

Research Article

Beliefs in Motion: How Educators Influence One Another's Perspectives on Emergent Bilinguals

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Abstract

This study examined how cooperating teachers' (CTs') beliefs about language and emergent bilinguals relate to and change alongside the beliefs of student teachers (STs) during the student teaching experience. Grounded in associative diffusion theory, the study conceptualized the cooperating teacher–student teacher relationship as a context in which beliefs about language, linguistic diversity, and instructional practice may be negotiated and transformed. Using a quantitative correlational design, the study followed five cooperating teachers and five student teachers in an educator preparation program and a partnering school district in central Texas across a four-month student teaching semester. Participants completed a language attitudes survey at three points during the semester. Descriptive statistics and Spearman's rank-order correlations were used to examine patterns of beliefs and relationships between CTs and STs over time. Findings highlight the student teaching placement as an important site of teacher belief formation and suggest that teacher education programs should intentionally examine language ideologies before and during clinical experiences. Structured opportunities for CTs and STs to discuss assumptions about linguistic diversity, examine instructional beliefs, and engage in collaborative inquiry may help prevent the unexamined reproduction of deficit-oriented perspectives and support more linguistically responsive practices for emergent bilinguals.

Keywords

Emergent Bilinguals, English as a Second Language, Teacher Preparation, Language Perceptions

1. Introduction

Although university teacher preparation programs provide (coursework) on second language acquisition theory and practice, many preservice teachers develop/are exposed to conventionally held, deficit oriented perceptions of emergent bilinguals during their field experiences and student teaching. An outcome is preservice teachers may hold negative perceptions of emergent bilinguals in terms of student achievement and engagement [4, 5]. This study investigated how cooperating teachers' (CTs') beliefs about English as a Second Language

(ESL) students shape the perceptions, expectations, and instructional decisions of preservice teachers during their field experiences. By examining changes in preservice teachers' beliefs over the course of a semester and their alignment with CT expectations, the study seeks to uncover how professional socialization and mentoring practices contribute to, or challenge, deficit views of multilingual learners. The findings will inform the design of mentor teacher professional development and field-based teacher education models that promote equitable, research-based practices for emergent bilinguals. The

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following research question guided the study:

How do cooperating teachers' (CT) and student teachers' (ST) beliefs about language and emergent bilingual education relate and change over the course of the semester?

2. Literature Review

2.1. Teacher Perceptions and Language Beliefs

Students' feelings of self-efficacy have a great impact on the educational experiences of emergent bilinguals [13, 14, 21]. Teachers' perceptions impact students' feelings of self-efficacy. Teachers' level of enthusiasm and commitment to their students influences students' perceptions of themselves as learners [22]. Emergent bilinguals' relationship with their instructor will influence their self-discipline, motivation, and autonomy [10]. Teachers' perceptions and beliefs about language influence their instructional decisions as well as their attitude toward educating emergent bilingual students [19].

In-service and preservice teachers' beliefs about emergent bilingual education are shaped by their personal language ideologies. Language ideologies are the beliefs, assumptions, and attitudes people hold about language and how it should be used, often tied to ideas about identity, culture, power, and what counts as *correct* or *appropriate* language [15]. This can result in conflicting self reports in research. For example, preservice teachers may report positive attitudes toward the idea of bilingual or multilingual education, while also reporting negative attitudes toward home languages other than English [6]. Walker and colleagues [23] highlighted how in-service teachers will readily voice support for bilingual education as it adds diversity to the student body, while at the same time complain about the academic deficits they believe emergent bilingual students bring to school. Al-Bataineh and Gallagher [1] have characterized this contradiction of attitudes as the belief that English is the only proper language at school, and native languages are just for use at home.

