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## Exploring Student-directed Translanguaging in the English-centric Classroom

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### Abstract

Translanguaging has been suggested as a pedagogical practice for bilingual students in which they use two languages alternately in the classroom (Williams, 1996) and it contributes to students' language learning with the use of two languages to make meaning (Baker, 2011). The main goal of this study is to investigate preparatory class students' attitudes towards translanguaging and their translanguaging practices. To do this, a mixed-method research design was selected and applied to 28 preparatory class B1 level students chosen through the nonrandom sampling method. The quantitative data were collected from students through a questionnaire asking about students' attitudes towards English-only policy, students' translanguaging attitudes, and practices. Besides, to collect the qualitative data, online reading classes were observed for eight weeks. Moreover, focus group interviews with 4 lower and 4 higher achieving students were conducted in order to get a deeper understanding of students' perceptions of translanguaging. The findings gathered from the questionnaire revealed that preparatory class students have positive attitudes towards translanguaging. In addition, the qualitative findings obtained from online reading class observation indicated that students most frequently use translanguaging practices to express their initial evaluations of the text, mention their comprehension, paraphrase, ask for help, show their critical thinking skills, discuss a topic about the related text, put forward their predictions about the content. Furthermore, the findings of focus group interviews showed that both low and high achievers have negative perceptions of translanguaging. To encourage students in the use of translanguaging in a foreign language learning class, students' positive attitudes should be supported, their negative perceptions should not be underestimated and negative perceptions of translanguaging should be tried to be changed into positive ones so that students can benefit from translanguaging.

**Keywords:** *Language Learners, Translanguaging, Attitude, Achievement*

## **Introduction**

The use of L1 in a foreign language teaching and learning setting has been investigated by many researchers (De La Campa & Nassaji, 2009; Storch & Wigglesworth, 2003; Turnbull & Arnett, 2002; Wang & Wen, 2002) and there have been different ideas about the use of L1 in foreign language classrooms throughout the years. The previous perceptions were based on the idea in the use of L1 was considered a problem and should be avoided (Moore, 2013). Willis (1981) noted that English learning and teaching should be through the medium of English since the use of L1 harms the exposure to the L2. On the contrary, Sparks and Ganschow (1993) underlined the important relationship between the native language and foreign language learning. This monolingual approach which supported the use of English as the only source of learning and teaching started to lose its importance over time especially when the research pointed out that the use of L1 has been a mediational tool for L2 learning (Canagarajah, 2011; Creese & Blackledge, 2010; Garcia, 2009). However, the monolingual lens had an impact on bilingual education at first. The idea of bilingualism and bilingual education was originally based on the monolingual perspective “where bilingualism was understood as simply the pluralization of monolingualism” (Garcia & Woodley, 2015, p. 134). This perspective suggested that there are two separate language systems that bilinguals have.

For bilingual education, the monolingual perspective did not propose the use of one language for learning the other language. Instead, two languages were considered separate. Lambert (1973) provided two types of bilingualism; additive and subtractive bilingualism. While the former suggests the addition of a new language to the previous one and the use of both equally, the second one is used to describe the decrease of the first language due to the learning of a second language (Lambert, 1973). Nevertheless, these two types of bilingualism have not been enough for the education of today's world bilinguals as there is a need for another type of bilingualism that would provide another perspective rather than a monolingual lens (Garcia & Woodley, 2015). Garcia (2009) was the first who challenged this perception of bilingualism. Rather than having two separate languages, there is one system that integrates the features of two languages called 'The Dynamic Bilingual Model' (Garcia & Li, 2014).

As an opposite perspective to the monolingual practices of bilingual education, ‘translanguaging’ was coined by Cen Williams (1996) as a pedagogical practice. At that time, Williams (1996) defined translanguaging as a pedagogical practice of bilingual students in which they used the Welsh and English languages alternately in the classroom and they benefited from this in learning the second language. After that, translanguaging was used to describe the use of two languages to make meaning in a language learning environment (Baker, 2011).

Considering Turkish students at the higher education level, most Turkish students have used Turkish in their English learning practices in the classroom. While doing so, they aim at learning English with the help of their mother tongue Turkish. Therefore, this study aims to investigate Turkish preparatory class students’ translanguaging practices and their perceptions of translanguaging.

