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Multilingual Tutors' Experiences and Practices in Online Sessions

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Abstract

This thesis explores multilingual tutors' diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds and examines how those elements affect their tutoring practices in online sessions. While previous scholarship has examined multilingual student experiences, direct experiences of online multilingual tutors are relatively unexplored. For this study, four tutors were interviewed. The interviews revealed that tutors perceive their multilingualism as a strength in how they relate to multilingual students and their writing while also experiencing challenges related to assumptions made about their linguistic abilities. In online sessions, clarity and purposeful communication is key and multilingual tutors communicate clearly, often code-switching, which enhances understanding, efficiency, and creating bonds with students despite the lack of physical presence.

Introduction

The United States is a country of choice for many international students for reasons such as quality education, athletic scholarships, and promising labor markets. As of 2017, international students make "1.1 million of the 4.6 million enrolled students worldwide" (Zong & Batalova, 2018, p 1). With this large number of international students comes linguistic and cultural diversity and universities need support services, like writing centers, that are equipped to work with diverse students. With the increase of multilingual students at American universities, the need for multilingual writing tutors grows as well. Writing centers should be prepared for linguistic diversity and train their tutors to aid students with varying communication needs. In the 21st century, a writing center should be a place that "embraces the concept of multiliteracies, in which effective tutors learn to engage with difference in open-minded, flexible, and non-dogmatic ways" (Grimm, 2009, p. 21). Today's writing centers should be spaces where writing tutors are trained and prepared to work with students who speak multiple languages and are from various cultures. Writing tutors, if they are not already, should be taught to accept and embrace differences (such as students' capacity with the English language or unfamiliarity with the American culture or curriculum standards).

Because multilingual students' writing demands may differ from English only speaking students, "experts seek to better understand the needs of writers for whom English was not learned or acquired as a first language" (Hauer, 2019, abstract). Such needs may include composing first drafts in students' native language, being overly focused on grammar, preferring to meet tutors in online spaces, or requesting to work with multilingual tutors to articulate their ideas more clearly. Writing centers should

therefore be prepared for the various demands and practices that come with the linguistic diversity and strive to make their centers the best possible resources they can be.

While much research has been devoted to tutoring multilingual students in person or online (e.g., Bruce, 2016; Rafoth, 2015), not enough research has focused on the experiences of multilingual tutors. Although scholars like Kevin Dvorak (2016) explored the experiences of tutors in a multilingual writing center,[1] most scholarship still focuses on the perspectives of multilingual tutees, leaving the multilingual tutors' approaches and experiences relatively unexplored (Hauer, 2019, abstract). Multilingual tutors' practices should play an important role in writing center research as their skills and talents are unique from monolingual tutors. Multilingual tutors may offer insights on how to best aid the increasing number of multilingual and international students and create a diversity-welcoming environment that contributes to the overall quality of writing centers. Accordingly, Ben Rafoth (2015) writes, "A tutor's knowledge of another language is valuable not only for the cultural insights it gives them but also for the shared experiences of language learning and figuring out how to overcome communication obstacles" (p. 20). Multilingual tutors most likely went through similar experiences learning multiple languages and therefore may be more empathetic toward multilingual students and their writing concerns. Shared perspectives of a common second language or being a language learner can create a comfortable environment for multilingual students during sessions, resulting in students' preference of working with that tutor in the future. Multilingual tutors become not only invaluable resources for multilingual students, but they also serve as quality assets to writing centers in general, as they represent diversity

[1] By multilingual writing centers, I mean centers where tutors and students speak multiple languages and are encouraged to use more than one language during tutoring sessions.

and their presence creates welcoming spaces where individuals feel comfortable and like to revisit.

There is an existing scholarship that covers both multilingual and online tutoring, however these areas have been relatively unexplored together. Studies by Dvorak (2016) and Rafoth (2015) that involve direct input from multilingual writing tutors have examined when and why tutors use multiple languages during tutoring sessions and whether or not it helps the students they assist. However, both studies explore multilingual tutoring practices in face-to-face sessions leaving online tutoring unanalyzed. As many students may live far from campus and cannot always commute to the writing center, or because students may prefer meeting using varying modalities, online tutoring has increasingly become a convenient option (Fitzgerald & Ianetta, 2016). Since the dynamics in a virtual space are not the same as in person, due to the lack of body language and facial expressions, tutors need to be creative and find ways to enhance their written or spoken communication, adopting alternative methods, such as tone of voice or using more descriptive vocabulary. Scholars like Beth Hewett (2015) and Lauren Fitzgerald and Melissa Ianetta (2016) explore online writing practices for tutors, however they leave the multilingual aspect excluded. Multilingual and online tutoring experiences and practices are never merged together, which is needed in writing center research.

The current study adds to the existing literature of multilingual and online tutoring by exploring multilingual tutors' experiences in online tutoring sessions. Four multilingual tutors who speak at least two languages fluently and conduct tutoring sessions online were selected for this study. To explore the personal experiences of participants, 60-minute semi-structured interviews were chosen as the best methodology

and participants were asked about their experiences as multilingual students and tutors in online sessions. The qualitative data gathered from the participants were analyzed by identifying patterns in their responses that focused on multilingual online tutoring. The data were analyzed by focusing on the major themes and concepts taken from previous scholarship and compared and contrasted to findings from the interviews with the goal of adding to or modifying existing research.

This study was conducted at Nova Southeastern University's (NSU) Writing and Communication Center (WCC). NSU is designated a Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI) with a significant number of Spanish speaking students enrolling each year (NSU Fact Book, 2019). As a space that works with all 6,071 Hispanic students across NSU's campuses (NSU Fact Book, 2019, p. 112), the WCC receives many multilingual students on a daily basis as well as employs multilingual tutors. At the time of this study in 2019, the WCC employed 15 multilingual tutors. Because multilingual tutors at WCC interact with many multilingual students every day, it was my interest to familiarize myself with their perspectives and practices.

As a researcher, what drew me into conducting this study was my personal experience as a multilingual online tutor. I designed the interview questions based on existing scholarship on multilingual and online tutoring but also my experiences. I have observed that multilingual students in the WCC often look for multilingual tutors to help them with their writing, which left me with many questions: What do multilingual tutors do differently from English-only speaking tutors? How do the languages that tutors speak, and their cultural backgrounds affect the way they tutor? Would the tutors consider their multilingualism a strength or a weakness when tutoring? When and how do

multilingual tutors use code-switching with students? What techniques do multilingual tutors use to make students comfortable in online spaces?

In my belief, multilingual tutors possess more empathy toward language learners and are able to make multilingual students feel comfortable, even in virtual spaces, which draws them to making recurring sessions with multilingual tutors. In the two years that I have been tutoring online, multilingual students have told me that they make recurring appointments with me mainly because I am multilingual as well. Based on my experience as a multilingual tutor, I was wondering what experiences other multilingual tutors have and what they do while working with students.

Moreover, I believe that not only the language but also culture plays an important role during sessions and sometimes even more in online spaces where tutors solely rely on their voices and attitudes. As "cultural backgrounds can impact the ways in which people make rhetorical decisions" (Cox, 2016, p. 61), each country also has its own idioms and phrases that only individuals sharing the same culture understand. As the participants noted, when a tutor and student connect based on a cultural experience, a special bond can be created resulting in an enjoyable and effective tutoring session. This study was conducted to examine how language and culture affect tutors' practices and what important perspectives multilingual tutors can provide to writing centers. With the study results, I make recommendations for writing centers that work with multilingual students in online sessions.

Literature Review

This section provides an overview of scholarship on multilingual writing centers, multilingual students who attend them, and multilingual tutors who work at them. I provide a synthesized summary of what has been said about online tutoring, its advantages and disadvantages, best approaches, and suggestions for utilizing virtual spaces to best aid students. Also, I touch on how linguistic and cultural backgrounds play a role in multilingual tutoring and what it is like to be a multilingual tutor.

Perceptions on Multilingual Writing Centers

Because there are many multilingual students attending U.S. universities, writing centers should be prepared to work with linguistically and culturally diverse students and have diverse tutors among their staff. Authors, such as Shanti Bruce (2016) and Liliana Naydan (2016), point out that institutions and writing centers should create environments where all students and tutors can feel welcome and valued. When individuals do not feel included, it creates "barriers that keep them from doing their best work" (Turner, 1994, p. 356). When students do not feel like they belong, when there are no signs showing that diversity is welcome in the center, such as hearing multiple languages spoken, individuals are less likely to focus solely on their writing. Just as multilingual students can feel like outsiders in writing centers, multilingual tutors can too.

The goal for writing centers should be to create comfort for not only students but also tutors who might feel that they do not belong, whether it is for their language, ethnicity, or culture. The scholarship suggests that writing centers are built considering the comfort of individuals who attend them and work at them and should strive to create a "house for diversity" where they feel at home with input from students and tutors

(Condon & Olson, 2016, p. 29). For example, claims such as standard English is the most correct form of English and the only form of English spoken and written in, can affect the culture of the writing center and passing down such myths only helps to alienate multilingual individuals. Naydan (2016) explains that it is this "hegemonic narrative" that prevents welcoming diversity in the writing center and puts limitations to students and tutors (p. 29). The usual monolingual hegemonic thinking the author discusses looks something like this: "We speak English, and that is why we work in the writing center; they need to learn English, and they come to us so they can learn our insider English ropes" (p. 29). Such narratives imply a sense of division and can result in multilingual students being intimidated to attend writing centers and multilingual tutors not disclosing their linguistic upbringings in fear of losing their insider status.

In order for multilingual writing centers to serve their purpose as inviting spaces for everyone, scholars such as Erica Cirillo-McCarthy et al. (2016) suggest starting from the mission statement. Although many early authors like Elizabeth Boquet (1999), Nancy Grimm (1996), and Stephen North (1984) attempted to move writing centers away from the "fix it shop" or editing center, which is important, there are downsides for writing centers claiming they do not edit papers or correct grammar. When it comes to multilingual writing centers, the language needs to be reframed to one that promotes inclusiveness for students and for tutors. The mission statement of a multilingual writing center should include phrases such as "encouraging autonomy and confidence in writing, empowering students to identify as writers, inspiring students to develop personal style/voice, collaborating with students through all stages of the writing process" (Cirillo-McCarthy, et al., 2016, p. 67). Reframing the mission statement is a starting point for

writing centers to create the mentioned “house for diversity” where multilingual students and tutors feel comfortable and encouraged to do their best work.

Another step to creating a more welcoming environment and embracing the multilingual and multicultural differences is “placing phrases in different languages and posters representing different cultures around the center” as well as including “sensitivity discussions in meetings” where tutors would learn about different cultures of the students that tend to visit their writing center (Bruce, 2016, p. 91-93). Writing centers could also include more subliminal messages that state that diversity is welcome such as hanging a large clock on the major wall displaying the time in various places in the world (Grimm, 2009). By practicing these strategies, students will feel more welcome and tutors “enriched” (Bruce, 2016, p. 93). Therefore, a multilingual writing center should be a place that creates comfort and a learning platform for all involved individuals where students and tutors benefit from one another.

When writing centers allow multilingual tutors to realize their professional potential and they start feeling confident about their identities and linguistic upbringings, many things can change. Writing centers that encourage multilingual tutors to work with multilingual students help both parties to develop their rhetorical skills by allowing them to shift among languages and cultures (Guerra, 2004; Lape, 2013; Lorimer Leonard 2014). It is because of the specific ways that multilingual tutors can help multilingual students that Terese Thonus (2014) claims that “multilingual tutoring by multilingual tutors may be superior to any other (tutoring) model” (p. 207). Because multilingual tutors understand what multilingual students are experiencing and can relate to individuals who are learning a language, authors such as Christian Brendel (2012),

Hsing-Yin Cynthia Lin and Katherine DeLuca (2017), and Glenn Hutchinson and Paula Gillespie (2016) support Thonus' (2014) claim that "including multilingual tutors can strengthen a writing center, particularly in working with multilingual writers" (Hutchinson & Gillespie, 2016, p. 123), as they "draw upon their own experiences as language learners when tutoring" (p. 124). It is essential that multilingual tutors are encouraged to use their potential as they are able to "understand what it is like for them (students) on a human level" (Bruce, 2016, p. 85).

Apart from better understanding the difficulties of composing in multiple languages, tutors who come from different cultures might have experienced discrimination themselves, for multiple reasons such as "skin color, hair texture, or the languages they might be speaking with their parents or friends" (Hutchinson & Gillespie, 2016, p. 126-27). Perhaps, some of the multilingual tutors went through the same cultural and linguistic transitions and understand what it is like to be in the students' shoes. Multilingual tutors can empathize with them and are able to adjust to meet the students' comfort zone in various aspects, for instance, pacing talking, providing more direct suggestions or switching between languages during tutoring sessions (Nieves, 2017; Phillips 2017). Another strategy of working with multilingual writers suggested by Suresh Canagarajah (2006) is letting the students alternate between identities and writing styles to empower them. Multilingual tutors recognize the importance of letting students brainstorm in their native language if that is what they feel most comfortable with at the moment. They can guide students through the process of transferring their ideas into English while avoiding students getting stuck in the early composition process because of a language barrier. When multilingual tutors are able to relate to students it helps them to

understand where the students' thought process is coming from and allows them to work with ease. Moreover, their awareness of multilingual students' needs creates a place for bonding (Nieves, 2017). When this special bond happens, it is as if the student and tutor were having a session within a session. When students and tutors are working without their concerns of being different or outsiders, they can dedicate their full focus to their work, and both benefit from it.

Encouraging diversity in writing centers can result in not only multilingual students, but also multilingual tutors, finding spaces where they feel at home. Multilingual tutors also appreciate working in spaces where their native language and culture is welcome to fully embrace their identities. For example, Neisha-Anne Green (2016) states that being able to code-mesh in the writing center feels natural to her and suppressing it would give her the feeling of anxiety. The multilingual tutors that Dvorak (2016) had interviewed also "embrace the fact that they have the ability to think, write, talk and teach in more than one language" (p. 118). They utilize their linguistic skills in tutoring sessions and consider it to be a great tool for multiple reasons, whether it is to bond with a student or understand the students' thought process when they can't express themselves in English. When tutors are able to utilize their linguistic abilities in writing centers, it not only creates a homey atmosphere for them but also brings a rewarding feeling that they are able to utilize their talents to help others.

Tutoring Multilingual Students

Higher vs. Lower Order Concerns

Although writing center scholarship and practitioners often encourage focusing on higher order concerns over lower order concerns, multilingual students often enter

writing centers requesting to focus on grammar. Research from scholars such as Carol Severino et al. (2009) or Joseph Cheatle (2017) indicate that in fact, non-native English-speaking writers most commonly come to writing centers with the request to focus on grammar. Specifically, of the 85 non-native English-speaking students Severino et al. (2009) studied, almost 60% of them asked for grammar/punctuation assistance. In contrast, of the 85 native speaking students, only 21% asked about grammar/punctuation (p. 119). The request to work on grammar from multilingual writers is often initiated by their professors and their misconception of what the writing center does. The common misconception of the writing center as the "fix-it shop" (North, 1984, p. 435) has two consequences. One, multilingual writers might feel that their writing is not worth reading unless it is free of grammatical or written accent errors, creating a false impression of grammar being the main factor in evaluation. There is also the consequence of unnecessary preoccupation with lower order concerns and students' low self-esteem as writers (Liu, 2010; Cirillo-McCarthy et al., 2016; North, 1984). In addition, the writing tutors are put in the position to convince students otherwise while also having to be prepared to aid students with their writing concerns.

This false impression of the importance of grammar and punctuation along with the feeling of inferiority that multilingual students come to the center with makes it difficult for tutors as they need to find a way to stir away students' focus and contribute to a more positive relationship toward writing. Many authors point out that it is important for tutors and students to understand that cultural or linguistic differences do not equal to errors (Blau & Hall, 2002; Horner et al., 2011; Matsuda & Cox, 2009; Zawacki & Habib, 2014). Tutors are often put in the position where they have to explain to multilingual

students that making grammatical errors does necessarily mean that they are bad writers. When tutors assist multilingual students with writing, their primary goal should be creating students who will be confident and self-sufficient writers in the future.