A study by Iverson [11] reported preservice teachers' restricted students' use of home language as they believed it might interfere with English instruction. Pacheco and colleagues [18] identified the ways in which student teachers navigated instruction while negotiating their language ideologies. They found that the preservice teachers believed students' home language was a valuable resource for scaffolding and bridging content and language, however some of them worried that home language would conflict with learning English. A study by Lee and Zhang [15] revealed a correlation between positive perceptions of translanguaging - fluidly drawing from linguistic repertoires of their home language and newly acquired language - and high feelings of self efficacy among preservice teachers. The study also provided evidence that individuals who were exposed to dual language education in their field experiences had higher feelings of teacher self efficacy [15].

2.2. Cooperating Teacher and Student Teacher Relationships

The student teaching practicum is the culmination of teacher preparation, and a critical point in becoming a teacher [4]. Central to the experience is the relationship that develops between the student teacher (ST) and the cooperating teacher (CT) who mentors the student teacher in their classroom [2]. Practicing teachers often rate their student teaching experience as having the greatest influence on their career [8]. In addition, hidden curricular contexts, such as ecological, ideological and cultural values, during the student teaching experience shape the identity of STs and CTs and influence the relationship between ST and CT [3, 16].

Investigating the nature of the relationship between ST and CT as it unfolds throughout the student teaching semester has been an important point of inquiry for research on teacher preparation. Kasperbauer and Roberts [12] found that STs greatly value their relationship with their CTs, however ST perceptions of the relationship decreased over the course of the semester. Hamilton and Riley [9] surveyed to identify shared concerns between STs and CTs over the course of the student teaching experience. They found that prior to beginning the student teaching experience, 27 of the 39 survey items were identified as shared concerns, however at the end of the experience 23 of those concerns were no longer shared. A study by Parks [20] demonstrated that STs observe their CTs' teaching strategies and identify those which align with their own values, and those which do not. Over the course of the student teaching semester STs parse out the teaching approaches modeled by their CT to identify those they will try in their own practice and those they will not try in their own practice. Lesley and colleagues [17] looked at the relationship between STs and CTs in literacy instruction. 9 out of 19 STs reported imitating the actions and behaviors modeled by their CT, and 10 of the 19 STs reported being guided or scaffolded to particular teaching behaviors and decisions. STs perceived imitating behaviors of the CT as a crucial part of their learning, while also reporting that they would have liked an opportunity to try out their own teaching methods [17].

2.3. Theoretical Framework

According to Goldberg and Stein [7] "culture does not spread like a virus." Associative diffusion theory posits that individuals do not merely adopt or mimic behaviors and beliefs around them. Individuals learn how certain ideas, values and behaviors seem to be compatible with others. When individuals or groups interact frequently they are exposed to social judgements and beliefs of each other. These beliefs and values are then diffused into an individual's network of associated values. Rather than copying individual practices, people learn the connections among ideas, which shapes cultural and be-

havioral change over time. This is the process by which cultural values and actions are shaped and transmitted from one individual to another [7]. In the context of education, associative diffusion helps explain how instructional practices, curriculum ideas, and beliefs about teaching spread through professional learning communities. Teachers often adopt innovations not simply because others use them, but because they come to see those innovations as connected to other valued practices, goals, or beliefs.

3. Methods

This study used quantitative methodology to explore the correlational relationship between student teachers’ and cooperating teachers’ beliefs about language and emergent bilingual education. Spearman’s rank-order correlation was used due to the ordinal nature of the data and the small sample size, which may violate assumptions of normality required for Pearson’s correlation.

3.1. Research Question

How do cooperating teachers’ (CT) and student teachers’ (ST) beliefs about language and emergent bilingual education relate and change over the course of the semester?

The following subquestions guided the study:

- 1) What are CTs’ and STs’ beliefs at each phase of the semester? (Descriptive statistics for Phase 1, 2, and 3)
- 2) How do CTs and STs language beliefs change across the semester?
- 3) Is there a correlation between CTs’ and STs’ beliefs at each phase?
- 4) Do STs language beliefs become more aligned to CTs beliefs over time?
- 5) Which belief areas show the greatest change over time?
- 6) How do CTs and their paired STs’ beliefs align over the course of the semester?

