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## Exploring University Students' Note-taking in Literature Courses: A Translanguaging Perspective

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### Abstract

Note-taking (NT) in a university lecture or a seminar taught in English is a daunting task for non-native speakers due to the specific academic and cognitive skills it necessitates. Students are supposed to comprehend the information introduced by the speaker, identify the particular register, distinguish the necessary and unnecessary information, transform spoken language into personally distinguishable written codes and information chunks and write down in the pace of speech in order not to miss key points made by the speaker. Considering note-taking as a personal study tool commonly utilized by students in tertiary education, this study attempts to understand the relationship between translanguaging and note-taking in university-level courses taught at an English Language and Literature (ELL) programme of a public university in Turkey. The data were obtained through students' notes, student and lecturer interviews and observations during classes in the spring semester. The research primarily aims to investigate how university students take notes in content-based courses. Particular attention is paid to students' use of translanguaging in their lesson notes. The samples reveal an adequate number of instances where students listen to a lecture delivered in L2 and take their notes in a combination of L1 and L2. The results show that translanguaging is not only a tool used verbally by students in their interactions, but also a potential asset for note-taking. Focusing on an under-researched practice and unveiling the attitudes towards it, the study reveals the functions of translanguaging practices in student notes. It thus suggests that the scope of the research on translanguaging could be broadened to the written practices and their complementary uses in academic classes.

## Üniversite Öğrencilerinin Edebiyat Derslerinde Not Tutmalarını Keşfetme: Bir Dillerarası Geçiş Perspektifi

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### Araştırma Makalesi

### Öz

Bir üniversite dersinde veya seminerde İngilizce not alma (NA), gerektirdiği özel akademik ve bilişsel becerilerden dolayı göz korkutucu bir iştir. Öğrencilerden, konuşmacı tarafından sunulan bilgileri anlamaları, aktarıldığı tarzı belirlemeleri, konuşmanın gerekli ve gereksiz kısımlarını ayırt etmeleri, konuşulan dili kişisel olarak ayırt edilebilir kodlara ve bilgi yığınlarına dönüştürmeleri ve önemli noktaları kaçırmadan konuşma hızında yazmaları beklenir. Not almayı, yükseköğretimdeki öğrenciler tarafından yaygın kullanılan bir kişisel çalışma aracı olarak ele alan bu çalışma, Türkiye'de bir devlet üniversitesinin İngiliz Dili ve Edebiyatı programında okutulan üniversite düzeyindeki derslerde dillerarası geçiş ve not alma arasındaki ilişkiyi anlamaya çalışmaktadır. Veriler; öğrenci notları, öğrenci ve öğretim üyesi görüşmeleri ve derslerde yapılan gözlemler yoluyla bahar döneminde toplanmıştır. Araştırma, öncelikle üniversite öğrencilerinin içerik temelli derslerde nasıl not aldıklarını araştırmayı amaçlamaktadır. Öğrencilerin ders notlarında dillerarası geçişi nasıl kullandığına özel önem verilecektir. Örnekler, öğrencilerin ikinci dilde verilen bir dersi dinlediğinde, birinci

ve ikinci dil kombinasyonunda notlarını aldığını ortaya koymaktadır. Sonuçlar, dillerarası geçişin sadece öğrenciler tarafından etkileşimlerinde sözlü olarak kullanılan bir araç olmadığını, aynı zamanda not almak için potansiyel bir araç olduğunu göstermektedir. Az araştırılmış bir uygulamaya odaklanan ve ona yönelik tutumları ortaya koyan bu çalışma, öğrenci notlarında dillerarası geçiş uygulamalarının işlevlerini ortaya koymaktadır. Bu nedenle, bu konudaki araştırmanın kapsamının, yazılı uygulamalara ve bunların akademik sınıflardaki tamamlayıcı kullanımlarına genişletilebileceğini önermektedir.

## Introduction

Note-taking (NT) used by listeners and learners in diverse professional and academic contexts is a method of recording information for future use. The notes are normally “short condensations of source material that are generated by writing them down while simultaneously listening, studying, or observing” (Piolat et al., 2005, p. 292). In various academic settings, accurate note-taking is an unmistakable sign of intellectual capacity and academic proficiency as it comprises information transfer and its future recycling through cognitive and material processes. The complexity of note-taking is due to the skills and tasks involved such as listening for details, writing in the flow of talk/interaction, identifying key points, differentiating between the essential and the redundant, summarising in a logical manner and crafting a personal system of transcription (Fajardo, 1996).

On the one hand, listening to lectures and also taking notes simultaneously in L2 put a lot of burden on university students’ shoulders cognitively and linguistically (Thomson, 2003). It is considered to facilitate learning and retain the content more easily (Di Vesta & Gray, 1972; Fisher & Harris, 1973; Rickard & Friedman, 1978; Carrier & Titus, 1979). Mendelsohn (1998) claims that students who are supposed to take notes in L2 should be allowed to do so in what way they like because the language should not be a barrier between the student and the content. Instead, it should help students’ comprehension of content and note-taking skills such as selecting, discarding, summarizing the information. Taking notes in a non-native language, can be considered “a question of academic survival” (Dunkel & Pialorsi, 1982 in Dunkel, 1988; Flowerdew & Miller, 1992; Siegel, 2016; van der Meer, 2012).

On the other hand, as the number of students who attend lectures in L2 has been increasing, the importance of note-taking in L2 is also on the rise. The university policies force lecturers to insist on English-only teaching models. Garcia (2009) adds that lecturers are also left with using L1 only in their classrooms and hiding their translanguaging practices from administrators because even if they see its benefits, the prevalent ideologies make them believe that they have committed a wrongdoing. Regarding the English-only teaching policy, Kırgöz (2014) states that English as the medium of instruction is not a method without problems. Such teaching policy brings its own problems for students who miss critical information, tend to participate less in courses and waste more time on comprehension, which leads to cynicism and low motivation among learners. All of these problems affect students’ ability of note-taking, too. To address this issue, many English for Academic Purposes (EAP) courses such as “academic listening” or “lecture listening and note-taking” have become popular at tertiary levels.