Multilingual tutors with their background as language learners can more easily identify and understand “the provenance and rationale for error” that multilingual students make, which is crucial (Mendez Newman, 2017, p. 7). Moreover, if the knowledge of language is not enough, multilingual tutors can utilize their cultural experiences to truly understand what the students mean (Brendel, 2012). Providing that they tend to understand the root of multilingual students’ errors in writing, there are multiple strategies multilingual tutors can use to work on higher order concerns with the students while tackling the requested grammar concern. A tutor that Hutchinson and Gillespie (2016) interviewed, for instance, revealed that she usually shows students the professors’ grading rubric with the points dedicated to sections of the paper and grammar is one of the last on the chart. She makes students understand that “if the paper isn't answering the intended prompt, then having a perfect grammar won’t prevent them from receiving a lower grade” (p. 127). What scholars noticed is that when tutors do not make it clear that higher order concerns are what is valued more, “writers who receive detailed feedback, with suggestions ranging from minor editing to global revision, often make the editing changes but not the global revisions” (Rafoth, 2009, p. 156). The reasons for avoiding global revisions are that either the students are concerned about grammar more than they should be or that it is simply easier to correct lower order concerns.

Multilingual tutors often need to make decisions when they see an error caused by language barrier in students’ papers. They need to decide whether to focus on the overall

argument and not point out the grammatical errors or try to edit them. It is tricky because if tutors decide to edit such errors, they might be taking the language learner's identity away from the student, but if they don't, the student might get a bad grade. What Michelle Cox (2016) suggests is "not to mask the linguistic proficiency of a student writer," stating that "an intermediate ESL student should not come across as advanced on a paper after a few trips to the writing center" (p. 66). The strategy that multilingual tutors can use after identifying the root of the students' errors is to explain to students how English works and then focus on context and what the students are communicating (Cox, 2016; Mendez Newman, 2017; Min, 2016). As Young-Kyung Min (2016) states, the tutoring process should "move from editor-dynamic to educator-dynamic" (p. 21). For instance, tutors should explain to students the rules of English sentence structure if they notice that words are out of place because the student uses a sentence structure that would work in Spanish. The advantage of explaining the rules, as Hewett (2015) writes, is that it "helps the students with particular pieces of writing while providing them permanent learning aids applicable in their future" (p. 90). When tutors teach students the rules, they give them a skill set that will make them more confident and independent writers for future and allow them to spend more time focusing on the overall argument the students are communicating rather than being concerned about lower order concerns.

Although, the scholarship is not unified when it comes to the type of feedback that is most effective when working with multilingual students (Hauer, 2016; Hewett, 2015; Hutchinson & Gillespie, 2016; Rafoth, 2009), there are many authors who call for meeting in the middle and suggest negotiation practices as the win-win for both students and tutors. In order to fulfil the multilingual students' wish to work on grammar but also

the tutors' training to focus on higher order concerns, tutors should practice a negotiation approach in sessions (Blau & Hall, 2002; Hauer, 2016; Lape, 2013; Rafoth, 2015). Negotiation is a flexible approach where both parties engage in an open conversation about the goals and expectations in the session and meet somewhere in the middle. Practicing negotiation with multilingual students ensures that their voice is heard as they participate in making changes (Severino, 2009) and portrays the tutors' role as less directive while still maintaining some control over the direction of the session.

Tutor Roles

All tutors have their own style of tutoring, which defines their role during sessions. The role of tutors may vary in each session or may shift throughout. Many tutors expressed that they feel anxious when working with multilingual students because they are unsure of their role as tutors (Thonus, 2004) and feel guilty when line-editing rather than focusing on higher orders concerns that they would with native-speaking students (Blau & Hall, 2002; Matsuda & Cox, 2009). The scholarship, for the most part, is unified in stating that tutors should be more indirect rather than providing directives to students. Donald Murray (1972/2011) expressed the importance of letting students discover the truth and "experience the writing process for themselves" while the educators just being patient recipients (p. 5). Scholars such as Muriel Harris (1992) and Lara Hauer (2016) applied this idea into tutoring as well and suggest that tutors play a more passive role and offer space to students to take charge while tutors listen to them, and let them wonder. Therefore, the suggestion for tutors is to act as recipients who give the students space, or we risk robbing them of the experience of the composing process. Tutors should engage in a dialogue and converse with students about the changes they

want to make rather than practicing a directive approach. Students should be allowed to make decisions for themselves while tutors only guiding them through the process and engaging in a dialogue with them as "the students often know what they want to change in their writing so why not ask them" (Hutchinson & Gillespie, 2016, p. 136). Once tutors engage students and get them to make decisions about their writing, they are more likely to gain an overall positive experience with the composing process and feel the writing more of their own.

Tutors can engage with students indirectly by asking them questions and explaining the grammatical and stylistic rules to help students apply them on their own in the future. By asking students questions, tutors show students that they misunderstood the students' message (Ritter, 2005, p. 59). Instead of pointing out an error, by asking students questions the students realize where they need to be clearer and it lets them think for themselves.

While some scholars advocate for indirect tutoring approaches (Hauer, 2016; Hutchinson & Gillespie, 2016), others such as Rafoth (2009) and Hewett (2015) are aware of the downside of indirect feedback, especially when working with multilingual students online. The reason for their skepticism is that it is difficult to be personable while trying to communicate the purpose clearly at the same time. As Rafoth (2009) explains, when the tutor's feedback is aimed to be reassuring and comforting, it can distract the writer from the real need of supervision. Moreover, indirectness and politeness in tutors' comments like "I wonder if. . .," or "You might want to think about. . .," might encourage tutors to think they sound non-directive and polite but "multilingual students can understand it as wishy-washy" (Rafoth, 2009, p. 157). The American

politeness through indirect advice might not be understood the same way in the students' culture and can be counterproductive.

Hewett (2015) opposes the previously suggested approach of asking questions as a form of indirect feedback when working with multilingual students online. Hewett's research revealed that students' main concern about getting indirect feedback is that tutors would be "responding to student writing with questions instead of answers" (p.114). Suggestions in the form of questions can be confusing and easily misunderstood. For example, suggestions such as "have you thought about starting a new paragraph here," can be easily misunderstood or simply answered "no." Instead, tutors should say more direct phrases such as, "I suggest that you…" to save time and avoid confusion (Fitzgerald & Ianetta, 2016, p.183).

While much research has focused on tutor tendency to take on indirect roles, studies by Terese Thonus (2004) and Jessica Williams and Carol Severino (2004) each showed that native-English speaking tutors tend to negotiate less and give more instructions when working with multilingual students. They also tend to be more in control and take initiative when tutoring non-native English writers and therefore take on the role of a motivator. The possible reason why native-speaking tutors are more "directive and authoritative" (Williams & Severino, 2004, p. 166) is because their linguistic proficiency puts them in the position of authority and makes them feel like they should be the experts in the room (Ritter, 2002). Thonus' and Williams and Severino's findings supports Hewett (2015), Rafoth (2009), and Fitzgerald and Ianetta's (2016) claims about the tutor roles, however there is lack of scholarship that would include

direct perspectives of multilingual tutors on what role they tend to play and what type of feedback is mostly used by them when working with multilingual students.

Code-Switching

Multilingual tutors are unique in that they can integrate code-switching or interchanging languages during sessions with multilingual students. A multilingual approach to composition has been a topic of interest for many authors such as Suresh Canagarajah (2006, 2015), Noreen Lape (2013), Vershawn Young and Aja Martinez (2011), or Terry Zawacki and Anna Sophia Habib (2014), but the multilingual approach to tutoring is largely still emerging. Interchanging languages during tutoring sessions is a flexible approach that supports the negotiation approach to tutoring and can be found practiced at more linguistically diverse writing centers. Code-switching in the writing centers is a pedagogy of interest for scholars such as Brendel (2012), Dvorak (2016), Hutchinson and Gillespie (2016), and Green (2016). These scholars explore writing centers with linguistically diverse tutors and their use of language as a tutoring strategy during sessions. Moreover, these authors respectively discuss the effect code-switching has on multilingual tutors and multilingual students they work with.

Within the realm of composition, Suresh Canagarajah (2006) believes that using 'standard' English only "limits the acquisition, creativity and production" of individuals (p. 592). He argues that if multiple languages and dialects are encouraged in composition classrooms, writers are offered an enriched learning opportunity and space to express themselves. Nancy Grimm (2009) applies multilingualism to writing centers and argues "When a writing center embraces multilingualism rather than monolingualism as a conceptual norm, many things change" (p. 17). She believes that although multilingual

tutors may not always have an “A” in the traditional English courses, because they are accustomed to constantly negotiating between languages, cultures, and identities, they possess essential knowledge and skills for creative writing environments that monolingual tutors do not. Code-switching is a tool that multilingual tutors are equipped with and sets them apart from monolingual tutors. Multilingual tutors can utilize their linguistic and cultural knowledge when working with multilingual students in a number of instances such as to clarify ideas, avoid students getting stuck due to a language barrier, or to create a bond with students while feeling that tutors are utilizing their unique skills to help others.

Although code-switching can be beneficial to both students and tutors, often multilingual tutors are not sure when to use code-switching or whether or not it is permitted in their writing centers. What Choi et al. (2017) and Dvorak (2016) found was that tutors felt that they did something wrong when caught interchanging between languages during a session. For example, Choi et al. describe an experience when Kim, a Korean born multilingual tutor, was not sure if she was allowed to switch to Korean to help another Korean student and release her stress by speaking to her in a language other than English:

> I was hesitant but, at the same time, glad when she (student) asked if she could discuss matters with me in Korean, because I understood what she was concerned about. I wanted to help her, so I said yes. Relieved to speak in her mother tongue, she expressed very clearly what her instructor wanted her to do and why she chose to draft her paper in a certain way. (Choi et al., 2017, p. 18)

What resulted from this multilingual session where Kim and the Korean student interchanged between Korean and English were reactions such as “I feel safe,” and “I would’ve visited Writing Center earlier if I had known I could speak in Korean” (Choi et al., 2017, p. 18). By code-switching during the session, the student felt comfortable and was able to express herself clearer, which allowed Kim to assist her better and faster. When students are able to get help from a tutor with whom they can code-switch, they tend to visit the writing center more frequently. As Hutchinson and Gillespie (2016) state, “We sometimes hear of requests for specific kinds of tutors but not for native speakers of English; the most frequent request is for a tutor who speaks Spanish” (2016, p.132). The faster work pace while feeling more comfortable results in multilingual students making recurring appointments with the tutor they can code-switch with. Interviewed multilingual students by Dvorak (2016) disclosed that being spoken to in Spanish during sessions encouraged and made them feel comfortable and efficient. Tutors should let the student’s voice come through during sessions (Thonus, 2004), and the opportunity to code-switch ensures that multilingual students are not silent about their ideas due to a language barrier.

As Canagarajah (2011) states, students should be allowed to “play” and “experiment” with writing (p. 415). With the idea of playing with writing, writing centers should create a space where tutors and students can practice being creative and bringing multiple languages into their sessions. Multilingual tutoring allows tutors and students to think critically about options as they negotiate between their linguistic choices and find the most suitable fit for the student’s writing. As apparent from Kim’s case, playing with code-switching is not only beneficial for students, but also for multilingual tutors as it

helps them to work more efficiently. As Hutchinson and Gillespie (2016) explain, when tutors involve more than one language in their session, it helps to "bridge the gaps" between their first language and English and it "makes students feel comfortable and it helps the tutors to understand their intended meaning" (p. 131). Code-switching is a practice that can bring compassion and understanding into the tutoring sessions and help tutors to better grasp what students intend to write but perhaps have difficulty expressing.

The multilingual tutors' experiences with code-switching from the scholarship were positive and perceived as a natural strategy to implement in tutoring sessions. A multilingual tutor cited in Hutchinson and Gillespie's (2016) work, Jeanette, feels that whenever she code-switches, it is like "there is a session within a session" as she often advises her multilingual students "if it does not come to you in English, then think in Spanish" (p. 131). When the students tell her the word they have in mind in Spanish, she can quickly navigate them to the English interpretation, without the students being stuck or getting frustrated because they cannot let their ideas out. Martha, another multilingual tutor who practices code-switching in the same manner as Jeanette, helps students with brainstorming the correct words and ideas by switching between English and Spanish. She recalls a multilingual tutoring session with a female student, stating that "In order to help her find words to convey her thoughts as accurate as possible, I asked her what she meant by saying certain things, discussing which Spanish words we thought worked best" (Hutchinson & Gillespie, 2016, p.132). In Martha's case, the two were collaborating and using both languages to make sure that the tutor understood the student's ideas correctly, then negotiating to find the perfect fit in English to clearly explain what the student wanted to communicate.

Code-switching is a technique that comes natural to multilingual tutors and writing center policies should not let them suppress what comes natural to them as it can lead to frustration. Green (2016) recalls her own experience as a Barbados born tutor before she knew about code-switching and code-meshing and learned to embrace it. She states that in order to fit in her writing center, she would hide in her academic self for years. Out of fear of not belonging or not being accepted, she was suppressing what was natural to her and often felt anxiety, shortness of breath, and fatigue (p. 76-77). The feeling that she needed to constantly speak and tutor in standard English only would not allow her to be her true self and she felt limited.

Just as tutors want to obey and conform to writing center policies, even if they do not always align with their personal beliefs, students who visit the center also adjust to the environment. There are times when multilingual students do not dare to start speaking their native language during sessions because they do not think it is permitted, but other times, they prefer to stick to English because they simply want to practice (Dvorak, 2016). A multilingual tutor, Roberta, cited in Dvorak (2016)'s study, states that if the students want to use the tutoring session as a practice, she will only speak to them in English, but other times if she sees the student struggling with finding words and perhaps being unsure if he/she can use another language, Roberta code-switches to help them out. She states, "I understand the student needs to learn English, but why [create] frustration. They know you speak the language, but you refuse to help them using their native language?" (Dvorak, 2016, p. 116). Roberta believes that using multiple languages during sessions should not be suppressed for the sake of both students and tutors. She drew from her own experience as a language learner when she felt lost and frustrated because she

did not have anyone to help her in Spanish. Moreover, as Choi et al. (2017) describe, the feeling that multilingual tutors expressed after helping someone utilizing their linguistic or cultural knowledge was priceless. Some tutors mentioned that they found an identity as writing tutors when they were helping students using code-switching (Choi et al., 2017). Allowing code-switching in writing centers shows respect toward linguistic and cultural differences and enables multilingual tutors to utilize what comes natural to them while helping multilingual students in a way that is giving them a voice and creates a positive attitude toward writing.

Special Training

Tutoring multilingual students is a unique practice and although it may come natural to multilingual tutors, it is recommended that tutors go through a special training to assist multilingual students. There are scholars such as Nieves (2017) who believe that the "rhetorical attunement" (p. iii) that multilingual tutors experience with multilingual students is due to tutors' multilingual upbringing, but many others such as Bailey (2012), Chainer Nowacki (2012), Rafoth (2015), and Thonus (2004) still suggest that tutors should be specifically trained to work with multilingual students.

Sherwood (2007) cites the Greek rhetorician Isocrates in claiming that "tutoring is a rhetorical art form whose mastery combines talent, training, and experience" (p. 53). Therefore, although tutor multilingual upbringing and personal experiences play a major role in the ability empathize with multilingual students, it is also due to specific tutor education and training that tutors learn to utilize their skills effectively (Nieves, 2017). It is ultimately the combination of training and diverse linguistic experiences all that allows multilingual tutors to utilize their potential to the fullest, however the training part is

essential for tutors to learn how to work with their skills to help students. Accordingly, Phillips (2017) also believes that writing centers should strive to train tutors to "increase their expertise" that they already possess to "establish a culture that values the needs of multilingual students" (p. 46). The students vary in their needs and levels of English proficiency and Phillips suggests that tutors are trained to support students' needs, otherwise they might get discouraged.

In particular, Chainer Nowacki (2012) states that tutors need to be trained to help multilingual students express themselves. The reason is that often language learners have many ideas that are unexpressed simply due to the linguistic or cultural barrier. However, rather than helping multilingual students express themselves, often tutors who work with multilingual students tend to take over the session and be directive in making changes, which results in suppressing the student's voice. As Thonus (2004) states, tutor training is especially needed as many tutors experience frustration when interacting with multilingual students. When tutors are not trained to work in a different manner with students who might struggle to express themselves or are slower in making changes, it is easy for tutors to overcome their frustration by taking over the session. For example, Juan, a multilingual tutor that Dvorak (2016) interviewed, describes his session with a multilingual student saying, "It was mainly me who ran the session," and thinks he could have been "less directive" (p. 129). Remembering that session, Juan acknowledges his mistake as he was the one holding the pen and making all the changes in the student's paper.

Scholars such as Thonus (2004) and Severino (2009) suggest that the training should encourage a flexible approach from tutors since all multilingual students are

different and most importantly, they should allow the students' voices to come through and help them to express themselves clearly. Tutors need to make sure that they explain any suggested changes clearly to multilingual students and that the students participate, and their voice is being heard throughout their work.