### **Translanguaging**

Originated from the Welsh term ‘trawsieithu’, the term ‘translanguaging’ was coined by the researcher Cen Williams (1996) to refer to a pedagogical practice of bilingual students where they alternated the English and Welsh languages. Williams (1996) used this term to reflect the situation of bilingual students who used one language to receive the necessary information as an input and used another language as an output in the bilingual classroom. For instance, students are asked to listen to a conversation in one language and later speak or write about it in another language (Baker, 2011). Even though the term ‘translanguaging’ was coined by Williams in the 1980s, it did not get much attention until the time when Baker (2001) translated the Welsh term into English. Baker (2011) describes translanguaging as “the process of making meaning, shaping experiences and gaining understanding and knowledge through the use of two languages” (p. 288). In contrast to the languaging that has a focus on general language practices, in translanguaging, both languages of bilingual speakers are used in a dynamic and integrated way to have more understanding and express their knowledge. For Li (2011), “translanguaging is both going between different linguistic structures and systems, including different modalities (speaking, writing, signing, listening, reading, remembering) and going beyond them” (p. 1223). In parallel with this idea, Garcia and Li (2014) define translanguaging to refer to new language practices rather than two separate languages. They suggest that translanguaging is used to describe a unified repertoire of languages from which bilingual speakers choose features to communicate. These definitions given by many researchers go beyond the concept of additive bilingualism which supports two autonomous languages. On the contrary, dynamic bilingualism where the bilinguals have complex and interrelated language practices provides one linguistic repertoire for two different languages (Garcia & Li, 2014). As there is a shift from two separate languages to one linguistic repertoire, translanguaging has drawn much attention in bilingual education. Some researchers (Canagarajah, 2011; Garcia, 2009) point out that there is an exact distinction between code-switching and translanguaging, and Garcia and Li (2014) posit that translanguaging “refers not simply to a shift or shuttle between two languages, but the speakers’ construction and use of original and complex interrelated discursive practices...” (p. 22). While code-switching refers to alternating between two or more different languages to communicate, translanguaging refers to the selection of features from bilinguals’ entire linguistic system. That is, as Garcia (2009) points out that “in translanguaging, there are no clear-cut boundaries between the languages of bilingual speakers” (p. 82).

Recent studies (Canagarajah, 2011; Creese & Blackledge, 2010; Lewis et al., 2012) have shown that translanguaging practices help the development of language proficiency of bilinguals. Translanguaging also creates a space where bilinguals can use two languages for interaction (Li, 2011). Moreover, it gives an opportunity both for the teachers and students to make meaning and develop identity (Garcia, 2009). In the light of these researches, this study which aims to provide a deeper understanding of translanguaging practices of preparatory class students and their attitudes towards translanguaging at higher education level in Turkey may reflect the significance of translanguaging in foreign language learning.

In this present study, preparatory class students' attitudes towards translanguaging and their translanguaging practices are investigated and this study primarily attempts to answer the following questions:

**RQ<sub>1</sub>:** What are preparatory class students' attitudes towards translanguaging?

**RQ<sub>2</sub>:** Is there a significant relationship between preparatory class students' attitudes towards translanguaging and their first-term academic achievement?

**RQ<sub>3</sub>:** For what purposes do the preparatory class students have translanguaging practices in a reading class?

**RQ<sub>4</sub>:** What are the perceptions of low achievers and those of high achievers on translanguaging?

## **Method**

### *Study Group*

The subjects of the present study were 15 male and 13 female, a total of 28 B1 level of English Preparatory class students at a state university in the west part of Turkey. B1 level of students was chosen for this study since this level of language learners are considered an "independent user" for the B2 level and they may practice translanguaging more as they are emergent bilinguals (CEFR, Common Reference Levels). The school where the present study was conducted formed its classes according to the proficiency exam results that the students had taken at the beginning of each academic year. Therefore, the preparatory classes were formed according to the proficiency exam results, not to their departments.

