The Utilisation of Peer-Assisted Learning/Mentoring and Translanguaging in Higher Education

Eleni Meletiadou
London Metropolitan University
UK

Abstract

The use of peer-assisted learning/mentoring (PALM) and translanguaging (TRL) as inclusive learning strategies to support students' transition into Higher Education and enhance their wellbeing in the post-Covid era has not been widely explored. Lecturers express their deep concern about the mental health issues and lack of confidence an increasing number of learners have faced lately in the UK due to the COVID-19 pandemic. In terms of the present study, 80 undergraduate multilingual students were involved in PALM tasks during which they could use their first language through translanguaging and English, the target language, for one academic semester. The main goal was to ensure they had equal opportunities to develop their oral fluency while preparing group presentations. Paired T-tests were used to compare students' pre- to post-tests scores. In terms of this mixed-methods case study, the researcher also analyzed students' reflective reports and the anonymous feedback learners provided thematically to explore their attitudes. Findings indicated that these two approaches enabled students to improve their academic performance significantly although learners felt uneasy at the beginning. The combination of these two methods created a psychologically safe space as learners gradually developed a personal relationship with their peers. In response to the need for more information, as regards the use of PALM activities and TRL with multilingual learners, this study intends to contribute student voice since the inclusion of learner opinion has been minimal. Recommendations for the successful implementation of these two instructional approaches in undergraduate courses and suggestions for further research are provided.

Keywords: peer-assisted learning/mentoring, translanguaging, well-being, presentation skills, undergraduate students, inclusion

Higher Education (HE) has increasingly moved away from an elitist and exclusive mentality, focused on power and privilege claims, and towards a more egalitarian and inclusive mindset, based on justice and human rights claims (Blessinger & Stefani, 2017). In view of the call for Higher Education Institutions (HEI) to create support mechanisms to help learners adjust to university requirements, it is crucial to consider arguments that the majority of learners' failure or withdrawal tends to indicate challenges in adapting to the environment rather than learning difficulties (Haverila, Haverila & McLaughlin, 2020). Moreover, international students face additional problems as they speak English as a foreign/second or even third language (Gorter & Cenoz, 2017).

Peer Assisted Learning/Mentoring (PALM) has become prominent in educational learning and research (Hobson, 2020). It provides a setting for learners to work together while interacting and solving problems, reflecting on examples and the content of class sessions, and exchanging feedback (Hilsdon, 2014). PALM can be defined as an instructional intervention in terms of which learners interact with each other and depend on one another to enhance their understanding of the content of lectures and seminars and develop their autonomy as learners. Whilst PALM improves students' academic performance by fostering a deep approach to learning in which individual learners can develop high level cognitive capacities, it also offers the medium through which learners can increase their autonomy (Louden, McComb, Moore & Cole, 2019) offering and receiving emotional support.

The benefits of PALM as regards the enhancement of students' presentation skills and overall well-being have been chronicled by researchers (Hobson, 2020). The present research was conducted with the goal of examining the effectiveness of a well-developed university-based PALM intervention design to foster inclusivity and help the diverse student cohort, including low-achieving students and international students, at a University in the UK amidst the COVID-19 pandemic. The research outcomes are expected to make an important contribution to the context field of language education by offering a rigorous assessment of the impact of the use of PALM as an inclusive learning technique in undergraduate practice (Beatty, Acar & Cheatham, 2021). Additionally, there are few studies which explore the combined use of translanguaging (TRL) and PALM as a means of promoting inclusion and supporting students' well-being in the post-COVID-19 era in HE (Di Sabato & Hughes, 2021).

This article intends to examine if the combined use of PALM and TRL, as inclusive learning strategies which promote equality and cooperation among learners in HEI, can improve undergraduate multilingual students' presentation skills and well-being even in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic. These strategies promote involvement as they allow more international students to engage actively with their peers. For instance, in terms of TRL, these learners can use words and phrases from their own mother tongue when they find it difficult to express their ideas in the target language. In terms of PALM, international students can be supported by local students, who can help them express their ideas more accurately, and, thus, become more confident. Consequently, these two approaches foster tolerance and inclusion for all learners, irrespective of their (linguistic) background. The study aspires to investigate the following research questions:

1. What is the impact of PALM and TRL on undergraduate multilingual students' oral fluency and presentation skills?
2. What are the attitudes of undergraduate multilingual students towards PALM and TRL?
3. What is the impact of PALM and TRL on multilingual students' wellbeing?

The remainder of the article will explore the latest literature regarding the use of PALM and TRL as inclusive learning strategies to enhance students' presentation skills and well-being with the anticipated outcome being to add to the body of information that addresses issues related to academic success for language learners especially in terms of the current pandemic (Tigert, Groff, Martin-Beltrán, Peercy & Silverman, 2019). Subsequently, the methodology of the study and its findings will be examined and discussed taking into consideration previous research findings. Finally, conclusions will be drawn, the limitations of this research study will be identified, and suggestions for further research as well as ideas for the effective application of PALM and TRL will be provided.

Literature Review

The Use of PALM and TRL in HE

PALM, as an educational and instructional method, has been present since Ancient Greek philosophers, like Socrates, began discussing their ideas in small groups. It refers to students' learning from and with students (Boud & Cohen, 2014). Collaborative learning has been considered as an important pedagogy in HE, as it paves the way for students to interact among themselves in small groups (Cabrera, Crissman, Bernal, Nora, Terenzini & Pascarella, 2002). Taking into consideration the multilingual and multicultural student cohorts in HEI nowadays, several studies have explored TRL, which is defined as the deployment of a speaker's full linguistic repertoire without regard for watchful adherence to the socially and politically defined boundaries of named, usually national and state, languages (Otheguy, García & Reid, 2015, p. 281). This concept is increasingly influential in HE in English dominant contexts (Andrei, Kibler & Salerno, 2020). However, more studies on the pedagogical implications of combining TRL methods and PALM in HE are necessary, especially in situations where English is the main language of HE (Rodriguez, Musanti & Cavazos, 2021).