Students’ note-taking and its impact on their learning have always generated a great interest in researchers. In general terms, the topic has been examined under three aspects: the cognitive effects of note-taking, the link between good quality notes and learning, and methodological alterations that enrich students’ note-taking ability. However, there is still a significant gap in research on new discourses, especially in tertiary education. Mazak (2017) suggests that researching translanguaging at universities is an area demanding more attention from researchers. For that reason, Mazak and Carroll (2016) claim that “almost no literature exists on translanguaging in the higher education context, since most (though not all) of the existing literature explores translanguaging in primary and occasionally secondary classrooms in the US and the UK” (p. 6). This is also valid for translanguaging studies in Turkey as there is limited research on translanguaging practices at Turkish universities.

To fill this gap, this study sets out to investigate how university students take notes for negotiating meaning with their future selves in terms of thought, creativity and language use with no restrictions in

their personal hand-written notes. Instead of considering translanguaging as a tool that helps students scaffold, this study reveals the potential benefits of this flexible language use in written notes in order to meet the higher expectations of their departments. It also evidences how students self-regulate and also utilize their entire linguistic collections.

The purpose of this study is to explore the relationship between translanguaging and note-taking in university-level courses taught at an ELL programme of a public university in Turkey. The research questions in this study are as follows:

1. What strategies do ELL students use in their notes?
2. To what extent do ELL students use translanguaging (TL) in their notes?
3. What are the functions of TL in student notes?
4. What are lecturers' attitudes towards students' use of TL in their notes?

### **Literature Review**

#### **Translanguaging**

In general terms, translanguaging refers to practices where speakers use their L1 and L2 together. To elaborate, it is considered to be a lens, which is the whole linguistic repertoire of a bilingual; and also a pedagogical approach, which is about leveraging the content suitable to the learners' levels. Translanguaging adopts the flexible, fluid and creative language use of speakers (Garcia & Li Wei, 2014). It also highlights that these collections are gathered through speaker's various experiences in their social interactions, thus they are highly personal and unique. Translanguaging proposes that there are no borders between languages, speakers' unique repertoire exists as one whole collection and their use of this collection crosses the boundaries (Soltero-González et al., 2012).

As an approach, translanguaging suggests teachers give the opportunity of creating spaces to utilize their entire linguistic collection to achieve meaning-making (Celice & Seltzer, 2011; Espinosa et al., 2016). It covers a lot of practices that are performed by bilinguals. In other words, it does not only include using all multimodalities such as L1, L2, visuals, and semiotics verbally, it also embraces written meaning-making ways such as note-taking under the umbrella term writing. Translation is one of the common practices utilized by university students. For example, they can listen to the lecture in L2, but keep their notes in her/his mother tongue. Or another one may copy what is produced in the lecture as they are in L2 but when they self-study, they can translate the notes taken during the lecture to help the process of comprehension and recollection for later use. These instances contrast with an idealized classroom in which lectures are only delivered in L2, students think, contribute and take notes in L2.

Translanguaging pedagogy values students' personal development of content and language mastery (Otheguy et al., 2015) because it considers this practice as a primary component of students' making sense of the world (Garcia, 2009). Language varieties should not be considered as a barrier that prevents learners from mastering the target languages as previous structuralist approaches prevailed. Rather, they are resources that should be sustained, capitalised, and nurtured (Horner et al., 2011). Therefore, the focus of the lesson should not be on how to patrol language varieties out of the class, but it should be on how they can be utilized purposefully to serve students' academic development. Translanguaging proposes that bilinguals should be evaluated "in their own terms" (Canagarajah, 2011, p. 3). At this point, translanguaging assigns teachers a vital role. If they consider their home languages as diversity, students can use their linguistic resources to better themselves linguistically and professionally (Garcia & Kleyn, 2016). As the last word, teachers' positive stance towards translanguaging in the classroom can give students the opportunity of using their repertoire fully, not partially (Canagarajah, 2011).

#### **Note-taking in Lectures**

Note-taking during lectures is accepted to be a vital strategy commonly used by university students. In this way, they are believed to listen more attentively and retain the content of the lecture for future

use (Crawford, 2016; Rickards et al., 1997; Carrell et al., 2002). Yet, some researchers (Hale & Courtney, 1994) opposed this idea, but they could not find support for their thesis. Note-taking as an active skill requires students to follow the lecture and scribble at the same time under time pressure. In other words, students are expected to be mentally and physically active to be able to understand the aural and visual input, select important information, discard the ones that are relatively less important and record it in a way that can be decoded easily for the student's personal use (Piolat et al., 2005).

Many variables affect note-taking activity such as working memory, attitude towards the course, mood, background knowledge and cognitive ability (Dunkel, 1988). Another important variable is the language of the input delivery. If the lecture is given in a language that is not the native language of the student, it can become a more daunting task (Field, 2008). Here, students listen carefully to distinguish fast coming sounds from others to get the meaning. If they are not familiar with the disciplinary content terminology, they can easily lose their attention and motivation to listen further. In other words, note-taking can turn into a real challenge for these students.

Kobayashi (2005) divides note-taking activity into two stages: the process and product of note-taking. The first one refers to the activity of writing by working for the activation of students' attention. The second one refers to the finished product of the notes as an external repository in order to keep information for future use, revision and study. Both are considered to be important as they address various functions such as increasing attention, retrieving the content. To sum, both guide students to focus on important parts and eliminate unnecessary details (Robinson et al., 2006). If students take impartial notes in the class (note-taking) and do not check their notes and review them (note-making), they would miss out some important parts (Katayama & Robinson, 2000). Thus, both stages should be given equal importance. Kiewra et al.(1995) highlight that if they are used together, they can work more effectively. In the first stage, they are more like drafts that need refining such as tabulating, organizing and outlining. And also one advantage of using the text and also visuals is that the combination of some multimodalities leads to retrieving information more easily (Robinson & Molina, 2002).

It has to be mentioned that listening to a lecture and a conversation and taking notes are quite different from each other. Academic listening requires the listener to have background knowledge of the specific content, the ability to decide what is (not) important. While speakers take a turn in conversational talks, participants of academic talks have to listen to long, stretchy monologues in lectures. Students are expected to combine the incoming message with information coming from their background knowledge (James, 1977). He also stresses that students employ many skills during note-taking such as "decoding, comprehending, identifying main points, deciding when to write these, and writing quickly and clearly". Dunkel (1988) highlights the functions of note-taking by stating that it increases student attention during the lecture and information retention for future uses.

