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Language ideologies and access in a multilingual tutoring program

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ABSTRACT

This study explores language ideologies within a multilingual tutoring program. We analyze the perspectives of multilingual university-students ($n = 49$) who were trained as tutors and paired with high school-aged multilingual learners. The program was designed to reduce educational inequalities by providing students with what we describe as language access – the opportunity to learn academic content in a student's preferred language. This access is consistently offered to English-dominant students in U.S. schools, yet is often denied to multilingual learners. Therefore, we documented tutors' beliefs about the purpose, successes, and challenges related to multilingual tutoring. Our results show that language ideologies played a key role in how tutoring was conceptualized and utilized, often in ways that reified monolingual orientations to education, even within a multilingually-oriented tutoring program. These results have implications for the design and implementation of multilingual tutoring, student language access, and language ideological research writ large.

KEYWORDS

Tutoring; multilingual learners; bilingual education; power dynamics; English as a second language

Introduction

Students have the right to be educated in a language they understand (Scott et al., 2009; United Nations, 1992, 2013). This right is consistently realized for English-dominant students in U.S. schools – who have near-universal access to schooling in English. Yet, this right is denied to the vast majority of language minoritized youth who learn English as a second language (henceforth "multilingual learners"), the vast majority of whom receive English-only education (Wright, 2019). Educational statistics bear out the benefit of learning in one's preferred language, with English-dominant students in U.S. contexts provided ample access to instruction in English, and consistently scoring above their multilingual learner peers on many standardized educational metrics (National Center for Education Statistics NCES, 2021). In addition, as a majority of multilingual learners also identify as students of color (U.S. Department of Education, 2016), these inequalities are exacerbated by racism and anti-immigrant sentiment faced by multilingual learners in schools (Miklikowska et al., 2019).

Recent research has shown that some of these inequalities may be ameliorated in bilingual education or dual language programming, where students have access to content area learning in English, as well as a partner language (e.g., Thomas & Collier, 2019). Still, the vast majority of U.S. schools offer no dual language or bilingual education programming (García & Kleifgen, 2018), due to lack of funding, a shortage of multilingual teachers, or the sheer number of languages spoken in a given school. This inequality is further complexified at the secondary level (i.e., middle and high school) where multilingual learners are expected to learn English and complex academic content simultaneously (Bunch, 2013; Lang, 2019).

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Nevertheless, multilingual learners at the secondary level are even less likely to receive language support than younger learners (Boyle et al., 2015).

To address this range of inequalities, recent research has explored the potential of multilingual tutoring. Studies have documented gains on academic, linguistic, and social metrics for multilingual learners who receive *peer* tutoring (e.g., Bowman-Perrott et al., 2016; Sytsma, Panahon, & Houlihan, 2019). Yet there is reason to believe that additional benefits may be gleaned from adult (non-peer) tutoring, particularly adults more fully trained in effective pedagogical techniques (Arco-Tirado et al., 2018).

Therefore, this study documents a program in which multilingual university students ($n = 49$) were trained to offer tutoring using students' preferred languages. Tutors were trained in effective multilingual tutoring methods to provide what we describe as *language access*– providing students the opportunity to learn academic content in their preferred language to promote both language and academic content learning. Although exploring the specific affordances and limitations of this programming for furthering students' school success was one key aspect of this program, our main purpose in this paper is to explore the perspectives of multilingual tutors themselves. We draw on the theoretical framework of *language ideologies* to demonstrate how particular ideologies manifested and played a key role in how this tutoring was taken up by participating tutors. Our research is guided by the following questions.

RQ1. How do participating tutors describe a multilingual tutoring program inregard to purpose, successes, and challenges?

RQ2. What do these various framings of purpose, success, and challenge suggest about language ideologies that inform different approaches to multilingual tutoring?

Addressing these questions sheds light on the various ways that language ideologies manifest within multilingual tutoring – in ways that hold the potential to disrupt educational disparities for multilingual learners, but that also demonstrate the recalcitrance of monolingual language ideologies (Babino & Stewart, 2019; Silverstein, 1996; Wiley, 2014) even in a multilingual tutoring space. These dynamics illustrate the affordances, and also potential limitations of multilingual tutoring as a way to advance student language access and content area learning. These contributions extend previous theories of language ideologies, while simultaneously describing actionable ways to address language access disparities in education for multilingual learners.

Theoretical framework: language ideologies

Language ideologies represent systems of beliefs about language (González, 2005; Razfar, 2005), particularly those that rationalize or justify particular forms of language use (Silverstein, 1979, 2004). Examining the "beliefs, feelings, and conceptions about language structure and use, which often index the political economic interests of individual speakers, ethnic and other interest groups, and nation-states" (Kroskrity, 2015, p. 95), language ideological research has focused on power dynamics inherent to language use (Rosa & Burdick, 2017). Specifically, this research explores the impact of linguistic power imbalances on individuals, social groups, and society writ large (Fairclough, 2013).