Several researchers have investigated the use of TRL to date. Fang and Liu (2020) explored the impact of TRL on multilingual students using a mixed-methods approach, together with classroom observations, semi-structured interviews, and a questionnaire. They reported that learners held a neutral-to-positive stance towards TRL practices. Lecturers also recognised the efficacy of TRL for content learning as it seemed to enhance understanding, strengthen students' social relations, and improve learning for undergraduates with lower English competence. The study revealed that there was some discomfort with the application of TRL and exaggerated use of the mother tongue (L1). Despite the instability of L1 as a resource for subject learning, the researchers suggested that educators and students had to assume an open-minded plurilingual approach to language learning and teaching.

Moreover, Motlhaka and Makalela (2016) examined the use of TRL in a university writing class based on Bakhtin and Vygotsky's sociocultural framework on first year BA students in Education. They claimed that interactive instruction raised learners' awareness as they formed their own distinct voices in writing using compensation and various social techniques when they moved between L1 and L2 writing. Despite the small sample of the study, the researchers argued that TRL was a suitable framework for academic literacy and that it offered excellent conditions for interactive pedagogy in multilingual settings.

The Impact of PALM and TRL on Multilingual Students' Oral Fluency, Presentation Skills, and Wellbeing

The present study also aspired to explore the influence of PALM on students' presentations skills. Many modules in undergraduate courses require learners to prepare an oral presentation either alone or as part of a group. International and multilingual students often complain that interference from their L1 or from other languages they have mastered prevents them from preparing high-quality oral presentations (Denizer, 2017). They also confess that they do not understand the instructions of the tasks or the main concepts that they are asked to present and elaborate on (Meier, 2017).

PALM, when combined with TRL, seems to provide a viable solution to most of the problems that students encounter as they develop their understanding of the theory with the help of their peers finding support and useful advice regarding how to overcome the multiple barriers they face as multilingual learners (Caruso, 2018). Using their L1 also allows them to feel psychologically safe as they can resort to their L1 if they cannot think of a word or a phrase in the L2 (Charamba & Zano, 2019). Various researchers have reported their findings regarding the impact of TRL and PALM on learners' presentation skills but not amidst the COVID-19 crisis which has inflicted a heavy burden on students' mental health and overall wellbeing. Kohls, Baldofski, Moeller, Klemm and Rummel-Kluge (2021) reported that university students in Germany who participated in their study seemed to be vulnerable and suffer from elevated depressive symptoms due to the pandemic.

Furthermore, Mbirimi-Hungwe and McCabe (2020) used a "transcollab" model of teaching combining TRL and collaborative learning to support learners' understanding of academic concepts. The aim was to assist them to comprehend academic texts. Results showed that through collaborative learning, TRL can be used to improve plurilingual students' mastery of concepts. Although the study involved South African medical students only, the researchers argued that TRL can be utilized in cooperative learning tasks to enhance deeper understanding of the content, major theories and concepts.

Dalziel and Guarda (2021) also explored student TRL practices in the English as a Medium of Instruction (EMI) classroom at the University of Padova in Italy. In terms of this study, learners were invited to actively engage in group work or oral presentations, to unveil the possible use of spontaneous TRL practices. Despite the common belief in the benefits of an English-only approach, this study revealed that in many EMI classes both lecturers and students activate TRL practices. The researchers of this research confirmed that TRL is intended as the strategic use that multilingual speakers make of their entire linguistic range so as to facilitate the effective learning of content (Canagarajah & Said, 2011).

Additionally, Chester, Burton, Xenos, and Elgar (2013) examined the efficacy of a mentoring programme assisting the transition of first year undergraduates at a university in Australia. There were 241 first year students who participated in and provided data for the evaluation study. The researchers reported considerable positive change in three of the five aspects of learner success, with a significant increase in deep and strategic learning methods, and a reduction in surface learning. Although the effects demonstrated in this research could be the result of maturation, the outcomes indicate that proactive implementation in the first semester of the first year in a university setting can enhance crucial aspects of learning and wellbeing, lead to positive changes in academic self-efficacy and academic performance, and increase the success rate for undergraduate students.

As can be seen, there appear to be some gaps in the literature regarding the impact of PALM and TRL on undergraduate multilingual students' well-being and presentation skills (Back, Han & Weng, 2020). Although the use of PALM is associated with increased academic performance (Hodgson, Benson & Brack, 2015), more studies are necessary to explore the combined impact of PALM and TRL, when used as inclusive learning strategies with undergraduate language learners in HEI in the UK especially amidst crises, such as the COVID-19 pandemic (Mbirimi-Hungwe & McCabe, 2020). The present study intends to add to the body of information that addresses issues related to academic success for language learners using a case study and data from anonymous student feedback, reflective reports and focus group discussions. It examined the use of PALM and TRL as innovative inclusive instructional techniques with undergraduate multilingual students in HEI and explored their impact on these learners' presentation skills and well-being amidst the unprecedented COVID-19 crisis.

Methodology

Participants

The study under consideration involved 80 multilingual students (Table 1), aged 19-27, who participated in well-structured PALM activities for an entire academic semester (12 weeks) and a lecturer who conducted this research. The goal was to develop learners' presentation skills, self-confidence, and oral fluency to perform well in their final assignment which was an individual oral presentation. The researcher received ethics approval from the university and informed consent from the students. Students had just joined the university after the COVID-19 pandemic and needed support as many of them either faced mental health issues or had caring responsibilities. Participants were multilingual and multicultural learners (i.e., students whose one parent was from Italy and the other from Poland) and were intimidated at the thought of presenting to an audience (Table 1).

Table 1
Demographic Characteristics of Students

	Students	Frequency
Gender	Male	33
	Female	47
Origin	Local students	24
	International students (i.e., French, Italian, Spanish, Polish)	56

Students attended three one-hour classes per week. The instructor asked learners to offer anonymous feedback every 2-3 weeks through Mentimeter. Mentimeter is an online polling tool frequently used in education to increase classroom engagement and ensure that everyone's voice is heard (Ożadowicz, 2020). She also held focus group discussions with ten groups of eight students each time (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2018) using the same prompt questions (Appendix A) to examine whether learners faced any challenges during the implementation twice with assessments during Weeks 4 and 8. These discussions provided valuable insights into the nature of problems that students faced during the implementation and allowed them to share their views and voice their concerns. The lecturer could then discuss and agree with the students on ways in which she could accommodate their needs taking her own restrictions into consideration.

