"I Subtitle Myself": Affordances and Challenges of Canadian EAL Students' Plurilingual Learning Strategies in a Francophone College

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Canadian multilingualism and multiculturalism are on the rise. Yet, monolingual language instruction remains the standard: students are often discouraged from using their additional languages and teaching materials still lack a plurilingual lens. To further inform the practice of plurilingual pedagogies, this paper reports on results of a convergent mixed methods study that investigated the plurilingual learning strategies of 20 adult English as an additional language (EAL) student tutors and tutees in a Francophone college in Montréal. The study asked (1) What plurilingual strategies do EAL tutors and tutees use to teach and learn English from each other? (2) What are their perceptions of the affordances and challenges of these plurilingual strategies? Data from an observation grid, fieldnotes, and semi-structured interviews were analyzed deductively and inductively, and merged for convergence analysis. Results show that (1) participants regularly engaged in plurilingual practices including translation, translanguaging, and crosslinguistic comparisons during the tutoring sessions. Further, (2) participants perceived plurilingual strategies as useful for supporting English language development, fostering positive learning experience and conceptual links; however, they noted challenges pertaining to the monolingual posture of EAL instruction, to English oral production, and to the feasibility of plurilingual pedagogies. Implications for EAL education in multilingual contexts like Canada are discussed.

Le multilinguisme et le multiculturalisme canadien augmente. Pourtant, l'instruction monolingue reste la norme: on décourage souvent les étudiants d'utiliser leurs autres langues et le matériel pédagogique manque encore d'optique plurilingue. Pour informer davantage la pratique de pédagogies plurilingues, cet article présente un rapport sur les résultats d'une étude de méthodes combinées convergentes qui se sont penchées sur les stratégies d'apprentissage de 20 adultes en anglais langue additionnelle (ALA) d'apprenants tuteurs et d'apprenants dans un collège francophone de Montréal. L'étude demandait (1) Quelles stratégies plurilingues les apprenants tuteurs et les apprenants mettent en œuvre pour enseigner et apprendre l'anglais les uns des autres? (2) Quelles sont leurs perceptions des affordances et des défis de ces stratégies plurilingues? Les données tirées d'une grille d'observation, les notes de terrain et des entrevues semi-structurées ont été analysées de façon inductive et déductive et mises en commun pour une analyse de convergence. Les résultats ont montré que (1) les participants

avaient régulièrement recours à des pratiques plurilingues comme la traduction, le translanguaging et les comparaisons translinguistiques lors des séances d'apprentissage. De plus, (2) les participants ont perçu l'utilité des stratégies plurilingues en ce qu'elles soutenaient le développement de l'anglais, favorisant une expérience d'apprentissage positive et des liens conceptuels; cependant, ils ont remarqué des défis liés à la posture monolingue de l'enseignement de l'ALA, à la production orale en anglais et à la faisabilité des pédagogies plurilingues. Nous discutons des implications pour l'enseignement de l'ALA dans des contextes multilingues comme le Canada.

Keywords: plurilingual pedagogies, postsecondary ESL, translation, translanguaging, crosslinguistic comparison

Amidst increased global mobility, Canada's linguistic landscape continues to diversify. Between 2011 and 2016, the country welcomed 1.1 million newcomers, and along with it saw a drastic rise in the number of Canadians who speak more than one language at home, which grew from 1.9% to 19.4% in just 5 years (Statistics Canada, 2016). Further, 70% of these multilingual Canadians reported speaking a home language that is neither of the official English and French languages. Cities across Canada reflect this new reality; in Montréal for instance, 21% of residents are reportedly trilingual (Statistics Canada, 2019). Research suggests that such high levels of multilingualism are advantageous for additional language (AL) development, and scholars posit that linguistically inclusive pedagogies that draw from learners' rich plurilingual repertoires benefit AL teaching and learning (Canagarajah, 2018; Cook 2012; Cook & Li, 2016; Cummins, 2017; García & Otheguy, 2019; Göbel & Vieluf, 2014; Lau & Van Viegen, 2020; Lightbown & Spada, 2020).

However, official language policies—such as Canada's (1969) Official Languages Act, or Québec's (1977) *la Charte de la langue française*—continue to influence how teachers encourage or discourage multilingualism in AL classrooms (Haque, 2012; Henderson, 2017; Krasny & Sachar, 2017). In Québec, there is a lack of teacher training promoting plurilingual mindsets among AL educators (Boisvert et al., 2020), especially for teachers of multilingual adult postsecondary learners (Blandford et al., 2019). Hence, official policies provide little to no guidance on how Canadian language education can provide linguistically inclusive pedagogies (Mady, 2007; Mady & Black, 2012; Mady & Turnbull, 2010), particularly in highly multilingual cities like Montréal where many residents identify as plurilingual and pluricultural (Galante & dela Cruz, 2021). As a result, mainstream Canadian AL instruction tends to delegitimize the plurilingual practices, and disparage the plurilingual identities of multilingual AL students across a variety of learning contexts (Cummins, 2007; Guo, 2013; Sterzuk, 2015), and teachers of French or English

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as an additional language (FAL/EAL) may find it challenging to confront their own or their teaching environment's monolingual bias (Galante, et al., 2020; Piccardo, 2013; Querrien, 2017; Woll, 2020). Thus, implementation of plurilingual pedagogies remains a challenge: AL instructional materials and curricula continue to favour a monolingual approach, ignoring the plurilingual and pluricultural realities of many learners (Cook, 2016; Kubota, 2020; Kubota & Bale, 2020; Kubota & Miller, 2017).