### *Data Collection Instrument*

Data collection instruments employed in this study were a questionnaire, a class observation, and a focus group interview. The questionnaire adapted from the study of Küçük (2018) was used to investigate the students' attitudes towards translanguaging. The questionnaire includes 22 Likert-type questions and it has 3 sections. In the first section, there are 8 items that investigate the students' attitudes towards using only the English language in English lessons. In the second section, there are 8 items looking into students' attitudes towards translanguaging, and in the third section, there are 6 items related to students' translanguaging practices within the classroom. Overall, this questionnaire gives a holistic investigation of students' attitudes towards translanguaging by considering these three points.

Regarding the questionnaire's validity issue, the researcher consulted two experts for the content validity of the questionnaire. Moreover, three native speakers of Turkish were asked to examine the language of the items in the questionnaire in order to figure out if there is a necessity to make any changes to the questionnaire. As for the reliability of the questionnaire, it is mentioned that the reliability coefficient of the scale is .731 (Küçük, 2018).

In this study, observation was used to investigate for what purposes students have translanguaging practices in a reading classroom. To achieve this goal, a non-participant observation was used. Since it was the covid-19 pandemic time, students had their classes online and the observation was done online. During the observation process, an observation checklist which was adapted from the work of Henk et al. (2000) was used to reveal the students' purposes of having translanguaging practices in a reading class. The online class checklist was formed

with three stages. One of the stages was the pre-reading stage, another was the while-reading stage and the last stage was the post-reading stage. By checking the use of students' translanguaging with the checklist, it was aimed to reveal the purposes of students' translanguaging at different stages during a reading class.

In addition to the questionnaire and classroom observations, a focus group interview with two groups of participants was used. There were totally 8 students. One of the groups consisted of 4 students who were chosen with the lowest first term academic grades from 28 students in total (72, 78, 83, 84) and the other group consisted of 4 students chosen with the highest first term academic grades (99, 99, 99, 99). Two focus group interviews were conducted online to get a deeper understanding of students' perceptions of translanguaging. The interview questions were adapted from the work of Tabatabaei (2019) and checked by the advisor to make sure that they are appropriate for this study.

#### *Procedure*

First of all, the researcher took permission from the Ethics Committee of the institution to which the researcher was affiliated and then from the institution where the study took place. Later, the researcher sent the consent forms to the students and the teacher via e-mail. They were informed about the study and its aims and process. Moreover, they were also given information about their roles taken in the study since students as the subject group played a very important role in the present study. After sending back their consent forms, both the students and the teacher mentioned their consent for the observation, and the students also sent their consent both for the questionnaire and interview. By getting their consent, the researcher started to collect the data.

#### **Results**

In order to look into students' attitudes towards translanguaging, the students' answers to the questionnaire were analyzed by using the SPSS program. The data gathered from the questionnaire were analyzed with descriptive statistics and the mean and standard deviation scores of the items in the questionnaire were presented in Table 1.

**Table 1**

*The Means and Standard Deviations of Students' Attitudes Towards English-Only Policy*

	M	SD
I believe the more English students use in the classroom, the more they make progress in English.	4.10	.78
I believe students should use English a lot in the classroom in order to master English.	4.07	.71
I think only English is allowed to be used in English classes.	3.50	.92
I believe students should use only English when working together in the classroom.	3.35	.98
I believe there is no situation that requires students to use their first language in the classroom.	2.35	.78
Using both my first language and English(translanguaging) during the lesson leads my English to weaken.	2.17	.81
When the instructor switches from one language to another during the lesson, it wastes a lot of time.	1.96	.63
When the instructor switches from English to Turkish (or vice versa) during the lesson, it makes me confused.	1.96	.74

As the results yield the item "I believe the more English students use in the classroom, the more they make progress in English" had the highest mean score ( $M=4.10$ ). This means that students mostly agree that using English contributes to their English development. The items "When the instructor switches from one language to another during the lesson, it wastes a lot of time" and "When the instructor switches from English to Turkish (or vice versa) during the lesson, it makes me confused" had the lowest mean scores equally ( $M=1.96$ ;  $M=1.96$ ). These results show most of the students do not agree that switching from one language to another creates a waste of time and makes them confused. All in all, the overall mean ( $M= 2.93$ ) of all the items in English used only within the class point to a neutral attitude.

In the third section of the questionnaire which is about students' attitudes towards translanguaging, the results reflect that students' have positive attitudes towards translanguaging with an overall mean score of 3.83, and the means and standard deviations of each item related to their attitudes are shown in Table 2.