Much of this research highlights the hegemonic influence of monolingual language ideologies (Gramling, 2016; Silverstein, 1996). Monolingual language ideologies idealize a particular form of language – and its speakers – as the norm or "standard" of language use (Chang-Bacon, 2021). In U.S. contexts, this "standard" often manifests as English monolingualism, and the use of specific privileged varieties of English therein. These privileged forms most often correlate to language practices associated with white middle- and upper-class communities (Alim, 2005; Baker-Bell, 2020; Lippi-Green, 2012; Wiley, 2014). As a result, the language practices of individuals who do not adhere to these supposed norms are delegitimized and erroneously framed as aberrant,

nonstandard, or simply incorrect. A language ideological perspective demonstrates how these delegitimizations of language have impacts that go beyond language. Rather, linguistic stigmatization also functions as a justification for the continued marginalization of individuals and groups, sidelining their intellectual contributions, and rationalizing economic or social oppression (DeBose, 2007; Flores & Chaparro, 2018).

Therefore, we argue that the notion of language access – providing opportunities for students to learn in a preferred language – has impact beyond students' academic success. Aside from being a fundamental educational right (United Nations, 1992, 2013), language access can provide an avenue toward the potential disruption of monolingual language ideologies in school settings. Yet, meaningfully disrupting the entrenched monolingual habitus (Gogolin, 1997) of most U.S. schooling often involves significant macro-level policy change. At the micro-level, however, multilingual tutoring can provide a space, even for just a moment, where students' multilingualism can be leveraged and legitimized in ways often overlooked during the majority of a students' schooling experience. Coupled with the documented effectiveness of tutoring interventions, reviewed below, we explore the potential of multilingual tutoring as an actionable, initial step toward further disruption of monolingual language ideologies.

Literature review

Tutoring and multilingual learners

Tutoring – defined as one-on-one or small-group instructional programming – has one of the most substantial causal evidence bases in the educational research literature. Experimental studies consistently demonstrate that tutoring interventions have a statistically significant and substantially large effect on academic learning outcomes (Dietrichson, Bøg, Filges, & Klint Jørgensen, 2017; Nickow et al., 2020; Ritter et al., 2009). In general, tutoring effects tend to be stronger when programs are administered by teachers and paraprofessionals, when students are in earlier grades, and when tutoring occurs during school hours (Nickow et al., 2020). However, despite this body of evidence, relatively few studies specifically examine tutoring interventions for multilingual learners. Consistent with the broader tutoring literature, the handful of studies that target multilingual learners report positive effects on various linguistic outcomes. For instance, a short 10-week reading intervention program for multilingual learners implemented by undergraduate students majoring in special education produced meaningful progress in English decoding (Denton et al., 2004), while an intensive 10-month daily tutoring program provided by trained bilingual reading teachers resulted in significant improvements in English letter naming, phonological awareness, reading, and other language skills (Vaughn et al., 2006). In both of these cases, English was the primary language of instruction.

Given the evidence supporting dual language immersion programs (Acosta et al., 2019; Steele et al., 2017; Umansky & Reardon, 2014; Valentino & Reardon, 2015), it is unsurprising that recent research also suggests that tutoring interventions and programming offered in students' preferred languages may lead to larger and more enduring academic gains (Borman et al., 2020; Richards-Tutor et al., 2016). For example, in a recent randomized controlled trial of a one-on-one home language tutoring intervention for first-grade multilingual learners, Borman, Borman, Park, and Houghton (2020) report a mean effect size of $d = 0.66$ across all literacy measures. While dual language immersion or high-frequency tutoring may not be feasible in all educational contexts, other forms of multilingual tutoring, such as peer tutoring, may provide both practical and effective alternatives for serving the linguistic and academic needs of multilingual learners (e.g., Bowman-Perrott et al., 2016; Gerena & Keiler, 2012; Sytsma et al., 2019). However, although peer tutoring and cross-age tutoring may be effective to some degree, both are "unlikely to substitute to any substantial extent for programs that employ adults as tutors" (Nickow et al., 2020, p. 50). Adult tutors may be current or former teachers, trained in other professional capacities, and may have more experience in effective pedagogical practice. This current study documents a type of "in-between" multilingual tutoring program that trained multilingual university undergraduate students ($n = 49$) to offer tutoring to

multilingual high school students. To our knowledge, this study represents one of the first analyses of this type of program that pairs multilingual university students (non-preservice teachers) and multilingual learners (see Jimenez-Silva et al., 2022 for an exception).

The educational significance of language Ideologies

Studies have documented the critical importance of teacher language ideologies in teaching multilingual learners (Anderson, Ambroso, Cruz, Zuiker, & Rodríguez-Martínez, 2021; Banes, Martínez, Athanases, & Wong, 2016; Deroo & Ponzo, 2019; Palmer, 2011; Schlaman, 2019; Snyder & Varghese, 2019). Language ideological research has suggested that the language ideologies of instructors mediate their perceptions of multilingual learners and their everyday teaching practices in the classroom (Fitzsimmons-Doolan et al.,2017; Gallo et al., 2014; Henderson, 2017; Palmer, 2011). Scholars have examined the ways that teachers, school leaders, policymakers, and students themselves contest, negotiate, and/or reinforce language ideologies (e.g. Baker-Bell, 2013; Chang-Bacon, 2022; Farr & Song, 2011; Martínez, 2013), but very few have studied how tutor language ideologies influence and shape tutoring settings and interactions. An exception is Elabdali's (2022) study of two multilingual doctoral students and their negotiation and resistance of monolingual ideologies in a university writing center. This study documented imbalances in language ideological power dynamics from the perspective of tutees, indicating a further need to research how tutors themselves navigate (and perhaps exacerbate) these dynamics. We suggest that, given the popularity of tutoring, examining the language ideologies that permeate tutor-tutee interactions is critical to the field of multilingual education and for research on tutoring writ large.