As a challenging and critical activity for many students, note-taking requires students to use some distinctive skills (Al-Musalli, 2015). In his study in the USA, Powers (as cited in Flowerdew, 1994) revealed that several micro-skills are involved in note-taking. The primary ones are given as follows:

- Identifying major themes, ideas, relationships between major ideas, the topic of a lecture and supporting ideas, examples
- Retaining information through note-taking and from notes
- Inferring relationships between information
- Comprehending key vocabulary in the lecture
- Following the spoken mode of lectures (pp. 12-13).

However, studying in a content-based classroom where students have to follow a language policy can be even more overwhelming as they are not native speakers of that language. Thus, note-taking in this context can take more than previous skills. On top of these skills, students have to be familiar with discipline-related vocabulary and structures. They can also struggle with different accents and rates of

speech. Some features of natural talk such as false starts, redundancies, and repetitions will also be dealt with (Flowerdew & Miller, 1997). Being not familiar with the idiomatic usage, registers, (in)formality and also cultural differences (if any) can potentially build barriers between students' comprehension and the subject matter (Sheppard, 2015). It will surely and directly affect their note-taking. If their proficiency in the target language is low, even a simple instruction such as "take a note of this" in the flow of fast delivery, can be problematic for some students. Listening to a lecture in a non-native language is harder to follow compared to the one in students' L1 and brings more cognitive burden to students.

For better quality notes, Siegel (2016) and Tsai and Wu (2010) suggest that students can benefit from ready-to-use outline formats. These formats are important assets, but they kill the variety and creativity of notes taken by standardizing them. Another point is there is no perfect outline that can be used for each lesson and course. Each course has its own distinctive discipline-specific nature and format. Thus, in this study, we attempt to analyze personalized student notes taken in various courses of the ELL programme. The students take notes in the way and form they like and a sample of their notes is analyzed to understand how they take them, how translanguaging is accommodated in their notes, and how translanguaging and creativity meet in their notes.

### **When Translanguaging and Note-taking Meet**

Although translanguaging has always been used for referring to spoken interaction between bilinguals, it occurs frequently in bilingual written materials. In note-taking, the present self also attempts to communicate with the future self. These texts can include students' emotional, cultural, and personality characteristics. However, some qualities of translanguaging occur in both written and spoken forms. When students employ translanguaging, they push the boundaries of named languages -because this theory claims there are no any- and disrupt the ideas monolingual approaches proposed not only in speaking but also in writing. It is the space they created so they can use it freely. As a warning, the act of note-taking refers to creating personal notes by using their entire linguistic repertoire during or after the lecture (Espinosa et al., 2016). In these notes, students create meaning by adding her/his critical thinking skills, voice, experiences, sense of humour, etc. (Samway, 2006). It does not basically refer to copying sentences from a lecture or any visual as they are (Fu, 2009).

The interest towards translanguaging in writing and student notes has been piling up (Kibler, 2010; Velasco & Garcia, 2013). Students use translanguaging as a vehicle for many reasons such as supporting and scaffolding their learning, increasing understanding, improving knowledge, problem-solving, and developing metalinguistic awareness (Garcia & Kano, 2014). Espinosa and Herrera (2016) state that students who use translanguaging in their writing can employ critical thinking, which is a vital skill for all disciplines. Also, translanguaging allows students to integrate their home (L1) and school practices (L2) in their writings (Alvarez, 2014; Laman, 2014). Garcia and Li Wei (2014) claim that translanguaging is an asset for students' "literacy development" (p. 86). Thus, Horner, Lu, Royster and Trimburet (2011) criticize the approaches that aim for eradicating students' language differences. Instead, this reality should be accepted. Thus, the present study attempts to be built on the following core principles to explain note-taking as a type of writing through a translanguaging frame as follows:

- Note-taking is more than recording information. It is using one's entire repertoire in order to construct meaning. Translanguaging aids to leverage their linguistic level to the content.
- The content is more important regardless of the language. There can be distinctive disciplinary conventions in note-taking style.
- As decision-makers, students have the freedom of producing their own texts on the content in their notes, teachers' permission or policies might not be followed.
- Note-takers can employ their entire linguistic repertoire throughout all note-taking processes such as drafting, refining, highlighting, shorthand, coding (except exams).

### **Methodology**

The data were collected during the spring semester of the 2019-2020 academic year at the department of Western Languages and Literatures (ELL programme) of Gaziantep University (GAUN). All participants voluntarily participated in the study. A total of 155 students were observed during the lecture and 10 % of this number was interviewed, and one-third of the students (f: 55) provided their hand-written notes taken during lectures. Convenience sampling is used because some students are more “willing and available to be studied” (Creswell, 2014).

The samples presented serve as a case study that allows us to examine note-taking methods in university students’ notes. For this study, various courses were visited after necessary permissions were taken. Students’ and lecturers’ engagement during the lecture was observed. 15 students showed consent for a copy of their personal notes to be taken during the lecture. Students were observed while they were listening to the lectures and taking notes. During this process, students were asked questions about their note-taking stages. Out of 55 note-taking samples, 3 were selected for analysis. The first two were taken in the Postcolonial Literature course offered in year 4 and the last one was taken in the Poetry course offered for freshman students.

#### **The Interview**

The semi-structured interview had two parts (Appendix 1). The first part was designed to gather background information of the interviewees such as gender, first and second language, self-assessed language proficiency, and use of English outside the class. The second section consisted of questions about students’ note-taking habits in the class. The interview questions were rearranged for the lecturers with minor changes. The questions used in the interview were adapted from Shifidi (2014). The wording, layout, and content were mostly revised and modified to adapt it the current study. According to Berg and Lune (2012), interviews should be conducted in the language of the respondents (Turkish in this case) in order to prevent misunderstandings between the interviewer and interviewees. Thus, the questions were translated into Turkish by the researchers, who are both native speakers of Turkish and checked. The length of each interview ranged between 10 and 30 minutes, depending on the available time and interviewees’ participation.