One way to strengthen the plurilingual dimension of existing AL pedagogies in linguistically diverse settings like Canada is by incorporating students' plurilingual practices when learning their AL into teaching materials and programs (Kubota, 2020). Yet, while previous research has examined AL learners' plurilingual practices and their perceptions of such practices (e.g., Dault & Collins, 2017; Galante, 2020b; Galante et al., 2020), not many studies have focused on peer-to-peer interactions (e.g., Payant, 2015), and none so far have examined such interactions in Francophone postsecondary contexts in Québec. To fill this gap, this article reports parts of the findings from a mixed methods study investigating the plurilingual competence, identities, and strategies of adult EAL student tutors and tutees in a Francophone college (also known as Collège d'enseignement général et professionnel, or CÉGEP) in Montréal, Québec, Canada. Specifically, this article reports on these EAL student's plurilingual strategies during their tutoring sessions, as well as their perceptions of these strategies' affordances and challenges.

Plurilingual Strategies: Learners' and Teachers' Perceptions

Responding to an increasingly mobile world, AL research has shifted its gaze to the multi and the plural (Block, 2003; May, 2014)—turning its attention towards transnational, transcultural, and often immigrant language learners, as well as to their fluid and dynamic linguistic repertoires and identities (Jaspers, 2018; Kubota, 2016; Ortega, 2014). Plurilingualism (Coste et al., 1997/2009; Council of Europe [CoE], 2001) emerged as part of this shift to recognize the fluid nature of languages and language use, drawing from similar concepts such as heteroglossia (Bakhtin, 1981), polylingual languaging (Jørgensen, 2008), translanguaging (García, 2009), metrolingualism (Pennycook, 2010), flexible bilingualism (Creese et al., 2011), code-meshing (Canagarajah, 2011), and lingua franca multilingualism (Makoni & Pennycook, 2012).

As a theoretical-pedagogical framework for AL learning, teaching, and assessment, plurilingualism puts forth that an individual's known languages and cultures are interconnected in one composite linguistic repertoire, which is an essential resource for learning new languages (CoE, 2020; Moore & Gajo, 2009; Piccardo, 2019). Plurilingualism emphasizes that language learners have the agency to flexibly use their repertoire when communicating and when learning new languages (García & Otheguy, 2019; Marshall & Moore, 2018; Payant, 2020), and is part of their plurilingual and pluricultural competence

(CoE, 2001; Coste et al., 1997/2009), which can be quantitively examined (Galante, 2020a; Galante & dela Cruz, 2021). Thus, one goal of plurilingual instruction is to raise students' awareness of and draw from their plurilingual and pluricultural competence to develop not only their target AL, but all the languages in their repertoire (Cenoz & Gorter, 2013).

The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CoE, 2020) outlines how plurilingualism advances an action-oriented approach to AL instruction (Piccardo, 2013), and research on plurilingual pedagogies has identified various practices that teachers and students employ to facilitate AL development. These plurilingual strategies include (1) *translanguaging* for meaning-making (Cenoz, 2017; Hornberger & Link, 2012), wherein students mix their languages when making meaning about course content; (2) *translation* for mediation (CoE, 2020; Galante, 2021; Muñoz-Basols, 2019), wherein learners translate between their first language (L1) and the target AL to carry out tasks; and (3) *crosslinguistic comparison* (also known as *Comparons nos langues*; Auger, 2005; 2008a; 2008b; for additional discussions on crosslinguistic approaches, see also Candelier 2008; Candelier et al., 2010), wherein learners systematically compare and contrast AL forms and meanings with L1 counterparts.

Research indicates that pedagogies utilizing plurilingual strategies benefit AL development. Translanguaging for meaning-making has been shown to develop learners' AL lexical (Galante, 2020c; Makalela, 2015; Prasad, 2013) and grammatical knowledge (Payant & Kim, 2015), as well as their literacies (Kim et al., 2020; Lau et al., 2016). Translation has been shown to support students' AL vocabulary learning (Galante, 2021; Joyce, 2015), writing (Marshall & Moore, 2013; Payant & Maatouk, 2022; Stille & Cummins, 2013; Wilson & González Davies, 2017), and overall academic performance (Pujol-Ferran, et al., 2016). Further, crosslinguistic strategies have been suggested to support learners' development of grammatical features (Apaloo & Cardoso, 2021; Dault & Collins, 2017), and to foster their metalinguistic awareness (Lau et al., 2020; Stille & Cummins, 2013; Woll, 2018). Research also indicates that more advanced AL learners tend to be more aware of their plurilingual competence (dela Cruz, 2020), as well as how to draw benefits from it (Bono & Stratilaki, 2013).

Overall, adult EAL and FAL students perceive plurilingual strategies to be useful and enjoyable for AL learning especially for beginner students, although students from across proficiency levels have been observed to engage in such strategies (Dault & Collins, 2017; Galante, 2020c; 2021; Marshall & Moore, 2013). French as third language (L3) learners also recognize the benefits of plurilingual interaction with peers, especially when carrying out specific L3 tasks; however, they argue that L1 or second language (L2) use should be limited (Payant, 2015). Teachers share similar positive perceptions, claiming that plurilingual strategies increase their students' engagement, support their comprehension, and create a space for both students and teachers

to have a positive AL learning/teaching experience by validating learners' lived linguistic experiences, and by allowing teachers' to confront their own monolingual mindsets (Dault & Collins, 2017; Galante et al., 2020).

Despite these affordances, some students have expressed that it can be challenging to use strategies such as translanguaging because it is not always easy or efficient to access and translate meanings across their languages (Galante, 2020b; Payant, 2015). French as a Second Language (FSL) teachers have also found their students' plurilingual practices to be spontaneous, and hence they felt unknowledgeable about incorporating these practices in their lessons and materials (Dault & Collins, 2016; 2017), and EAL teachers also remarked that time is needed to familiarize themselves with the approach (Galante, 2020b). Additionally, other EAL teachers have reported that they sometimes felt uncomfortable implementing these plurilingual strategies within their courses as the strategies may run counter to their school's official or de facto English-only policies (Galante et al., 2020).