In relation tutor textbooks and training materials, Bailey (2012) explains why tutors would be frustrated or unsure how to work with multilingual students. He states that they are very "US-centric" and that "tutor education materials are geared to a U.S. context and consequently to users who are assumed to be monocultural and monolingual U.S. tutors" (p. 3). These tutor training materials do not reflect the multilingual and multicultural staff that writing centers have and do not encourage the utilization of their skills. When tutor training material is not reflecting the writing center staff, writing centers should strive to offer proper alternative training to nourish the professional growth of multilingual tutors.

Online Tutoring

When it comes to tutoring online, many scholars are skeptical of its potential and highlight multiple limitations. For instance, Fitzgerald and Ianetta (2016) claim that "online tutoring limits much of the tutor's and writer's access to the complex body of information found in live, face-to-face sessions" (p. 178). In a face-to-face tutoring session, both tutors and students have "ready access" to information that are "more easily read and interpreted" such as "the written text being shared, the conversational exchanges that take place, the displays of body language" (Smith & Sloan, 2009, p. 5). Although, synchronous online tutoring now allows audio and video conferencing or instant messaging between both parties, allowing them to work synchronously on the same text,

scholars such as Bell (2012), Fitzgerald and Ianetta (2016), and Pemberton (2010) still believe that even with the best technology, there will always be certain limits imposed to the information shared between tutor and student. Pemberton (2010) compares online and face-to-face tutoring, stating that it is as "moving the writing center conference from an IMAX theater to a grainy black-and-white, thirteen-inch television screen" (x). Although online platforms offer a full range of modalities such as ability to share screens, use a webcam, or chat through text, which can all help recreate the experience of a face-to-face session, skepticism pertains to the misunderstandings that come with technology and sharing information through it.

On the other hand, even skeptical scholars are aware that online tutoring exists because of the many benefits it provides. For instance, online tutoring "provides more opportunities for tutoring to students who are not on campus" (Fitzgerald & Ianetta, 2016, p. 167). Some students cannot commute to campus because of work or family responsibilities and online tutoring enables them to have the benefit of tutoring without traveling. Diane Martinez and Leslie Olsen (2015) believe that any institution that provides online courses should also offer online tutoring support. The scholarship therefore calls for embracing the online environment as it "presents opportunities to mediate the challenges of working with students from a distance" (Gallagher & Maxfield, 2019, p. 2). However, online tutoring is not limited to people who cannot commute, some on site students prefer to be tutored online while staying in the comfort of their homes. Joanna Wolfe and Jo Ann Griffin (2012) found that "87% of student writers who participated in an online session either preferred the online environment or had no environment preference" (p. 81). The authors' results show that online tutoring for its

multiple benefits is a preferred option by many. As Bill Chewning (2007) states, online tutoring "allows tutors and tutees to address issues from places and times that they feel comfortable or ready" (p. 59). Therefore, the comfort that online tutoring provides benefits students, tutors who are not on campus, and anyone who performs better from the comfort of a place of their choice. Another benefit that scholars such as Chewning (2007), Hewett (2015), and Rafoth (2009) highlight is the data collection opportunity that online tutoring brings. This is especially helpful for tutors as online sessions can be recorded and tutors can review them and reflect on their work. Learning from previously recorded sessions can be a useful tool for self-reflecting and future tutor training.

As much as online tutoring can be beneficial, there is a common drawback that the literature mentions which is technical issues. Wolfe and Griffin's (2012) study revealed that criticisms of online tutoring concerned problems with technology, such as audio difficulties or hard time communicating ideas in an electronic medium (p. 195). The authors argue that online tutors need to be prepared to assist students not only with composition but also technical issues. Students can come up with unusual needs around writing issues, technology malfunction, or misunderstanding how to post their papers online. Therefore, scholars such as Wolfe and Griffin (2012) or Eric Moberg (2010) advocate for providing tutor training and using technologies that provide pedagogical value to writing centers. Online tutors should go through a special theoretical training that explains strategies on how to aid students with the technological issues they experience in the online space.

As much as special theoretical training is suggested, tutors should also participate in hands-on activities with the platform they are using to tutor. Martinez and Olsen

(2015) suggest that a formal tutor training on the online tutoring platform is accompanied by dialogue among tutors and trying out the technology from both the student and tutor perspectives. It is crucial that tutors also understand what the platform looks like from students' end to be able to navigate them in times when students struggle. Ultimately, online tutors need to be prepared and familiar enough with the technology they are using to be able to offer help to students not just with writing but also with technical issues to avoid any additional frustration and focus on what is important. Martinez and Olsen (2015) and Moberg (2010) also point out that the online platform that tutors use should not be difficult but rather user-friendly for all technological proficiencies. Scholars like Michelle Sidler, Richard Morris and Elizabeth Overman Smith (2008) and Martha Pennington (2003) explain that students are easily discouraged if they find the technology difficult to use or experience mechanical breakdowns. If the platform is too challenging to use, students can quickly lose ground and not want to participate. The online platform therefore shouldn't be difficult to use because then it takes too much time and negative attitude during the session, trying to cope with the frustration of the student toward the technology.

As technology can limit the understanding of interpersonal and nonverbal cues and make it difficult for the tutor to get acquainted with students (Pemberton, 2010) a suggested approach for online tutors is to "think rhetorically," which can serve as a powerful tool to supplement for the interpersonal communication that can be lost when using technology (Fitzgerald & Ianetta, 2016, p. 181). Online tutors should keep in mind ethos, pathos, and purpose during sessions. The tutors are aware of ethos when they think of how they present themselves. A strategy to implement ethos in the online session

would be “believing that the writer is interested” because “such an attitude might in turn help to draw in a writer who is not” (Hewett, 2010, p. 58). Since online tutors can’t use body language as much as in face-to-face sessions, Bell (2012) emphasizes on utilizing the means available to the tutor, which is the voice and tone. According to Hewett (2010), tutors should “be personable by being genuine, specific, thoughtful, and self-engaged in the conference and the student’s writing” (p. 124). Therefore, keeping the tone lighthearted and friendly is a key to success in online tutoring as it can stand in place of an eye contact or smile. The students can sense the mood and engagement in the voice of the tutor, which can be reflected on the responses of the students and their overall experience with online tutoring. Given that online tutors do not know what students are doing or how they are feeling behind the screens, this strategy can be especially useful as a tool to lift the tutor’s spirit and engage the students.

The way that online tutors can include pathos is to establish a personal connection by appealing to the students’ feelings. Scholars such as David Carlson and Eileen Apperson-Williams (2003) state that the online distance between tutor and student is often considered impersonal because the “tutoring table is replaced with a computer screen” which can feel “cold, sterile, and, to many, uninviting” (p. 233). Online tutors need to get creative in substituting elements that “make us feel alive and energized” that students would get in face-to-face sessions, such as facial expression and gestures (Rafoth, 2010, p.146). Nieves (2017) highlights the importance of tutors empathizing with students and bringing pathos into the session supports her claim. As Hewett (2010) explains, online tutors should strive “to enact caring and present a human face in online settings” (p. 61). Empathizing with the student, checking if they understood the

suggestions, caring for their issues and struggles can create that personal connection that is limited by technology.

However, as much as online tutors should strive to be personable and caring, they also need to focus on the revisions. The concepts of ethos and purpose can be sometimes at odds as Rafoth (2009) says when online tutors try to be "reassuring and comforting" it can distract them from "the real need for revisions" (p. 158). Therefore, it is crucial that online tutors stay on track with the purpose of the session and do not get lost in recreating the face-to-face experience. To keep the sessions effective, to avoid any confusions caused by technology and to fulfil the purpose of tutoring sessions, Hewett (2015) and Rafoth (2009) suggest clear and direct communication when it comes to online settings. Specifically, Rafoth (2009) points out the need for tutors to be clear, confident and honest in multilingual online tutoring. The authors do not believe that Provisionals is the key to success in online tutoring and call for more directive approach as opposed to in person settings.

Multilingual Online Tutoring

When it comes to multilingual online tutoring that Rafoth (2009) discusses, online spaces can be for tutors to create safe and comfortable environments that might sound especially appealing to multilingual students. Scholars such as Blair (2005) or Thomas (2017) believe that online settings are ideal for multilingual students, especially language learners as they might lack the confidence to participate in an in person tutoring due to their linguistic proficiency or accent. Because online sessions only include the student and a tutor and there are no other people around who would serve as distractions, the risk of not being heard or being shy to speak up are minimized (Blair, 2005). The students do

not need to be self-conscious about their accents or level of English because there is nobody else watching or listening. Ultimately, online tutoring comes with benefits that are particularly promising for tutoring multilingual students.

While there is ample material to suggest that online tutoring is beneficial for multilingual students, the gap in literature that I found was in the direct perspectives of tutors on what it is like to be a multilingual online tutor. As Cox (2016) states that the "cultural backgrounds can impact the ways in which people make rhetorical decisions, organize texts, make arguments, and relate to readers" (p. 61), little scholarship offers direct experiences of multilingual tutors explaining how their linguistic or cultural differences affect their tutoring practices online. There are a few responses from multilingual tutors in the literature reflecting on what it is like to be non-native English speaking or non-white English-speaking tutor. According to Choi et al.'s (2017) blog post, multilingual and multicultural tutors "often face skepticism and doubt, from both native and non-native English speakers" (p. 3). These tutors often face stereotypes and negative comments from students because they are not what students imagine that a writing tutor should look or sound like. Moreover, multilingual and multicultural tutors get questioned about their ability or receive looks from the students who are unsure about their skills. For instance, an African American tutor, Oyeleye, recalled that a student asked "What is your qualification?" before they began to work (Choi et al., 2017, p. 4). Oyeleye states that students come to the center with certain expectations of an ideal tutor. Another multilingual tutor from South Korea, Choi, whose English is her second language was challenged by a student who told her: "Last semester, I worked with a native speaker because I need help with English" (Choi et al., 2017, p. 6). What is

interesting is that non-native English speakers are sometimes even more skeptical about the abilities of non-native tutors because they feel that a native speaker should be the one correcting their academic language.

Although Choi et al's (2017) blog post offers direct perspectives and also shines a light on some negative connotations to being a multilingual tutor, the online space is left unexplored. Because of the lacking literature on multilingual tutors' experiences online, this study explores how multilingual tutors utilize their strengths when working with multilingual students in online settings and what it feels like to be a multilingual tutor that interacts with students in an online space. Although sometimes tutors receive negative or stereotypical comments from students because of their ideological expectations, the value of multilingual/multicultural tutors is apparent. Because there are no direct perspectives from multilingual tutors working in online spaces, I explored this issue in more detail with the participants of my study.

Conclusion

When thinking about how the literature review plays into this research, a lot has been explored on multilingual writing centers, multilingual tutoring and online tutoring that helps to construct questions that need to be developed or explained in more detail. Going into the next phase of the research, we now know that multilingual writing centers should avoid monolingual hegemonic thinking and rather promote inclusiveness by actions such as adjusting the mission statement, hanging posters in multiple languages or clock with various times in the world to create an environment that welcomes diversity. Such an environment results in making multilingual and multicultural students more

comfortable and empowers them to feel confident about their identities while utilizing their unique skills to help others.

When it comes to multilingual tutoring, tutors are facing difficult situations as they often need to decide whether or not to point out and edit errors caused by linguistic or cultural barriers. The existing scholarship is not unified in providing an answer to what is the right thing to do. Scholars also do not agree on providing direct or indirect feedback, however it seems that the win-win option for both students and tutors is negotiation and meeting in the middle. The literature provides responses of monolingual tutors who negotiate less and instruct more when working with multilingual students, perhaps because of the feeling of being the authority in the room. It would be very interesting to see which approach multilingual tutors prefer, however the literature lacks their perspectives. We now know that multilingual tutors feel very natural when using code-switching during sessions for multiple reasons such as clarifying ideas, helping the students to express their thoughts or simply to bond. When multilingual tutors are discouraged from switching between languages as something that is natural to them, it can be frustrating and bring anxiety. Therefore, writing centers should encourage this behavior as it is much appreciated by multilingual tutors and students as well. The writing centers can encourage code-switching by including discussions about it in multilingual tutor training.

Special training was an important aspect that came up in online tutoring as well as scholars tend to see online sessions as limiting. Despite all benefits that online tutoring brings such as the enhanced comfort and privacy appreciated especially by language learners, tutors need to get hands-on training on the online platform they are using.

Sometimes online tutoring can be tricky for tutors as some scholars advise them to be as clear and direct as possible while others emphasize being personable and caring to substitute for the lack of physical presence. These concepts can be at odds and for this reason, I explored the potential of various online approaches with the participants of the study. In striving to better understand what it is like to be a multilingual online tutor, I learned that although multilingual tutors see their linguistic and cultural skills as a strength and a helping factor in their tutoring, they sometimes face negative attitudes from students who expect their tutors to be all-American monolingual tutors. These reactions are however not from tutors who work in the online spaces, and I am curious to find out what are the differences if any once the environment changes.

Methodology

There have not been many studies done on multilingual tutors in online spaces from the tutor's perspective. Previous research gives us a good idea on what to pay attention to and what to be aware of when helping students who speak multiple languages, but existing scholarship tends to omit what it is like to be a multilingual online tutor. This study seeks to explore multilingual tutors at NSU's WCC, specifically their diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds and how they think those elements affect their tutoring experiences and practices when working with students in online tutoring sessions. The chapter discusses my methodological choices, provides a rationale for that specific approach, describes the research setting and sample, as well as explains the data collection and analysis. Further, it provides a detailed description of all aspects of design and procedures of the study, including issues of trustworthiness, limitations and delimitations.

Rationale for Research Approach

For this study, I conducted qualitative research, specifically in the form of interviews. In the introduction to *Writing Center Research: Extending the Conversation*, Gillespie et al. (2002) claims that earlier scholars such as North and Braddock have already suggested to "move beyond reflections on experience, speculations, and surveys toward systematic assumption-testing empirical studies" (p. xviii). The aim of this research was to find out how multilingual tutors understand and experience their world. As Svend Brinkmann and Steinar Kvale (2015) suggest, the best way to "get to know other people and learn about their experiences, feelings, and attitudes" is by asking them and listening to them (p. 1). Because the direct perspectives from multilingual tutors were

the essential aspect of this research, having a conversation with the participants appealed to me as the most effective method of collecting the desired data. As the scholars claim, when the researcher listens, he/she is able to hear about the views and opinions of participants "in their own words" (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2015, p. 1). The nature of the research question revolves around personal experiences and conducting intensive individual interviews with multilingual online tutors was selected as the best method to explore their perspectives and obtain the most detailed information on the issue.

Driscoll and Perdue's (2012) scholarship points out the lack of evidence-based research articles in the *Writing Center Journal*. After two-decades of collecting data "only 16% of WCJ's research articles are replicable, aggregable, and data-supported (RAD) research," which is considered very low (Driscoll & Perdue, 2012, p. 28). The authors analyzed a total of 270 publications in the *Writing Center Journal*. In studying these articles, Driscoll and Perdue (2012) discovered that very little research studies included actual research, to be precise, only 6% of all articles, and the rest were only theoretical articles, presenting an argument (Driscoll & Perdue, 2012). Based on these findings, I decided to conduct a qualitative research that would add to scholarship that fulfills RAD criteria. To achieve results that are not solely theoretical but rather evidence-based arguments, it was vital to me that other researchers can follow the same research method and data collection process and apply it in similar settings.

As the researcher, I designed a series of 35 structured, open-ended questions in a way that I did not have to intervene in the responses and offered space to the participants to express themselves without interruptions (see Appendix A for interview questions). Each participant was asked the same 35 questions in the same order to avoid any bias

from the researcher that would influence the interviewees' answers. The open-ended questions were designed based on findings from existing literature and my personal insights and experiences as an online multilingual tutor. For instance, the literature pointed out code-switching as a strategy to help multilingual students, which I personally experienced as well, therefore I asked the participants if they ever use it and whether or not they perceive it as an effective tutoring method. The rationale behind creating a structured interview was driven by the data analysis in mind. The data analysis of answers to the same questions was more straightforward and allowed me to clearly compare and contrast the various answers to the questions. Doing so, the research method also becomes replicable.

Research Sample and Data Sources

As the researcher, I wrote a script informing tutors about the nature and purpose of the study, accompanied by the requirements to qualify, which was put in an email and forwarded with the help of The WCC's director to the entire listserv of writing tutors. To qualify for the study, participants must be consultants in the NSU WCC, must speak more than one language fluently, and must have experience with online tutoring. There were no exclusion criteria of enrollment based on aspects such as race, gender, or ethnicity determined by the researcher. There was a voluntary convenience sample from which I chose four qualified participants that reached out to me to be included in the study. Given the time frame and the parameters of the research, four participants were an appropriate number to provide a range of experiences and perspectives, particularly because the interviews were quite in-depth.