For instance, as students complained about the lack of sufficient time to complete tasks, the lecturer provided an extension of one week. Moreover, since some learners indicated that they needed more time to interact with their peers, the lecturer also increased the time devoted to interaction in groups and pairs offering 15 additional minutes per week. Students were also encouraged to reflect on their own behaviour, such as their tendency to dominate conversations, and think of ways in which they could foster inclusion for all students and allow them to share their own ideas as well. Some students indicated that one of them could have the role of a timekeeper in his/her group to ensure that all learners participated in the conversations. The lecturer therefore made necessary changes responding to students' feedback to support all learners as much as possible, emphasizing inclusivity and providing equal opportunities for student progression and academic success. Participation in the discussions and the provision of feedback was optional, but learners engaged with enthusiasm.

Although most PALM schemes involve the interaction of first year with more experienced learners such as third year students, the current research innovated by exploring the interaction of first year peers who mentor each other. The lecturer chose to have learners work in mixed-ability groups of 4 students in which there was at least one native English speaker who could provide linguistic support to the other students. Multilingual international learners were also encouraged to contribute more in terms of content and ideas and were allowed to use words or short phrases in their L1.

Instruments and Procedure

Students had to present on a specific topic of their choice which was different for each group as a pre-test in week 2. They were then engaged in bi-weekly oral presentation tasks for a total of 4. The groups of 4were randomly assigned. Learners had to prepare 4 slides in their groups and present them to their peers and lecturer. As an observer, the researcher saw that learners first ensured that they understood the instructions for the task, then elaborated on the key concepts. They worked on a different topic every 2 weeks, and finally divided their work in half. Students then worked in pairs as they focused on 2 of the 4 slides. Afterwards, learners worked individually to complete their part of their work and then discussed their work in groups to finalise the slides they would use and decide how they would present them to the other groups (Figure 1).

Participants were encouraged to use their L1 when they worked in groups and pairs whenever they could not remember a word or a phrase in L2. However, their presentation was in English, and they had to use the L2 while presenting their work. The researcher played the role of the supervisor and moderator and made sure all students were supported and contributing equally to the tasks. Learners were encouraged to change groups every 2 weeks to network and receive feedback and support from different peers. After spending a year and a half in isolation, students needed more exposure to people and enjoyed interacting with peers while developing their oral fluency and presentation skills (Kohls et al., 2021). The lecturer was always present to resolve minor disagreements or misunderstandings. The overarching goal was to promote collaboration taking into consideration diverse students' learning styles (Mbirimi-Hungwe & McCabe, 2020).

Figure 1
Implementation of PALM Tasks
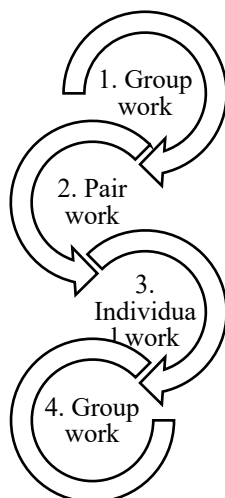
Students provided feedback to their peers after each presentation in the form of comments highlighting strengths and providing suggestions for further improvement. However, only the lecturer provided marks based on the assessment criteria (pre-test in week 2 and post-test in week 10). The lecturer explained the assessment criteria to the learners and provided support to ensure that the feedback was constructive and polite. The overarching goal was to enhance their academic performance and improve their engagement in the learning process.

At the end of the implementation, learners had to write a reflective report regarding their group experience. The lecturer analysed the content of students' anonymous feedback, focus group discussions, and final reflective reports to identify the strengths and potential challenges of this intervention. Learners participated in these tasks in a face-to-face setting, and the researcher collected field notes from observations to triangulate the data and increase the reliability of the data collected (Flick, 2018). The researcher analysed all data using thematic analysis (Nowell, Norris, White & Moules, 2017) to identify patterns in the data and use these themes to address the research. She also had an assistant who analysed 10% of the data, which were chosen randomly, to enhance the reliability of the analysis. The researcher and her assistant identified and agreed on themes which provided a response to the research questions of this research.

Results and Discussion

This section of the article is divided into three subsections. Each one presents and discusses the findings of this study in relation to the three research questions.

Impact on Students' Presentation Skills

The present study examined the impact of PALM and TL on students' presentation skills by comparing learners' post- versus pre-test scores (Table 2) (Hincks, 2003). Students had to present a set of 4 slides before and after the implementation of four PALM tasks in terms of which learners were allowed to use TL. The researcher provided a score based on the assessment criteria for all students' group presentations and a second assessor, an experienced lecturer, checked 20% of the presentations. She used the same marking criteria, and the interrater agreement was 90%, which is considered relatively high (Belotto, 2018).

Table 2
Students' Pre- and Post-test Scores

	M	SD
Pre-test	29.88	14.99
Post-test	54.54	9.95
Paired t-test (pre-vs post-test)	t (79) = 21.76, p < .05	
Cohen's d	d = 1.93	

A paired t-test was conducted to explore students' progress (George & Mallery, 2016). This indicated that there was a statistically significant difference between learners' pre-test (M = 29.88, SD = 14.99, n = 80) and post-test (M = 54.54, SD = 9.95, n = 80) in their oral performance (t (79) = 21.76, p < .05). Cohen's effect size value (d = 1.93) suggested a "large" effect size and high practical significance for the enhancement of these students' oral presentation skills (Cohen et al., 2013). The findings of the study support the results of previous research which has explored the impact of these two approaches in isolation and reported their beneficial impact on students' academic performance (Dalziel & Guarda, 2021; Mbirimi-Hungwe & McCabe, 2020).

Perceived Benefits and Challenges of PALM and TL

In terms of the present research, several challenges and benefits related to the use of PALM and TL were identified and reported by most of the participants (Table 3).