To date, research on the use of plurilingual strategies among adults in the AL classroom has largely focused on teacher-student interaction, or on individual students' plurilingual practices. Little is known about how students use their plurilingual repertoire to learn the AL when interacting with a peer, such as between student-tutors and tutees, which changes not only the interaction's dynamic, but potentially learners' perceptions of these plurilingual strategies' affordances and challenges as well. Additionally, there is a dearth of research examining Canadian AL students' perspectives on the challenges presented by plurilingual strategies, especially in the Québec context (e.g., Dault & Collins, 2017; Galante, 2020b; Galante et al., 2020). Further insight into students' pedagogical use of their plurilingual repertoire with their peers, and the benefits and challenges that they encounter during the process, is paramount for better informing the implementation of plurilingual pedagogies in Canadian EAL classrooms.

The present study addressed two research questions:
1. What plurilingual strategies do EAL student tutors and tutees use to teach and learn AL English from their peers?
2. What are these EAL peers' perceptions of the affordances and challenges of plurilingual strategies?

Method

Context

The study was conducted in a Francophone college in Montréal, Québec, Canada. Participants were recruited from the college language help centre where current EAL students could register to be an English tutor or tutee. Officially, French is the language of communication and instruction in the

college, except in AL courses (e.g., English). The language help centre offers tutoring in English and Spanish but has a de facto English-only policy for English tutors and tutees, which comprises the majority of students in the centre. The centre assigns tutors to tutees based on their availabilities, and hence pairings are not always exclusive. The centre offers tutees one to three one-hour tutoring sessions per week with the same or a different tutor. The tutoring period lasts 13 weeks, starting on the semester's third week and ending the week before final exams. A tutor-tutee dyad works on their own, even if other dyads are also working in the room at the same time.

Participants

Eleven tutors and nine tutees between the ages of 18 and 56 were recruited for the study (N = 20), forming 10 non-exclusive pairs (e.g., Tutor 1 worked with Tutee 1 and Tutee 2). The tutors were enrolled in or had completed the EAL course Communication orale et écrite: Relation d'aide appliquée à l'anglais to train them as English tutors. The tutees were enrolled in the EAL course for beginner learners. While the participants were made aware in the consent form that the study would investigate their language practices, none had been trained to deliver, or had previously received, plurilingual instruction, and none received instruction to use plurilingual strategies when tutoring. Most of the participants spoke French as L1 (n = 16), but a few spoke L1 Spanish (n = 3) or Pulaar (n = 1). English was the most reported AL (n = 18); two participants reported French as AL. Spanish, German, Italian, and Japanese were also reported as ALs. Most of the participants were born in Québec (n = 15), but five were permanent residents from Peru, Venezuela, Colombia, Ivory Coast, and Guinea.

Instruments

Three instruments were used and available in English and French, Canada's official languages. The translated instruments were checked by a French speaker.

Demographic questionnaire. A demographic questionnaire was used to gather information about the participants' name, age, country of origin, ethnicity, languages, language use, and length of residence in Canada.

Observation grid. An observation grid was used to record the frequency and types of plurilingual strategies that participants used during field observations of tutoring sessions. Following the definitions cited in the literature review, the grid targeted *translation*, *translanguaging*, and *crosslinguistic comparison* (see Appendix). Additionally, the grid allowed for recording of notes outside the scope of the grid's items, such as any specific language domains (e.g., vocabulary; grammar) or skills (e.g., oral comprehension/production) for which the participants used plurilingual strategies.

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Semi-structured interviews. Individual interviews were conducted in English or French, or both (depending on participants' preferences), to ask participants' perceptions of the affordances and challenges of plurilingual learning strategies. The interviews followed a guide and participants were asked the same questions, but allowed some openness for further probing (Mackey & Gass, 2015). Questions included: "What do you think about using languages other than English when you're tutoring/getting tutored?" and "I observed that during your tutoring sessions, you translanguaged/switched between English and French a lot. Can you tell me why?". If necessary, follow-up questions were asked to further probe participants' perceptions of their plurilingual strategies' affordances and challenges: "Do you get some kind of indication from your student that it helps?" or "Do you also think there might be disadvantages?".

Data Collection

Data were collected over the Fall 2019 semester. Before the first field observation all participants filled out a demographic questionnaire. Next, three field observations (N = 3 hours/tutor-tutee pair) were conducted to observe the participants' one-hour tutoring sessions: one at the beginning, middle, and end of the semester. Each field observation lasted over a week since not all dyads met on the same days and times. Due to participants' personal reasons (e.g., sickness, cancellation), 10 pairs were present for the first observation, but only seven and six pairs were present for the second and third observations, respectively. On some days and times, multiple dyads were observed at the same time. Observations were not filmed for ethical reasons because non-participant students were sometimes present in the room, along with the centre's teacher-in-charge. The researcher observed the participants discretely without interrupting or interacting with them, and participants were asked to conduct their tutoring sessions as if the researcher was not in the room. After the third field observation, 20-minute semi-structured interviews were conducted individually by the researcher; three tutors and three tutees (n = 6) who were observed to engage in plurilingual strategies the most or least were chosen for interviews to probe participants' perspectives on the advantages and limitations of plurilingual strategies.

Data Analysis

The study followed a convergent mixed methods design to look for convergences and divergences in how various data sources address the research questions (RQs) at the analysis and interpretation level (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). Data from field notes and interviews were coded using in vivo coding (Saldaña, 2021) prior to inductive analysis to keep themes rooted in the participants' own language and actions. The researcher read and

broke down the data into smaller units (e.g., a sentence or a phrase within a sentence), which were assigned a code based on their dominant meanings.