Participants were emailed the informed consent form to review and sign. The participants were allowed to take as much time to do so and I was available to answer any questions or concerns they might have had before signing. Once the participants returned the signed consent form, I scheduled an in-person interview with each of them at their convenience. Each participant agreed verbally and in writing that they voluntarily participated in the study before the beginning of their interviews. The participants were given a $20 Amazon gift card after concluding the interviews.

The risk to participants and the likelihood of loss of confidentiality were minimal and any direct identifiers such as electronic copies of signed consent forms and transcribed interviews, are saved in a password protected Google Drive Account. Each participant chose a pseudonym under which they are referred to throughout the research study. No real names or any other direct identifiers are included in the article.

The overall recruitment process of participants followed the IRB guidelines. The research study proposal was described in great detail along with the approach of recruiting participants and the ethical considerations as well as the data collection methods were approved by the IRB and allowed me to conduct the study accordingly.

Data Analysis Methods

Following the data collection by voice recording and transcription of all interviews, I analyzed the collected data by identifying patterns in participants' open-ended and qualitative responses. Based on these patterns, I was able to develop themes, which as Jackie Grutsch McKinney (2016) suggests should be then shaped into theoretical narratives to address the research questions. To craft a theoretical narrative, I examined what the data said and what it means. I used comprehensive sampling where all

data are used, and no data are put aside or deleted to avoid subjectivity. The existing literature covering what the experts say about multilingual and online tutoring was utilized as a recourse to compare with what the participants noted as significant. The themes were selected based on found commonalities in previous scholarship such as the perspective on multilingual writing center, who should visit the writing center, tutoring multilingual students, code-switching and online tutoring. These topics were recurring in the literature and were most commonly discussed by scholars, ranging in opinions on them.

Limitations and Delimitations

The potential weakness of this study is that all recruited participants are women. This limitation however reflects the population of the WCC at NSU, where most of the tutors are women. To be specific, at the time of writing, there are 61 female tutors and 11 male tutors, out of which only four male tutors are multilingual. Those of the four that were interested in participating, unfortunately did not have experience with tutoring online and therefore did not qualify to be recruited. I am aware of the fact that a more diverse sample of participants in terms of gender would be ideal however it was out of the scope of the research setting.

Another limitation that possibly constrained the outcome of the study is that all participants' second language is the same, Spanish. Although the families of the participants come from different countries, they are all located in South America. In terms of responses about language and culture and how it affects their tutoring practices, the responses may be limited to the Hispanic culture. This limitation reflects the

population and culture of the area where the study was conducted, South Florida. Moreover, NSU is a university that is recognized as a Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI).

The only delimitations that were intentionally imposed were on the linguistic ability of speaking more than one language proficiently and to have experience with tutoring in online spaces. No other delimitations such as age, gender, race, or ethnicity were implemented.

Results

The results chapter contains direct, personal experiences of multilingual online tutors that are later compared to the existing literature concerning the same issues. The tutors expressed themselves on the following topics: perceptions on multilingual writing centers, tutoring multilingual students, online tutoring, and also provided personal insights on what it is like to be a multilingual online tutor, which is an element that the existing literature lacks the most.

The participants of the research are four female multilingual online tutors that work in the WCC at NSU and are enrolled in the Composition, Rhetoric, and Digital Media graduate program. They have experience tutoring both undergraduate and graduate students. All four participants have different backgrounds, although they have the same second language in common, Spanish, their level of linguistic proficiency varies, and they differ in the age and way that they learned English and Spanish.

Kimberly[2] has Cuban parents and was raised in a three-generation house. Her grandmother lived in the house behind them and took care of her while her parents were at work. Because Kimberly's grandmother only spoke Spanish, that was the first language that Kimberly learned. She also went to a day-care that taught the kids Spanish and only taught them English on the side. She started speaking more English as she entered kindergarten. She has been tutoring since 2017, both in person and online.

Ivana was born and raised in Miami, although her parents are from Honduras. Spanish is the first language for her parents, and they do not know any other language. When Ivana was a child, she naturally started speaking Spanish with them, but as soon as

[2] All participants were given pseudonyms

she started school, she learned English as well. Her mother always wanted to learn English, so she would encourage Ivana and her brother to speak English to each other in the house so she could listen. Ivana then spoke English at school and English and Spanish at home. She began tutoring when she started graduate school, in 2017.

Luna learned English and Spanish at the same time. She was born in the U.S.; her father spoke English and her mother spoke Spanish when she was growing up. She has always spoken both languages at home and then English at school. She noted that at some point in her life, certain family members started making fun of her Spanish because it was not good enough and she became self-conscious and to this day, she is still a bit insecure when speaking Spanish. Luna has been tutoring face-to-face and online since she was a sophomore in an undergraduate program in 2016.

Alicia is a first generation Cuban American. Her first language was Spanish, and she spoke Spanish and English her whole life. Because of schooling, English is now her dominant language and the only one she can write in. She has been tutoring since 2017 and other than a mock session, she has never had an in-person tutoring session; she has always tutored online.

Perceptions on Multilingual Writing Centers

Multilingual writing center, as a place where diversity, multiple languages or dialects, and all linguistic proficiencies are welcome, and where sessions happen with multilingual writing tutors, sounded great to all participants. In fact, the words they used to describe such a place were “exciting,” “considerate,” “thoughtful,” and “awesome.” Alicia commented that it would be really great if she had to write a paper in Spanish and a tutor would be there to help her with the composing process, “because that is probably

how they (multilingual students) feel." Luna explained that multilingual writing centers can also be very challenging for some tutors. "I think it does put a certain amount of pressure on the tutor who can't speak let's say Spanish and gets a student who would request a Spanish speaking tutor," Luna commented. It can cause some pressure on the tutors, "but at the same time, it is really rewarding when you do have to conduct sessions like that" (Luna). Luna made an interesting point in explaining that being able to switch to Spanish can be helpful in sessions with students who also speak Spanish, even if the whole session is mainly in English. She said, "Even if you conduct them in English, which is usually what I do, just having the ability to communicate a little bit more effectively if you think there is something they are not understanding in English, it is very helpful" (Luna). A multilingual writing center would allow conversations like that to happen more fluidly.

All four participants agreed that having a multilingual writing center where all linguistic proficiencies are welcome is very helpful for students and themselves as tutors too. They feel for the students who are learning English and admitted that if they were in the students' shoes, they would appreciate having a space where someone could help them with writing. Kimberly agreed with Luna in stating that the writing process should be done in English, however she believes that "the creation process before should be allowed to be done in their native language" (Kimberly). In our discussion, Kimberly speaks of an online session that she had with a student from Puerto Rico, where everything other than the writing was in Spanish and "the student found it so much more helpful because it can be overwhelming." She believes that having at least initial discussions in Spanish can relieve some of the stress that students experience when they

go over a paper that was not written in their native tongue. Kimberly recalled some of her sessions with English learners when they clearly felt that they were a few steps behind because of the language barrier. She said that "they do not feel that it is their best work because it is not their native tongue" (Kimberly). She added that if the tutor is at least able to collaborate with the student in their native language, nothing gets lost in translation and the students are able to get their ideas down in their native language and then start making the corrections in English on paper.

Tutoring Multilingual Students

All participants except Alicia find tutoring multilingual students to be a different experience from tutoring English only speaking students. From Alicia's perspective, "it is not really any different, I think I just get more excited when I hear an accent or I see a name that is not common and I am just curious where they are from, etc. . . . I find it to be a bond when I ask them where they are from and am interested in their background. It creates a friendly environment and eases the student into the session." On the other hand, for the remaining three participants, their experiences with multilingual students are unique for different reasons. Luna claimed that "it can be more challenging but in other instances easier. If the student learned English later in life, there is more vulnerability than with English only speaking students, so they might be less inclined to share and are more eager to get help." Ivana shares the same experience with multilingual students as Luna. She finds them to be more eager to learn and be more prepared for the sessions. For example, Ivana explained how she,

> worked with a student from China and she was aware that her language is not very common here and she was actually prepared for the session much better than

> I was. She had her Chinese to English dictionary, her word set up to underline what she spelled wrong and she wanted me to explain everything. She kept asking me questions, why is this underlined, etc. . . . She wanted to know the rules. In my experience, English learners are usually more prepared and know what they have trouble with. (Ivana)

Similar to Luna, Ivana noticed that multilingual students are more self-conscious about their writing, but as Ivana said, "they own it more." She explained in more detail what she means by owning: "Rather than someone who would say I am terrible at writing, help me, they own it more, like, I am a good writer, but I just can't get it out in English. So sometimes, I would say they are actually more confident, and they are aware of the fact that their writing is not as strong because of the language barrier" (Ivana). For the four participants, working with multilingual students is a special experience that is exciting yet sometimes challenging. These students tend to be more vulnerable and self-conscious, but the participants find them always well prepared for sessions and eager to get help.

Higher vs. Lower Order Concerns

From the participants' experiences, multilingual students tend to request that tutors focus on lower order concerns such as grammar more than English only speaking students. Although, Kimberly has a different perspective, claiming that she feels that everyone comes in with the same request, "Can you proofread this?" She added that "the requests are the same. I came across multilingual students who are worried that their ideas are not clear and I also had native speakers who were not sure about their grammar. I had both from both sides. But, usually they want me to look at the entire paper and start

from the beginning" (Kimberly). Kimberly is the only one who disagrees with the rest about the requests from multilingual students.

Unlike Kimberly, the other three participants emphasize that lower order concerns are the priority for multilingual students. Ivana stated that "multilingual students tend to come asking for help with their grammar over structure or organization." When the students come asking to fix their grammar, the participants still try to make them understand that grammar should not be the main concern and try to apply some advice on higher order concerns as well. Ivana commented that "I would love to say, ok we fixed your grammar, but can we look at your structure?" She added that her solution is to "tell them, maybe this sentence should go before this one or after that one to apply the correct structure too even if they don't ask for it." Alicia applies a similar technique in incorporating the importance of higher order concerns even if students do not request it, stating, "I always try to convince them to look at the bigger picture and explain that if I do not understand what they are saying, it is pointless to look at commas."

Alicia and Luna feel that often the request for grammar comes from the faculty. Alicia stated that "Sometimes, it is based on their professors and what they give them as feedback that they need to work on. So, if the professor pays a lot of attention to punctuation and grammar, it will reflect on the request of the students." Luna commented that "usually when students come asking to fix their grammar, a lot of times it comes from the professor. They would say, oh my professor told me to come get help with this. It can be very frustrating because often it is not even the student fixating on it, it is the professor. It comes with the misconceptions of what we do." The students' requests and therefore the requests of their professors are indirectly tied to the fact that some faculty

are not clear on what the writing center does and also tend to perceive multilingual students or language learners as candidates for the writing center. Luna explained that "Oftentimes there is that misconception that we are editors of grammar. I just want especially faculty to get away from that assumption of us, because it is not what we do, and it is also not the kind of thing students should be graded on." It is then the tutors' duty to shift the focus of multilingual students toward higher order concerns and put more importance to the writer than the piece of writing.

All participants emphasized that the most important aspect is the overall argument that the student is making. Alicia summarized it by asking "Basically, do I understand what you wrote? I tell the students what I understood from it and then ask them if that is what they tried to communicate. If the answer is yes, it is well written." Luna explained that "grammar is important, but professors need to pay more attention to the actual content of the paper, like is the argument being made? There are all these other parts of writing that go beyond grammar." Ivana confessed that she attends to grammar but as the last part of the writing process: "It is at the end that I focus on the lower order concerns, just to clean up the paper" (Ivana).

Each participant stated that during consultations, they try to shift the attention to higher order concerns and focus on producing better writers not writing. They do so by trying to create more confident and self-sufficient writers for the future. In terms of implementing strategies, Alicia and Kimberly have the same approach of teaching students the rules rather than telling them what to do, so the students can apply the rules in their future writing. Alicia explained, "I try not to correct anything before reading the whole paper because the overall argument is important. And then, I want you to know the

rules so you can do it by yourself in the future." Kimberly has the same approach, stating that,

> Typically I pay attention to higher order concerns first but there are also lower order concerns and addressing them does not mean to make the students feel bad or to pick at it instead of a thesis statement, but it is to install habits, because if you point out why you would put a comma there, for example, and explain the thinking process behind it, then they can start doing that on their own and they don't have to think about those little things anymore. (Kimberly)

Through explaining the rules of lower orders concerns, the participants make students become better writers by installing a habit in them that they can use on their own in the future. The way Ivana gives more importance to the writer and installs confidence is by asking questions: "I do not focus on the writing; I love asking them questions. For example, what do you think about this, what is your understanding, etc. . . . I think they really appreciate it when you start asking them questions and care about their opinion," Ivana explained. Teaching students the rules of higher vs. lower order concerns and asking them questions are two ways the participants create better and more confident writers out of multilingual students who come to the center often with low self-esteem.

When it comes to evaluating multilingual students, sometimes the requests from professors can collide with what the writing tutors are for or what the student truly needs help with to produce good writing. Luna believes that "professors should treat multilingual students the same, as we do. They might have troubles with grammar, but is grammar really worth so many points on the rubric that we can't focus on organization or whether the argument is being made or not?" (Luna). She believes that all students should

focus on the bigger concepts in writing. Kimberly shares Luna's frustration about how it is unfortunate that we use grammar as a measure of quality in work even for language learners, stating that "I think grammar should be the least weighed aspect in the rubric when it comes to evaluating a paper." Like Luna and Kimberly, Ivana sympathizes with English learners that come to the center. She stated that:

> It is the professor's responsibility to at least consider that student is learning the language. Think about how hard it would be for you coming from America trying to get your ideas through and write in a different language. I think it is the institution's responsibility, if they want to be all about diversity and welcoming international students to take those extra steps to help those students. (Ivana)

The participants call for more focus on the overall argument over grammar and prompt the faculty to do the same. They believe that professors should also at least consider that a student is learning a language when evaluating and try not to fixate on lower order concerns but sympathize with the language learner and focus on more important aspects of writing.

Tutor Roles

Tutoring styles can vary and the roles that the tutors assume can shift throughout the session. Tutors can either take on a passive role and act as listeners or guides, giving more space to the students, or prefer to take the initiative and act as motivators who lead the sessions. The participants were asked which type of a tutor they tend to be more and why. All four participants responded that it depends on the student, however they perceive themselves more as motivators. The reason why they see themselves as motivators over listeners is due to the fact that students often downplay their writing

skills during sessions. According to Ivana, “You need to motivate them because sometimes they are just unengaged but other times they are so down and not confident that you need to initiate.” From Ivana’s experience, working with multilingual writers is different in a way that “you absolutely have to motivate more. Because they have been told probably their whole student career that they need help with writing. Especially, the undergraduate students need to be motivated.” Alicia shares Ivana’s experience, stating that “a lot of students downplay their writing skills and I worked with some that I really needed to motivate, so in most sessions I am the motivator.” She experiences the same issue with native and non-native speakers. She explained that “I also have first language speakers who are not confident about their writing and I need to motivate them the same.” However, usually this experience happens with English learners “who often start their session telling me that English is not their first language,” Alicia said. The way she uses the students’ statements about being English learners is to bond with the students and ease the tension with sharing that English is also her second language. “I usually comfort them that English is not my first language either to alleviate the tension,” Alicia shared. Luna also tries to motivate students and comfort them in her own way:

> I want to say I have a healthy balance of being a motivator and a listener, but in general I do try to motivate them because lots of students feel negatively about their writing and I just tell them that nobody was born a good writer and that they should allow themselves to have those ugly drafts because I do allow myself to have them too. I tell them that it is a part of the process. (Luna)

Kimberly also sees herself as more of a motivator because “not everyone is comfortable with reading the paper out loud” and she usually takes over the reading. She believes that

the moment of decision about who reads the paper out loud defines the role she possesses in sessions. Kimberly also understands that reading the paper out loud can be uncomfortable for students: “By reading out loud, I try to make it as positive of an experience as possible because it can make students feel vulnerable.” The participants tend to take on the role of a motivator more often than the role of a listener because of the vulnerable and insecure attitudes of the students. Comforting the students by stating that English is not the participants’ first language either and by volunteering to read the paper out loud for them are the techniques that they use in their sessions.