Table 3
Benefits and Challenges of PALM and TRL

Themes	Comments
PALM - Benefits	
1. Collaboration / Help low-achieving and multilingual Ss	'I love peer learning because interacting with the lecturer all the time is boring. I can also help friends who find it difficult to understand some words in English…we need to support them…they sometimes have wonderful ideas.'
2. Connections to personal experiences/ Reapplication of concepts	'When I work with my peers, I can often find solutions to various challenges as we are able to link what we are doing to previous experience and find a way out…I can also reapply things I have learnt in the past and remember them.'
3. Building confidence	'I feel well-supported by my peers…They respect me and always praise me when I share my ideas…I also feel more confident when I help others understand the theory…'
4. Space for fluent language use	'At last, I can use my mother tongue and English without feeling I am doing something wrong…I feel like that with our lecturer.'
5. Reflection/challenge of language use	'When I talk with my peers, I can challenge their ideas as I can interact freely using my own language as well…I do not have to use English all the time…This allows me to express my ideas better…'
PALM - Challenges	
6. Group formation/group dynamics	'Some students want to dominate the conversation…they are not patient enough to allow other people to state their points of view.'
7. Time	'We have so little time to complete the task…we need an extension of the deadline.'
8. Misunderstandings	'Sometimes, students do not pay attention when we explain what each one of us needs to do…we then have to spend more time to clarify things…'

PALM = Peer-assisted learning/mentoring

TRL*- Benefits	
9. Clarification of concepts	*'It is so difficult to understand certain theories in English, but my peers use words in own language and help me clarify the concepts…they revoice my ideas in the target language…I can see the light at the end of the tunnel…*
10. Exchange of knowledge	*'In the past, I used to keep quiet as I did not understand half of the things my lecture[r] is telling us and no one could help me…Now, I am able to work with my friends, either pairs or in groups, and we can exchange ideas…'*
11. Transcend linguistic and cultural barriers	*'I am so happy that I do not have to talk only to my Italian friends as they were the on[ly] ones who could understand me. I can now interact with peers with different cultural backgrounds and use words from various languages…it is so exciting…'*
12. Peer Support/Mentoring/ "ubuntu"	*'We know that we must support each other as we depend on one another for this assignment. We are in this together…so, we help our friends when they are strugglin[g] …'*
13. Construction of knowledge	*'When we do not understand a concept, we exchange ideas until it is clear for all of us…we provide our own interpretations, and we reach an agreement…'*
TRL*- Challenges	
14. Lack of time	*'We need more time to explain things to our friends in their own language…it is not t[hat] simple, but it is extremely rewarding as everyone is on the same boat…no one is left behind'*
15. Difficulties of code-switching	*'Sometimes, I get slightly confused, but we joke about this…it is part of the game…'*
16. Misunderstanding	*'We do not always know exactly what some words mean in another language…therefore, we sometimes make mistakes, but we correct them along the way…'*

TRL* = translanguaging

The researcher tried to create TRL spaces for teaching and learning using PALM to allow students to interact freely with each other. Learners chose the language they preferred as they jointly reflected, exchanged ideas, and used language to enhance their understanding of both the content and tasks of the current module drawing on their linguistic repertoire and cultural background (Table 3). The lecturer made the strategic instructional decision to explain content in the L2 but allowed students to further explain and elaborate on the basic concepts and the instructions of the various tasks using words and phrases from other languages as well. She also allowed the more proficient students who were native speakers to help their peers by restating their comments. High-achieving students could therefore benefit from low-achieving students' ideas and contributions. They helped them improve their linguistic performance in the L2, while less proficient students also felt appreciated for their input.

International students then overcame their hesitations and were able to make explicit connections between concepts and vocabulary development in both L1 and L2 (Table 3). Fluid language use was modelled and encouraged, and learners felt psychologically safe to share their thoughts after being in isolation for quite some time due to the COVID-19 pandemic. They were encouraged to use their multilingualism naturally and fluidly. This turned these sessions into a playful game and allowed even the shyest students to overcome their reservations and engage in the interactions contributing to the main tasks. Learners built their confidence as they felt safe to display their multilingualism and enhance their learning drawing on their multilingual/ multicultural background when discussing academic concepts and ideas for their group presentations. In this TRL festival, learners were allowed to voice their ideas in L1 and then translate them in the L2 validating students' multilingual skills and bridging all languages in an academic context.

Students did not laugh at each other but came to their peers' rescue. This reminded learners of the notion of ubuntu (Table 3) which Makalela (2016) first reported. Students felt they needed each other to understand the theory and the task to prepare their presentations no matter which language they had to use to reach their goal. For them, it was natural and even amusing to move

from one language to another, while preparing their presentations in English. Successful communication, negotiation of meaning, and active interaction among students were not hindered by TRL. Learners felt relieved as they did not have to admit their shortcomings in their lecturer's presence (García, 2012; García & Wei, 2014; Makalela 2016). Monolingual interaction was a thing of the past. International education necessitates the fluid movement of languages (Makoni, 2017) and proposes that students should transcend linguistic boundaries to grasp meaning. The researcher promoted a series of collaborative activities in terms of which learners shared and exchanged knowledge to prepare their group tasks (Table 3) and their final individual presentations.

During the group and pair interactions, students often resorted to English when there were misunderstandings due to the use of various languages. Ultimately, English was used as a resource to enhance the understanding of the theory and the instructions for the task (Table 3). Learners could make sense of the concepts and guidance for the task in which ever language they found more convenient, and they could then use English more confidently (Makalela, 2016; Mbirimi-Hungwe & Hungwe, 2018). Native English speakers could also learn new words and gain insights into exciting new cultures. They were then able to understand their peers better and work more effectively in terms of the task (Table 3). They all knew that they would have to work with people from various countries in the future, and this was the perfect opportunity for them to start developing their intercultural and multilingual awareness. Students also knew that they needed each other to complete the task successfully. They all contributed equally as some peers provided explanations in some learners' L1, others shared their innovative ideas, and some even offered technical support to improve their presentations. The combination of TRL and PALM allowed learners to understand the theory using various linguistic repertoires. This highlighted the interrelatedness of languages and the value of peer support as students - acting as mentors and mentees - were able to transcend linguistic and cultural boundaries to help their peers and support them when they faced challenges in terms of the L2 or the task itself (Table 3). The fact that all students completed the task successfully in the L2 without complaints, major misunderstandings or conflicts indicated that learners should be allowed to interact in whichever language they found appropriate for learning (Heugh, 2014).