For example, the sentence "a few minutes into the session, she started using more French, as the student was negotiating her comprehension of their material via French" is assigned as one unit to the code "supporting comprehension" to reflect the theme that ALs are used to support comprehension in English. If a unit could be assigned to more than one code, it was coded according to its most dominant theme. For instance, the sentence "she asks a lot of metalinguistic questions about vocabulary and grammar, to ensure her comprehension or to get explanations of more technical linguistic knowledge" was assigned the code "supporting comprehension" because its overall theme pertained to using plurilingual strategies to ensure comprehension of English materials, despite also mentioning other codes that emerged during coding such as "metalinguistic awareness," "vocabulary," or "grammar," which referred to themes of using ALs to enhance metalinguistic understanding, to discuss vocabulary items, or to discuss grammatical items, respectively. To enhance the findings' validity, the researcher first performed two independent rounds of analyses to check for intra-rater agreement, which was 97.5% for field note data, and 97.1% for interview data. After, the researcher resolved doubtful units by assigning them to only one code during a third round of analysis. NVivo 1.4.1 (QSR International Pty. Ltd., 2020) was used for coding and analyzing field note and interview data.

To answer RQ1, data from the observation grid were deductively analyzed: items recorded on the grid were tabulated to quantify the types and raw frequencies of participants' plurilingual practices, as well as these practices' pedagogical use. Field notes were inductively analyzed using content analysis (Patton, 2015) to identify additional emergent patterns in participants' plurilingual practices. To answer RQ2, interview data were first transcribed by the researcher. The French transcriptions were reviewed and verified by a French speaker. After, interview data were analyzed inductively using content analysis (Patton, 2015) to identify patterns in participants' perceptions of the affordances and challenges of using plurilingual strategies. Table 1 summarizes the analyses conducted for the data sources used to address the RQs.

Table 1

Data Sources and Analyses for Each Research Question

Research Question	Data Sources	Data Analyses
RQ1: What plurilingual strategies do EAL student tutors and tutees use to teach and learn AL English from their peers?	Observation grid	Deductive analysis
	Field notes	Inductive analysis
RQ2: What are these EAL peers' perceptions of the affordances and challenges of plurilingual strategies?	Semi-structured interviews	Inductive analysis

Results

This section presents the study's results according to how they address the RQs.

Plurilingual Strategies

Table 2 summarizes the findings addressing the first RQ: the participants' plurilingual practices, their pedagogical uses, and the number of instances per category. Tutors and tutees were observed to engage in plurilingual practices regularly, and almost at the same frequency at 56 and 53 instances, respectively. Overall, participants were mostly observed to use AL English and L1 French, but there were also instances of AL Spanish use during the tutoring sessions. Specifically, the participants were observed to translanguage (n = 41) and translate (n = 39) most of the time, but they were also observed performing crosslinguistic comparisons (n = 28). On average, tutors were observed to translate, translanguage, or crosslinguistically compare for pedagogical reasons (n = 106) more times than their tutees (n = 62), which was expected due to their roles and proficiency levels.

Table 2
Types and Frequency of Participants' Pedagogical Plurilingual Practices

	Tutors	Tutees	Totals
Number of Plurilingual Strategies	55	53	108
Translation	19	20	39
Translanguaging	20	21	41
Crosslinguistic comparison	16	12	28
Pedagogical Use	106	60	166
Providing examples	21	3	24
Providing (self) feedback	21	1	22
(Self) Explaining a concept	21	9	30
Asking a question	20	21	41
Answering a question	20	20	40
Providing directions	3	0	3
Self-checking for comprehension	0	6	6

Specifically, the participants engaged in these plurilingual strategies for a variety of pedagogical purposes, the most common of which were posing (n = 41) and responding (n = 40) to a question. For example, a tutor would ask their tutee in English how they chose their answer to a grammar exercise question, during which the tutee would translanguage and justify their choice in French, or in a mix of English and French. Additionally, participants employed plurilingual strategies to provide examples (n = 24), (self) feedback (n = 22), or task directions (n = 3); to (self) explain a concept (n = 30); and to self-check for comprehension (n = 6). Given the context's instructive nature, tutors were frequently observed providing isolated or contextualized examples for grammar or vocabulary when their tutees demonstrated difficulty in grasping their subject at hand. Tutors would also provide feedback to tutees regarding mistakes in quizzes or exercises, spelling and syntactic errors in written assignments, or pronunciation accuracy during their oral interaction. Occasionally, tutees would also give themselves feedback when self-correcting their speech. Further, participants would frequently translanguage when explaining a concept to their partner or to themselves; examples include a tutor explaining the difference between comparative and superlative adjectives, or a tutee thinking aloud about the rule for the third person singular in the simple present while completing a grammar exercise. Contrarily, rare instances of translanguaging or translation were observed whenever tutors would clarify a task's instructions in the L1. Also, few instances of plurilingual practices were recorded for the purpose of

self-checking for comprehension; tutees rarely translanguaged when thinking aloud about their understanding of a concept or a tutor's example.

Notes collected during the observations reveal additional patterns in participants' plurilingual practices. These patterns include engaging in translation, translanguaging, or crosslinguistic comparisons to support their AL English comprehension and production, learn new grammar and vocabulary items, and scaffold metalinguistic awareness. Table 3 lists the patterns of AL domains and skills with which participants were observed to associate their plurilingual practices, with the number of units coded per theme.

Table 3
AL Domains and Skills Associated with Plurilingual Strategies

Reasons	Number of Units Coded Per Theme
Grammar	8
Vocabulary	12
Supporting comprehension	23
Supporting production	20
Metalinguistic awareness	18

Most commonly, the participants drew from their plurilingual repertoire to support their AL English comprehension (n = 23), which pertained mostly to oral comprehension, given the spoken nature of the tutoring sessions. That is, tutors and tutees would translate and translanguage to scaffold their oral communication by repeating or clarifying an English utterance in their AL. In other cases, tutors would also translate oral exam prompts from English to an AL to afford tutees a more nuanced understanding of the prompt. However, participants were also observed to facilitate AL comprehension when dealing with written texts, such as when a tutor would help their tutee understand items in a textbook grammar exercise. Aside from comprehension, participants also used plurilingual strategies to support their AL English production (n = 20), which was also mostly oral. Both tutors and tutees were observed to translanguage to fill lexical gaps in their speech, or to avoid communication breakdown (e.g., starting an utterance in English, and continuing it in an AL). Again, however, participants would also translanguage when mediating written texts, such as when a tutor would switch between English and their ALs to offer corrections to a tutee's essay.