Methods

Program context

The Multilingual Tutoring Project was created as a collaboration between a large research university in the Southeastern U.S. and a local school district. This community partnership was designed to address language access disparities faced by multilingual learners in secondary classrooms to redress racial and economic inequity in the university's community. The participating school district included 14,000 students, and served as a refugee resettlement community. 10% of students in this district were identified as "English learners," representing over 50 languages spoken. The high-school aged students in this study attended an English-medium high school (i.e., it was not a dual-language or bilingual education model), and the majority of these students' U.S. schooling experiences were characterized by this monolingual model. Within the participating high school, there were 196 students designated as "English learners" by the district, 46 of whom were considered "former English learners" (i.e., multilingual learners who once had the English learner designation but lost this designation upon achieving grade-level English language proficiency standards based on standardized tests and district performance measures). These students spoke 12 different languages, with the majority (75%) of them speaking Spanish, followed by Arabic (6%), and Swahili (6%).

Multilingual tutors were recruited through the university's independent volunteer center and were taught linguistically responsive pedagogical practices that support language and content acquisition for multilingual learners in a classroom setting. These strategies included using extra-linguistic supports, such as visual supports and graphic organizers, modifying oral language to ensure students were exposed to comprehensible input, and engaging students in purposeful activities where students had multiple opportunities to practice and apply their knowledge. In addition to these pedagogical practices, tutors were informed of the importance of valuing and leveraging students' multilingualism. They were trained on the difference between using a deficit approach, where students' linguistic and cultural practices are eradicated and replaced with dominant practices society views as superior, compared to an asset-based approach, where students can access schooling while maintaining their

linguistic and cultural competencies. Tutors were instructed to use a funds of knowledge (González et al., 2006) approach to better understand students' abilities, knowledge, and experiences to establish connections between their home culture and education. With this knowledge, tutors were guided to increase language access by facilitating and encouraging new learning for students using their multilingualism.

Data for this study were collected during the 2020–2021 school year, which, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, took place largely online. Despite the many hardships and upheavals in schooling across this time, we found the virtual medium actually helped to facilitate the logistics of tutoring. Tutors could "Zoom in" to class at designated times, observe their tutees during their usual class times, and move into "breakout rooms" with their tutees as needed. Even when schools began to transition to in-person instruction in the spring of 2021, tutors continued to conduct their tutoring sessions via video conferencing.

Participants

Participants ($n = 49$) were undergraduate students at a large research university in the Southeastern U.S. All participants were between the ages of 18–21 years old and had volunteered to become tutors in local schools as part of a service program at their university. Participants came from a broad range of disciplinary backgrounds (i.e., undergraduate majors), most outside of the field of education (none were education majors or pre-service teachers). The majority of participants identified either as white ($n = 31$, 48%) or Asian ($n = 31$, 47%), with three students (5%) respectively identifying as Black, Hispanic/Latinx, and Multiracial. All participants identified as bi/multilingual, with 35 (72%) identifying English as their "first language," 8 (16%) identified English as an "additional language," and 6 (12%) described having learned multiple languages simultaneously throughout their childhood.

Data sources

To document the design and enactment of this multilingual tutoring program, our team surveyed tutors, students, and students' classroom teachers throughout the first year of the tutoring program. We also conducted observations of the tutor training sessions and tutoring sessions. For the purposes of this paper and its focus on the perspectives of tutors themselves, we drew primarily on the tutors' open-ended qualitative survey responses. Following scholars who have established the use of surveys and open-ended written responses to study language ideologies (e.g., Anderson et al., 2021; Banes et al., 2016; Fitzsimmons-Doolan, 2018) we developed a survey to include 12 open-ended prompts designed to elicit participants' views on the program, their experience with students, and beliefs about multilingual tutoring itself after having participated in the program (see Appendix A). The prompts were piloted with a focus group of experienced teachers and teacher educators and revised based on group feedback (e.g., wording, length of survey, etc.).

Data analysis

We began our analysis by compiling and organizing the tutor response data according to each survey question. First, we employed an inductive analytical approach by reading and re-reading through the data several times and by open-coding for general categories and themes, with a heightened focus on any mentions of language (Bhattacharya, 2017; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). For example, we highlighted and labeled the response "I didn't know what a math term was in Spanish and they didn't understand it in either language," as "multilingual challenge." We open-coded all of the data in this manner and then wrote a analytic memos to begin the process of axial coding, or interpreting and grouping the codes into broader categories (Charmaz, 2014). Both researchers reviewed the analytic memos discussed the emerging findings together.