Although several educators still insist that using many languages creates confusion (García, 2012), students in the present research were able to negotiate meaning and complete their tasks successfully without their lecturer's intervention. Possibly the interrelatedness, exposure, and appreciation of other languages and the joy of interacting with peers (Table 3) and supporting each other to reach a final learning goal, after a period of physical and mental isolation due to COVID-19 pandemic, were two of the reasons which may explain why the combination of these two instructional techniques proved to be helpful for these students who faced various barriers, linguistic, mental, and educational.

As English is the language for business and employment (Mbirimi-Hungwe, 2019), it is frequently used as the medium of instruction globally. This puts international and multilingual learners at a disadvantage as they need additional teaching support to learn the concepts in the L2. However, if students are allowed to negotiate meaning through peer learning/mentoring and understand the main theories and instructions of the different tasks through the use of different languages, they could then contribute to their groups and master the main concepts as they improve their mastery of the L2 (Table 3).

In terms of the present research, it was surprising to observe learners as they used phrases in various languages keeping English as the central language of communication (Table 3). Moving easily from one language to the other enabled all students to feel included as the combination of PALM and TRL widened learners' participation and engagement in the learning tasks. The PALM and TRL implementation scheme also catered for all students' learning styles as learners were involved in group, pair, and individual work. This facilitated not only deep learning, and self-reliance, but also support and inclusion for all students (Table 3). Learners were also encouraged to interact, negotiate meaning, and reflect on a variety of key concepts as they engaged in the preparation of their group presentations developing a variety of skills, but most of all their oral fluency. They defied all barriers imposed by their diverse linguistic and cultural background and promoted equal participation and inclusion of all learners irrespective of their background.

Students indicated that the lecturer should play the role of the supervisor and facilitator allowing learners to develop their skills and improve their academic performance by realising the value of interdependence and interconnectedness of learners as they tried to make sense of the world and their own learning (Table 3). This intervention allowed them to become who they wanted to be by developing their autonomous and collaborative skills. Therefore, they first interacted with their peers and clarified the concepts and the tasks in groups, then in pairs and finally were allowed to work autonomously and reflect on their previous experience as they completed their individual tasks. Students were thus able to work and carry their peers with them during these collaborative activities in which learners continuously changed roles (mentors vs mentees) and languages with the ultimate goal of engaging all students in the preparation of their presentations after clarifying the theory and the task at hand. The affective side of this task was clear as learners enjoyed this interdependence placing emphasis on the collective good which also allowed them to complete their assignment successfully.

Although previous studies stress the importance of peer learning/mentoring as a highly valued academic practice (Hilsdon, 2014), educators still face some challenges in terms of group composition, time required, and misunderstandings (Table 3) which need to be addressed to maximize the mediating role of the collaborative activity. If groups and pairs, comprising students with varying degrees of content and language mastering, share the common goal of completing a group presentation or helping one another to grasp the module content, this promotes constructive interaction and eventually facilitates subject matter understanding. While mentoring relations in this study revealed a contribution to enhanced subject matter understanding, they sometimes made certain students dependent on peers more than was appropriate. In this case, the use of group, pair, and individual work discouraged learners' overdependence on their peers.

Perceived Impact of PALM and TRL on Student Well-Being

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, HE students' lives and learning conditions have changed dramatically. Self-determination theory (SDT) (Deci & Ryan, 2000) states that the basic psychological needs for competence, independence, and relatedness represent core conditions for personal growth, integration, social development, and psychological well-being as empirical studies have also indicated (Riggenbach, Amouroux, Van Petegem, Tourniaire, Tonelli, Wiener, Hofer & Antonietti, 2019). Moreover, the satisfaction of basic psychological needs can act as a buffer in times of stress, reducing appraisals of anxiety and promoting adaptive coping (Vansteenkiste & Ryan, 2013). To enable personal growth, intrinsic motivation, and psychological well-being, satisfaction of basic psychological needs has been

increasingly taken up and promoted in the educational context with SDT acting as a framework for interventions (Lüftenegger, Klug, Harrer, Langer, Spiel & Schober, 2016).

The students in the current study indicated that the combination of the two approaches improved their self-confidence (Table 3) satisfying their need for competence which refers to experiencing one's behaviour as effective. For example, learners felt competent when they were able to meet the requirements of their studies. This also satisfied their need for autonomy (Table 3) which refers to experiencing one's behaviour as volitional and self-endorsed. For instance, these learners felt autonomous when they willingly devoted time and effort to the completion of their group presentation. Finally, the need for relatedness refers to feeling connected with and experiencing mutual support from significant others (Niemiec & Ryan, 2009) which was the core goal of the research since inclusivity was promoted by enabling all students to strive to reach their full potential.

The current study contributes in terms of the need for HEI to improve learners' quality of life in various ways as they need not only to impart knowledge, but also to develop the whole student by providing opportunities for personal growth and fulfilment. Therefore, students need a range of transversal skills such as complex and autonomous thinking, creativity, and effective communication (Succi & Canovi, 2020). As social spaces, enabling social interaction, HEI must offer learners opportunities for formal and informal networking allowing students to feel that they belong (Table 3) and helping them unfold their potential (Tonon, 2020). This was incredibly difficult during the COVID-19 pandemic due to the disruption it caused representing an unprecedented challenge for students' quality of life and thriving.

As HEI resorted to distance education as an emergency response to the pandemic, the lack of physical presence and the lesser extent of informal discourse and spontaneous interaction created a communication gap which caused negative emotions, gaps in understanding, and misconceptions. To counteract these responses, it is crucial to explicitly address learners' individual needs, feelings, and difficulties and promote interaction among learners and relatedness which contributes to psychological wellbeing (Olsson, McGee, Nada-Raja & Williams, 2013). These were supported by the present scheme (Table 3).

The current research reveals that these practices enhance learners' emotional well-being alleviating language learning anxiety, reducing negative behaviour, and promoting social justice through equity in education (Table 3). These two practices have resulted in giving back voice to multilingual, multicultural (Anderson & Cowart, 2012; Lehtomäki, Moate & Posti-Ahokas, 2016), and low-achieving students (Table 3), transforming cognitive structures by fostering language fluidity, raising well-being and attainment levels, and eventually transforming an unequal classroom into a more just educational space. The researcher's efforts in part legitimize PALM and TRL Education for Social Justice agenda which allows universities to become places for releasing subjectivities, ensuring well-being, and decolonizing society as they promote inclusivity and equality of opportunity for all learners irrespective of their background.