Moreover, participants' plurilingual practices were observed to be associated with grammar (n = 8) and vocabulary (n = 12). Overall, participants were observed to use direct translation and crosslinguistic comparisons when tackling new vocabulary items, polysemous words, or common English expressions or collocations. For instance, Tutor 6 and Tutee 7 were observed directly translating between English and French when discussing

the word "jetlag," and this same pair was observed doing similarly when discussing the preposition "across" (*à travers*) at a different time; in both cases, the tutee had never encountered the target items previously. A different pair crosslinguistically analyzed the French preposition "*pendant*," and its translation into the English prepositions "for" or "during" depending on the context. In terms of grammar, participants were observed to use crosslinguistic comparisons when analyzing more complex concepts, such as the English progressive present tense, whose form in French is not distinguishable from the present simple tense. In such cases, tutors and tutees were observed to translate examples in both English and French (e.g., "*j'étudie*" vs. "I study" vs. "I am studying"), while making explicit the differences or similarities in meaning. This example also highlights that while plurilingual strategies are categorized as discrete practices, students can engage in them simultaneously.

Finally, the tutors and tutees translanguaged and performed crosslinguistic comparisons when engaging with metalinguistic descriptions about their AL English. For instance, pairs were observed switching between English and their ALs when discussing that in English, the simple present tense is for habits or facts, while the progressive present tense is for actions happening in the moment. In another case, Tutor 7 and Tutee 6 were discussing the metalinguistic differences between the English expression "how old *are* you?" and the French equivalent "*quel âge as-tu* ?", focusing on the idea that in English, a person *is* a certain number of years old, while in French, a person *has* a certain number of years. Tutor 4 was even observed sharing tips to Tutee 5 about avoiding losing points in oral exams by being aware of filler words/expressions in English and French; that is, the tutor was advising that the tutee use "uhm, I don't know... uh, I guess..." instead of "*euh, je sais pas,*" to which tutees would typically resort when speaking with uncertainty.

In sum, the EAL student tutors and tutees in the study were observed to engage in plurilingual strategies including translation, translanguaging, and crosslinguistic comparisons for a wide range of pedagogical purposes, and in association with specific AL domains and skills.

Affordances and Challenges

The second RQ examined the affordances and challenges relating to the participants' use of plurilingual strategies during tutoring sessions. Table 4 summarizes the emerging themes, with the number of units coded per theme.

Table 4
Affordances and Challenges of Plurilingual Strategies

	Number of Units Coded Per Theme		
	Tutors	Tutees	Totals
Affordances	33	13	46
Support overall AL development	26	10	36
Help create/draw from conceptual links	4	2	6
Foster positive AL learning	3	1	4
Challenges	17	6	23
Monolingual posture of AL classrooms	10	2	12
Impediment to AL production	3	4	7
Feasibility issues	4	0	4

Overall, 46 units were coded under affordances, and 23 units were coded under challenges indicating that the affordances outweighed the challenges. The participants mainly believed that plurilingual strategies support their overall AL development (n = 36), that they help them draw from existing conceptual links and to create new ones across and beyond their languages (n = 6), and foster a positive AL learning experience (n = 4). Despite these affordances, the participants also noted that certain factors present challenges to their use of plurilingual strategies, namely: these strategies run counter to their AL classroom's monolingual posture (n = 12); they believed that the strategies could potentially impede development of their AL production skills (n = 7); and they present feasibility issues in classroom contexts (n = 4).

In addition to elucidating the overall patterns of participants' perceptions of the affordances and challenges of plurilingual strategies, interview responses also suggest that tutors were more aware of plurilingual strategies' affordances (n = 33) than their tutees (n = 13) as 71.7% of coded units under affordances stemmed from tutors' responses. Similarly, tutors spoke more about the strategies' challenges (n = 17) than their tutees (n = 6); tutors' responses made up 73.9% of coded units under challenges. Particularly, tutors spoke of feasibility issues, which the tutees never discussed during the interview.

Support overall AL development. A major emergent theme was that participants perceived their plurilingual strategies as effective in scaffolding their overall English language development. For instance, one tutor described translanguaging as subtitling himself—that he would switch between English and French when explaining certain topics like grammar to his tutees in order to support their comprehension:

Most of the time I find myself using French because sadly, it's hard for [my tutees] to understand more complex sentences. So to get to the meaning sometimes I have to use French but I try most of

the time to say it first in English and then say it in French. So, for example, I will say that's because it's a passive voice, parce que c'est une voix passive … because, yeah, I want to practice English but there's no point if they don't understand. So, it's kind of like subtitles. I subtitle myself. (Tutor 4)

As Tutor 4 expressed, even simply restating his English explanations in French makes the tutoring more productive since it helps advance the tutee's AL learning. Tutor 11 also agreed that plurilingual strategies are useful for supporting her tutees' understanding: "when I first started being a tutor, I only spoke in English, but then I understood that they were not understanding everything, so I started to put some words in French." More importantly, she stressed that a systematic use of plurilingual strategies—seeing "when it's good to use the mother tongue and when it's not"—is an effective way to scaffold and speed up AL learning.