The researchers secured member-checking and peer debriefing from time to time before coming to a decision for the themes (Creswell, 2012; Merriam, 1998). The transcription was checked by three colleagues in the field to ensure inter-rater reliability. They analysed the transcribed data, identified the themes collaboratively. They were not given any checklists not to interfere in their assessment. In this way, interrater reliability was ensured by using Cohen Kappa’s degree of agreement. When more than half of the raters (2 out of 3 for this case) agreed with the theme identified (For ex. Rater 1 yes, Rater 2 no, Rater 3 yes, Final Ranking yes), it was accepted. Contradictory themes were eliminated if they were not reached an agreement. All of these techniques were used for improving the trustworthiness and credibility of this study (Creswell, 2012; Janesick, 2004; Lincoln & Guba 1985; Spall, 1998; Spillett, 2003).

Student and lecturer interviews which were conducted at the university were recorded, transcribed and coded by adopting content analysis. Interviewing is an effective strategy used not only for discovering, receiving and collecting participants’ perceptions, beliefs, attitudes, and values (Berg & Lune, 2012; Byrne, 2004; Mackey & Gass, 2005; Rapley, 2001; Richards, 2003) but also for getting their views and opinions (Creswell, 2014). Richards (2003) claims that a qualitative study would not be complete without interviews because it is potentially the backbone of the study. Sample representative excerpts of the themes are also provided in the related section.

#### **Observation**

Observation is a good asset for investigating human behaviour, attitudes and practices because it helps a researcher to “see events, actions, and experiences” directly (Ritchie & Lewis, 2003, p. 35). This allows the researcher to catch the details such as comparing visual and oral classroom occurrences (Jacobs et al., 1999). The non-participant observation research technique was utilised for tracking students’ note-taking

behaviour during the lectures by the first author of the present paper. The observations helped us to examine students' note-taking habits better and also crosscheck the data gathered already. Students were informed about the presence of the researcher in the class as they were given information about the research.

A total of 21 teaching hours (45 minutes each) of English content classes were observed depending on the nature of the course and the consent from the lecturer. Hand-written notes were taken alongside the interview questions to compare students' actual note-taking behaviour and statements. By using triangulation, the researchers attempted to capture all the details of the data, using a different perspective each time, which can evidence a better insight into the data collected.

## Results

### The Analysis of Student Notes

#### Note Sample 1:

This hand-written note shown in Figure 1 was taken in a Postcolonial Literature course for final-year ELL students. The class starts with a discussion about the coloniser and colonised. The participants follow a book titled *Beginning Postcolonialism*, the language of which is English. The lecturer E reads extracts from the book and then initiates a discussion. During the lecture, students take notes of whatever they believe is important. The lecturer does not ask them to take notes or no extra time is given for note-taking. Students who prefer taking notes, do so in the flow of discussion.

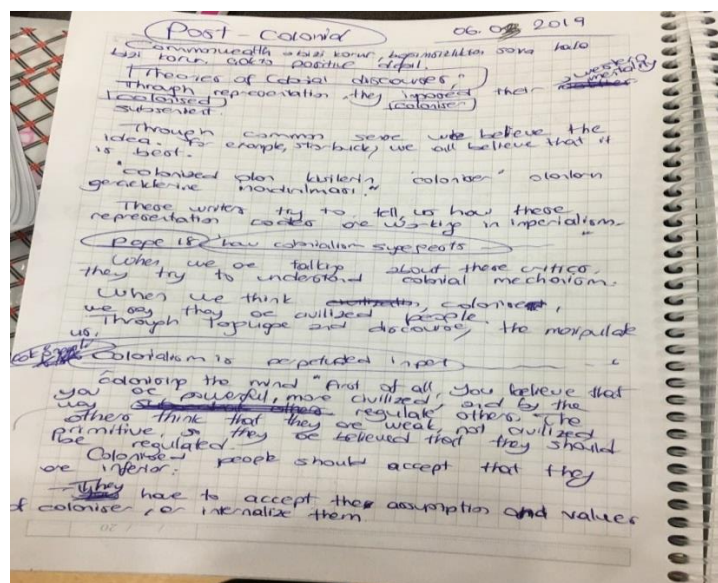


Figure 1. Sample Note 1 Taken in Postcolonial Literature Class

Figure 1 shows the notes taken by a student in PL class. If it is analysed from top to the bottom, the date the note is taken is provided on the top right-hand side. The name of the course is given at the top in the middle, in a circle. There are different methods for highlighting here. Tabulating is one of them used for organizing the main and sub-points. The titles are put into circles that go on as "how colonialism suggests" and "colonialism is perpetuated in part" refer to the related paragraphs that have important information. In the first sentence beginnings, the student takes notes of page number as a signpost in order to guide her/his future self. And in the second circled information unit, there is another little circle on the left-hand side saying "very important" with three stars. Again, we witness that the students grade the information in terms of order of importance. Some units are written in big fonts, some are circled, some are starred and some are commented on. As these notes are highly personal and serve only the note taker her/himself, the student knows better how they are used or coded for later use.