When asked what approach they typically prefer, all four participants agreed that indirect feedback can come out as unclear and confusing especially when working with multilingual students. “I try to avoid indirect feedback with multilingual students,” Kimberly said. Alicia also stated that “I am very direct; you need to be careful with how you phrase what you want students to do because it can be misunderstood.” On the other hand, Luna and Ivana’s feedback in sessions is more indirect. Both claimed that it is due to the way they were trained even though they realize that it might sound unclear to students. Luna commented that “The politeness and indirectness definitely has to do with how we are trained, and it has to do with our liability when it comes to things. We are peers and not experts which is probably another misconception that a lot of students and professors have.” Ivana also shared that “It is the way we are trained so we do not directly tell them what to do but lead them to it. It might be a cultural thing and I imagine some people would prefer more direct feedback as opposed to tip-toeing around the issue.”

There are issues with indirect as well as direct feedback as the participants revealed. Ivana experienced students not understanding what she meant when she was being indirect. She stated that "it happens all the time that students do not understand what I mean because I am being indirect, and I think it is a problem, but that is how we are trained. We are trained to only give them suggestions and they usually come out as indirect phrases or questions." However, Luna and Kimberly noticed a recurring issue with giving direct feedback: "As second language speakers tend to be more receptive of feedback, sometimes I find them too receptive, and they take my direct advice and write it as I said it. I need to explain to them that it was just an example and that they do not have to write exactly that" (Kimberly). Luna experienced the same issue with students adopting her words, indicating that "sometimes when you are direct, they like everything you say word by word and that is the worst. You do not want that." As a solution, Luna tries to find a healthy balance when she said "I try to avoid being unclear yet not to tell them what to do. I rely a lot on examples. That is what I found to be my most effective method of communicating feedback because if not, the language is so vague sometimes." Alicia seems to find a healthy balance as well by asking the students direct questions:

> I make sure I don't use the fluff around that can be misunderstood yet still make them feel like they have a choice. I stopped saying phrases such as 'I wonder' because that can be confusing. So, instead of saying 'I wonder what tone you want to use in the essay,' I ask them more directly, 'what tone do you want to use in the essay?' I don't want to tell them what to do, so I ask them questions, but more directly. (Alicia)

Providing examples and asking rather direct questions are ways that participants prevent being misunderstood when giving feedback to multilingual students.

Code-switching

Code-switching is a practice that all participants have experienced and used during sessions. They use code-switching because it is an efficient way to communicate during the composition process or simply to relate to the student and create a bond with them. Kimberly explained that the fact that a tutor knows multiple languages is a factor that makes the students more comfortable even if the second language is not the same: "I can see that being a factor that makes them feel more comfortable, because I can tell them that I know how it feels to learn a language. If you let them know, there is a common ground and they do not feel alone." For Luna, code-switching is "invaluable." She believes that code-switching

> . . . can make the student as well as the tutor more comfortable. For tutors whose English is not their first language, I see, visually, that they become more comfortable if they can sink into their native language, even if it is just for a little but, maybe just to say a word that does not translate to English. It can reduce the tension of the situation and it can build bridges and kind of show to students that the tutor is on the same page. (Luna)

Like Luna, Ivana also sees the benefit in code-switching. Ivana shared her experience of what motivated her to start tutoring in the first place, stating that it was in fact an article about code-switching: "One of the first articles I read about tutoring was on code-switching and I thought it was the coolest thing and I thought it was great to utilize my knowledge of both languages to help students," Ivana recalled.

The question of when it is appropriate or helpful to code-switch is something that depends on the student. Kimberly shared that “If I feel like I need to switch, I will switch. If I see that they are not understanding me for a while, then I will switch so I do not waste time.” She explained that it depends on each person and how they prefer to have a session.

All participants agreed that when it comes to initiating code-switching, they leave it up to the student. They do not want to assume that they are multilingual or that they want to have a chat in Spanish during the session, because many students want to use this time and space to practice their English skills. Alicia shared that she lets the students make the move: “I always start in English and do not ask them to switch first.” Kimberly agreed stating that “I like them to take the lead. If they are more comfortable speaking Spanish, I will do it. For example, a Puerto Rican student asked me if I could speak Spanish and I went with it.” She also feels that because of the switch, she was able to assist the student better: “It was much easier for her and the session went so much faster and we did a lot” (Kimberly). Luna also learned to wait for the student to take initiative to code-switch: “I would usually wait for them because I do not want to assume they Spanish because they have an accent, they could very well speak Portuguese and there I can’t help them. I always wait for them and when they say something in Spanish first, then I feel like I can move forward and start using it as well.” Ivana has the same approach to code-switching as Luna, stating that “I leave it up to them. Sometimes I hear I would hear them say a specific detail like ay ay ay or yo sé and then I would react in Spanish. And then you just hear them switching to Spanish completely and start venting,” Ivana laughed.

What is interesting is that certain multilingual students, even those who were not proficient in English, would demand to only speak English during the session because they take the opportunity to practice. Each participant had such sessions. Ivana commented that the reason why she lets the students take the lead in code-switching is because she wants to respect when they want to speak only English and practice: “I learned to be very cautious because sometimes they would request me to speak only English because they are trying to practice. I learned to respect that” (Ivana). Luna also recalled that when students asked her to speak only in English, “it was because they wanted to practice.” Kimberly added that she also had such a session and she adjusted to it as well: “A student demanded to have a session only in English because she wanted to practice and took the opportunity to learn English better. It just depends on the student what they are more comfortable with” (Kimberly). All four participants had this scenario where English learners demanded to only use English throughout the session and they all confirmed that it was fine for them to adjust because they respect the students’ choice and they always let them lead the session in whatever way or language they are most comfortable.

Alicia has a direct experience with a student who would repeatedly make an appointment with her because of her linguistic ability. She stated, “I have a lady who repeatedly schedules an appointment with me every single week because I understand if she has to say a word in Spanish. She would make the appointment three weeks ahead of time to be sure she gets it with me.” Ivana also recalled a time when students would tell her that they made an appointment with her because they thought she would understand Spanish. “I had a few that told me they made an appointment with me because they

thought that I spoke and understood Spanish" Ivana shared. Luna does not know whether or not specific students made an appointment with her because of her linguistic ability, because they have never shared the information with her. However, she would be given multilingual walk-ins. "I have had moments when a walk in has been given to me because the student needed help in Spanish and the administrative coordinator knows I speak Spanish," Luna recalled. Kimberly also had not heard directly from the students why they made an appointment with her, but she says "They can see that I speak Spanish in my bio, so perhaps that is what draws them in."

Special Training

None of the participants have ever gone through a special training focused on working with multilingual students. The way that they substitute this experience is by talking about this topic with their colleagues in the writing center. Ivana suggested "since there is not much scholarship on the topic, we should talk about our experiences among tutors maybe once or twice every semester to just say what we have noticed and how we handled it." Luna also discusses the topic with her colleagues, however, believes that "it would be beneficial to have some training on the specific kind of multilingual students or just about how to deal with those appointments when the students are not inclined to share or when they feel vulnerable." Kimberly agrees that "having more training and more mock sessions would benefit tutors, because you are going to encounter it a lot, especially at universities that are so diverse. I picked up on more things as I worked with clients but never had any training."

On the other hand, Alicia feels differently, she believes that "there is no special training needed once you are multilingual yourself. Then you obviously understand the

struggle the writer is going through." But she still thinks that special training would be beneficial for monolingual tutors: "If you were not multilingual then I think it would be helpful to get some training because you just do not understand" (Alicia). Same as Kimberly, Alicia feels that she learned from personal experiences, stating that "I think more than training you need repetition and just experiences from real sessions and to be open to ideas that are coming from other people" (Alicia). None of the tutors went through special training therefore they learn by sharing experiences with their colleagues. All tutors agreed that some training would be beneficial, but Alicia believes that experiences from sessions and sharing ideas with others are even more essential.

Online Tutoring

All interviewed tutors perceive online tutoring as an advantage. They believe that it makes both them and the students more comfortable, and it is specifically helpful to multilingual students who are learning English. According to Alicia, online tutoring,

> is an advantage for multilingual students who want to practice English. They are forced to communicate. If we have to use both languages, we will but besides from their writing they get to practice talking in English too. Face-to-face has a lot of body language so I can understand if they are confused, but online they need to express themselves that you are confused. I can't see their faces because students don't like to use the camera, I can't see their body language, so I have to hear their voice. They need to describe their emotions to me and that helps them. (Alicia)

She also noticed that she became better at recognizing emotions through voice. She said that "now I can hear them smiling." This makes her want to sound positive during

sessions because students can hear it in her voice. “So, I emphasize even more on the voice and make sure I am happy,” Alicia explained. Luna added that showing enthusiasm is important whether the session is conducted in English or Spanish: “They can hear the enthusiasm in any language.” Emphasizing on the voice is a tool that works for Kimberly as well to engage students. “I try to vocally recreate the face-to-face session; I try to be more animated and they will know I am in it. When I present myself in a certain light, they will reflect it,” Kimberly shared. Since students usually do not wish to use a web camera, the voice is the only means that tutors can rely on. “I create a bond with my voice. That is the only thing you have to work with. Students almost never want to use the camera, and I don’t blame them,” Ivana shared.

Luna finds online tutoring very helpful because of all the features that it comes with. She explained, “Just to have that extra medium to communicate with is really helpful. We can share screens with one another, I can show them how I format papers instead of trying to explain to them or show them really quickly how research can be done by sharing my screen. Also having online appointments can reduce some of the pressure of being in person” (Luna). Luna prefers online appointments over in person ones mostly because of the safe space that it creates for both parties. As Luna describes, “I am not going to lie, I do enjoy online appointments just because there is a certain level of anonymity.” Ivana shares the same view as Luna on the level of anonymity and also believes that online sessions are helpful, especially for multilingual students for multiple reasons. Like Luna, Ivana likes using the screen sharing option to help students, stating that “because we have the screen sharing option, I can quickly show them how to do research and we can actually research together. With multilingual students, if we don’t

understand each other, it is an advantage because we have the power of the internet in our hands" (Ivana).

For Kimberly, online sessions are great, mostly because they are within a safe space that gives students who would normally not be able to commute to campus for tutoring a chance to access writing center services. According to Kimberly, "For some people, meeting in person is uncomfortable and the detachment of being online and the possibility of having a session at home is great. It also creates a safe space where they are comfortable and most importantly you can work with students who cannot commute."

However, online sessions can also be frustrating when there are technical difficulties. Luna explains that when "There are technical difficulties and when the audio does not work and I need to type into the chat box, it is not a fun time." Same as Alicia, Luna finds the tone of the voice crucial when working online and also believes that her mood and attitude can be heard. Luna states,

> I would say I still talk with my hands even when they can't see me (LOL) I feel like those things can be heard; it just feels more genuine. I also try to make my voice a little more cheerful and I ask them questions, like how they are doing, etc... I explain to them the online landscape and walk them through it if they have never had an online session before. I also give them the option to use camera, audio or just chat. (Luna)

To bond with students online, all four participants minimize their authority and bring more humility by admitting their flaws to the students. Alicia explains, "I tell them, hold on let me pull up the APA website. I tell them I don't know everything by heart, and

we go over it together." Similarly, Luna admits to practicing it in almost every session because it makes the student feel that they are in it together. As Luna explains,

> I want to say I admit my flaws in every session. Even if it is a flaw like 'oh gosh I am a chronic procrastinator,' it humanizes us. Especially, when people have that misconception that we are experts and know everything, we don't, and I feel that it is important to be honest about that, so they also have realistic expectations of what to get out of the session. This way they understand that we are on the same boat, we are in it together. And the majority of people appreciate it, I have not had a bad reaction. (Luna)

All the participants were comfortable admitting their flaws. Typically, it is the formatting and citations where the participants feel most uncomfortable. "I always tell them, hey APA is not my thing, but we will figure it out together," Luna said. Ivana also never had a negative reaction when admitting her flaws:

> I do it for being empathetic and it has never been seen as unprofessional. I love writing but I also realize it is not the greatest and it is a recursive process for me too. I clear that misconception that I must be a great writer and I never have to practice. I always tell them not to worry because I have problems with commas too and I need to read it out loud for myself to know where to put them. They relax. (Ivana)

Kimberly also disclosed that she admits her flaws to the students all the time and they appreciate it: "When you are showing vulnerability, they love it. I am not perfect, I say it all the time, I used to struggle with commas too. I tell them I struggle with the semicolon myself and they appreciate it. As long as there is commonality there and that even a tutor

can struggle with semicolons, etc. it makes them feel comfortable and makes the session lighter."

The other approach Kimberly uses to bond with her tutees is humor. She jokes around and tries to make the consultation as positive of an experience as possible. Kimberly said, "I try to be extra nice and joke around, you never know what day people had and without the physical clues you can't know. I always try to compliment them on something, they need to feel that they are doing something right."

All four participants noted that multilingual students tend to feel self-conscious and they need to try to create a space where these students feel safe and their linguistic and cultural diversity welcome. The strategy that the participants use with shy or insecure students is striving to make them feel as comfortable as possible. As online sessions are limiting in terms of body gestures and facial expressions, the participants rely on the spoken word. For Alicia, it is important to ask questions and show interest in the students and their culture. Alicia said, "I ask questions. Your name is unique, where is it from? I call them out on it, but it is a genuine interest from me so they do not feel like I am putting them down but I find it interesting."

What works for Luna is to become a listener. She explains, "Sometimes, honestly, they just need to vent," and Luna said it is important to just let students take a second and "have that humane moment." Graduate school especially can be demanding, and she believes that by sharing little struggles she goes through herself makes the tutees feel that they are on the same boat. She believes "it creates a moment of connection and it lets them know that you are there for them and you understand their frustrations" (Luna). Ivana also shared that her students sometimes like to just vent about their struggles and

their professors. The way she handles such situations is by sympathizing with them. Ivana explained that "To cut a conversation about their professor, I just calm them down and tell them I have been through the same and I understand."

Ivana added that when she hears that the students are stressed, she uses code-switching to ease them into the session and tries to create a friendly environment:

> I learned to ease their anxiety with code-switching. I love to code-switch because I feel like the Spanish language is very friendly and familiar, very home. Once they hear me speaking Spanish, their voice calms down and they thank me (LOL). They are already stressed from the assignment and having to speak to a tutor probably doesn't help, so this is a way for me to relax them. (Ivana)

Luna believes that online sessions alleviate pressure off of students and tutors and create a more personal experience tailored to the student's needs. As Luna explains,

> The pressure is released because there is more privacy. Face-to-face sessions are nice because it creates a community for all these people working together and it is collaborative and awesome but there is something about. . . there is intimacy in online sessions. We are not being watched, there is much less pressure and we are just talking to this other person about writing. (Luna)

Ivana also thinks that students can feel safer and in control in online sessions. She stated, "They can still be shy and hesitant, but they quickly realize that control is in their hands. They can choose to use the webcam, we don't even have to see each other if they don't want to, we don't even have to speak, we can just type in the chat box, and this is a huge deal to them" (Ivana). Ivana compared the session to having a phone conversation with a friend. Kimberly shares similar feelings with Luna. Kimberly said, "it can be

intimidating for multilingual students to go to a space where they don't know anyone and speak English if that is not the language you are used to. But they can do online sessions from anywhere, where they are most comfortable, and they don't need to put themselves out there. They don't even have to use the camera." Kimberly believes that online sessions create that safe space that multilingual students need in order to feel more comfortable. She explained how "Multilingual students can feel shy or embarrassed to speak in front of others. When they are at home where nobody else hears them, they engage more easily. Whereas in person, they might feel embarrassed about how they say things and that people around can hear them" (Kimberly).

As multilingual students are often shy and hesitant in sessions, participants shared that the key to make them feel that they are in a safe and inclusive space is by making them feel comfortable. Since they rely on the voice in online sessions, the participants find effective techniques such as asking them questions about their name or culture, listening to them when they need to vent, or code-switching to make them feel more at home. However, they all agreed that online sessions create a safe space for insecure students as they bring more intimacy and put more control in students' hands.

All four participants shared their must-do's for working online with multilingual students. Being very clear and direct and understanding the environment are major strategies tutors use when working online, especially when the conditions are not ideal. In Kimberly's experience, tutors need to be very careful when giving feedback to multilingual students. As she explained, "I have to be extra clear from the beginning of the session, especially online." She shared that the features that the online platform offers are very useful to clarify ideas:

> I feel like the chat box in online sessions helps me a lot to write down things that they do not understand in English, for example, the bracket. Without the chat box, we would spend minutes trying to understand each other and what I meant. I was explaining it as parentheses but squared and they would not get it. So, typing it into the chat box was the easiest way to explain and we could move on. (Kimberly)

Luna has the same experience with utilizing the chat box as a tool to establish clarity for both, student or the tutor. According to Luna, “If something is not coming across verbally, the chat feature allows you to easily send it in a written form and make things clearer to the student or the tutor.”