Provided that multilingual learners often show lower educational attainment when compared with their monolingual peers for whom English is their first language (Duarte & Gogolin, 2013), these students are refrained from using their full linguistic repertoires and thus constrained in learning and expression (García & Wei, 2014). Since the lack of attention to students' home languages has been repeatedly described as possibly having far-reaching negative effects, TRL pedagogy is presented as a unique approach through which diverse

learners may use all their languages in formal education (Table 3), despite teachers not knowing those languages (García & Wei, 2014). The benefits are even better when it is combined with PALM which facilitates the whole procedure placing TRL in an extremely supportive framework.

The simultaneous use of PALM and TRL closes the gap among students from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds and allows learners to recognise and use linguistic and cultural diversity as a resource for learning. This can help all students prepare for globally connected societies and changing working styles (García & Wei, 2014). The current study addresses calls from practitioners about ways in which TRL can be successfully implemented in education (Canagarajah & Said, 2011). The use of these two approaches allowed learners in the present research to make cross-linguistic friendships (Table 3) as multilingualism and multiculturalism were promoted increasing students' motivation and positive attitudes towards learning (Günther-van der Meij, Duarte & Nap, 2018). There is a clear link between the use of TRL and PALM and learners' social-emotional well-being. Students indicated that they enjoyed making new friends and working closely with them, especially after almost 2 years of isolation (Table 3). TRL and PALM reduced individual differences between students and helped them deal with negative emotions such as feeling mad or sad about not being able to improve their academic performance.

It is noteworthy that the current study indicated that the combined use of PALM and TRL may offer various benefits to university students, including mentor modelling, strategy knowledge, and spontaneous strategy use. These seem to have a positive impact on learners' academic progress, language development, engagement, and social-emotional well-being. TRL and peer learning/mentoring were used effectively by students in the present research as they utilized them for specific and meaningful reasons, such as academic success and well-being. This led to the development of all learners up to a certain degree, depending on their individual learning styles.

Recommendations and Conclusion

PALM and TRL have been "hot topics" in HE for quite some time in terms of their relevance for students, lecturers, and educational institutions internationally. While PALM research has grown exponentially with the increasing focus on the social aspects of teaching and learning, the notion of TRL is currently widely used when responding to multilingual students' needs in the increasingly plurilingual universities (García & Lin, 2017). The present study aspired to explore the impact of PALM and TRL on learners' academic performance and well-being and add to the existing literature. It has some limitations as it implemented these two approaches with university students only, for a limited amount of time, and without explicitly training learners in peer learning/mentoring strategies. Moreover, the researcher could use additional ways of eliciting feedback from the students, possibly in the form of diaries, and involve more lecturers in the intervention so as to explore additional challenges of the combined use of these two strategies.

Despite its limitations, the current research promoted "translanguaging to construct meaning" instead of forming barriers for learning and relying upon peers as "funds of knowledge" (Moll, 2007, p. 74) as yet another successful strategy to support international and/or local students in the UK deal with the challenges of HE studies in a second or foreign language of instruction. Apparently, the use of more than one language in HEI potentially assists rather than diminishes the development of academic discourse (Van der Walt & Dornbrack, 2011). Languages are

vehicles through which learners grasp and make sense of the content to convert information into knowledge. The use of a language that students are conversant with to clear up any kind of confusion is revealed to be a common practice in HEI.

Consequently, if the aim of teaching is to facilitate knowledge acquisition, then students could use any language that would be conducive to knowledge acquisition for as long as it is possible, as was the case with the current intervention. Sticking to the use of a language that constitutes a barrier to knowledge acquisition, as is sometimes the case when only English is permitted in a class, would undermine the facilitating role of peers, who can act as mentors, since the learning sessions would be less productive in terms of knowledge acquisition. Thus, drawing upon languages used by learners to facilitate knowledge acquisition in terms of peer work is revealed to be one of the strategies that students believe leads to enhanced comprehension (Table 3).

Taking into consideration the findings of the present study, we could recommend that educators should be involved in professional development training seminars/courses and create communities of practice with colleagues to share best practice and challenges they may face in terms of the implementation of PALM and TRL in their classes. Practitioners need to carefully plan and supervise relevant activities, but also allow some space for spontaneity and flexibility always taking their learners' specific needs and mood into consideration. They should also invite more knowledgeable colleagues to mentor them and discuss the challenges they may be facing.

Additionally, HEI should consider training their staff to help them adopt these practices more widely because their consistent use by educators can increase multilingual students', often the majority in many HEIs in the UK, comprehension, support their language and academic development, and encourage their socio-emotional well-being. The present research indicated that PALM and TRL can act as scaffolds for multilingual students' emotional well-being minimising learning anxiety and behavioural issues, and allowing emotional scaffolding (Park, 2014) in addition to improving acquisition of content.

These findings emphasize the link between emotion and cognition, highlighting the role of positive affect in increasing classroom engagement (Pekrun & Linnenbrink-Garcia, 2012). They speak to the power that anxiety holds among learners and provide further evidence of the ability of TRL and PALM strategies to alleviate some of this stress and increase interaction. Hopefully, these findings will further encourage educators to dedicate time and space to emotional and cognitive scaffolding with a combination of these two approaches. It can be anticipated that future research will continue to delve into the power of TRL and PALM for students in primary, secondary and tertiary education in the UK and globally.

References

Anderson, G., & Cowart, M. (2012). They are talking: Are we listening? Using student voice to enhance culturally responsive teaching. *Teacher Education and Practice, 25*(1), 10-23.

