interesting and different. It was observed that the students compared the Turkish cultural elements they learned with their cultural elements after the application and their interest in different cultures and their research motivation increased after being influenced by the sharing of their friends from different countries. Dağdeviren (2019) reached a similar conclusion in his study. Dağdeviren (2019) concluded that international students needed to know the cultural characteristics of society to make sense of the actions of the society in which they learn the language. However, there are many studies in the literature supporting the conclusion that students must have adequate knowledge about the cultural elements of the language in the process of second language acquisition (Bölükbaş & Keskin, 2010; Saniei, 2012; Shemshadsara, 2012; Güleç & İnce, 2013; Çiftci et al., 2013; Er, 2015).

The result regarding the question "What is the contribution of culture-themed documentary practices to permanence?" in the present study was that there was a significant difference between the scores the students received from the pre-test and the scores from the permanence test. All of the students in the study group completed the guided writing process by increasing their writing scores. Based on the data, it was concluded that guided writing practices improved writing skill levels. As a result, it was found that the students' writing skill permanency scores were higher than the pre-test scores, and the writing skills, which the students argued that they had difficulties with, improved with the practice. However, many studies are reporting positive results and contribute to the development of writing skills of international students learning Turkish as a foreign language (Selvikavak, 2006; Tok, 2012; Reyhan, 2012; Aryningtyas et al., 2013; Takil, 2014; Kalfa, 2014; Hamaratlı, 2015; Kaplan, 2018; Yıldırım, 2018; Aydın, 2019; Erkan, 2019; Khatri, 2019; Mutlu, 2019; Altay, 2020; Çangal, 2020; Güngör, 2020; Dalgacı & Büyükkiz, 2021; Bekdaş, 2022; Harmankaya, 2023; Özşavlı, 2023).

In the interviews that were conducted to determine the opinions of the students in the study group about the practices, it was found that all students expressed positive opinions about the writing practices. It was also determined that the students had opinions that the writing practices developed and contributed to their writing skills. The students argued that they realized the mistakes they often made during the writing practices and they acquired new knowledge about writing. Based on the notes taken by the researcher in the student interviews, it was concluded that the writing skills of the students improved after the application and that spelling errors (e.g., following spelling rules, using punctuation marks correctly, using punctuated sounds correctly, dividing syllables correctly) decreased. It was also concluded that the students developed active vocabulary by learning new words through applications. The diaries of the researcher and the interviews conducted with the trainers also support this result. In conclusion, the students said that the activities aimed at improving their writing skills improved and contributed to their writing skills. Based on the students' opinions, it was concluded that the application achieved its purpose. There are many studies in the literature in which the positive opinions of international students on the development of writing skills were shared (Tok, 2012; Takil, 2014; Hamaratlı, 2015; Takil, 2016; Çetin et al., 2016; Baş & Turhan, 2017; Aydoğdu, 2019; Aydın, 2019; Çangal, 2020; Yılmaz, 2021; Bekdaş, 2022; Özşavlı, 2023).

It was determined in the study that all trainers stated a positive opinion of the writing practices performed in the interviews held to determine the opinions of the trainers on the practices. The trainers argued that guided writing developed writing skills by supporting students from different aspects. Similarly, as seen in the researcher diaries and observation notes kept by the researcher for all applications, positive developments were detected in the writings of the students after the applications. Right at this point, the findings about the practices in the study and the views of the trainers support each other.

At the end of the study, improvements were detected in the students' writing in terms of spelling rules and using punctuation marks correctly. Positive developments were recorded in students' correct use of dotted sounds, correct division of syllables, and correct sentences. There were improvements in students' correct use of upper and lower case letters. Also, in the observation forms kept for each student after each activity, it was determined that the students who made the same mistakes over and over did not make the same mistakes when the process was completed. As Trainer 3 said, the time for students to think and write on the given topic decreased at significant levels. As Trainer 1 said, it was concluded that the students' writings became better in terms of content and format. However, as Trainer 1 and Trainer 3 shared, it was found that the scores of the students in the writing exams increased. Finally, the problem "The students have problems in transferring the ideas they want to convey to their writings completely and accurately", which was recorded by the researcher could not be fully solved for all students. However, it was concluded that there was a significant decrease in the number of students who had problems in this regard.

Based on the results obtained in the study, students must be supported in this process by increasing the variety of classroom practices of writing skill, which is one of the most difficult productive skills students face in the language acquisition process. Also, activity-based practice studies can be performed for different language levels on guided, controlled, and free writing. Finally, students also have serious problems with transferring their ideas in their minds into their written products. They have problems in ensuring the integrity of meaning in their writings. Considering these deficiencies reported by previous students, studies can be conducted to solve them.

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