**Table 2**  
*Students' Attitudes Towards Translanguaging*

	M	SD
Using both my first language and English at the same time during the lessons increases my understanding of the subject.	4.25	.70
It benefits me when the instructor uses both my first language and English at the same time during the lesson.	4.25	.75
I will benefit more from the lessons if the instructor presents the words both in my first language and English.	4.14	.85
I want to use my first language during the lessons when I feel the need.	4.10	.83
It benefits me when the instructor uses course materials both in my first language and English.	4.00	1.02
Using both my first language and English at the same time during the lessons helps me improve my English.	3.90	.74
It should be okay to speak my first language with my classmates during class activities.	3.46	.96
Using only English in the lessons is not important as long as I fulfill my classroom responsibilities.	2.60	.87

The items "It benefits me when the instructor uses both my first language and English at the same time during the lesson" and "Using both my first language and English at the same time during the lessons increase my understanding of the subject" had the highest and equal mean scores ( $M=4.25$ ). The results revealed students mostly agree on the use of their first language and English during their lessons due to the fact that the use of two languages increases their understanding. The item "Using only English in the lessons is not important as long as I fulfill my classroom responsibilities" had the lowest mean score ( $M=2.60$ ) and this represents students feel neutral about using only English is not important if they can succeed in classroom tasks. Considering all the means and standard deviations of each item, it is seen that students have positive attitudes towards translanguaging.

The last section of the questionnaire deals with students' preferences for translanguaging practices during the lessons. When the items in this section were analyzed in terms of means and

standard deviations, it was seen that the item “I use my first language to ask about a new concept to my classmates during the lesson” had the highest mean score (M=3.32) which represents most students often use translanguaging practice to ask about a new concept. However, the item “I take notes in my first language regardless of the language used by the instructor or in the lessons” represents that students sometimes prefer to use their first language to take notes irrespective of their instructor’s language use and it had the lowest mean score (M=2.00) as seen in Table 3.

**Table 3**  
*Students’ Translanguaging Practices*

	M	SD
I use my first language to ask about a new concept to my classmates during the lesson.	3.32	.68
I use my first language to explain a new concept to my classmates during the lesson.	2.96	.96
I use my first language to check the meaning of a new word or concept.	2.78	.83
I take notes in the language that the instructor uses	2.67	.82
I see that I switch from one language to another without noticing while taking notes in the classroom.	2.14	.80
I take notes in my first language regardless of the language used by the instructor or in the lessons.	2.00	.67

To put it in a nutshell, the overall results of the questionnaire reveal they believe that the more they practice English, the more they will improve their English. However, students mostly believe translanguaging is beneficial for their language learning, and they do not believe that translanguaging weakens their language learning. Since they believe in the benefits of translanguaging, they agree on the use of course materials both in their first language and English. Moreover, they think that using both languages at the same time during the lessons will support their understanding of the subject and subsequently their language learning. Consequently, it can be said that students have more positive attitudes towards translanguaging than using only English in the classroom.

The online reading classes were observed in terms of the class observation checklist and the translanguaging instances were categorized into three groups: the pre-reading stage, while-reading stage, and post-reading stage. Considering the pre-reading stage, students' translanguaging was identified and it was shown that they translanguaged for several reasons such as in topic discussion and to state their predictions about the text as seen in Table 4.

**Table 4**  
*Students' Translanguaging at the Pre-Reading Stage*

Weeks	To discuss a topic		To state predictions		Total	
	<i>f</i>	%	<i>F</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%
1	2	9.60	1	4.80	3	14
2	2	9.60	0	0	2	9.60
3	1	4.80	0	0	1	4.80
4	4	19	0	0	4	19
5	3	14	0	0	3	14
6	4	19	1	4.80	5	24
7	0	0	0	0	0	0
8	2	9.60	1	4.80	3	14
Total	18	85.60%	3	14.40%	21	100%

As illustrated in Table 4, weeks 6 and 4 got the most frequently used translanguaging practices in total. While weeks 6 and 4 got 4 turns in the use of translanguaging for topic discussion, only week 6 got 1 more turn in translanguaging for stating predictions. In weeks 1, 5, and 8, there were 3 turns in total. While in week 5, all the translanguaging practices were for a topic discussion. In both weeks 1 and 8, there were 2 turns to discuss a topic and 1 turn to state predictions. On the other hand, in week 2, 2 turns were identified to discuss a topic. However, there was no translanguaging turn for stating predictions in week 2. Regarding week 3, it was concluded that there was only 1 turn which was identified as for a topic discussion. Lastly, in week 7 there was no turn both for discussing a topic and stating predictions. To make a summary, week 6 got the most frequently used translanguaging practices in total and week 7 got the least frequently used translanguaging practices in total at the pre-reading stage.