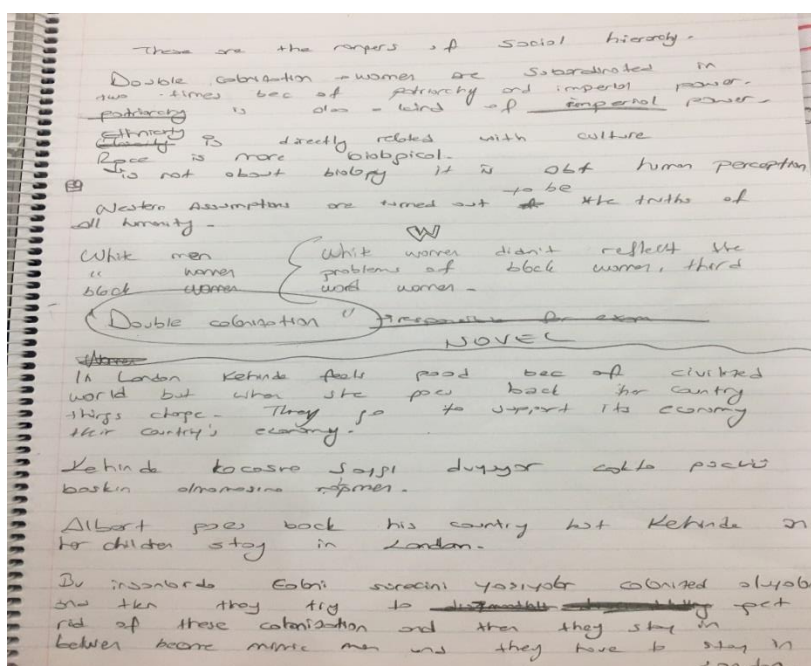


We can witness a lot of issues with paragraphing, capitalization and punctuation as these notes are scribbled carelessly and quickly in the flow of the lecture. While there are corrections, especially for content words that can potentially cause misunderstanding for future use, functional or grammatical points are not corrected as it does not affect the meaning. The student uses very short, simple and easy-to-understand information units in her/his notes. In this way, s/he can deal with the content of the subject matter more, not with the complexity of structures, s/he states in the interview. This can help her/him digest the information more quickly.

In some parts, the content is provided multilingually, in L1 and L2. The point which was explained with a recent example in the information unit starting as “through common sense...” is supported in the following lines in L1. However, the keywords such as “colonised” and “coloniser” are always used in L2 as students are apprenticed into the related science community (Fennema-Bloom, 2010). By addressing their future self, students make the meaning clear to themselves.

**Note Sample 2:**

This note as illustrated in Figure 2 is taken in the final minutes of the first and second half of the Postcolonial Literature course. In the first half, the class discusses some key terminology such as “double colonisation”. This takes place in the final minutes during the first half of the lesson before the break. In the second half, a novel titled *Kehinde* by Buchi Emecheta is read aloud and discussed during the lecture. The book tells the story of Kehinde and her husband Albert, returning to Nigeria from London.



**Figure 2.** Sample Note 2 Taken in Postcolonial Literature Class

Figure 2 shows a note taken in the same class as the one shown in Figure 1 but by a different student. Abbreviations (e.g. “bec of” for because of) are used to make the activity of note-taking faster as note-taking in L2 in the flow of lecture is quite challenging. On the right-hand side of the middle part, the student lists the hierarchy of patriarchy for that period and uses a ditto mark “” for not repeating the previous word “white” again, which can accelerate her/his note-taking.

In general, grammatical mistakes, crossing out, problems with spelling, punctualization, and messy handwriting are common features in all student notes. The key terms such as double colonization, ethnicity, and race are clarified in notes. Some key content words are also underlined for highlighting. While grammatical corrections stay untouched, correction is made for ethnicity as it is one of the target

words for this course. These kinds of mistakes are corrected for avoiding misunderstanding in future revisions. For example, in the second unit of the novel part, we can witness that the student has hastily translated a sentence, but the sentence is syntactically wrong in the fast-flowing lecture. For note-taking, it is not an issue because this problem does not affect the meaning of the sentence considerably.

It can be seen that the student does not prefer circling or tabulating for highlighting points but double colonization is a vital term for this class so it is put in a circle and also in quotation marks and also its size is kept relatively much bigger compared to the font used in other parts. And a comment is added "responsible for exam" is important for guiding the student when s/he prepares for the exam.

There is a line drawn in the middle of the page to show the second half of the class as it is devoted to the novel *Kehinde*, not to the theory. This line represents the division of the lesson into two halves. Some notes on important points of the story are taken in chronological order. We can see how the student shuffles between L1 and L2 in the second half of the page. The first information unit is in L2, the second is in L1 and back to L2 and in the last paragraph s/he starts her/his statement in L1 but continues in L2. As an extra note, key terminology is again used in L2 in the notes in L1. It can be proof of how all languages are stored in a unified compartment with no clear boundaries. The student uses all her/his linguistic repertoire for meaning-making in notes.

### Note Sample 3:

This note sample illustrated in Figure 3 is taken by a student in the Analysis of Poetry II course which is an obligatory course for freshman students. In this lesson, they analyze a selection of poems with the elements of poetry such as style, figurative language, themes, tone, and philological/semantic interpretations of the poems. In general, the lecturer reads the poem aloud for the first time and then asks students to read aloud. In this way, the selected poem is introduced to the whole class. The class does a line-by-line analysis with a different focal point each time. The lesson is highly interactive and cooperative. In this particular lesson, the students are reading *To be or not to be, that is the question* by William Shakespeare, which is a well-known poem exemplifying paradox.