A must-do for Alicia is having a quiet room and if that is not possible then she utilizes that noise to engage in a little conversation to break the ice: “Having a quiet room is a must. When I had a dog that would make a noise in the background the student would always ask what it was and get distracted by it. Even traffic from a major street can be heard in the speakers and it is all distracting for both parties. But when it happens, I use it for a little chit chat and to relate to something” (Alicia). Ivana shared her experience with working online when there is noise. Similar to Alicia, Ivana explained that “It is always easy to engage with them when they are in a quiet room.” But she added that working in silence is not always possible, especially with grad students who oftentimes have kids in the background. As Ivana recalled,

> I learned to understand the space where they are at from what I can hear. I have a student who always has her kids playing next to her and I can hear them. In these cases, I am more direct because I know she doesn't have time or energy for fluff

> and just needs to get her paper done. I also usually have them read the paper out loud instead of me because my voice could get lost in the noise and she wouldn't hear me. (Ivana)

It is about hearing and understanding the environment and working with it in the best way possible. Connecting to the importance of hearing the environment in online sessions, Kimberly added that "it is vital that the audio works, because if you need to type everything into the chat box, online sessions become a nightmare." She suggested that all tutors are well prepared for handling technical difficulties.

Each participant expressed their frustration with technical difficulties and their last but not least must-do in online sessions is to be prepared for them, ideally by receiving special training on the online platform. Like the others, Luna explained that the only time online tutoring can be a disadvantage is when there are technical difficulties. According to Luna,

> The only issue you might have in person is when you can't download a document, but online you are so dependent on technology and when it doesn't work, it eats up the time and it is frustrating. Or when the audio does not work and we need to type in the chat box, it is hard to feel productive when it happens. Our software does not even show me when the student is typing so I just sit there wondering if they are still there and read my comments. (Luna)

Alicia experienced the same technical difficulties as Luna. She said, "A lot of times there is technical difficulty and it is annoying. The audio does not work, and we need to use the chat box. When it works it is great because GoToMeeting allows you to share screens back and forth which is helpful but when it does not work it is challenging." Kimberly

commented that “it is vital that we know the software well and we need to be ready to answer any questions that students might ask about it. Especially when there are difficulties, you need to know what it looks like on their end to navigate them. It would be super helpful to get training on the program” (Kimberly). Because of the technical difficulties, Kimberly stated that she prefers face-to-face sessions: “You only have 45 minutes and if there is an issue, it can really affect how much time you have left with the client. And then they try to finish everything in so little time. In person, the worst that can happen is that they forgot a laptop,” Kimberly added.

All participants agreed that to make online sessions more efficient, special training on the platform is vital. Students often ask what to click or need to be navigated and if the tutor does not know the platform well enough on both ends, it can be frustrating and eat up the already short tutoring time. As Ivana explained, “I love GoToMeeting when it works, but I would say special training on it would help because there are always technical difficulties as with probably every online platform.” Luna makes an interesting comment about needing more hands-on practice rather than just theoretical:

> We definitely need training on the online platform. We have some training in theory on how to use it but we haven’t had the opportunity to practice yet. There are times that I use a computer at home, and it looks one way and then I use a computer at work, and it looks different. It looks different also on Macs and PC’s. And I don't know what to do, how to share my screen, etc., because it looks completely different. And again, it just eats away the time from the appointment. Even just practicing with another tutor using the platform would be invaluable. (Luna)

Alicia agreed with Luna that she would prefer more hands-on training over theory: “You can talk about organization but until I see fifty papers, I will not know what it means.” Same as Luna, Alicia pointed out the difference in the platform layout for PC and Mac and how it can be confusing. She stated that “Sometimes, they have two different layouts for Mac and PC. It would also be helpful to know what the students see to guide them.”

Multilingual Online Tutoring

When asked how it is being a multilingual online tutor, the participants were surprised because nobody has asked them about their experiences before. The tutors pointed out that people assume that once they are multilingual, they should not have any difficulties tutoring in either language. However, they noted that although they feel that being multilingual is a strength that helps them to bond with students, it can also be very challenging and sometimes intimidating. As the others, Kimberly explained that she sees multilingualism as a strength because “you have that vulnerability and commonality and that works with most students. It makes everyone more comfortable.”

However, a tutor’s linguistic background can become an issue when they assume that the tutor’s linguistic proficiency is on a certain level. Some of the participants have used Spanish in the academic world and therefore they lack some of that formal proficiency. Ivana specifically shared her negative experience when her multilingual ability confused a student of her proficiency and therefore created demands that she was not able to fulfil:

> I have had some students that wanted me to speak Spanish, but their Spanish was much more advanced than mine. So, sometimes I had to ask them what they mean, it was almost like they became the tutor for a bit. I noticed that one student

> felt discouraged with me because my Spanish was not what she wanted it to be. I don't think she questioned my professionalism, but my Spanish was not what she needed it to be for her ideas to come through. She could not get her ideas out clearly and I felt terrible. (Ivana)

Ivana claimed that she knows Spanish "but helping someone who speaks Spanish better than English is intimidating because their proficiency is better, and you want to keep up." She still sees multilingualism as a strength and she is happy to use it, but "If I can't use it to help you it becomes embarrassing" (Ivana). Luna has a very similar experience to Ivana in a sense that when she does not feel that her proficiency is good enough, she gets frustrated as there is a certain amount of pressure on her linguistic ability: "As a multilingual tutor, there is a certain kind of pressure, because it is expected from you to be able to help multilingual students, and it is difficult when you don't feel confident in that second language," Luna explained. Although she claimed she has never had a session where she felt that she did not help the student, she still did not feel she did her best. Luna elaborated,

> There are moments when you are disappointed in yourself, because you just don't know how to translate a certain thing. And you try to do it by code-switching, but the proficiency is not there. I would get frustrated with myself sometimes. You want to help them the best you can but you feel you are not doing enough, which is why I feel for those students whose English is not their first language. You almost feel…you don't even want to offer that kind of help sometimes. (Luna)

Luna shared that although the sessions usually go fine and she considers multilingualism to be a strength, it can be intimidating, and she sometimes feels anxious beforehand if she knows the student would want to use Spanish in the session.

Kimberly has had a similar experience as Luna where she felt self-conscious about her linguistic proficiency in a session that was almost entirely done in Spanish. According to Kimberly, "I tried my best, but I was so conscious about messing up a tense and I just wanted to help the student and we met at a space of vulnerability because she was an English learner and my Spanish was not so great. I knew at that point she would not judge me so I put all my embarrassment on the side. At the end we did it together and the student was really happy." From Kimberly's experience, it seems that her not so great Spanish proficiency helped her to bond with the student since they both understood each other and were on the same boat.

The participants explained that multilingualism does not only come with the linguistic knowledge, but also a cultural awareness. According to Alicia, "You can have a wider perspective and understand more cultures." Alicia feels that her cultural background opens her eyes and mind. She explained that "being bicultural is not something I show but my mindset is very open and I am open to asking questions and I understand tone and I am doing it in a way that is friendly and I think part of it is because I grew up in a multicultural neighborhood and so I am genuinely interested in other cultures and languages which I think the students can sense it." (Alicia). Ivana also explained that she sees her multilingualism also as a cultural advantage when helping students because "there are stories, ideas, and metaphors that we know in the Hispanic

culture, so they are just phenomenon that we understand as part of our culture. To be able to bring that into a session and relate based on that is actually really beautiful."

Since all participants are Hispanic, their responses to how their culture affects their tutoring practices were similar. They feel that their Hispanic background makes them more compassionate, warm and eager to help, which are typical traits for that culture. According to Luna, "It makes me more compassionate towards other people, whether it is their culture or their language. I think it opens my eyes towards what they are going through." Ivana feels very similar to Luna. She explained that "It is probably a Hispanic thing, but we are very hospitable, and I think that is a huge factor in my tutoring sessions. I love to be hospitable and I ask what they need to be comfortable and how I can help them. I always try to see what I need to do to make it a better experience for the student. That customer service just comes naturally to me because I was raised that way."

The only one who does not fully embrace her Hispanic culture in tutoring is Kimberly. She pointed out the negative side of the culture that she rather suppresses during sessions where she wants to be professional. She stated,

> I think I suppress it a little. I know that the Hispanic side of me is much more stubborn. There are just certain things that are not appropriate. When you change the language, you change the personality a little too, it is like you are letting it out. And I would just try to be more formal when tutoring in Spanish because Cubans like to cut the last letters off of words but in a session, I would keep it there. (Kimberly)

She added that perhaps she is more formal in English because that is her academic language and Spanish is mostly used informally at home.

When it comes to multilingual tutoring online, it seems both students and tutors feel more comfortable behind the screen. Alicia confirms this, especially when she needs to conduct a session in Spanish. According to Alicia, “Absolutely, I feel more comfortable behind the screen, especially working in Spanish since I am not as proficient and I just don't want them to see my face, I don't know why.” She explained that face-to-face sessions can be intimidating sometimes: “I know I make faces and facial expressions and I can hide it behind the screen. I am just more comfortable working online; it is just another level of cognition that I do not have to take into account.” Luna also feels that online space is one where she feels more comfortable as a tutor and believes the same translates to the students. Luna explained that “Online space is helpful for me as a tutor, to be in that quiet space, and not being watched. Some people just need that kind of privacy, even the students. Not even I am watching them. We are in two different spaces, both comfortable and we are just talking. Nobody is being judged based on appearance.”

All participants mentioned that the fact that they are not being watched during sessions is nice sometimes. The participants revealed that it can make them even more focused on what they are doing without being distracted or self-conscious. Luna commented that,

> It is nice to have my leg up on a chair, play with my hair, and I am not distracting anyone with just being comfortable. I don’t have the same kind of body language in face-to-face sessions. Online, I don’t have to be self-conscious about myself and I can just feel like I am having a conversation, a verbal one. You can almost be more invested in that session without those distractions. (Luna)

Ivana also shared that she feels more comfortable behind the screen: “I like being behind the computer, I do find it a little bit more conversational, there is something about it. Maybe it is because I am already at home and I am more comfortable. I am happy asking them how they are doing and what they need help with from my sofa (LOL). I think when I am relaxed it reflects on the students and they get comfortable too.” She compared it to when she is in the writing center, oftentimes rushing from a class, or hungry or hasn't had a chance to go to the bathroom: “At home, it is my time that I am only dedicated to tutoring,” Ivana added. She feels that she can be more concentrated on tutoring from her home.

Kimberly remembered a time when she felt uncomfortable tutoring in person and she says that it could never happen online, which is her safe space. She connects it to the uncomfortable feeling that English learners might have: “When there is a guy on the other side that you would not be comfortable around in person, it is a safe space to hide in just like for the English learners. Any kind of tension is minimized online,” Kimberly shared.

Conclusion

From the participants’ responses, it is evident that multilingual writing centers are spaces where students and tutors can thrive. Having a space where tutors can help students even in their native language or at least understand what they are going through makes them feel comfortable and results in a more effective composition process. The writing center should be designed for everyone and it should offer services that all students could use in whatever writing stage they are. They wish to diminish

misconceptions about the writing center being a fix shop for students who struggle with grammar, because there is much more to it as well as there is much more to composition.

When working with multilingual students, the participants try to focus on the writer rather than the piece of writing by asking, “do I understand what you wrote?” Their strategy is to pay attention to higher order concerns such as the overall meaning before cleaning up the paper with correct grammar. The requests from multilingual students are often asking participants to focus on grammar, but they always try to incorporate revisions for higher order concerns as well. Other strategies consist of teaching the students the rules so they can apply them in their future writing on their own, rather than telling them what to do. In part, it is because of the way they are trained. They are aware of the fact that sometimes their indirectness might be misunderstood, so they rely on providing examples and asking more direct questions. Multilingual students’ confidence levels tend to be lower and they often downplay their writing skills. Therefore, the tutors tend to possess the role of a motivator. Because it can be challenging to aid multilingual students, the participants suggest that all tutors, especially monolingual tutors, go through special training. Apart from special training, sharing experiences among other tutors seems to be invaluable. They suggest code-switching as a method to efficiently assist multilingual students. From their experience, code-switching is a great way to make students comfortable and help tutors to communicate their revisions when there is a language barrier. Although it is intimidating for tutors whose proficiency is not as good as one of the student’s, it belongs in their favorite and most effective practices used when working with multilingual students.

Online sessions come with numerous benefits, especially for commuting students and language learners. Online sessions are also spaces where students feel in control because they don't need to be seen or heard if they don't wish to. However, technical difficulties are an aspect that can change a great session into a nightmare. The participants' suggestion is to get hands-on training on the online platform to understand both ends to be able to utilize it to its full potential and guide the students if needed. As some practices differ from in person sessions, the participants learned how to substitute face-to-face experiences with strategies such as emphasizing on their tone of voice and listening to the environment. One of their most used and successful strategies in online sessions is descending authority and bringing more humility into the sessions. They practice admitting their own flaws, code-switching, or showing interest in students' cultural backgrounds. The students then feel welcome and respected and the limitations of physical presence are minimized.

The participants conclude that their multilingual skills help them in sessions and that their Hispanic background affects their tutoring practices as they tend to be very friendly, hospitable, and concerned about students' comfort at all times. The students typically appreciate these actions and make recurring appointments with the participants. Being multilingual tutors, the participants prefer to work online since they feel much more comfortable behind the screen. The virtual space is a safe and comfortable option for both students and tutors that brings extra resources like using a chat box to clarify tutors' feedback that might be misunderstood by voice. Moreover, online sessions allow tutors to focus more on the session without all distractions that in person appointments often come with.

In the next two chapters, the results will be analyzed and synthesized by finding patterns that emerged from themes in the literature review. By comparing them, the meaning will be determined as well as interpretation of the results will aim to make a contribution to the academic discipline. Moreover, based on the conclusions, recommendations for future research will be offered.

Discussion

This chapter synthesizes and discusses the results in the light of the study's research question and previous scholarship. The results are analyzed by finding patterns in the participants' responses and comparing and contrasting the findings from the literature review. The format consists of the same predetermined themes from the literature review. The main themes are perceptions on multilingual writing centers, tutoring multilingual students and online tutoring.

Perceptions on Multilingual Writing Centers

The perceptions on multilingual writing centers and what they should look like is a theme that emerges with many linguistically diverse writing tutors working in centers and students attending them. The findings from existing literature and participants' responses point out that when multilingual tutors and students do not feel that diversity and all linguistic proficiencies are welcome in the writing center, they feel discouraged. Kimberly specifically recalls some of her sessions with English learners when they clearly felt that they were a few steps behind because of the language barrier. In her interview, Kimberly stated that "they do not feel that it is their best work because it is not their native tongue." Multilingual students, especially language learners, can have a low self-esteem. When a writing center does not display that all linguistic proficiencies are welcome or do not have tutors who could help language learners express their ideas, many students might avoid seeking help with their writing. The participants' views on inclusiveness and the need to appreciate all linguistic proficiencies align with the danger that Naydan (2016) calls "hegemonic narrative" (p. 29). The monolingual hegemonic thinking that implies a sense of division in writing centers can be challenged by

encouraging multilingual tutors to utilize their linguistic skills to help students. The tutors utilizing linguistic abilities was apparent from participants' comments on their personal experiences with multilingual students. They utilize multilingualism anytime they can as it helps them to release the stress that might arise in tutoring sessions due to being stuck or inability to express thoughts.

Multilingual tutors bring diversity, which students need to feel comfortable. The tutors' experiences help to empathize and connect with the students on a personal level. Because the participants are able to draw from their own experiences as language learners (Hutchinson & Gillespie, 2016), they put themselves into the multilingual students' shoes and, as Bruce (2016) states, they would appreciate to receive a multilingual help if they were in the position of the students. As Alicia said, it would be great if she had to write a paper in Spanish and there was someone who could help her with the composing process, "because that is probably how they (multilingual students) feel." Perhaps, some of the multilingual tutors went through the same cultural or linguistic transitions themselves and understand what it feels like. Participants claimed that because of their multilingualism they are able to feel for students who are learning a language and admit that if they were in their position, they would very much appreciate a space where they would feel welcome and could get help with writing. The participants understand if students need to brainstorm in their native language or even code-switch at times if they can't explain themselves in English. It may just take a few seconds to clarify a word in another language compared to minutes spent trying to understand each other in English only. However, these few seconds are what makes a difference in the tutoring session and what creates a space where diversity is appreciated and valued. In her interview, Kimberly

specifically agrees with Bruce (2016) that composing in a foreign language can be overwhelming and tiring. That is why Kimberly believes that having at least a little chit chat in the students' native language is invaluable for enhancing the student-tutor relationship and eases the students into the session.