Next, we returned to the tutor response data focusing on the responses that referenced or alluded to language with the goal of analyzing and making sense of the beliefs, conceptions, and stated claims about language ideological practices articulated by our respondents. We specifically noted patterns both in what the tutors stated explicitly and what was often left unstated or implicit. As we further refined our theoretical perspective of language ideologies, we collectively analyzed the ways that participating tutors described and conceptualized the tutoring program along with the purpose and function of multilingualism (both their own and their tutees') using the basic three-category framework of "purpose," "success," and "challenge." We then organized our codes in accordance with this three-frame structure (see Appendix B). For instance, the "multilingual challenge" open code mentioned above was categorized under "challenge," specifically "interactional barriers." For the analysis, we sought to explore how these framings and conceptualizations were informed by the language ideologies of the tutors. Finally, we selected specific responses and quotations that represented our results to include in the findings section. These excerpts are featured in our analysis below, accompanied by pseudonyms for each of the participants.

Findings

Framing purpose

Analyzing tutors' descriptions of the multilingual tutoring program in regard to purpose, successes, and challenges (RQ1) highlighted a range of language ideological dynamics at play (RQ2). In regard to purpose, the multilingual tutoring program recruited multilingual tutors from the partnering university and trained tutors on the pedagogical importance of bilingualism. The multilingual tutoring program is distinct from other more general tutoring programs for this reason. As a result, we had hypothesized that the participating tutors might frame the purpose of their involvement in the program from a linguistic perspective, but based on our analysis, we found that participating tutors did not commonly reference linguistic support to frame their purpose. Instead, tutors tended to rely more heavily on generic concepts, such as individualized attention or peer mentorship, to describe perceptions of their purpose. The two most common framings of purpose were one-on-one assistance and peer relatability. The tutors consistently described the their role as providing one-on-one assistance and attention to specific students, providing a resource that is unavailable in a larger class setting. In addition, the tutors consistently cited their closeness in age (the tutees are predominantly high school students; the tutors are undergraduate students) as an asset for their role. They often positioned themselves in contrast to the teacher: while the teacher is not relatable, the tutor is closer to a peer. For instance, John stated that "it was helpful for the student I tutored to have one-on-one help", and Sarah effectively summarized these framings by stating that what was most helpful for the tutees was "getting to talk with someone closer to their age and learn from someone in a smaller setting than the entire class."

In some ways, the tutors generally framed their purpose as contrasting that of the traditional teacher role. While a teacher generally is responsible for a large class, the tutors focused on giving individualized attention to specific groups of students. While the teacher is an authority figure that students should remain distant from, the tutors are relatable as relatively near-age peers and less judgmental. Yet, what is intriguing is that the multilingual tutors seldomly framed language (and any aspect of it) as a feature of this relatability, or their overall tutoring purpose. John and Sarah, the tutors mentioned above, both identify as bilingual speakers, yet they did not frame their participation in this way. Sarah, as quoted above, even found her age to be a more relevant factor than her multilingualism in relating to her student. As such, the most common framings of purpose used by the tutors in the multilingual tutoring program relied primarily on framings that describe more general (monolingual) tutoring programs.

However, 7 of the tutors explicitly mentioned language when asked about their role as a tutor. Paradoxically, some of these tutors seemed surprised that their multilingual proficiency was an important part of their role, while others were conversely perplexed that their multilingualism was less impactful than they had originally envisioned. Regarding the former, Mary expressed, "I was surprised by the Spanish speaking skills I needed to use to best help my students," while Jeremy similarly stated, "I did not realize how much of a difference I would make. The kids I worked with relied on me every week to translate their teacher in Spanish." In this way, both Mary and Jeremy seemed not to have expected that their multilingualism would be important in their role, even though the program was explicitly positioned as a multilingual tutoring program. This suggests that these tutors, despite training and lived experience that emphasized the importance of multilingualism, did not associate multilingualism with tutoring. In other words, despite the multilingual framing of the tutoring program, many participants defaulted to English, both in ideology and practice, as the primary modality of their tutoring.

In the reverse situation, a few tutors expected their multilingualism to define their purpose in their tutor-tutee relationships, but their actual experience reshaped their perspective. For instance, Jennifer explained that "at first, I thought that it was completely necessary to speak another language fluently and be able to teach the kids in that language. I was also surprised about how much of an influence I had in the class." Jennifer's statement suggests that, unlike Mary and Jeremy, she understood the original intention of the multilingual tutoring program. However, she stated that she was able to exert a positive influence on her tutees, regardless of her multilingualism, linking to an implicit assertion that tutoring need not be multilingual. In both cases where the tutors expressed surprise about their role, they did so in a way that dissociated multilingualism from tutoring. Across the participants more broadly, framing the role of the tutor in generic terms was a common discursive move that de-emphasized the multilingual component of the tutoring, with many of their statements potentially applicable to describe an English-only tutoring program. Articulating the role in this way functioned to downplay the "multilingual" aspect of the program, so that it essentially reverted to a more typical (monolingual) version of tutoring.