Similarly, a tutee reinforced this idea that plurilingual strategies pedagogically support AL learning vis-à-vis comprehension. For him, the fact that his tutor shared their L1 Spanish served as an advantage because the tutor was able to recognize potential semantic obstacles when they were communicating in English, which she could then help resolve by using the L1 to provide explanations and examples. Speaking about translanguaging during tutoring sessions, he said,

Oui on le fait. Oui, parce que, bien, écoute. On est des étudiants. C'est très dur en anglais! Il y a un obstacle sémantique pour la communication. Donc pour une personne de franchir cet obstacle sémantique, c'est parler dans une langue qu'elle peut mieux comprendre. / Yes, we do it. Yes, because, well, listen. We are students. It's very hard in English! There is a semantic obstacle when communicating. So, for someone to hurdle this obstacle, it's to speak in a language that they can better understand. (Tutee 1)

His statement suggests that AL learners are aware of how plurilingual pedagogies could help them overcome communicative blocks that might impede communication in English. Tutee 1 added that by using the L1 to translanguage or compare crosslinguistically, his tutor was able to help him develop his metalinguistic awareness to be able to respond to questions on his own: "*Elle me forme une image en espagnol, pour mettre en scène en espagnol, pour pouvoir donner la réponse moi-même.*/She forms an image in Spanish for me, to situate [the example] in Spanish, so I could come up with an answer on my own."

Tutee 6 echoed this belief, claiming that "*plus que tu connais une langue, plus que c'est facile d'en apprendre une nouvelle*/the more you know one language, the easier it is to learn a new one." That is, she believed that drawing from various plurilingual strategies is advantageous for AL development as it helps draw from and develop her full emerging repertoire.

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Help create/draw from conceptual links. Participants also perceived plurilingual strategies as beneficial in helping them form new conceptual links—such as forming connections between vocabulary items or academic content learned across languages in their repertoire—while also allowing them to capitalize on existing ones. Tutor 4 explained that even in his own experience as an AL learner, he utilizes his full repertoire to facilitate learning a new language, increasing his metalinguistic awareness of the similarities and connections across his languages:

> For myself, like in a way, it's a language, right? They're all languages. They're gonna be similar [in] some ways … why I find Spanish so easy to learn is because there were so many similarities in French. So, if I'm gonna start learning German, for example, it's very similar to English, of course I'm gonna start using English links to my German learning. It's how you form connections in your brain, it's by making new logical connections to things you already know. Of course, I'm gonna try using English, French—when I see cucumber, it looks like *un concombre*! (Tutor 4)

As his statement highlights, drawing from his plurilingual repertoire raises Tutor 4's sensitivity to conceptual links across his languages, such as orthographic similarities between some English and French words. On the other hand, Tutor 2 argued that beyond her language courses, drawing from her plurilingual repertoire also benefits her understanding of scientific concepts, such as those tackled in her biology class, which might sound farfetched because the class is delivered in French. Tutor 2 shared, "in biology sometimes, they show videos of the cell membrane and stuff, and it's in English and there's a part of the class that's confused. And so, I can understand, but some of my friends can't," and she argued that "maybe that's an advantage because there's a lot of academic [content] that are only in English."

Overall, participants' responses elucidate that these EAL students perceive their plurilingual practices as resources that help them build up and tap into their linguistic and academic knowledge, which are all interconnected.

Foster positive AL learning. Results revealed that participants believe that plurilingual strategies afford learners a more positive AL learning experience by fostering a more welcoming learning environment and peer relationship. Tutor 2 recounted how she enjoyed learning English more in a high school class, in which language mixing was normalized. She explained,

> The English classes I've had since elementary school were pretty much "only English." It was only until high school when we learned—I don't remember which book—that I was like, okay, [learning English] could be nice. It was different. Because in [previous] English classes, we were only allowed to speak English between us, but in high school if you don't speak English that's fine. They were a bit more loose. That made me like it better. (Tutor 2)

This participant expressed that the official and de facto language policies in her past schools and English classrooms have impacted how she perceived her English classes, adding that the plurilingual posture in the abovementioned class made English "the class [she] liked the most."

Another participant, Tutor 11, also highlighted that plurilingual strategies promote a positive AL learning experience by fostering a relationship between her and her tutees. Specifically, Tutor 11 described that translanguaging and translation allow her to "explain [herself] clearly the way [she] want[s] it," which then "helps [her] … to really have a connection with [her] student." The socio-affective benefits of plurilingual strategies were also supported by a tutee, who had the following observation:

> With [my tutor], uhm, I think the relation[ship] is more friendly, like I don't feel like if I talk in French he will say "oh my God, don't do that!" It's just friendly, we talk, and I do my possible to talk in English but sometimes it's not possible, so he understands. It's more like a friend, to talk with a friend . (Tutee 6)

The participants also raised key challenges presented by their plurilingual strategies, which will now be reported.

Monolingual posture of AL classrooms. A major challenge for participants is how plurilingual strategies often run counter to their EAL classrooms' monolingual posture, which negatively impacts their comprehension and development of the AL, their opinions towards the AL, and their overall AL learning experience. Two of the tutors spoke about the persistence of English-only approaches in the college's EAL courses; Tutor 4 shared, "The way my tutees talk about it, it's just pure English and like hardcore, sometimes, English. They're just, they don't understand when they come out of class." He stressed how he would often go over course materials with his tutees, who typically leave their EAL classes with little to no comprehension of the English material because they are not encouraged to use their ALs in the classroom.

Tutor 2 concurred with this idea, saying, "[though] I would like to speak English my whole tutoring session, the student will not understand a thing I'm saying and then not improve in English then it's gonna be like their English class all over again." She further expounded that an English-only approach would not only negatively impact students' learning progress, but that "it's gonna eventually push them to not like English because they won't understand nothing and they will fail their class." She added that she was speaking from experience: she went to a primary school with a strict official language policy. This experience resulted in her aversion towards the ALs that she was learning at the time, such that even though she "learned English and Spanish, kind of well," she "didn't like it that much."

Tutee 6 agreed, recalling how stressful her EAL courses could be because of the obligation to always speak in English only: "sometimes it is very

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stressful because I think I'm not sure to, uh, of a word, my tense of verb, verb tense, so sometimes I'm stressed about this obligation." And although she thought that this obligation was useful to advance her AL development, she repeated that she nonetheless finds it very stressful to speak with strangers in English.