Apart from multilingual writing centers benefitting students, as Bruce (2016) believes, it should also be a place where multilingual tutors feel at home, taking advantage of their skills. For this reason, multilingual tutors should be encouraged and empowered to use their multilingual skills in the center. It will result in multilingual tutors being confident about their identities and allow their professional potential to be utilized to its fullest. The participants, in fact, agreed stating that it is "rewarding" for them to be able to aid students using their linguistic skills. However, Luna pointed out an interesting aspect stating that although having multilingual writing tutors is a strength, conducting multilingual sessions can also be challenging and intimidating for multilingual tutors. Expecting the multilingual tutors to assist students who speak the same languages puts a certain pressure on tutors' shoulders, especially those whose linguistic proficiency is not as good as the students.' Besides multilingual sessions being challenging at times, creating a writing center where diversity is welcome and where multilingualism is encouraged and differences in language and culture are embraced, multilingual writing centers result in positive experiences for students and rewarding feelings of tutors who when empowered add a higher value to writing centers.

Tutoring Multilingual Students

Higher vs. Lower Order Concerns

Tutoring multilingual students involves a phenomenon of multilingual students being overly preoccupied with grammar and requesting to focus on it during sessions. This issue is discussed in the existing literature (Severino et al. 2009; Cheatle 2017) and confirmed by the research participants. The approach that the participants use to tackle this issue is not simply being prepared to aid students in this area, but trying to stir students away and rather focus on higher order concerns. Although the participants do fulfil students' wishes and help them with grammar, they try to make the students understand that it should not be their main concern and they include advice on higher order concerns as well, even if the students don't ask for it. Alicia stated, "I always try to convince them to look at the bigger picture and explain that if I do not understand what they are saying, it is pointless to look at commas." Alicia as well as other participants tries to make the students realize that there are more important elements in the writing process to focus on than grammar or punctuation. Many authors (Blau & Hall 2002; Matsuda & Cox 2009; Zawacki & Habib 2014) point out that it is vital that tutors explain to multilingual students that cultural or linguistic differences do not equal to errors and that making grammatical errors caused by a language barrier does not make them bad writers. The participants agree with this notion and try to encourage multilingual students for their effort rather than picking on their grammar. For instance, Luna explains,

> We can certainly help with those things (grammar) but there are much deeper issues in the writing, and I want to focus on that. We should focus more on the student who is doing a great job navigating these two languages and getting an education in a second language, it is a little frustrating to focus on grammar at that point. (Luna)

The participants and scholars such as Cox (2016) claim that experienced faculty should know to focus on the context. Luna as well as the rest of the participants call for consideration towards students who are learning the language and therefore not to pick on the lower order concerns, but rather evaluating students based on their overall argument. Alicia states, “Basically, do I understand what you wrote?” If so, then everything else is secondary. Luna, as other interviewed tutors, suggests that faculty pays more attention to the actual content rather than grammar and grammar should not be the only reason for a referral.

When applying the approach of focusing on the overall argument, multilingual tutors are essential when working with multilingual students as they their own experience as language learners helps them to understand the root of the students’ error and are able to identify moment when it is needed to explain how English works (Cox 2016; Mendez Newman 2017; Min 2016). When tutors notice that the root of error is caused by unfamiliarity with English, the participants and Cox (2016) suggest not to mask the students’ proficiency but rather take the role of an educator and explain to students the rules of English language. Doing so will result in development of more confident and self-sufficient writers in the future. For instance, Kimberly describes her approach as follows:

> Typically I pay attention to higher order concerns first but there are also lower order concerns and addressing them does not mean to make the students feel bad or to pick at it instead of a thesis statement, but it is to install habits, because if you point out why you would put a comma there, for example, and explain the

> thinking process behind it, then they can start doing that on their own and they don't have to think about those little things anymore. (Kimberly)

Through explaining the rules of lower orders concerns, the tutors make students become better writers by installing a habit in them that they can use on their own in the future. Rather than telling students what to do, which would perhaps make the piece of writing better at the moment, the tutors give them skills that allow them to improve as writers in general. Doing so, the tutors showcase attention to the writers and build their knowledge over mechanically editing grammatical errors, which does not benefit the students in the long term. By teaching multilingual students the rules, they create more confident writers who spend less time working on lower order concerns with the tutor and more time focusing on important aspects of writing that tutors are there to help with.

Another way to educate students and create writers who can critically think about their writing and higher order concerns is asking them questions. Wanting to hear the students' input helps them to think about their writing and their choices in arguments and also shows interest in the students' ideas, which is empowering. For instance, Ivana explains: "I love asking them questions. For example, what do you think about this, what is your understanding, etc... I think they really appreciate it when you start asking them questions and care about their opinion," Ivana explained. It appears that multilingual tutors feel for language learners and understand when they need appreciation and how to showcase their care. Teaching students the rules of English language and asking them questions that make them think about their arguments and showing interest in their writing are two approaches that multilingual tutors use when working with multilingual students who come to sessions overly preoccupied with lower order concerns.

Tutor Roles

Although multilingual tutors use asking questions as a strategy when working with multilingual students as an effective tool for showcasing interest in students' writing, it can be at odds as a tutoring method as it can confuse tutors about their role in the session. Although many authors (Blythe, 2001; Murray, 1972/2011; Hutchinson & Gillespie, 2016) suggest indirect feedback while tutors play the role of listeners and guides, others (Hewett 2015; Rafoth, 2009) along with the participants, prefer a more directive approach and the role of a motivator when assisting multilingual students. When working with multilingual students all four participants stated that indirect feedback can come out as unclear and confusing. From Ivana's experience, students did not understand what she meant when she was being indirect. She explained, "It happens all the time that students do not understand what I mean because I am being indirect, and I think it is a problem, but that is how we are trained. We are trained to only give students suggestions and they usually come out as indirect phrases or questions." The tutors are aware of the fact that indirect feedback is less efficient, but some practice it anyway because that is the way they have been trained. It appears that the method that seems to align with tutors' training and works with multilingual students is still providing feedback in the question form, but in a more direct manner. As Alicia said, "I make sure I don't use the fluff around that can be misunderstood yet still make them feel like they have a choice. I stopped saying phrases such as "I wonder" because that can be confusing. So, instead of saying I wonder what tone you want to use in the essay, I ask them more directly, what tone do you want to use in the essay. Providing feedback in this form allows the students' voice to be heard, portraying the tutor as less directive, yet in control of the session.

Although most authors suggest that tutors play a role of a listener during sessions or at least negotiate with the students, they still found that native English-speaking tutors tend to be more “directive and authoritative” when working with multilingual students (Williams & Severino 2004, p. 166). The study’s multilingual participants confirmed that they act the same way, explaining that multilingual students need a different approach, because they tend to be insecure and downplay their writing skills. For example, from Ivana’s experience, working with multilingual writers is different in a way that “you absolutely have to motivate more. Because they have been told probably their whole student career that they need help with writing. Especially, the undergraduate students need to be motivated” (Ivana). The participants' approach is to try to motivate multilingual students and comfort them by stating that nobody was born a great writer and that English is not their first language either, so they don't need to be self-conscious. Another approach that participants adopt to take pressure off of students’ shoulders is reading the paper out loud to them, rather than forcing the shy students to read. As much as the scholars advocate for the role of a listener and giving space to students, because of the vulnerable and insecure attitude that multilingual students enter the tutoring sessions with, the participants tend to take the lead and take the role of a motivator to encourage students, and provide more direct feedback to avoid students’ unnecessary frustration from being confused.

There is one issue that the participants pointed out with direct feedback, which is the times when multilingual students adopt the tutors’ words and write it as theirs. Luna explained that “Sometimes when you are direct, they like everything you say word by word and that is the worst. You do not want that.” As a solution, Luna tries to find a

healthy balance. She stated, “I try to avoid being unclear yet not to tell them what to do. I rely a lot on examples. That is what I found to be my most effective method of communicating feedback because if not, the language is so vague sometimes.” Providing plenty of examples and asking rather direct questions are two ways that tutors use to prevent being misunderstood or cited word for word when giving feedback to multilingual students.

Code-Switching

Multilingual tutors are unique in that they can incorporate code-switching or interchanging between languages in their feedback when working with multilingual students. Code-switching is a practice that sets them apart from monolingual tutors and although it is a rather developing tutoring pedagogy, many authors (Dvorak, 2016; Grimm, 2009; Hutchinson and Gillespie, 2016) have interest in and are fond of its utilization. Code-switching can be a helpful strategy during sessions between multilingual tutors and students. It can be utilized to clarify ideas and avoid misunderstandings, create a bond between tutor and student, and utilize what comes naturally, to help others. Scholars such as Hutchinson and Gillespie (2016) claim that code-switching brings many benefits to individuals using it but also to the writing center in general as offering this kind of service adds value to the center.

Similar to the existing literature, the participants claim that code-switching helps them to make students comfortable, understand their intended meaning, communicate more efficiently, and connect with the students on a personal level. As Kimberly states, code-switching helps her to find “a common ground and the students do not feel alone.” The participants claimed that no matter the English proficiency, the students felt more

connected to them when they had at least a little chit chat in Spanish. The bond created through code-switching is an important element that they would practice regardless of the students' level of English. Moreover, when the participants notice that the student is not understanding, then they switch, to move faster in the session. As Kimberly states, "If I see that they are not understanding me for a while, then I will switch so I do not waste time." Kimberly's approach aligns with one of the tutors that Hutchinson and Gillespie (2016) interviewed, who explained that she "uses Spanish to help the student to better understand something in English" (p. 132). Therefore, it appears that code-switching saves a lot of time in the sessions and allows students and tutors to move smoothly forward as it prevents inability to express themselves or understand the intended meaning of the other, due to a linguistic barrier.

As students experience the comfort and efficiency in multilingual sessions where they are able to code-switch, they tend to make recurring appointments with the request to work with a specific tutor they can code-switch with. Hutchinson and Gillespie (2016) explain, "We sometimes hear of requests for specific kinds of tutors but not for native speakers of English; the most frequent request is for a tutor who speaks Spanish" (p. 132). The students who were regulars and worked with almost every tutor, chose to visit tutor with whom they could code switch with most often. Sometimes multilingual students are scared to be judged based on their linguistic ability, even in the writing center. Multilingual tutors seem to ease the anxiety, especially for students who have been speaking English only for a few years. For instance, a student that Dvorak (2016) interviewed explained that as a first language Spanish speaker, she was more comfortable working with a bilingual tutor because she was worried that she would be judged based

on her English proficiency, which was intimidating. However, her tutor was multilingual and made her feel comfortable right from the start, by addressing her in Spanish. The fact that Spanish was allowed in the writing center encouraged her to become a regular visitor. The participants confirmed that code switching is appreciated by the students they work with and although some of them are not sure of the cause, all four get multilingual students who make recurring appointments with them. Kimberly states that a Puerto Rican student asked her if she could speak Spanish and she went with it. She explained that because of this switch, she was able to assist the student better. According to Kimberly, "It was much easier for the student and the session went so much faster and we did a lot." Although Kimberly has never been told that students make an appointment with her because of her multilingualism, the pace in which they get work done is much faster due to code-switching and the students certainly feel it. On the other hand, Alicia is aware of the fact that some of her students request appointments with her specifically because of her linguistic ability. Alicia stated, "I have a lady who repeatedly schedules an appointment with me every single week because I understand if she has to say a word in Spanish. She would make the appointment three weeks ahead of time to be sure she gets it with me." The multilingual students that Alicia has worked with testified that they felt comfortable and were able to get their ideas through faster when they interchanged between English and Spanish.

The practice of code-switching is however also beneficial to tutors. For instance, Green (2016) speaks of the frustration that some tutors experience when they are suppressing what comes natural to them and when writing centers do not allow them to embrace their linguistic abilities. Suppressing interchanging languages can lead to

anxiety as it might feel natural to express certain feelings or communicate certain words in languages other than English. In fact, all participants without hesitation claim that being able to use Spanish when tutoring is something that they cannot imagine avoiding. For example, Luna explained that to her, “code-switching is invaluable.” It allows her to feel more comfortable and work more efficiently with multilingual students.

However, what might be natural and unthinkable to avoid in NSU’s WCC, where the study’s participants work, it may not be the norm in other writing centers. For instance in the writing center that Choi et al. (2017) describe, where a Korean born multilingual tutor, Kim, reflects on her session with another Korean student where she was not sure if she was allowed to switch to Korean to help the student and release her stress by speaking to her in a language other than English in the writing center. She recalls:

> I was hesitant but, at the same time, glad when she (student) asked if she could discuss matters with me in Korean, because I understood what she was concerned about. I wanted to help her, so I said yes. Relieved to speak in her mother tongue, she expressed very clearly what her instructor wanted her to do and why she chose to draft her paper in a certain way. (Choi et al., 2017, p. 18)

Because Dvorak (2016) found that one of his multilingual tutors was also worried about using a language other than English during sessions, he states that it is vital that multilingual tutors are permitted to code-switch and are trained to understand when and how to use it. However, it seems that whether the multilingual tutors are sure about code-switching or not, they all let the students take the lead and decide when to switch languages. It is interesting that multilingual tutors tend to take on the role of a motivator

and offer direct feedback when working with multilingual students. However, when code-switching, they prefer the students be in control of changing languages. The reason from existing literature and the participants' responses seems to be that sometimes, multilingual students do not wish to use their native language because they want to practice their English and the tutors try to respect that. Roberta, a multilingual tutor that Dvorak (2016) interviewed, claims that she understands that sometimes students want to take the opportunity to practice English but jumps in with code-switching when she sees frustration arising to help the student out. All participants experienced this before and allowed students to practice and therefore do not begin speaking in language other than English and let the student initiate the switch. For example, Ivana stated, "I learned to be very cautious because sometimes they would request me to speak only English because they are trying to practice. I learned to respect that." Multilingual tutors appear to be flexible and able to quickly adjust to students' needs. Kimberly said, "I like them to take the lead. If they are more comfortable speaking Spanish, I will do it." Moreover, they are respectful of the students' backgrounds and do not throw all multilingual students in the same box, treating them one way.

As another reason why the participants prefer to wait for students is because they do not want to assume anybody's linguistic or cultural background. Luna explained, "I would usually wait for them because I do not want to assume they speak Spanish because they have an accent." The strategy that multilingual tutors use to understand clues from students to code-switch, is being attentive and paying attention to small details and hints such as when the students says "ay ay ay" or "yo sé" in the middle of an English dialogue. When multilingual tutors believe that the student would be receptive to using

other languages, then they switch and often find the students thankful and relieved of stress. It seems that code-switching is not only an efficient strategy to clarify content for multilingual students but allows multilingual tutors to work more efficiently. In addition, the commonality of language other than English makes both parties comfortable and free of frustrations due to suppressing what comes natural to them.

Special Training

Although the practice of code-switching might come natural to multilingual tutors as well as working with multilingual students in general, special training is still suggested. Many authors (Bailey, 2012; Chainer Nowacki, 2012; Rafoth, 2015; Thonus 2004) suggest that tutors are trained to work with multilingual students. Although more authors such as Nieves (2017) and Sherwood (2007) support this notion, they believe that the key to success is a combination of proper tutor training and personal experiences to complement multilingual tutors' linguistic and cultural upbringing.

Simply being multilingual does not make the tutor an expert on multilingual sessions. In fact, the results that Thonus (2004) showed, stated that tutors can experience frustration when having to aid multilingual students. Luna confirmed that she does feel an added pressure on her shoulders before assisting multilingual students and fears that she may not be able to offer her best service. Luna's feeling of stress before multilingual sessions might be connected to the lack of training on assisting multilingual students and the lack of tutor training material for linguistically diverse tutors that Bailey (2012) points out. The participants revealed that none of them have ever gone through a special training and believe that it would be beneficial, especially for those who do not have many experiences assisting multilingual students. However, like Nieves (2017) and

Sherwood (2007), the participants do not perceive special training as the most helpful tool for working with multilingual students. They mostly value ongoing conversations among colleagues and their personal experiences from multilingual sessions as the two factors that give them better training than anything else. For example, Kimberly states that, "I think more than training you need repetition and just experiences from real sessions and to be open to ideas that are coming from other people." All participants agree that some training would be beneficial, but they picked up the most knowledge by working with multilingual students and sharing personal stories with their colleagues in the writing center.