Andrei, E., Kibler, A. K., & Salerno, A. S. (2020). "No, professor, that is not true": First attempts at introducing translanguaging to pre–service teachers. In *Envisioning TESOL through a Translanguaging Lens* (pp. 93–109). Cham: Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-47031-9_5

Back, M., Han, M., & Weng, S. C. (2020). Emotional scaffolding for emergent multilingual learners through translanguaging: Case stories. *Language and Education, 34*(5), 387–406. https://doi.org/10.1080/09500782.2020.1744638

Beatty, L., Acar, S., & Cheatham, G. A. (2021). Translanguaging in inclusive classrooms: Learning with children and families. *Young Exceptional Children, 24*(3), 154–169. https://doi.org/10.1177/10962506211002536

Belotto, M. J. (2018). Data analysis methods for qualitative research: Managing the challenges of coding, interrater reliability, and thematic analysis. *Qualitative Report, 23*(11), 2622–33. https://doi.org/10.46743/2160-3715/2018.3492

Blessinger, P., & Stefani, L. (2017). Inclusive leadership in higher education: Inclusion as a core institutional value. In *Inclusive leadership in higher education* (pp. 7-19). New York: Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315466095-1

Boud, D., & Cohen, R. (2014). *Peer learning in higher education: Learning from and with each other*. London: Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315042565

Cabrera, A. F., Crissman, J. L., Bernal, E. M., Nora, A., Terenzini, P. T., & Pascarella, E. T. (2002). Collaborative learning: Its impact on college students' development and diversity. *Journal of College Student Development, 43*(1), 20–34.

Canagarajah, S., & Said, S. B. (2011). Linguistic imperialism. In *Routledge handbook of applied linguistics* (pp. 388–400). Abingdon: Routledge.

Caruso, E. (2018). Translanguaging in higher education: Using several languages for the analysis of academic content in the teaching and learning process. *Language Learning in Higher Education, 8*(1), 65-90. https://doi.org/10.1515/cercles-2018-0004

Charamba, E., & Zano, K. (2019). Effects of translanguaging as an intervention strategy in a South African Chemistry classroom. *Bilingual Research Journal, 42*(3), 291–307. https://doi.org/10.1080/15235882.2019.1631229

Chester, A., Burton, L. J., Xenos, S., & Elgar, K. (2013). Peer mentoring: Supporting successful transition for first year undergraduate psychology students. *Australian Journal of Psychology, 65*(1), 30–37. https://doi.org/10.1111/ajpy.12006

Cohen, L., Manion, L., & Morrison, K. (2013). *Research methods in education*. New York: Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203720967

Dalziel, F., & Guarda, M. (2021). Student translanguaging practices in the EMI classroom: A study of italian higher education. In *English-Medium instruction and translanguaging* (pp. 124–140). Bristol: Multilingual Matters. https://doi.org/10.21832/9781788927338-013

Deci, E. L., & Ryan, R. M. (2000). The" what" and" why" of goal pursuits: Human needs and the self-determination of behavior. *Psychological Inquiry, 11*(4), 227–268. https://doi.org/10.1207/S15327965PLI1104_01

Denizer, E. N. (2017). Does mother tongue interfere in second language learning? *Journal of Foreign Language Education and Technology, 2*(1), 39–54.

Di Sabato, B., & Hughes, B. (Eds.). (2021). *Multilingual perspectives from Europe and beyond on language policy and practice*. New York: Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9780429351075

Duarte, J., & Gogolin, I. (Eds.). (2013). *Linguistic superdiversity in urban areas: Research approaches* (Vol. 2). Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing.

Günther-van der Meij, M., Duarte, J., & Nap, L. (2020). Including multiple languages in secondary education: A translanguaging approach. *European Journal of Applied Linguistics, 8*(1), 73–106. https://doi.org/10.1515/eujal-2019-0027

Fang, F., & Liu, Y. (2020). 'Using all English is not always meaningful': Stakeholders' perspectives on the use of and attitudes towards translanguaging at a Chinese university. *Lingua*, 247, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.lingua.2020.102959.

Flick, U. (2018). Triangulation in data collection. In *The SAGE handbook of qualitative data collection* (pp. 527–544). Los Angeles, CA: Sage. https://doi.org/10.4135/9781526416070.n34

García, O. (2012). Multilingual pedagogies. In *The Routledge handbook of multilingualism* (pp. 249–263). New York: Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203154427-22

García, O., & Lin, A. M. (2017). Translanguaging in bilingual education. *Bilingual and Multilingual Education*,117–130. Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-02258-1

García, O., & Wei, L. (2014). Language, bilingualism and education. In *Translanguaging: Language, Bilingualism and Education* (pp. 46–62). Palgrave Pivot, London.

George, D., & Mallery, P. (2016). *IBM SPSS statistics 23 step by step: A simple guide and reference*. London: Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315545899

Gorter, D., & Cenoz, J. (2017). Language education policy and multilingual assessment. *Language and Education, 31*(3), 231–248. https://doi.org/10.1080/09500782.2016.1261892

Haverila, M. J., Haverila, K., & McLaughlin, C. (2020). Variables affecting the retention intentions of students in higher education institutions: A comparison between international and domestic students. *Journal of International Students, 10*(2), 358–382. https://doi.org/10.32674/jis.v10i2.1849

Heugh, K. (2014). Turbulence and dilemma: Implications of diversity and multilingualism in Australian education. *International Journal of Multilingualism, 11*(3), 347–63. https://doi.org/10.1080/14790718.2014.921180

Hilsdon, J. (2014). Peer learning for change in higher education. *Innovations in Education and Teaching International, 51*(3), 244–254. https://doi.org/10.1080/14703297.2013.796709

Hincks, R. (2003). Speech technologies for pronunciation feedback and evaluation. *ReCALL*, 3–20. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0958344003000211

Hobson, A. J. (2020). ONSIDE mentoring: A framework for supporting professional learning, development, and well-being. In *The Wiley international handbook of mentoring: Paradigms, practices, programs, and possibilities* (pp. 521–545). Malden, MA: Wiley Blackwell.

Hodgson, Y., Benson, R., & Brack, C. (2015). Student conceptions of peer-assisted learning. *Journal of Further and Higher Education, 39*(4), 579–597. https://doi.org/10.1080/0309877X.2014.938262

Kohls, E., Baldofski, S., Moeller, R., Klemm, S. L., & Rummel-Kluge, C. (2021). Mental health, social and emotional well-being, and perceived burdens of university students during COVID-19 pandemic lockdown in Germany. *Frontiers in psychiatry, 12*, 441. https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyt.2021.643957

Lehtomäki, E., Moate, J., & Posti-Ahokas, H. (2016). Global connectedness in higher education: Student voices on the value of cross-cultural learning dialogue. *Studies in Higher Education, 41*(11), 2011–2027. https://doi.org/10.1080/03075079.2015.1007943

Louden, J., McComb, S., Moore, C., & Cole, J. (2019, September). Evaluating three years of our peer-assisted learning scheme. In *RAISE Conference 2019: Exploring the Impact of Student Engagement*.