Impediment to AL production. While participants are cognizant of the negative consequences of monolingual AL teaching policies as previously discussed, some also approve of the pervasive monolingualism in EAL teaching, which they see as necessary for AL development. Some participants raised concerns about the extent to which plurilingual strategies are helpful for advancing their AL oral production skills. One tutee for instance thought that plurilingual strategies have limited usefulness for developing his oral English:

> *Oui et non. Oui, ça m'aide parce que j'utilise ma langue maternelle, et non parce que je fais pas d'effort. Mais oui, ça m'aide pour bien comprendre mais avec la production, non.*/Yes and no. Yes, it helps me because I use my first language, and no because I don't put in effort. But yes, it helps me to understand well but with production, no. (Tutee 1)

Believing that plurilingual practices interfere with his speaking skills, this tutee even argued that his teacher's English-only policy is a good decision, and insisted that because the class is EAL, students must use the target language in order to use it: "*C'est la classe d'anglais, c'est pas la classe de français ni d'espagnol. C'est anglais, donc utilise-le.*/It's English class, it's not French or Spanish class. It's English, so use it."

Tutors shared a similar perception. Tutor 4 highlighted that translation or translanguaging is more useful for comprehending meanings; however, when it comes to oral productions, he stressed that "they'll have to be in English." Tutor 2 reasoned that it would be impossible to learn the AL if students receive insufficient input, which she believed is necessary for developing their output: "There needs to be conversations in English, there needs to be reading, and you can't learn a language and how to speak it if you're not hearing it, if you're not reading it." Ultimately, Tutee 1 argued that "*si tu as le droit d'utiliser une autre langue dans les cours d'anglais, tu vas pas apprendre parce que le cours d'anglais ça passe au deuxième place.*/if you have the right to use another language in English classes, you will not learn because the English course will be deprioritized."

Feasibility issues. Lastly, participants expressed concerns about the feasibility of implementing plurilingual strategies in the classroom, which they perceive as a challenge to its usefulness and effectiveness. According to Tutor 4, plurilingual strategies become a challenge when teachers might not know their students' languages:

> In the classroom, that's a lot to ask. You might have kids who know
> five languages. You can't ask every English teacher to know all five

languages. So yes, it can be helpful but it's unrealistic. Maybe on your homework, but that's on yourself. You can have tools included in the homework, which help you making links, but you have to do that yourself.

However, he also suggested that the instructional materials themselves, such as a course assignment, should include a plurilingual dimension that could prompt students to draw from their full repertoire, even if they would have to do it individually.

Also, participants explained that it is not always useful to tap into their full repertoire if they do not share a common L1 or AL with their peers. Specifically, two of the tutors who speak French as L1 voiced out that it is not productive to use their AL Spanish in the tutoring sessions because none of their tutees speak it as AL; Tutee 11 for instance found that translanguaging or translating beyond English and French were "not useful for those cases." This reasoning reinforces the idea expressed previously that plurilingual strategies are less feasible when interlocutors do not share the same languages.

To recapitulate, the participants perceived several affordances and challenges related to their plurilingual strategies. Tutors and tutees claimed that plurilingual strategies support their overall AL development, help them tap into and develop conceptual links, and promote a positive AL learning experience. Yet, they also stressed that these strategies go against their AL classrooms' monolingual posture, hamper AL production, and pose certain feasibility issues.

Discussion

This study sought out to examine EAL student tutors and tutees' plurilingual strategies during their tutoring sessions, as well as these peers' perceptions of the affordances and challenges of these strategies.

Overall, findings from field observations show that these learners engage with translanguaging, translation, and crosslinguistic comparisons for a wide range of pedagogical purposes and to target specific AL skills and domains. This result strengthens findings from previous research from Canada and elsewhere suggesting that learners are able to engage in plurilingual practices in order to scaffold the development of their AL vocabulary (Galante, 2020c; Joyce, 2015; Makalela, 2015; Prasad, 2013;) and syntax (Apaloo & Cardoso, 2021; Dault & Collins, 2017; Payant & Kim, 2015), comprehension and writing skills (Kim et al., 2020; Marshall & Moore, 2013; Payant, 2020; Wilson & González Davies, 2017), and metalinguistic awareness (Lau et al., 2020; Stille & Cummins, 2013; Woll, 2018), as well as to support their overall target language development (Göbel & Vieluf, 2014; Lightbown & Spada, 2020; Piccardo, 2019) and academic learning (Pujol-Ferran et al., 2016). Results from observations also confirm previous research: more experienced learners

(i.e., tutors) seem to be more aware of how to benefit from their plurilingual repertoire (Bono & Stratilaki, 2009).

What is novel is that participants in this study were observed to regularly and purposefully engage in plurilingual strategies for pedagogical reasons, which contradicts claims made by some AL teachers who felt that students' plurilingual practices are spontaneous and thus difficult to incorporate in their lesson planning (Dault & Collins, 2016). These findings thus highlight the plurilingual awareness that students have about using their full repertoire in opportune times and ways, especially when they are not restricted from using plurilingual strategies during AL learning. Further, these results are significant as they provide new insights into the plurilingual practices of AL learners with each other in a tutoring context, whereas previous empirical research has focused mainly on documenting learners' plurilingual practices in teacher-led classroom contexts.