Nevertheless, a few multilingual tutors did report primarily using a non-English language during tutoring sessions and that their multilingualism was a positive asset to the tutor-tutee relationship. Carla, for example, stated that, initially, "I felt really frustrated when I was tutoring several English speakers even though I knew there were ESL students still in need of a bilingual tutor." Her desire to work with multilingual learners was left initially unfulfilled. However, at a later point, Carla was asked to focus on aiding one particular student in the class and eventually switched to using Spanish while tutoring this student. She recounted:

> At first, I utilized mostly English because my tutee never responded, "yes," when I asked him if he wanted me to speak Spanish. One class, however, I started speaking Spanish for some reason … and my tutee responded back to me in Spanish so I continued to speak in Spanish for the rest of that class. Before he logged off, he messaged me and said "fue un día lindo" [it was a nice day] and ever since then I have used mostly Spanish in our tutoring sessions.

While it is not possible from this excerpt to determine the exact extent to which Carla's use of Spanish influenced her tutoring relationship with this particular student, it is clear that Carla found her multilingualism to be a significant asset that she began to consistently draw upon to facilitate tutoring sessions.

Framing success

Next, we analyzed the ways that the tutors framed success in their responses. The tutors were asked to describe a moment or a situation in which they felt successful. We identified three

ways that tutors defined and framed these moments of success: (1) contributing to and clarifying student understanding, (2) witnessing student participation, and (3) helping by translating. First, the tutors consistently expressed feeling successful when they were actively involved in helping their tutees understand a topic or concept or when the tutees specifically asked the tutors for assistance. For instance, Kelly stated that she felt most successful when she "helped them understand a concept that they were previously struggling [with]." Kyle recounted an instance when he was able to coherently explain a concept to a student who was previously struggling; he felt excited and successful when the student responded, "Oh, I get it now!"

Secondly, the tutors not only framed success in terms of their contribution to student learning and understanding but also in terms of witnessing the student participate in class. In the fully virtual components of early-pandemic learning, tutors were able to observe students during full-class instruction by the teacher, and personally felt successful when their tutees "unmuted" and actively participated in the lesson. For example, Brian felt most successful when a student who usually did not speak in a full class setting class asked questions and participated in the lesson after working with the tutor in a small group setting. The cooperating teacher told Brian that "she was super happy that he talked and participated." In another instance, Amanda expressed feeling most successful "when … a student spoke unmuted on Zoom for the first time!" In both cases, the tutor did not seem to be explicitly encouraging the tutees to speak or participate in the classroom, but the tutor perceived that the student participated in class as an outcome of their relationship. Active participation was perceived as a desirable academic outcome, and the tutors attributed this benefit to their involvement. Aligning with the findings of the previous section, all of the tutors mentioned above identified as multilingual, yet none of them framed their (or their students') multilingualism as a criterion for success.

Tutors' multilingualism began to play a role in the final framing of success – helping through translation. The tutors consistently described their contribution as providing translation services for their tutees. For example, Leigha framed her contribution as the "translation and extra explanation I can provide [in the student's preferred language]", while Jenna felt successful when providing "one-on-one support where [she] could translate directions." Jack explained, "I sometimes tried to describe things in Spanish rather than English if the student seemed confused." When the tutees were confused or unclear about certain vocabulary words and concepts in English, the tutors provided translation and framed these moments as successful and rewarding. Jenna, for instance, further explained that when she encountered academic terms that both her and her tutee did not know in Spanish, she "would find the word in a dictionary and describe it with examples." Others used Google Translate to help their tutees comprehend specific academic terms. For example, Christina, who identifies as trilingual, explained, "I would use Google Translate and the student would communicate back with me what they didn't understand. It was difficult but rewarding when we got [on] the same page." Thus, the tutors' multilingualism appeared to become most relevant when translation of specific words or phrases was required. Taken together, the tutors framed the notion of success largely around matters of clarifying student understanding, witnessing student participation, and assisting with occasional translation.

Framing challenge

In a manner analogous to the framings discussed in the previous section, the tutors framed the challenge of their position in terms of interactional barriers or the absence of interaction. The tutors were generally frustrated when the tutees did not ask them questions or interact with them. For instance, Thomas, "felt unsuccessful when students wouldn't take advantage of my availability." Similarly, Belinda felt "frustrated when all [she] did, one class, was sit there [and was] not being used as support." These statements were generally representative of most tutors' sentiments of frustration.

Since they were volunteering their time to tutor, they wanted to make productive use of this time and hoped that their tutees would take advantage of their presence. In other words, from the perspective of the tutors, a certain degree of interaction was necessary for the tutoring session to be considered successful. On the contrary, tutors identified and positioned the absence of such interaction as their main source of frustration.