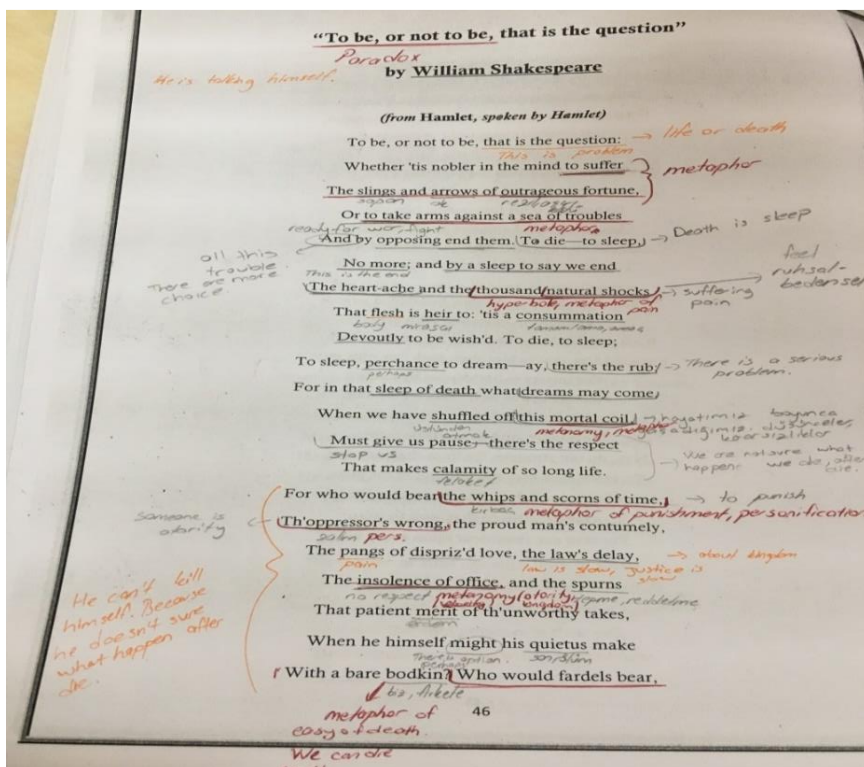


Figure 3. Sample Note 3 Taken in Poetry Class

Figure 3 illustrates student notes taken in a poetry class. For this lesson, students are provided with a selection of poems as a pack at the beginning of the spring term. It has been observed that students use them as skeleton notes as they scribble their analysis on them. Grammatical and problems with word choice are available in this sample too. There are many problems with the information unit “because he doesn’t sure what happens after die” but it does not prevent the student from delivering the message it carries because all the problems are functional words or about part of speech.

Discussions about the figure of speech and comprehension are made and the reasons why students state so are justified. The figure of speech such as metaphor, paradox, hyperbole, metonymy and personification are the center of attention in this class. This student has used color-coding for different purposes on her/his notes to make the meaning clear for her/himself. The red color is used for showing the figure of speech, orange is used for word’s translation into L2, and black is for word’s translation into L1. Apart from that, arrows are also used not to mix the notes up with each other.

Meaning is provided by the present student for the future one via different modalities. Thus, the content is provided multilingually –in L1 and L2- and multidimensionally –in the form of the figure of speech, comprehension, comments and analysis. Translation is a method and also the norm of this lecture. While translation is practiced in the classroom, students try to reproduce an utterance that is already produced in one language in another one (Creese et al., 2016). Although translation is a practice under translanguaging, both have a similar function such as crossing boundaries. They both “stress the permeability of boundaries” (Creese et al., 2016, pp. 4-5) as social and linguistic notions. In other words, translation is a way of translanguaging because students have to utilize all their linguistic knowledge to be able to translate the text. In this method, we can witness the support that the student’s L1 and L2 give each other. By using L1 in tandem with L2, students reflect that they use their entire repertoire to achieve a goal: understanding the poem, unpacking the hidden meaning in it and analyzing the poem.

### The Analysis of Student Interviews

The voluntary student interviewees are mostly female students (nine female, six male). While the majority of the students’ mother tongue is Turkish (f: 14), only one student’s native language is Arabic. Nearly half are freshmen (f: 7), and the other half are year 3 (f: 6) or final year students (f: 2). The data have revealed some of the note-taking strategies conducted by ELL students. The themes are derived from the student statements in the interviews. The summary of the themes listed in order of importance can be found below.

**Table 1.**

*The Summary of the Themes Derived from the Student Statements*

Themes	Frequency (f)	Extracts
a. Translanguaging is a common practice in note-taking.	15	<p><i>“summarise and rewrite the sentences in my own words.”</i></p> <p><i>“take personal notes in Turkish on English text.”</i></p>
b. Lecturers should provide only English class materials.	15	<p><i>“Only English materials are the best. Otherwise, we would only read the Turkish version”</i></p> <p><i>“Only English materials are primary sources”</i></p> <p><i>“Translated works are limiting”</i></p> <p><i>“they are good to be worked on”</i></p>

c. Translanguaging helps deeper understanding, internalising and personalising.	15	<p><i>"we read it in English, in Turkish with different translations, and watch the movie so we learn it better."</i></p> <p><i>"more terminology ... more translanguaging"</i></p> <p><i>"terminology is not available in our home language"</i></p> <p><i>"give local examples ... and the information is accommodated easily"</i></p>
d. Note-taking makes space for creativity.	8	<p><i>"we joke around about what we have learned"</i></p> <p><i>"the content ... is connected with my life"</i></p> <p><i>"Coding in my notes helps us memorise"</i></p> <p><i>"you imagine and draw ..."</i></p>
e. The content is more important than language choice.	6	<p><i>"For a deeper, critical and effective discussion, you need your mother tongue."</i></p> <p><i>"The amount of translanguaging is determined by the content of the course."</i></p>

#### a. Translanguaging is a common practice in note-taking.

Translanguaging can be seen frequently in the students' notes. All the lesson materials are provided in English, but it is very common to see hand-written, jotted-down notes that belong to students' L1 (f: 7). Many of them adopt a combination of their mother tongues and the target language for note-taking. Because it is a highly personal habit; how, what and how many notes they take changes considerably. Some use L2 mostly while the others use L1 to highlight what is written in L2. Some take notes in the same code the lecturer uses at that moment. Some others do simultaneous translations in the flow of talk and take notes in the meantime. Each student has a unique note-taking style that is particular to her/him. We can see this plainly in the extracts from the interview:

*I take notes of what the lecturer has said in the class, they are generally in English then I translate them in my head to Turkish. After that, I summarise and rewrite the sentences in my own words. This is how I learn the best.*

Student 7, Year 1

*I take personal notes in Turkish on English text.*

Student 5, Year 1

#### b. Lecturers should provide only English class materials.

The students state that they choose to study and learn English, therefore all the materials should be exclusively in English (f: 15). They are expected to write, discuss and present in English as well.

*Only English materials are the best for us. Otherwise, we would only read the Turkish version. It would be a fatal mistake for our learning.*

Student 8, Year 3

They confess that even if understanding an English text demands extra effort, they are willing to make this effort because it helps them learn better. They state that they sometimes read the Turkish versions of the resources so that they can compare and contrast with a critical eye. If the lecturers provide them with bilingual materials, this can lead them to laziness. In such a case, they would only read the text in their mother tongues.

*Only English materials are effective because they are primary sources. Imagine a novel; it can be loosely or erroneously translated. Translated works are limiting for primary sources but they are good to be worked on in terms of word choice, etc.* Student 13, Year 3

Another point made by students is that they cannot reflect their point of view clearly and effectively in exams. They have bilingual practices and routines in their daily lives, so they cannot remember some key vocabulary due to the time limitations, which affects their grades and performances in these examinations.