Additionally, interview findings suggest that these EAL learners perceive key benefits afforded by plurilingual strategies. Participants view plurilingual strategies as aiding their global AL development by scaffolding comprehension, a belief that is supported by existing empirical research (Göbel & Vieluf, 2014; Lightbown & Spada, 2020; Piccardo, 2019). Importantly, this belief corresponds to what was also observed during the tutoring sessions, manifesting a consistency between these AL learners' perceptions and actions. The participants also recognize that plurilingual strategies are useful for creating new and drawing from existing conceptual links, as well as fostering positive AL learning, which support findings from previous studies (Galante, 2021; Galante et al., 2020). Nevertheless, interview findings also reveal that participants considered their AL classrooms' monolingual posture as a major challenge for plurilingual language use in school contexts. While this result is not new since teachers in other studies have expressed similar concerns (Galante et al., 2020), it is significant as it shows that learners are also explicitly aware of this pedagogical issue. An important new dimension to this issue however, as elucidated by this study, is how EAL students simultaneously claim that monolingual instruction is both necessary and potentially disadvantageous to their AL development. This result could be explained by additional findings from this study, as well as from previous research, which indicate that AL learners are aware that though beneficial, it might not always be feasible nor productive to use their full repertoire in the classroom (e.g., Galante, 2020b). Overall, interview responses echo observation findings, as well as previous research (e.g., Bono & Stratilaki, 2009), reinforcing that more advanced students (e.g., tutors) are more aware of the affordances and challenges of plurilingual strategies, particularly in terms of feasibility.

These results have implications for AL pedagogy, classroom language policies, and teacher education. In places like Canada, especially in this study's site, Montréal—where many residents are plurilingual and pluricultural

(Galante & dela Cruz, 2021)—these findings can inform EAL teaching practices in a bottom-up manner. Teachers can consider how and why the EAL learners in this study already employ plurilingual strategies during peer interactions when designing instructional approaches and materials. For instance, classroom activities could encourage if not also oblige students to use their ALs along with the target language, such as a task asking students to create a plurilingual table that compares the structure of the English present tense to those of their ALs.

Since research indicates that target-language-only instruction does not offer any measurable long-term benefits (Lightbown & Spada, 2020), it follows that English-only policies are reconceptualized into more flexible and inclusive plurilingual policies to better respond to and legitimize the language practices of EAL students. As the results suggest, students are capable of strategically drawing from plurilingual strategies to accomplish specific pedagogical goals—they are cognizant of how and when these strategies could be more or less useful. A way to facilitate a shift towards a plurilingual policy is to foster a linguistically inclusive classroom environment where students engage with tasks such as the one described above wherein they mediate about the target language with their peers using their ALs, or where students are encouraged to ask questions in their L1/ALs even if teachers were to respond in the target language. Importantly, students should not be penalized for doing so.

Ultimately, because Canadian language teachers experience challenges when implementing plurilingual pedagogies (Dault & Collins, 2016; Galante et al., 2020), it is equally necessary to address teacher education for pre-service teachers (Woll, 2020), and ongoing professional development for in-service teachers (Blandford et al., 2019; Boisvert et al., 2020), which should help prepare them to recognize and draw from their students' plurilingualism. The study's findings can inform EAL teacher training on developing and delivering plurilingual pedagogies. For example, since students already translanguage or translate, and do crosslinguistic comparisons, EAL teachers can be trained to design or adapt tasks to utilize these strategies by drawing from existing plurilingual and pluricultural descriptors in the new Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CoE, 2020).

Admittedly, the study had limitations. First, the study's sample was small, and comprised mainly of L1 French-speaking students. Since plurilingual instruction is context specific (Marshall & Moore, 2018; Piccardo, 2013), teachers and future researchers should be mindful that the affordances and challenges that this study reveals could differ from those in other contexts. Second, the observations were not filmed; future studies can film observations to allow data triangulation with field notes and enhance the results' reliability. Third, while this study identified advantages and limitations of plurilingual strategies in relation to AL vocabulary, grammar, comprehension, and production, these findings draw only from the participants' practices and

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perceptions. Future research could look to triangulating these results by also employing quantitative measures to further examine in what way and to what extent plurilingual instruction can positively or negatively impact AL gains.

Conclusion

The present study examined adult EAL student-tutors and tutees' peer-to-peer pedagogical plurilingual strategies, and their perceptions of these strategies' affordances and challenges. Results indicate that students frequently engage in plurilingual strategies with their peers in order to support the teaching and learning of their AL. Findings also show that these EAL learners are aware that their plurilingual strategies offer benefits and pose limitations for AL development. As such, the study proposes that Canadian EAL educators and policymakers must take learners' plurilingual practices and awareness into account when informing the plurilingual dimensions of current teaching materials and practices, classroom language policies, and teacher education.

Given the plurilingual reality of many language learners—in Canada and elsewhere—it is becomingly urgent for language teaching practices to validate and legitimize students' plurilingual practices in the classroom, and recognize that with rich linguistic repertoires, these students are also knowledge holders who contribute to their own and their peers' language learning. Although more research is needed to gain further insights into how plurilingual pedagogies can be better implemented, and what challenges and benefits they present for AL development, Canadian language education can begin and continue to democratize language learning by integrating and centering students' voices and plurilingual experiences.

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Appendix

Observation Grid

Pair: _____   Observation #_____   Date: _____

Tutor

Type of plurilingual practices engaged with	Purpose	
☐ translanguaging ☐ direct translation ☐ cross-linguistic analysis ☐ cross-cultural analysis	Pedagogical ☐ to give examples ☐ to provide feedback ☐ to explain a concept ☐ to ask a question ☐ to answer a question ☐ other:	Non-Pedagogical ☐ to talk about topics not related to/outside of the tutoring lesson ☐ other instrumental use of language e.g., to give a command or request
Languages used:		
Notes:		

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Type of plurilingual practices engaged with	Purpose	
☐ translanguaging ☐ direct translation ☐ cross-linguistic analysis ☐ cross-cultural analysis	Pedagogical ☐ to give examples ☐ to provide feedback ☐ to explain a concept ☐ to ask a question ☐ to answer a question ☐ other:	Non-pedagogical ☐ to talk about topics not related to/outside of the tutoring lesson ☐ other instrumental use of language e.g., to give a command or request
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Notes:		