At the while-reading stage, students' translanguaging was identified and categorized as 'to state their initial evaluations about the text, to state their comprehension, to paraphrase, to ask for help, and to state their critical thinking skills. Considering the 8 weeks observed, week 2 and week 7 got the most frequently used translanguaging practices in total. On the other hand, there were no translanguaging practices identified in week 6 as seen in Table 5.

**Table 5**  
*Students' Translanguaging at the While-Reading Stage*

Weeks	To state their initial evaluations of the text		To state their comprehension		To paraphrase		To ask for help		To state their critical thinking skills		Total	
	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%
1	0	0	0	0	1	3.23	2	6.46	1	3.23	4	12.92
2	0	0	2	6.46	1	3.23	3	9.69	1	3.23	7	22.58
3	1	3.23	1	3.23	0	0	1	3.23	1	3.23	4	12.92
4	1	3.23	0	0	1	3.23	1	3.23	1	3.23	4	12.92
5	1	3.23	2	6.46	1	3.23	0	0	0	0	4	12.92
6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
7	0	0	5	16.15	1	3.23	1	3.23	0	0	7	22.60
8	0	0	1	3.23	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	3.23
Total	3	9.69	11	35.53	5	16.15	8	9.69	4	12.92	31	100%

At the post-reading stage, students' translanguaging practices were noted and categorized as 'to answer comprehension questions, to retell the text, and to discuss the topics related to the text'. Weeks 3 and 7 got the most frequently used translanguaging practices with the number of 3 turns while week 8 got no translanguaging practices as seen in Table 6.

**Table 6**  
*Students' Translanguaging at the Post-Reading Stage*

Weeks	To answer comprehension questions		To retell the text.		To discuss the topics related to the text.		Total	
	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%
1	2	15.8	0	0	0	0	2	15.38
2	0	0	1	7.69	0	0	1	7.69
3	3	23.07	0	0	0	0	3	23.07
4	2	15.38	0	0	0	0	2	15.38
5	1	7.69	0	0	0	0	1	7.69
6	1	7.69	0	0	0	0	1	7.69
7	3	23.7	0	0	0	0	3	23.07
8	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	12	92.28%	1	7.69%	0	0	13	100%

The One-Way ANOVA test was employed to investigate the effect of students' academic achievement on their attitudes towards translanguaging. The results presented that there is not a significant relationship between students' academic achievement and their attitudes towards translanguaging ( $f= 1.021, p=0.37 >0.05$ ).

In the focus group interview, there were a total of 8 students, and in the lower achievers group there were 4 male students, and in the higher achievers group, there were 2 male and 2 female students. In addition, the first language of all the students in each group was Turkish. Twenty questions were prepared and asked to the students in the focus group interview and the findings gathered from each question can be seen in Table 7.