**c. Translanguaging helps a deeper understanding, internalizing, and personalizing.**

All the interviewees agree that translanguaging facilitates a deeper understanding of the courses that have more challenging content (f: 15). As can be seen from the statement of one of the interviewees, they use all resources available to be able to understand the content fully.

*When we are learning about a novel for example Dracula, we read it in English, in Turkish with different translations, and watch the movie so we learn it better.* Student 10, Year 3

Especially in the courses such as translation, poetry or linguistics; the students claim that translanguaging is inevitable because they need all their resources to successfully decipher literary texts. Understanding keywords and terminology is vital in content-based context because when they miss some of the main words, it becomes even more difficult to understand properly.

*Lecturers have to translanguage because some terminology is not available in our home language for example extended metaphor, uncanny, etc.* Student 12, Year 3

For some courses, the lecturers use local examples to build connections between the known and the unknown. For example, when they study Linguistics, the lecturer offers examples in their first languages, to build a bridge with their target language. This facilitates their learning because they use their accumulated knowledge as a base and continue building their unknown knowledge upon it.

*If there is more terminology in the course such as Linguistics, we need more translanguaging for support.* Student 13, Year 3

*When we get stuck because of the complexity of the content, lecturers translanguage and give local examples so we understand what s/he means and the information is accommodated easily.*

Student 12, Year 3

**d. Note-taking makes space for creativity.**

Students' notes are the spaces where they can act freely. They can color-code, draw pictures, make stories, and organize them in the way they like. Translanguaging accompanies them when they want to be creative. One of the activities they love is playing with the languages that they have in their repertoire. For example, the students use what they have learned at school in order to joke around in their daily lives. In other words, they create a space for their learning.

*For example, we learn the Freudian drives in the lesson so we joke around about what we have learned and say "death drive im harekete geçti" (my death drive has been triggered) before final exams.* Student 15, Year 4

Also, the students claim that they have learned much better when they link their real-life to their lessons in their notes, in this way, the information becomes more meaningful for the learner and turns out to be a part of her/his life. For this connection, they benefit from translanguaging practices in writing mostly.

*If the content in my notes is connected with my life, I can remember better.* Student 5, Year 1

All students claim that they preferred their department willingly, but when they have challenging content they need to master, they work out highly personal studying strategies in their notes.

*For Dr. Moreau, we say Dr. Moron because he is a mad scientist. Coding in my notes helps us memorise words quicker in exams.*  
Student 8, Year 3

*For example, Hades in Greek mythology has a three-headed dog, called Cerberus /ˈsɜːrberəs/ but we call it /ˈdʒerberəs/ (like it is pronounced in Turkish) with a picture of it in notes because that's a wild dog.*  
Student 3, Year 1

*We use coding for literary terms and definitions in mythology. For example, James Joyce-Joyce (جوز) means a kind of tree (walnut tree) in Arabic and you imagine and draw Ulysses as the fruit of the tree.*  
Student 14, Year 4

In summary, the interviewed students stated that they overcome the problems they face in the courses by note-taking during and revising them after the lectures, translating resources before and after class, story-making, and coding key terminology prior to the exams to help them with memorization and strategic learning.

#### e. The content is more important than language choice.

Less than half of the interviewees claim that the content should be more valued in the classroom (f:6). As long as they contribute to the lesson, it is appreciated by the lecturer. If the lecturers banned students from using their mother tongue, this would lower participation, and thus learning would be negatively affected. The students added that discussion is the central point of the lessons. As Student 13 in year 3 stated *"For a deeper, critical and effective discussion, you need your mother tongue."* Some of the interviewees state that it is the content that determines how much translanguaging takes place in the class. If the content generates a lot of discussions, then there are more open-class discussions which lead to more translanguaging, but if it is more theory-based, it is given in the form of lectures and in this teaching method, they are expected to listen and take notes only.

*The amount of translanguaging is determined by the content of the course. In poetry, we use it more but in more theory-based courses, we generally listen, ask questions and take notes. It's not open for discussion.*  
Student 15, Year 4

#### The Analysis of Lecturer Interviews

The attitudes of the lecturers on students' note-taking in the ELL programme have been analyzed with conventional content analysis. Six lecturers –four female and two male– volunteered to take part in the interviews to state their opinions. All are native Turkish and bilingual English speakers. Five of them have been teaching in the programme for more than 10 years. Four of them are Ph.D. holders in the field. The summary of the themes derived from lecturer statements can be found below.

**Table 2.**

*The Summary of the Themes Derived from the Lecturer Statements*

Themes	Extracts
a. Note-taking is highly personal and content-sensitive.	<p><i>"Students are responsible for their own notes."</i></p> <p><i>"write in L1 or L2."</i></p> <p><i>"we ask them to translate the text into their L1."</i></p>
b. Learning the content is more important than the preferred language.	<p><i>"we expect students to analyze, synthesize, comment on and develop critical skills."</i></p> <p><i>"students show physical and mental effort such as listening carefully, taking notes"</i></p>

▪ **Note-taking is highly personal and content-sensitive.**

All the lecturers openly state that note-taking is the practice that students take responsibility for. However, these practices are shaped and decided by the classroom and the content of the course too. They state that what they see as important is up to their justification and it is significantly different for each student.

*Students are responsible for their own notes. We never say “take notes of this”.* Lecturer 6

*We don’t want to encourage them to write only in L1 or L2.* Lecturer 3

Yet, the lecturers confess that they have a much stricter approach to students’ writing in the exam. If students have the chance, they can easily abuse the language policy of the course. The lecturers state that they generally stick to the use of L2 in the exam. With this approach, students tend to be more attentive and conscious of the language policy of the programme.

*We are stricter about their writing in the exam. They know that we have to follow the language policy.* Lecturer 6

The lecturers claim that course content also determines the amount of translanguaging in their notes. Some courses such as poetry, translation or one with cultural content require students to translate, compare and contrast expressions in their L1 and L2.