3.2. Setting and Participants

The current study took place in the Spring semester within a university educator preparation program (EPP) and a large, suburban-serving independent school district in central Texas. Students who were enrolled in the EPP and began their student teaching placement during the first week of January in the Spring semester were eligible to participate. In the student teaching placement, each student teacher is assigned to a cooperating teacher who is certified to teach in Texas. These cooperating teachers were also eligible to participate. The researchers gained institutional review board approval to conduct the study and sent out recruitment emails during mid-January. By the end of January the researchers recruited a total of 10 participants. 5 student teachers and their 5 assigned cooperating teachers were given consent materials and agreed to participate.

3.3. Data Collection

Survey data was collected in three phases. Researchers recruited participants in January, and ten individuals consented to participate (five cooperating teachers and five student teachers). The first phase of surveys were disseminated on February 2, 2026. This phase consisted of one survey of demographic information (see appendix A) and one survey of language beliefs (see appendix B). In the second phase, participants completed the language beliefs survey again in March. The final phase occurred in April and participants completed the language beliefs survey a third time. Data collection at three separate occasions over the course of a four month period was conducted to explore whether or not changes over time occurred.

3.4. Demographic Data

To prepare the data, demographic variables included in the correlational analysis were coded as ordinal to meet the assumptions of Spearman’s rank-order correlation. These variables included years of experience, degree type, language background (monolingual or bilingual), ethnicity, and age. Descriptive participant data were also collected to provide contextual information about the sample, including participant role, gender, experience living outside the United States, languages spoken other than English, additional certifications, teaching preparation program, and departmental leadership positions.

The sample consisted of 10 participants, evenly divided between student teachers (n=5, 50%) and cooperating teachers (n=5, 50%). Most participants identified as female (n=9, 90%), while one participant identified as male (n=1, 10%). The ethnic composition of the sample included nine White participants (90%) and one Hispanic participant (10%). None of the participants reported having lived outside the United States. Two participants identified as bilingual, including one student teacher and one cooperating teacher. Among the cooperating teachers, two held master’s degrees, while three held bachelor’s degrees. Two participants reported holding an additional ESL certification, and two reported serving in leadership roles outside the classroom, including department chair, team lead, and ELA/Math vertical team lead. Descriptive statistics for the demographic variables included in the correctional analysis are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Descriptive statistics for demographic data.

Variable	Mean	Std D
Years Experience	3.2	2.40
Degree Type	1.2	
Monolingual/ Bilingual	1.8	0.42

Variable	Mean	Std D
Age	2.7	1.95

3.5. Data Preparation for Language Beliefs Survey

Likert scale responses to the language beliefs survey were coded as 5 - strongly agree, 4 - agree, 3 - neutral, 2 - disagree, and 1 - strongly disagree. Responses to the third, seventh, and tenth items were reverse coded due to the semantics of the question, signaling disagreement with the statement was closely associated with negative perceptions of languages other than English.

4. Results

4.1. Subquestion One

What are CTs' and STs' beliefs at each phase of the semester? (Descriptive statistics for Phase 1, 2, and 3)

Descriptive statistics were calculated for cooperating teachers in the first phase of language beliefs survey data. The sample had a mean of 19.20 (SD = 6.68), with scores ranging from 12 to 28. The median score was 21, and no mode was observed (see table 1.3). The mean (19.2) is slightly lower than the median (21), suggesting a slight skew caused by lower scores (12, 13). There was no mode, repeated values or clustering around one data point which is likely due to the small sample size. A relatively large standard deviation shows the data points are fairly spread out. See Table 2 for descriptive statistics for cooperating teachers' language beliefs at each phase of data collection.

In the second phase of the language beliefs survey data for cooperating teachers, descriptive statistics indicated that scores had a mean of 27.00 (SD = 6.48), with a median of 28.00 and a mode of 28.15. The mean being lower than the median and mode suggests a slight negative skew in the distribution.

The third phase of survey responses yielded a mean score of 28.20, while the median was higher at 33.00, suggesting a negative (left) skew in the distribution. This pattern indicates that several lower scores pulled the mean downward relative to the central tendency of the data.