Focusing specifically on language-related challenges often led tutors to paradoxically position multilingualism as the barrier causing the challenge. In these instances, even though the tutors were actively interacting with their tutees (which ostensibly should constitute a successful interaction), the tutees' multilingualism was often framed as a source of frustration and challenge that needed to be overcome. For instance, Leigha expressed frustration when she "didn't know what a math term was in Spanish and [the students] didn't understand it in either language." Cameron conversely framed his own multilingualism as the issue, stating that "I felt frustrated with myself occasionally when I would have difficulty translating a particular phrase." Despite both Leigha and Cameron's multilingualism, there were still moments when specific terms or phrases posed a challenge or a difficulty that they tried to overcome. Yet, they felt unsuccessful when they could not easily overcome the linguistic barrier. Despite identifying as multilingual, Gabriel also expressed a sense of frustration "when the student [he was tutoring] couldn't understand what [he] was saying." In each of these statements, the tutors associated the student's lack of comprehension or understanding as an issue with their shared non-English language.

Occasionally, participants described moments of successful leveraging of their multilingualism and that of students. For instance, although Cameron described experiencing difficulty translating particular phrases, he also recounted how other students in the class "often jumped in to help [him] out." Furthermore, Cameron also highlighted how he himself had benefited from this experience by stating that "my Spanish speaking skills have improved". For the tutors that primarily communicated with their tutees in a non-English language, they often described reaping personal linguistic benefits, in that they were able to practice that language with the student. For instance, Jeremy reported that he always spoke in Spanish with his tutees, and as a result, he stated, "I have been able to practice my Spanish significantly!" It is important to recognize these moments as a demonstration of the students' linguistic dexterity and their impact on their tutors. In such situations, at a linguistic level, students were clearly flipping the tutoring dynamic by facilitating language learning for their tutors. Although it is possible for these interactions to be mutually beneficial, these moments may be situations in which the multilingual tutors derrive disproportionate benefit characterized as one-sided (benefitting the tutor more than the student).

We conclude this findings section by returning to Carla, who initially hoped to engage her multilingualism in the tutoring setting and was able to successfully leverage Spanish in her tutoring. Although we initially described Carla's experience as positive on the basis that she actively used Spanish in her tutoring, Carla still framed her experiences in ways that exemplified the aforementioned theme of multilingualism-as-barrier. As she explained,

> I came across English words every so often … that I didn't know how to translate so I would have to use [a dictionary]. I also sometimes struggled comprehending the messages my tutee would send to me in the chat because he sometimes used phrases that I was unfamiliar with.

Just like many other tutors, Carla positioned the words and terms of the non-English language as the source of challenge and difficulty. She positioned her need to use a dictionary in order to convey meaning to her tutee as a struggle, along with her difficulties fully understanding her tutee's writing. These were all positioned as challenging interactions that framed language as a key barrier. Consequently, the multilingualism of the tutees was rarely mentioned in the tutors' responses. There is not a single instance in our data in which a tutor highlighted the fluency or dexterity students have in their stated home languages. The implications of these framings, and the language ideological dynamics at play, are further discussed next.

Discussion and implications

This study documented tutors' perspectives on purpose, successes, and challenges within a multilingual tutoring program through a language ideological lens. Results demonstrated some potential affordances of multilingual tutoring for expanding language access and content area learning, but also highlighted the continued influence of monolingual language ideologies, even within a program geared toward multilingual engagement. Although tutors often found ways to draw on or affirm their students' multilingualism, participants also reported encountering challenges that they had not originally envisioned as multilingual tutors.

Importantly, despite these challenges, and the continued presence of monolingual language ideologies, these results should not be interpreted as indicating the non-viability of multilingual tutoring. Existing research on the positive influence tutoring remains robust across multiple fronts, including academic outcomes (Dietrichson et al., 2017; Nickow et al., 2020; Ritter et al., 2009), positive mentorship, and the affirmation of multilingual identities (Jimenez-Silva et al., 2022). In particular, since this tutoring was introduced into a primarily monolingual educational context, where students had few opportunities to leverage themselves multilingually in their schooling experiences, the existence of such a program, and the generally positive reactions of both tutors and students to the program, can indeed be viewed as a net positive and a gradual step toward further integration of multilingualism into predominantly monolingual educational spaces.

Rather than dismissing the viability of multilingual tutoring itself, our findings instead demonstrate the importance of considering individual and institutional language ideologies when implementing such programs. First, it is necessary to note and synergize the goals of language access and academic content learning. In a monolingual educational model, these goals often get erroneously positioned as being at odds with one another. Since such monolingual models hold students accountable for expressing their academic mastery solely in English, students and teachers (and in this case, tutors) are under pressure to prioritize teaching and learning in the language of assessment (i.e., English). It is therefore necessary that schools and programs that consider adopting a multilingual tutoring model also structurally reinforce the synergies that exist between language access and content area learning beyond the tutoring itself (see Bunch, 2013; Lang, 2019).