Lüftenegger, M., Klug, J., Harrer, K., Langer, M., Spiel, C., & Schober, B. (2016). Students' achievement goals, learning-related emotions and academic achievement. *Frontiers in Psychology, 7*, 1–10. https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2016.00603

Makalela, L. (2016). Ubuntu translanguaging: An alternative framework for complex multilingual encounters. *Southern African Linguistics and Applied Language Studies, 34*(3), 187–196. https://doi.org/10.2989/16073614.2016.1250350

Makoni, S. B. (2017). Language planning, security, police communication and multilingualism in uniform: The case of South African Police Services. *Language & Communication, 57*, 48–56. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.langcom.2016.12.009

Mbirimi-Hungwe, V., & Hungwe, T. (2018). Translanguaging for epistemic access to computer science concepts: A call for change. *Per Linguam: a Journal of Language Learning Per Linguam: Tydskrif vir Taalaanleer, 34*(2), 97–111. https://doi.org/10.5785/34-2-771

Mbirimi-Hungwe, V., & McCabe, R. M. (2020). Translanguaging during collaborative learning: A 'transcollab' model of teaching. *Southern African Linguistics and Applied Language Studies, 38*(3), 244–259. https://doi.org/10.2989/16073614.2020.1847670

Meier, G. S. (2017). The multilingual turn as a critical movement in education: Assumptions, challenges and a need for reflection. *Applied Linguistics Review, 8*(1), 131–161. https://doi.org/10.1515/applirev-2016-2010

Moll, L. C. (2007). Bilingual classrooms and community analysis: some recent trends. In *Bilingual education: An introductory reader* (pp. 272–280). Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.

Motlhaka, H. A., & Makalela, L. (2016). Translanguaging in an academic writing class: Implications for a dialogic pedagogy. *Southern African Linguistics and Applied Language Studies, 34*(3), 251_260. https://doi.org/10.2989/16073614.2016.1250356

Niemiec, C. P., & Ryan, R. M. (2009). Autonomy, competence, and relatedness in the classroom: Applying self-determination theory to educational practice. *Theory and Research in Education, 7*(2), 133–144. https://doi.org/10.1177/1477878509104318

Nowell, L. S., Norris, J. M., White, D. E., & Moules, N. J. (2017). Thematic analysis: Striving to meet the trustworthiness criteria. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods, 16*(1), https://doi.org/10.1177/1609406917733847.

Olsson, C. A., McGee, R., Nada-Raja, S., & Williams, S. M. (2013). A 32-year longitudinal study of child and adolescent pathways to well-being in adulthood. *Journal of Happiness Studies, 14*(3), 1069–1083. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10902-012-9369-8

Otheguy, R., García, O. & Reid, W. (2015). Clarifying translanguaging and deconstructing named languages: A perspective from linguistics. *Applied Linguistics Review, 6*(3), 281–307. https://doi.org/10.1515/applirev-2015-001

Ożadowicz, A. (2020). Modified blended learning in engineering higher education during the COVID-19 lockdown—Building automation courses case study. *Education Sciences, 10*(10), 292. https://doi.org/10.3390/educsci10100292

Park, M. H. (2014). Increasing English language learners' engagement in instruction through emotional scaffolding. *Multicultural Education, 22*(1), 20–29.

Pekrun, R., & Linnenbrink-Garcia, L. (2012). Academic emotions and student engagement. In *Handbook of research on student engagement* (pp. 259-282). Boston, MA: Springer.

Riggenbach, A., Amouroux, R., Van Petegem, S., Tourniaire, B., Tonelli, A., Wiener, S., Hofer, M. & Antonietti, J. P. (2021). Autonomy and competence satisfaction as resources for facing chronic pain disability in adolescence: A self-determination perspective. *Psychology, Health & Medicine, 26*(3), 322–332. https://doi.org/10.1080/13548506.2020.1813900

Rodríguez, A. D., Musanti, S. I., & Cavazos, A. G. (2021). Translanguaging in higher education in the US: Leveraging students' bilingualism. *Critical Inquiry in Language Studies*, 40(1), 38–54. https://doi.org/10.1080/15427587.2021.1893730

Succi, C., & Canovi, M. (2020). Soft skills to enhance graduate employability: comparing students and employers' perceptions. *Studies in Higher Education, 45*(9), 1834–1847. https://doi.org/10.1080/03075079.2019.1585420

Tigert, J., Groff, J., Martin-Beltrán, M., Peercy, M. M., & Silverman, R. (2019). *Exploring the pedagogical potential of translanguaging in peer reading interactions: Codeswitching in the classroom.* London: Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315401102-3

Tonon, G. H. (Ed.). (2020). *Teaching quality of life in different domains*. Boston: Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-21551-4

Van der Walt, C., & Dornbrack, J. (2011). Academic biliteracy in South African higher education: strategies and practices of successful students. *Language, Culture and Curriculum, 24*(1), 89–104. https://doi.org/10.1080/07908318.2011.554985

Vansteenkiste, M., & Ryan, R. M. (2013). On psychological growth and vulnerability: basic psychological need satisfaction and need frustration as a unifying principle. *Journal of Psychotherapy Integration, 23*(3), 263–280. https://doi.org/10.1037/a0032359

Corresponding author: Eleni Meletiadou
Email: elenim@outlook.com

Appendix A

Focus Group Questions

1. How do you feel about using PALM in your classes?
2. How do you feel about using TRL in your classes?
3. Based on your experience, can you name any benefits of PALM? Can you elaborate on them? If there are no benefits, can you possibly tell us why you think PALM is not beneficial for your learning?
4. Based on your experience, can you name any benefits of TRL? Can you elaborate on them? If there are no benefits, can you possibly tell us why you think TRL is not beneficial for your learning?
5. Are there any challenges regarding the use of PALM in your classes?
6. Are there any challenges regarding the use of TRL in your classes?
7. Are there any suggestions for improvement for the use of PALM in your classes?
8. Are there any suggestions for improvement for the use of TRL in your classes?
9. Would you like to use PALM in the future?
10. Would you like to use TRL in the future?