The mode was 33.67, which is close to the median and suggests that the most frequently occurring values clustered near the higher end of the score range. The standard deviation was 9.15, indicating a moderate amount of variability in the data, with scores spread out around the mean. Scores ranged from a minimum of 14 to a maximum of 35, reflecting a 21-point spread. Overall, the distribution suggests that most scores tended to cluster in the upper range, with a smaller number of lower scores contributing to a left-skewed distribution.

Table 2. Descriptive statistics for language beliefs cooperating teachers.

Statistic	Phase 1	Phase 2	Phase 3
M	19.20	27.00	28.20
Mdn	21.00	28.00	33.00
Minimum	12.00	16.00	14.00
Maximum	28.00	33.00	35.00
SD	6.68	6.48	9.15

Descriptive statistics were calculated for student teachers in the first phase of language beliefs survey data. The sample had a mean of 17.60 (SD = 2.61), with scores ranging from 15 to 21. The median score was 17, and the mode was 15 (see Table 4). The mean (17.6) and median (17) are very close suggesting a fairly symmetrical distribution. The smaller standard deviation (2.6) shows low variability in this data set. The mode (15) indicates some clustering of data points. See Table 3 for descriptive statistics for student teachers' language beliefs at each phase of data collection.

In the second phase of the language beliefs survey data for student teachers, descriptive statistics indicated that scores were relatively centered, with a mean of 26.20 (SD = 6.18) and a median of 26.00. The mode was 25.84, suggesting that the most frequently occurring value was close to the mean. Overall, the similarity among the mean, median, and mode indicates that the distribution was approximately symmetric.

The third phase of student teacher responses from the language beliefs survey yielded the highest mean of 31.80. The median was 28.00 which indicated a slight positive skew in the data, indicating higher scores pulling the average upward. The mode was 25.96, indicating that this value occurred most frequently in the dataset, though it is close to the lower end of the scale and below both the mean and median. The standard deviation was 10.06, indicating a moderate level of variability in scores, with responses spread fairly widely around the mean. Scores ranged from a minimum of 21.00 to a maximum of 46.00, showing a range of 25 points. Overall, the distribution suggests a moderately dispersed set of scores with some clustering toward the lower end and a few higher values contributing to the upper range.

Table 3. Descriptive statistics for language beliefs student teachers.

Statistic	Phase 1	Phase 2	Phase 3
M	17.60	26.20	31.80
Mdn	17.00	26.00	28.00
Minimum	15.00	19.00	21.00
Maximum	21.00	36.00	46.00

Statistic	Phase 1	Phase 2	Phase 3
SD	2.61	6.18	10.06

4.2. Subquestion Two

How do CTs and STs language beliefs change across the

semester?

Over the course of the semester mean scores for cooperating teachers and student teachers trended upward. This could indicate a possible aligning trend, with scores trending toward more negative attitudes regarding English second language learning in schools.

Table 4. Means by Item at Each Phase of Data Collection.

Abbreviated Survey Item	ST P1	CT P1	ST P2	CT P2	ST P3	CT P3
American identity requires English	2.6	3.0	2.8	2.8	3.0	2.8
Parents should speak English at home	2.6	3.6	3.6	3.2	2.6	3.4
Importance of learning additional languages	2.8	3.2	2.4	2.6	2.6	3.4
Teaching non-English speakers is an unreasonable expectation	2.6	2.6	2.2	3.4	2.0	2.6
English priority over native language	2.6	3.0	2.0	2.0	2.4	2.4
Non-English speakers are detrimental to other students' learning	1.8	1.6	1.6	1.6	1.8	2.6
Teachers need training for linguistic diversity	1.6	2.2	1.6	2.0	2.0	2.8
Non-English speakers lack motivation	2.8	2.6	2.2	2.2	2.4	2.2
English learning over content learning	2.6	3.2	2.8	3.0	2.4	2.2
Full access to grade-level content	1.8	1.6	2.2	2.0	2.2	1.4
Learn English before academic content	3.2	2.4	2.8	2.2	3.2	2.4

Of all the survey data collected, the survey item which indicated that parents should speak English at home had the strongest agreement in phase one from cooperating teachers (CT) ($M = 3.6$). In the second phase, student teachers (ST) also averaged a mean of 3.6 on this survey item, increasing from 2.6 in the first round. This could evidence an influential relationship from the first data collection to the second round of data collection for the belief that parents should speak English at home.