It is also important to recognize that being multilingual in and of itself, or being taught by a multilingual instructor, does not necessarily guarantee the disruption of hegemonic language ideologies. As language ideologies are deeply entrenched in individuals and institutions, it is necessary to consider how language ideologies manifest *in practice*–even when particular individuals or programs are ideologically accepting of multilingualism. This consideration is especially important regarding notions of purpose and success in the practice of multilingual tutoring. Tutors in our study articulated the purpose of multilingual tutoring in broad terms of academic support and relationship building, quite typical of general tutoring programming (Denton, Anthony et al., 2004; Vaughn et al., 2006). However, our findings surfaced the need to specifically interrogate the purpose *of multilingualism* in multilingual tutoring. Many tutors, for example, framed a successful use of multilingualism as the ability to translate specific terms. This rather reductive framing seemed to position tutors as merely an embodied translation device. Especially in an age where students often have ready access to online translation services at the press of a button, participants' inclination to serve students through word-level translations seemed a diminishing perspective on their own potential value as tutors. This translation-emphatic framing surfaces a monolingual ideological framing of languages as readily translatable (see Gramling, 2016) – suggesting that a simple word-for-word translation will suffice to clarify meaning – devoid of a need to further negotiate cross-cultural and content-specific meaning making. This framing became a missed opportunity for tutors to leverage their full capacities as multilingual individuals, to *tutor*, rather than to provide (what they imagine to be) easy fixes for multilingual students.

In regard to challenges, these oversimplifications of tutoring led to understandable obstacles for tutors' attempts to enact their envisioned roles in practice. Such challenges were particularly apparent when word-level translations of complex, content-specific words were unhelpful or unfamiliar to students. Concerningly, this led some tutors to suggest fault in students' multilingual abilities. These moments began to approximate outdated, deficit-oriented language ideologies that frame students as lacking competence across multiple languages (see critiques of *semilingualism*, Valadez et al., 2000, or *languagelessness*; Rosa, 2016). This framing became a sticking point for some tutors, and in some cases, seemed to provide a justification for de-emphasizing the multilingual component of the tutoring interactions.

Critically, multilingual tutoring becomes a failed project if it merely reproduces the common and erroneous positioning of multilingual students as lacking linguistic competence. If tapping into students' multilingual abilities simply results in them being framed as less linguistically competent *in two languages* instead of just one, monolingual language ideologies not only remain in place, but are actually reinforced. Moreover, as multiple tutors stated that their own linguistic knowledge improved as a result of their role as tutors, it is clear that students themselves were playing and active role as language brokers – as tutors in their own right. We argue that this is evidence of the students' own linguistic dexterity that often goes unrecognized in tutoring dynamics that are presumed to be a one-way benefit from tutor to student. Still, evidence from our study demonstrates a concerning dynamic in which tutors themselves may become the *primary* language beneficiaries, with "practic[ing] my Spanish" (Jeremy) positioned as a key outcome of the tutoring pairing. It is, therefore, necessary to monitor this dynamic in a tutoring program, both in tutor training and in practice, to ensure that multilingual tutoring does not become an extractive space where the primary beneficiaries are the tutors themselves.

Thus, these findings reaffirm, but also extend, existing research on language ideologies in educational spaces. Our findings align with previous research on the influence of monolingual language ideologies in educational spaces (Deroo & Ponzo, 2019; Martínez, 2013), and the key role played by individual beliefs and justifications in how these ideologies manifest in practice (Henderson, 2017; Palmer, 2011). Our findings also extend this research to show that even an individual's framings of *multilingualism* can still carry monolingual language ideologies forward. This brings into question the notion that multilingual engagement, in and of itself, will act as a panacea for monolingual ideologies. If students are engaging in multiple languages through an intervention like multilingual tutoring, it can be tempting to assume that the monolingual habitus pervasive in so many U.S. schooling spaces will have been disrupted. However, our research demonstrates the recalcitrance of monolingual language ideologies, even in an intentionally multilingual space.

And yet, our findings also demonstrate that multilingual tutoring provided an important space for tutors and students to build relationships and to engage in a range of academic support opportunities. Thus, despite its challenges (challenges that are likely to arise in any attempt to disrupt deeply-entrenched ideological norms), tutoring remains a key potential space for extending language access to students in concrete and impactful ways.

In this way, our study has implications for the further development of multilingual tutoring programming. Most notably, extending equitable language access involves more than simply recruiting tutors who are themselves multilingual. At a practical level, linguistically responsive teaching requires a host of complex pedagogical skills (see Lucas & Villegas, 2010) which are often learned through formal teacher training and practical experience. University students who volunteer to be tutors do indeed bring a range of valuable experiences and knowledge to a tutoring space. However, as most may not be formally trained in educational pedagogy or language acquisition theory, it is essential to design a robust tutor training program that provides continued support for tutors – and especially provides guidance and a space to reflect on the language ideological dynamics described throughout this piece.

It is also important to complicate understanding of a tutors' (or a tutees') multilingualism in this regard. Our findings demonstrate that even individuals who identify as multilingual may understandably struggle with content-specific terms and vocabulary with which they (and their tutees) are not familiar. This dynamic demonstrates the limitations of positioning multilingual tutoring primarily as a space of translation. Learning content in any language involves much more than learning new vocabulary words, particularly at the secondary level where students are expected to apply content area knowledge to weave complex concepts together into hypotheses, explanations, and arguments (Brisk, 2020). Here, it becomes important to underscore the point that the educational experiences of the students in this sample where characterized by monolingual schooling experiences. Without access to robust multilingual programming (e.g. dual language educational programs), students have fewer opportunities to engage in the sort of rich language-and-content integration that would have likely facilitated more productive tutoring interactions within this program. Multilingual tutoring, therefore, should not be positioned as a replacement for broader forms of research-backed multilingual programming across students' educational experiences.