**Table 7***Comparison of Low Achievers' and Higher Achievers' Attitudes Towards Translanguaging*

	Lower Achievers	Higher Achievers
Do you use another language than English during your English lessons?	English (100%)	English (75%)
Why do you think that you speak other languages than English during English lessons?	Insufficient vocabulary in English (75%)	Insufficient proficiency in English (50%)
Which languages do you speak during your English lessons other than English? You can mention more than one language here.	Turkish (100%)	Turkish (100%)
How would you rate your overall English skill?	Average (75%)	Good (100%)
How often do you use English outside of school?	Sometimes (50%)	Often (100%) Seldom (50%)
Do you feel the need to use your first language(s) during your English lessons?	Yes (100%)	Yes (100%)
Why do you think that you need to use your first language(s) during English lessons?	Language habit (75%)	To express themselves better (75%)
Do you feel that your teacher encourages you to use your first language(s) during your English lessons?	No (100%)	Yes (50%) No (50%)
Does your teacher encourage you to only speak English in class?	Yes (100%)	Yes (50%) No (50%)
If you use your first language(s) during English lessons, how does your teacher react?	Warning (100%)	Warning (75%)
Does your English teacher respond in English only to questions during lessons?	No (100%)	No (100%)
Does your teacher always speak English during English lessons?	Yes (100%)	Yes (100%)
If you, or your classmates, ask your teacher a question in another language than English in class, what reaction does your teacher show?	No reaction (100%)	No reaction (100%)
If you would feel the need to express your thoughts or questions in your first language(s) during English lessons, how would that make you feel?	English proficiency is poor (50%)	English proficiency is poor (75%)
Do you tell your other classmates to express themselves in English, if they speak another language during class?	No (100%)	Yes (50%) No (50%)
Do you feel that it is negative to speak another language than English during English lessons?	Positive (100%)	Negative (75%)
Please explain why you feel that it is negative to speak another language than English during English lessons.	No reason	Causes lack of vocabulary in the English language (50%)
Do you feel that you can benefit by using your first language(s) during English lessons?	Beneficial (50%) Not beneficial (50%)	Not beneficial (100%)
Do you feel that you will fail your English course if you use your first language(s) during English lessons?	Fail (75%)	Fail (100%)
Would you feel more comfortable speaking English, if you were allowed to use your first language(s) in class in order to understand the English language better?	Not more comfortable (75%)	Not more comfortable (75%)

Comparing the answers of students interviewed in different two groups as seen in Table 7, it was revealed that both two groups of students (100%) with lower and higher grades use their first

language in English lessons. While the majority of the students with lower grades (75%) stated the reason for L1 use was insufficient vocabulary in the English language, the students with higher grades had various ideas as half of them thought it was because of lower English proficiency and the other half of them thought it was due to the deficit of education system. Although their reasons for L1 use were differentiating, two groups of students expressed they use their first language. When the students' perceptions of translanguaging were compared, it was seen that all of the students with higher grades (100%) believed that translanguaging is not beneficial for them whereas only half of the students (50%) with lower grades had the same idea with another group of students. Being asked whether they would feel more comfortable if they are allowed to use translanguaging within English classes, two groups of students mostly agreed that they would not feel more comfortable. Moreover, all the students in two different groups pointed out that when they use translanguaging to ask questions or express themselves, they feel bad. While the students with lower grades thought their English proficiency is not sufficient, the students with higher grades felt they are inadequate. Therefore, the students in both groups mostly agreed with the idea that having translanguaging practices may result in their failure in English classes. Considering all the answers of students who were interviewed in two different groups, it can be concluded that although students use translanguaging in English classes, they believe that translanguaging may have a negative effect on their academic achievement.

## **Discussion**

The aim of this study was to explore preparatory class students' attitudes towards translanguaging, to investigate whether there is a significant relationship between students' attitudes towards translanguaging and their academic achievement, to examine for what purposes the students have translanguaging practices in a reading class and to find out what the translanguaging perceptions of low achievers and those of high achievers. To realize these aims, a questionnaire was given to the students so as to explore their attitudes towards translanguaging. Moreover, online reading classes were observed for eight weeks to figure out the students' purposes for translanguaging in a reading class. Furthermore, focus group interviews with students both with lower and higher grades were administered to get a better understanding of their translanguaging perceptions. Both the quantitative data gathered from the questionnaire and the qualitative data gathered from the class observations and focus group interviews enabled us to answer the four research questions of this study.

The study findings pointed out that preparatory class students have more positive attitudes towards using translanguaging than using only the English language in their English classes and they use translanguaging for several reasons. The statistical findings of the questionnaire indicated that preparatory class students support using only the English language less than (2.93) using translanguaging during their English lessons. Moreover, the findings pointed out that students have mostly positive attitudes towards translanguaging, which is in line with the studies previously done by some researchers (Fang & Liu, 2020; Küçük, 2018; Rivera & Mazak, 2017).

The findings of the present study corroborate the study by Özkaynak (2020) in which he investigates whether there is a relationship between students' translanguaging practices and academic achievement and concluded that there is no statistically significant relationship between them. In this regard, this may result from various factors affecting students' attitudes and achievement. Creese and Blackledge (2010) suggest that students may feel guilty because of their translanguaging practices as they may point to low proficiency in the target language.