The belief that emergent bilinguals are detrimental to other students' learning had low levels of agreement in phase one and two. However, interestingly, in the third phase CTs' agreement with this belief increased from a mean of 1.6 to 2.6.

The item with the lowest level of agreement was belief that emergent bilinguals should have full access to grade-level content in phase 3 ($M = 1.4$).

4.3. Subquestion Three

Is there a correlation between CTs' and STs' beliefs at each phase?

The following sections detail the results of the spearman correlation coefficient from three separate sets of data collected in three phases. Since the analysis was performed on a

family of related tests, Bonferroni correction was applied to results to control for type one errors. This resulted in a lowered p value of .017.

4.3.1. Phase One

The phase occurred during the first month of the relationship between the student teacher and cooperating teacher. At this time, the spearman rho correlation coefficient was calculated for the relationship between cooperating teachers' and students teachers' beliefs about language. A moderate relationship that was not statistically significant was found ($p = .410, p > .493, n = 5$).

4.3.2. Phase Two

A Spearman's rank-order correlation was conducted to examine the relationship between the two variables. The analysis revealed a weak positive correlation, indicating that as one variable increased, the other variable also tended to increase slightly. ($p = .368, p > .542, n = 5$). However, this relationship was not statistically significant, suggesting that there is insufficient evidence to conclude a statistically meaningful relationship.

4.3.3. Phase Three

A Spearman's rank-order correlation was conducted to examine the relationship between the two variables. The results indicated a moderate positive correlation, suggesting that higher scores on one variable were associated with higher scores on the other variable. ($p = .410$, $p > .493$, $n = 5$) The correlation was not statistically significant, indicating that the relationship was not strong enough to conclude that a significant association is generalizable.

4.4. Subquestion Four

Do STs language beliefs become more aligned to CTs beliefs over time?

Descriptive statistics were used to examine the beliefs of Cooperating Teachers (CTs) and Student Teachers (STs) regarding multilingual learners across three phrases of the semester. Survey responses were analyzed to identify patterns related to language use, English acquisition, instructional access, and teacher preparation for working with linguistically minoritized students. Due to the small number of participants in each group (5 CTs and 5 STs per phase), frequencies were used instead of percentages to report findings. To improve readability within the tables, response categories were abbreviated as follows: Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Neutral (N), Disagree (D), and Strongly Disagree (SD).

4.4.1. Phase One

All five CTs agreed or strongly agreed that students with

limited English proficiency should have access to grade-level academic content. Four CTs also agreed or strongly agreed that teachers should receive training to support linguistically minoritized students. However, responses related to language assimilation varied among CTs. Two CTs agreed that speaking English is necessary to be considered American, while three disagreed. Similarly, three CTs agreed that parents should speak English with their children whenever possible, while two strongly disagreed (Table 5).

Student Teachers demonstrated similar patterns during Phase 1. All five STs agreed or strongly agreed that multilingual students should have access to grade-level academic content, and four STs agreed or strongly agreed that teachers should receive training related to linguistic diversity. Regarding assimilation-oriented beliefs, two STs agreed that speaking English is necessary to be considered American, two disagreed, and one selected neutral. Two STs also agreed that parents should speak English with their children, while two disagreed or strongly disagreed (Table 5).

Both CTs and STs demonstrated stronger agreement with statements related to instructional access and teacher preparation than with statements reflecting English-only ideologies. All participants supported multilingual students' access to grade-level content, while responses regarding language assimilation and English use remained divided across both groups. CTs demonstrated slightly stronger agreement than STs, with statements encouraging English use in the home.