Online Tutoring

When it comes to online tutoring, many scholars state that even with the best technology, online tutoring is limiting and inferior to face-to-face sessions (Bell, 2012; Fitzgerald & Ianetta, 2016; Pemberton, 2010). Although online tutoring provides a full range of modalities such as screen sharing, audio, chat box, etc., the skepticism pertains for the misunderstandings that can arise due to the lack of physical presence and information being shared through technology. In order to have an effective tutoring session online, tutors should use slightly different strategies than in face-to-face sessions. Due to the lack of physical presence, which can feel cold and impersonal, online tutoring can be perceived as limiting. However, this study shows that students purposefully make online appointments because they do not wish to be seen. What the existing literature perceives as limiting because of the relationship building difficulty is demanded by many students who prefer to keep some intimacy during sessions. The participants state that often students do not wish to be heard either and request to type in the chat box. Their

testimonies align with scholars such as Martinez and Olsen (2015), Gallagher and Maxfield (2019) and Chewning (2007), who believe that online tutoring comes with benefits mainly for those who cannot commute or prefer the homey environment without outside distractions.

From the participants' responses, it is apparent that Blair (2005), Rafoth (2009) and Thonus (2014) claims about online space being ideal for multilingual students are true, as they often lack confidence due to their linguistic proficiency or accent. Online sessions allow them to feel safe and comfortable behind their screens. The findings show that especially language learners prefer an online environment where they cannot be seen or heard and therefore judged by outside people. According to Ivana, "they can still be shy and hesitant but they quickly realize that they can choose to use the webcam, we don't have to see each other if they don't want to, we don't even have to speak, we can just type in the chat box, and this is a huge deal for them." In person, students might feel embarrassed about people around them hearing their accents, but when they are at home, nobody hears them, they can engage more easily and dictate how they would like the session to be conducted. However, when multilingual students do not wish to use video or audio, it makes the sessions difficult for tutors because it decreases their means to bond with students. For this reason, participants encourage to at least use audio in sessions where they can utilize their voice and tone that Bell (2012) emphasizes on to recreate the personal connection of a face-to-face session while still maintaining a safe and comfortable feeling for students. As Luna explains, "The tone of the voice is crucial in online sessions because the mood and attitude can be heard." Sounding happy and engaged reflects on the students' attitude and stands as an alternative for body language.

Moreover, when audio is functioning, online tutors are able to listen and pay attention to the noises in the background and utilize them as something to relate to and initiate small talk with the students to ease their potential stress from a tutoring session.

An interesting finding from the study is that when students do not wish to use the web camera and only want to speak or type, the participants perceive it as a great learning opportunity as due to the lack of physical clues, the students are forced to communicate more. They need to work harder in expressing themselves clearly and describing what they need to work on or how they feel about certain suggestions, resulting in being forced to speak more than they would in person.

When working with language learners who are self-conscious about their linguistic proficiencies or cultural backgrounds, the multilingual tutors use their differences as a way to create a bond with them. As language learners themselves, they can understand what it feels like and try to make them feel more comfortable by displaying their genuine interest that Hewett (2015) suggests. The participants ask them questions about where they are from, what is the origin of their names and turn their differences that might worry them into a topic of interest for the tutors. Moreover, the participants are not afraid to admit their own flaws, which makes the students feel like they are on the same boat and bond together without having to see one another.

Online tutoring is not only preferred by many multilingual students, but also by multilingual tutors. The participants revealed that they find comfort behind the screens as well, especially when conducting sessions in Spanish, where they do not feel as proficient. Because multilingual tutors go through linguistic struggles sometimes themselves, they are able to feel for students who have difficulties with composing in a

new language and feel shy using a web camera or even audio in online sessions. Alicia stated, “I feel more comfortable behind the screen, especially when working in Spanish since I am not as proficient and I just don't want them to see my face, I don't know why.” This feeling of a linguistic foreigner is what allows multilingual tutors to put themselves into the language learners’ shoes and empathize with them. Just as the students, the participants value the intimacy that the online space brings and appreciate the fact that nobody can see them. They even point out that because there are no outside distractions, compared to being in the writing center with many other people, when they are at home, in a space where they feel most comfortable, they feel more productive and more devoted to the sessions.

According to Choi et al. (2017) multilingual tutors often face skepticism and doubt from students as they do not fit into the picture of an ideal All-American tutor. Their comments, such as “Last time I worked with a native speaker because I need help with English” (Choi et al., 2017, p. 6), do not add to the multilingual tutors’ confidence and therefore it is not surprising that they would prefer to work in the online space that feels safer. This study helped me to discover some aspects that the scholarship was omitting and what I learned is that although multilingualism is perceived as a strength and opens possibilities to assist a variety of students, it can be an intimidating and anxiety-causing experience for tutors. Negative comments or doubts can also come from students who on the other hand expect a multilingual tutor with a perfectly fluent Spanish. When the linguistic proficiency of the tutors lacks the academic level, students who need more help using code-switching can be frustrated. When the students expect the tutors’ second language to be on a certain level that they would need to get their ideas

through and the tutor is struggling with the language, it creates a situation where multilingual tutors feel they don't offer their best help and feel disappointed of themselves. For example, Ivana describes her experience when the student felt discouraged with her: "Because my Spanish was not where she needed it to be for her ideas to come through. She could not get her ideas out clearly and I felt terrible." She described the feeling as if the student became a tutor for the moment. According to the participants, there is a certain amount of pressure that comes with the linguistic ability. Because tutors always want to provide the best service possible, multilingual tutors experience a bit of anxiety before sessions where they know that they will need to use their second language.

On the other hand, most of the time, multilingual sessions have great results and tutors are happy to use multiple languages in a session. Especially online, where clarity and purposeful communication is key (Hewett, 2015; Rafoth, 2009), multilingualism helps tutors code-switch and enhance the understanding to ensure high efficiency of the session. The participants also highlight that being online helps them conduct multilingual sessions because of the features that it provides. For instance, in Kimberly's experience, she needs to be very clear when working with multilingual students online and the platform allows her to practice clarity. Kimberly explains that "The chat box helps me a lot to write down things that the students don't understand in English, for example, bracket. Without the chat box, we would spend minutes trying to understand each other and what I mean." The chat box is a feature that can also be utilized by the students to explain something in Spanish that the tutor does not understand. These features are

helpful in avoiding misunderstandings and save time and unnecessary frustration to both parties.

To be able to utilize the best of the online platform, scholars such as Martinez and Olsen (2015), Moberg (2010), and Wolfe and Griffin (2012) suggest that tutors are trained to conduct online sessions and advocate for hands-on practice sessions with colleagues in the center. This study showed that in fact, the only downside the participants perceive with online tutoring are the occasional technical difficulties. For this reason, the online platform should be easy to use, and tutors should be trained to use it from both ends, theirs and the students' to be able to guide them in case of difficulties. More hands-on training on the online platform is precisely what the participants feel would be the most essential. They believe that having mock online sessions and practicing with another tutor using the platform from both ends would be invaluable.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Having explored the direct experiences and practices of four multilingual online tutors, I am now able to better understand the issues that were previously relatively unexplored or lacked direct tutors' perspectives. What I know now about perceptions on multilingual writing centers is that when a writing center removes the hegemonic monolingual thinking and narrative, invites different languages and cultures, and encourages multilingual tutors to utilize their linguistic skills, tutors become better and more complex professionals who do not suppress their identities. In fact, embracing their identities gives tutors a rewarding feeling for providing a service that multilingual students appreciate and often need in order to succeed and develop a positive relationship with writing. Therefore, I recommend that writing centers embrace differences and welcome diversity and multiple languages. By doing so, successful multilingual writing centers begin with diversifying the team with multilingual tutors and encouraging them to incorporate the languages and cultures that come natural to them even during sessions. Doing so results in fulfilled multilingual tutors and satisfied students, which adds to the overall value of a writing center.

When it comes to tutoring multilingual students and focusing on the overall argument as the most important aspect in composition, multilingual tutors are essential when working with multilingual students as their own experience as language learners helps them to identify when an error is caused by unfamiliarity with the English language. Instead of masking the students' linguistic proficiency and line-edit as monolingual tutors tend to do when working with language learners, multilingual tutors take the role of educators and explain to students the rules of English language.

Moreover, they give students an opportunity for their voices to be heard by asking them questions about their writing. Being curious about their thoughts and arguments shows interest of the tutor in the students' writing and makes students think about what they are trying to communicate. Besides this approach being effective for student writing, multilingual tutors utilize it as a way to enact caring and appreciate the students and their written piece they are composing. By explaining the rules of English and asking students questions, tutors allow students to think for themselves and give them the skills to become more confident and independent writers in the future.

On the other hand, the habit of asking students questions can be tricky when providing feedback in that manner. As much as the participants still use asking questions as a tutoring strategy because that is the way they are trained, they are also aware that it is not the most efficient pedagogy and often is misunderstood by multilingual students. What seems to be a more appropriate approach for multilingual tutors is putting themselves in the role of motivators, leading the session, encouraging the often low self-esteemed multilingual students by providing more direct feedback to avoid any confusion or misunderstanding. Still obeying the training modules and realizing that indirect feedback is less effective, multilingual tutors offer feedback in a form of more direct questions and rely on many examples. Doing so ensures that they portray themselves as less directive and authoritative, yet still have control over the session. Moreover, multilingual tutors avoid misunderstanding while ensuring that the students will not transcribe their suggestions word for word but rather use their own ideas for the piece they are composing.

An interesting finding of this study is that although multilingual tutors often find themselves in the role of a motivator, leading the session with multilingual students and being more directive when offering feedback, when it comes to code-switching, they offer more space to multilingual students and let them take the lead. Multilingual tutors do not initiate code-switching and wait for the students to decide what they are most comfortable with for two reasons. They learned to respect that some multilingual students want to take the opportunity and use the session to practice their English. Also, they are respectful of students' various cultural and linguistic backgrounds and do not want to generate their linguistic abilities based on hearing their accents. They do not want to stereotype a student with a Spanish accent who might as well be Portuguese. However, when multilingual students seem to be receptive to code-switching and initiate it or they seem to struggle for a while not being able to express themselves clearly, multilingual tutors are flexible and willing to switch to another language to avoid any frustrations or students' ideas being lost in translation. It is a practice that tutors at NSU's WCC perceive as invaluable as it allows them to invite their identities and enable them to have effective sessions with multilingual students for whom code-switching seems to play an important role when choosing the tutors to work with in the future. Being able to help students and create a special personal connection by using a familiar language other than English makes multilingual tutors unique and I recommend that other writing centers where this practice is not a norm, permit their multilingual tutors to utilize their talents and encourage them to invite into sessions what comes natural to them. Moreover, not only should they be encouraged to interchange between languages, but they should be trained to understand when and how to effectively use it.

When it comes to multilingual tutor training, the literature recommends it, as solely being multilingual does not necessarily mean the tutors know how to effectively use their skills in sessions. To avoid any stress and frustrations from not being sure how to aid multilingual students or when to code-switch, special training is suggested, but the participants mostly value engaging in dialogues with other multilingual tutors and sharing their personal experiences. In order to ensure multilingual tutors' professional growth, besides including training modules targeted to multilingual tutors, I recommend that writing centers initiate and support conversations among multilingual tutors providing them a platform to learn from one another. Moreover, writing centers could include multilingual mockup sessions to give a chance to tutors who may lack experiences with multilingual tutoring as the participants perceive hands-on experiences more essential than theoretical training.

Hands-on training and mockup sessions with colleagues are what multilingual tutors who work online call for as well. Multilingual tutors working online claim that special training with the online platform would be invaluable as technical difficulties or their unfamiliarity with what the platform looks like from students' perspectives is a downside of online tutoring sessions. The reason why tutors prefer online spaces, similar to multilingual students, is because it gives them the feeling of safety and comfort. What this study revealed is that being a multilingual tutor brings expectations that the tutors should be able to assist multilingual students, but none of the four participants ever used Spanish in an academic setting, but more as a language to speak informally at home. The fear of not being able to provide the best service frustrates the tutors and brings some anxiety before sessions. Although they still perceive their multilingualism as a strength

and use it happily with great results, they share some vulnerability with multilingual students. Perhaps, this is why multilingual tutors can relate so well with multilingual students and create a special bond that brings the students back to them.

The limitations of online tutoring that it is inferior to face-to-face sessions even with the best technology is exactly what draws multilingual tutors to the online space. Instead of perceiving aspects such as lack of physical presence as a limitation, they embrace it and in fact see it as a positive aspect. Multilingual tutors do not try to recreate the experience of a face-to-face session in the online space like the literature suggests to do, rather they utilize the intimacy that the space brings and claim to be actually more productive as they can devote all their focus to the session without having to pay attention to outside distractions. Moreover, online sessions offer a whole range of features that enable multilingual tutors to conduct efficient sessions with multilingual students they might have trouble communicating with. For instance, the chat box feature is invaluable when the student does not understand words such as brackets or parentheses and the tutor cannot translate it to their native language. The chat box allows multilingual tutors to simply type [ ] or ( ) and save time and frustration to both parties. Therefore, multilingual online tutors learned to embrace the “shortcomings” of the online space and make it an environment that works the best for them.

My research study explored four multilingual online tutors who happened to be all females and all graduate tutors. Therefore, for future research, I recommend exploring the perspectives from male tutors as well. Moreover, it would be interesting to also explore the fresh experiences of undergraduate tutors to add to the scholarship.

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Appendix A: Interview Questions

1. I'd like to start by having you tell me about yourself, your background, and culture and how you came to your multilingual ability.

2. Tell me about you as a tutor.
A. How long have you been tutoring (face to face and online)
B. Do you prefer one over the other, why?
C. Could you tell me about your best session that you had?
D. What is your thought about multilingual writing center?
E. Would you say your practices are following the writing center rule, which is focusing on producing better writers not writing? How do you do it?
F. Would you describe yourself as (a tutor) initiator/motivator or listener/guide? Why?
G. What students do you think should visit the writing center? How do you evaluate good writing?

3. What is your experience tutoring multilingual students? Is it any different from tutoring English-only speakers?
A. What impact does special training have for working with multilingual students? Can you describe the one you went (or are going) through?
B. What do you think about code-switching, do you ever use it? What are your experiences code-switching/code-meshing when tutoring online?
C. Can you see online tutoring being an advantage when working with multilingual students? Why?
D. What was your experience like when you and the student spoke the same language other than English, and the student demanded to only use English during the session?
E. How do you know when it is appropriate/helpful to switch to another language, if ever?
F. How do you deal with situations where the student's writing is incorrect in Standard English writing (global errors), but perhaps correct in another language's structure?
G. It is said that multilingual writers tend to request from the tutor to focus on grammar errors rather than organization, which is on the contrary more requested by English-only speakers. What is your experience with the different requests from students? Do they differ based on the language proficiency or culture?
H. What do you think second language speakers should be evaluated on?
I. Can you tell me about your experience with the "American" politeness and indirectness when it comes to giving advice to second language writers? Have you experienced a time when it was a problem because the student misunderstood the advice or saw it as hesitation from your part? (ex. "I wonder if…,or You might want to think about…" What was your experience when you were more direct?

4. Tell me what is your way to create that "bond" that online space lacks compared to face-to-face that is often needed to make students comfortable.
A. What would you say is your strategy to bond with a student? What about a multilingual student?

B. What do you do to recreate the face-to-face aspects that online space lacks? Or do you even try to recreate it?
C. What strategies do you use to make students, especially ones struggling with English, comfortable and respected?
D. Would you say that the online space helps to create the safe and inclusive environment that students may not always have in face-to-face interactions? (Minimizing the risk of being shy or overheard) How so?
E. Do you ever admit your uncertainties/flaws to the student? If so, how is it usually taken? Does it ever create compassion or a connection on a humane level or is it seen as unprofessional and decreases your credibility?

5. Can you tell me about a session when the virtual space was an advantage for the success of the student? Can you tell me about a session when it was a disadvantage for the success of the student?
A. Does tutoring online require doing any practices different from face-to-face? Which ones?
B. Would you say that an ongoing special training for tutors is vital when working in online spaces? What kind of training would be most useful? (ex. online platform training)
C. According to existing literature, multilingual, especially second language speakers feel more comfortable in online sessions behind the computer. How do multilingual tutors feel? (Confidence building)
D. What are some must-do's when tutoring online? (ex. clear directions, precise vocabulary, etc…)

6. What is your personal experience with being multilingual, perhaps English being your second language, what is it like to be tutoring in English, even native English speakers?
A. Do you remember a time when it was intimidating to be tutoring in your second language? How did you feel?
B. Would you say that being multilingual is a strength or a weakness in your tutoring sessions?
C. Can you recall a time when a student made an appointment with you because of your linguistic abilities? Why do you think you were the student's preference?
D. How does your cultural and linguistic background affect the way you tutor? To what extent do you think your cultural and linguistic background affects your tutoring practices?