Based on the study findings, it can be said that preparatory class students use translanguaging most frequently at the while-reading stage ( $f$ : 31), the second most frequently at the pre-reading stage ( $f$ : 21), and least frequently at the post-reading stage ( $f$ : 13). Considering the eight weeks observed, the students had most frequently translanguaging practices at the while-reading stage ( $f$ : 31), and they used translanguaging for several reasons such as stating their initial evaluations about the text and their comprehension, paraphrasing, asking for help, and presenting their critical thinking skills. Stating their comprehension (35.53 %) was the most frequently used translanguaging practice by the student at this stage. Most of the students may prefer translanguaging to reflect their comprehension due to the fact that translanguaging for comprehension enables students to be engaged with the texts in creativity (Makalela, 2015). Moreover, the findings of the study showing students use translanguaging for showing their comprehension are in parallel with the study (Mbirimi-Hungwe, 2016) which indicates translanguaging is effective for comprehension, and by negotiating, students can make meaning.

Besides, the pre-reading stage was the second stage having frequently used translanguaging practices by the students ( $f$ : 21). The detailed examination of the frequencies showed that students mostly use translanguaging for discussing a topic about the related text (85.60 %) and they use translanguaging for stating their predictions about the content (14.40 %) for few times. The findings of the present study resonate with the study (Hussein, 2013) concluding that the use of the first language in second language learning provides assistance for understanding the meaning of a new or difficult word and troublesome syntactic structures, and thus students can get a deeper understanding of the reading text. As the topic discussion gets students familiar with the text, students can understand the text more easily. Lastly, the students had the least frequently translanguaging practices at the post-reading stage ( $f$ : 13) and they used translanguaging for answering comprehension questions (92.28 %). In post-reading activities, students have translanguaging practices due to the fact that translanguaging enhances students' reading comprehension and instead of using one language for reading comprehension, translanguaging should be allowed for meaning negotiation resulting in reading (Mbirimi-Hungwe, 2016). Likewise, in the study by Nur et al. (2020) it is shown that the use of translanguaging improved students' reading comprehension significantly as students could find a chance to understand and answer the text through translanguaging. Moreover, when students use translanguaging independently, they can easily share their ideas with others. In line with these studies, the study (Swanwick, 2015) also suggested translanguaging should be used in teaching reading.

Finally, the findings of the focus group interviews conducted with students indicated that the group of students whose first term academic grades are lower has more positive perceptions than the group of students whose first term academic grades are higher. The reasons why the majority

of these two groups of students' perceptions of translanguaging are negative may be attributed to the explanations made by the students. When the students were asked why they think it is negative to use another language, half of the higher achievers (50%) indicated that the use of translanguaging causes a lack of vocabulary in the English language. Besides, the majority of these two groups of students stated that when they use their first language during class, they feel they will fail their English courses. Based on these findings, it can be said that both the lower achievers' and the higher achievers' perceptions of translanguaging are negative which is in line with the study (Alzahrani, 2019) indicating that most of the students believe the use of the first language affects English improvement negatively. However, the findings of the present study are in contrast with the previous studies (Carstens, 2016; Fang & Liu, 2020; Lopez-Hevia & Ruiz-Perez, 2021; Moody et al., 2019; Rivera & Mazak, 2017; Romanowski, 2020) which conclude students have positive attitudes towards translanguaging.

### Conclusion

The present study attempted to show preparatory class students' attitudes towards translanguaging and their translanguaging practices in a reading class. The findings suggested that translanguaging was mostly supported and used by the students. Nonetheless, students' perceptions of translanguaging were mostly negative. Therefore, the use of translanguaging can be encouraged by teachers or educational policy makers so as to create a more flexible and comfortable class atmosphere in which students can use their first language to improve their second language learning. As translanguaging provides such a comfortable environment, students can benefit from translanguaging in language learning.

Students' positive attitudes toward translanguaging can be considered an advantage since the research by Creese and Blackledge (2010) has shown that translanguaging promotes language learning and teaching by serving as a meaning-making tool. Teachers can make use of translanguaging in their language classes easily thanks to students' positive attitudes towards translanguaging.

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