Table 5. Phase 1 Beliefs of CTs and STs.

Belief Area	Student Teachers (n = 5)	Cooperating Teachers (n = 5)
Students should have access to grade-level content	4 A, 1 SA	4 A, 1 SA
Teachers should receive training to support linguistically minoritized students	3 A, 1 SA, 1 N	2 A, 2 SA, 1 N
Speaking English is necessary to be considered American	2 A, 1 N, 2 D	1 A, 1 SA, 2 D, 1 SD
Parents should speak English with their children	1 A, 1 N, 1 D, 2 SD	2 A, 1 N, 2 SD
Students should learn English before accessing grade-level content	2 A, 1 N, 2 D	1 A, 1 N, 3 D

Note. SA = strongly agree; A = agree; N = neutral; D = disagree; SD = strongly disagree.

4.4.2. Phase Two

Compared to Phase 1, CT responses during Phase 2 remained stable regarding multilingual students' instructional access and teacher preparation. All five CTs continued to agree or strongly agree that students with limited proficiency should have access to grade-level academic content. Similarly, four CTs continued to agree or strongly agree that teachers

should receive training to support linguistically minoritized students, while one selected neutral in both phases.

Some variation emerged in CT responses related to language assimilation and English use. In both Phase 1 and Phase 2, two CTs agreed that speaking English is necessary to be considered American. However, beliefs regarding parents speaking English with their children became less polarized in Phase 2. During Phase 1, two CTs strongly disagreed with this statement, whereas in Phase 2 one CT disagreed and one

strongly disagreed while two selected neutral responses. Beliefs regarding English acquisition before grade-level content remained divided across both phases, with one additional CT agreeing with the statement during Phase 2 (see Table 6).

Compared to Phase 1, ST responses during Phase 2 demonstrated stronger agreement regarding teacher preparation and stronger disagreements with English-only beliefs. In Phase 1, four STs agreed or strongly agreed that teachers should receive training related to linguistic diversity, whereas by Phase 2 all five STs agreed or strongly agreed. Support for multilingual students' access to grade-level academic content remained high across both phases, although one ST selected neutral during phase 2.

Phase 2 responses also demonstrated greater disagreement with assimilation-oriented beliefs compared to phase 1. In Phase 1, two STs disagreed that speaking English is necessary

to be considered American, whereas by Phase 2 four STs disagreed or strongly disagreed. Similar shifts appeared regarding English-first instruction. During Phase 1, two STs agreed that students should learn English before grade-level content, while by Phase 2 only one ST agreed and three disagreed or strongly disagreed.

Across Phase 2, both CTs and STs continued to demonstrate strong support for multilingual students' access to grade-level academic content and teacher preparation related to linguistically minoritized students. Compared to CTs, STs demonstrated greater movement away from assimilation-oriented beliefs between Phases 1 and 2. While CT response remained relatively stable across both phases, ST response reflected stronger disagreement with English-only beliefs and stronger support for integrating academic content instruction with language development.

Table 6. *Changes in CTs' and STs' Beliefs from Phase 1 to Phase 2.*

Belief Area	Student Teachers (n = 5): Phase 1 → Phase 2	Cooperating Teachers (n = 5): Phase 1 → Phase 2
Students should have access to grade-level content	4A, 1SA → 3A, 1SA, 1N	4A, 1SA → 4A, 1SA
Teachers should receive training to support linguistically minoritized students	3A, 1SA, 1N → 3A, 2SA	2A, 2SA, 1N → 3A, 1SA, 1N
Speaking English is necessary to be considered American	2A, 1N, 2D → 1A, 1D, 3SD	1A, 1SA, 2D, 1SD → 1A, 1SA, 1N, 2D
Parents should speak English with their children	1A, 1N, 1D, 2SD → 1A, 2N, 2SD	2A, 1N, 2SD → 1A, 2N, 1D, 1SD
Students should learn English before grade-level content	2A, 1N, 2D → 1A, 1N, 2D, 1SD	1A, 1N, 3D → 2A, 1N, 2D