In light of these dynamics, it stands to reason that tutors – who themselves may not be experts in the content area at hand – may face challenges in conveying these complex concepts to students, especially if their role is primarily positioned as that of a translator rather than a holistic educational partner in their own right. Tutors' own academic and pedagogical expertise should be considered, as well as their demonstrated ability to teach across cultural and linguistic difference. Too often, tutoring is positioned as a "savior" project in which university students (often from more privileged backgrounds) are presumed to be a benefit to groups of students (often positioned as less privileged) by their mere presence (see Cann & McCloskey, 2017). As such, tutors' educational expertise (e.g., college major, subject areas of interest), and racial/linguistic background should be considered when matching tutors with particular students. In addition, tutors may benefit from interactions with, and observations of, the content area teachers in the classes they are assigned to support – both to more fully grasp the content being taught as well as to get to know the students themselves and the school's sociocultural context. In general, however, it is necessary to productively reframe the inevitable moments when multilingual tutoring generates moments of negotiation across difference, whether a linguistic discussion over a specific word or a complex content-specific topic. These points of challenge, understandable when communicating across multiple languages, can be reframed as a productive space for negotiation of meaning between multilingual individuals – a shared experience by those who are learning language and content together while navigating the complex, nuanced language dynamics of multilingual meaning making across difference.

Finally, it is important to consider that even individuals who value or have benefitted from multilingualism may still uphold monolingual ideological approaches. Living within the monolingual habitus of English-dominant spaces, whether through schooling experiences (García & Kleifgen, 2018) or U.S. society more broadly (Wiley, 2014), it can be difficult, if not impossible to avoid social messaging around monolingual language ideologies. Our research demonstrates that tutors would likely benefit from explicit discussion of these language ideological dynamics and how they may manifest in their tutoring and their students' schooling experience.

Conclusion

Despite the challenges noted throughout this piece, multilingual tutoring remains a key space of potential for expanding language access and benefitting multilingual students. It's important to note that all tutors, tutees, and classroom teachers enrolled in the larger program study indicated positive experiences with the multilingual tutoring program. Whether it be academic support, relationship building, or students being inspired by seeing a university student leverage their multilingualism, there are myriad potential benefits of building and extending access to multilingual tutoring support. However, as our findings suggest, it remains necessary to challenge monolingual ideologies, even within a multilingual tutoring space. Our study explored these dynamics among university student

volunteers who participated in building such a space, but there is also potential to engage a broader range of community members in multilingual tutoring, including peers, caregivers, and local professionals (see Campano et al.,2016; Lee, 2019). Although disrupting entrenched ideologies of monolingualism will be a continuous challenge, finding ways to leverage students' multilingualism while simultaneously connecting schools with the broader community through tutoring relationships continues to hold promise for benefiting students and extending the language access to which they are entitled.

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Appendix A: Tutor Questionnaire

(1) What did you find most helpful from your training for your role as a tutor? Why?
(2) What were areas in which would you have liked more preparation or support? Why?
(3) Did anything surprise you about your tutoring role from what you imagined it would be? If so, what was it?
(4) What, specifically, do you feel was most helpful for the students about the tutoring?
(5) Please describe a situation or moment from your tutoring where you felt successful.
(6) Please describe a situation or moment from your tutoring where you felt frustrated or unsuccessful.
(7) Did you find your tutoring sessions usually focused more on language learning, academic content, or both? Please explain.
(8) In your tutoring sessions, did you and your student (a) mostly use English, (b) mostly use another language, (c) use a relatively equal mix of English and another language. Please explain.
(9) Did you ever come across academic content, related words or phrases that either you, your student (or both of you) did not know in the student's home language? How did you navigate this? Feel free to provide specific examples.
(10) Did you feel you were able to build relationships with your student(s)? If so, what helped most in establishing this relationship?
(11) If you heard someone say "Students don't need bilingual support in the classroom. They should only learn in English," how might you respond?
(12) Have you yourself benefitted from participation in this program? If so, how?

Appendix B: Code and Category Organization with Examples

Category	Code	Representative Example
Framing Purpose	One-on-one assistance	"The *individualized* help was definitely helpful for students who knew the material but needed an extra boost of validation for their personal confidence."
	Peer relatability	"Just having the option of asking someone *closer to their age* for help and not being judged."
Framing Success	Contributing to and clarifying student understanding	"I also felt successful when I *helped them understand* a concept that they were previously struggling on."
	Witnessing student participation	"I felt most successful … when the kids were unmuting and *actively participating* in the lesson!"
	Helping by translating	"The one-on-one support where I could *translate* directions."
Framing Challenges	Interactional "barriers"	"When the student I was tutoring *couldn't understand* what I was saying."
	Absence of interaction	"I tried to prompt her with questions and keep her engaged but she chose *not to respond*."