*In some lessons, we ask them to translate the text into their L1. Thus, I observe that it reflects on their notes too.* Lecturer 4

▪ **Learning the content is more important than the preferred language.**

All the lecturers highlight the importance of learning the content of the courses. The lecturers state that with the flow of the lesson, they sometimes discuss controversial issues and avoid worrying about the code of the language. However, they warn us that it does not mean that they abuse the policy; the L1 use never exceeds L2 use in spoken interaction, thus even if they do not interfere with the way how students take notes, they expect the same policy in their personal notes too for academic success. As lecturer 5 reports “*In this department, we expect students to analyze, synthesize, comment on and develop critical skills.*”. Lecturers stated that even if they do not allocate extra time for note-taking, they appreciate it when students take notes on their note-pads, note-books or their skeleton notes. They agree that it proves that they are motivated to learn the content and are ready to listen attentively and are mentally ready to participate in the lesson mentally. The ones who do not listen to the lecture, and who do not take notes are generally the ones who do not succeed in the course, too.

*We appreciate it when students show physical and mental effort such as listening carefully, taking notes, participating, coming to the class well-prepared.* Lecturer 3

**The Analysis of Observation Data**

The observation data was mainly used for complementing the data collected through interviews and students’ notes taken during and after the lecture. The findings of classroom observations reveal that translanguaging practices are widely employed in students’ notes during lectures. The data gathered from literature classrooms revealed that students use a range of strategies for note-taking at the pace of lectures such as their mother tongue alongside English, changes in form, colour-coding, etc. The note-taking strategies used by literature students are revealed in detail above.

**Discussion & Conclusion**

Note-taking is a common way of recording information in lectures at tertiary levels. Thus, students are expected to take notes to retain information for future reference. It is a complex activity in academic settings because it involves interweaving both comprehension and production processes. In this study, student notes taken in various ELL courses are analysed in terms of their nature, the organization of the information and how translanguaging is used alongside students’ and lecturers’ attitudes towards note-

taking. Translanguaging is a ubiquitous phenomenon both in speaking and writing. Note-takers use it in different stages of the note-taking process- writing on skeleton notes, editing, refining, and rewriting before the exams. It can be understood from the analysis that students use translanguaging for scaffolding such as retrieving words from L1. The note samples show how students achieve this challenging activity in various ways such as translanguaging, color-coding, highlighting, tabulating, etc., and their decisions on how to design their notes reflect the entire linguistic repertoire of the note-taker. The three-note samples included give us five functions of how translanguaging is used in the note-taking process by ELL students. Translanguaging is utilized for making use of multimodalities and the multilingual repertoire, commenting on the comment, restating the information multilingually, grading the information, making space for creativity, catching the fast-flowing lecture, and translating.

There has been an abundance of studies that highlight the positive effects of note-taking on learning (Bonner & Holliday, 2006; Kiewra, 2002; Titsworth & Kiewra, 2004), and these studies advise the necessity of training students to take notes more skilfully during the actual delivery of the lecture. These skills feed into each other and one supports the other in terms of comprehension. Especially students who have to receive a lecture that is not in her/his native language should especially be trained on how to operate their listening in tandem with note-taking skills. Apparently, these students need more support than students studying and taking notes in their L1.

Thus, by paying attention to the methods of note-taking instead of the text; this study brought note-taking into sharp focus from another perspective (also see Rost, 2002). The three samples reveal how students use shorthand and also other methods skilfully in the process of the lecture. The present study gives similar results with some previous studies in terms of some note-taking techniques such as abbreviations, color-coding, using arrows, tabulating, underlining, exemplifying, etc. used by students in this particular department (Chang, 2007; Chaudron et al., 1994; Hamp-Lyons, 1983; Oxford, 1990). These studies reveal how students take notes, how they organize, and what they catch and miss during the lecture and, thus provide some vital information to the lecturers such as how and what students record information. Therefore, it can be suggested that lecturers may praise translanguaging in notes and encourage students to use all of their linguistic resources to preserve information in their notes. A blended-language, translanguaging approach to notetaking seems logical as long as the notes are efficient and effective for the note-taker. For further studies, whether these note-taking strategies are content- and discipline-specific or they are valid for other departments can be investigated before making generalizations. It is clear that note-taking plays a vital role in this academic context, which is unlikely to be distinct from similar ones in other universities or adjacent disciplines.

#### **Author Contribution Rates**

The authors contributed equally to the study.

#### **Ethical Declaration**

All rules included in the “Directive for Scientific Research and Publication Ethics in Higher Education Institutions” have been adhered to, and none of the “Actions Contrary to Scientific Research and Publication Ethics” included in the second section of the Directive have been implemented.

#### **Ethics Committee Approval**

Gaziantep University Social and Human Sciences Ethics Committee Decision Number: 15491 Date: 12.03.2019

#### **Conflict Statement**

The author declares no competing interests.



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## Appendix 1. Interview Questions for Literature Students

### INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR LITERATURE STUDENTS

#### Part 1. Background information

1. Gender: Male ☐ Female ☐
2. Home/first language: English ☐ Turkish ☐ Other ☐ (Specify).....
3. Second language: English ☐ Turkish ☐ Other ☐ (Specify).....
4. How would you rate your level of English proficiency?  
Low Beginner ☐ High Beginner ☐ Low Intermediate ☐ High Intermediate ☐ Advanced ☐
5. Do you speak English outside the school? If yes, please explain.

#### Part 2. Translanguaging and Note-taking Practices

1. Do you ever use your first language during lessons?
2. When do you shift language typically (the use of more than one language) during lessons?
3. Do you take notes during the lessons?
4. Do you ever use your first language in your notes?
5. When do you shift language typically (the use of more than one language) during note-taking?
6. How often do you change from one language to the other?  
Always ☐ Often ☐ Sometimes ☐ Never ☐
7. Do you refine your notes? What do you change when you do that?
8. Do you think that learners should be allowed to translanguaging in their notes? Please explain.
9. Do you think translanguaging in your notes will help you understand the subjects better or not? Please explain.
10. Do you think the lecturer should provide study materials and terminology used in the classroom in both target language (English) and your mother tongue (Turkish)? Please explain why (not).
11. Do you face any language related challenges during lessons? Please explain.
12. How do you overcome these challenges? Please explain.
13. Is there anything else you'd like to share with me about your experience in using two languages together in your classes?

This is the end of the interview. Thank you for your time.