Note. SA= Strongly Agree; A= Agree; N=Neutral; D= Disagree; SD=Strongly Disagree

4.4.3. Phase Three

Patterns observed among CTs during Phases 1 and 2 largely remained stable during phase 3. All five CTs continued to agree or strongly agree that multilingual students should have access to grade-level academic content across all three phases. However, agreement regarding teacher preparation slightly decreased during Phase 2. In Phases 1 and 2, four CTs agreed or strongly agreed that teachers should receive training related to linguistic diversity, whereas in Phase 3 one CT strongly disagreed with the statement (see Table 7).

Beliefs related to language assimilation also remained relatively consistent across the semester. Across all three phases, one to two CTs agreed that speaking English is necessary to be considered American, while other CTs disagreed or selected neutral responses. Similarly, CT beliefs regarding English-first instruction demonstrated minimal change across phases.

Compared to earlier phases, ST response during Phase 3

continued to demonstrate strong support for multilingual students' instructional access and teacher preparation. Similar to Phase 2, four STs agreed or strongly agreed that multilingual students should have access to grade-level academic content, while one selected neutral. Support for teacher preparation also remained high, with four STs agreeing or strongly agreeing and one selecting neutral.

Phase 3 responses demonstrated the strongest disagreement with assimilation-oriented beliefs across the semester among STs. In Phase 1, two STs agreed that speaking English is necessary to be considered American; by Phase 3 only one ST agreed while three disagreed or strongly disagreed. Similar patterns appeared regarding English-first instruction. Across Phases 2 and 3, only one ST agreed that students should learn English before grade-level content, while three disagreed or strongly disagreed.

Across the three phases, both CTs and STs consistently supported multilingual students' access to grade-level academic content. However, differences emerged regarding beliefs connected to language assimilation and English-first instruction.

CT responses remained relatively stable across the semester, while ST response demonstrated progressively stronger disagreement with statements linking English use to American identity and prioritizing English acquisition before academic content instruction.

These patterns suggest that while both groups consistently valued instructional access for multilingual students STs demonstrated greater movement away from assimilation-oriented beliefs across the semester compared to CTs.

Table 7. *Changes in CTs' and STs' Beliefs Across Phases 1-3.*

Belief Area	Group	Phase 1	Phase 2	Phase 3
Students should have access to grade-level content	STs	4A, 1SA	3A, 1SA, 1N	3A, 1SA, 1N
	CTs	4A, 1SA	4A, 1SA	4A, 1SA
Teachers should receive training to support linguistically minoritized students	STs	3A, 1SA, 1N	3A, 2SA	3A, 1SA, 1N
	CTs	2A, 2SA, 1N	3A, 1SA, 1N	2A, 1SA, 1N, 1SD
Speaking English is necessary to be considered American	STs	2A, 1N, 2D	1A, 1D, 3SD	1A, 1N, 2D, 1SD
	CTs	1A, 1SA, 2D, 1SD	1A, 1SA, 1N, 2D	1SA, 1N, 1D, 2SD
Parents should speak English with their children	STs	1A, 1N, 1D, 2SD	1A, 2N, 2SD	2A, 1N, 2D
	CTs	2A, 1N, 2SD	1A, 2N, 1D, 1SD	1A, 2N, 1D, 1SD
Students should learn English before grade-level content	STs	2A, 1N, 2D	1A, 1N, 2D, 1SD	1A, 1N, 2D, 1SD
	CTs	1A, 1N, 3D	2A, 1N, 2D	2A, 1N, 2D

Note. SA= Strongly Agree; A= Agree; N=Neutral; D= Disagree; SD=Strongly Disagree

Overall, CTs and STs consistently supported multilingual students' access to grade-level academic content and the importance of teacher preparation for working with linguistically minoritized students across all three phases. However, beliefs related to language assimilation and English-first instruction remained more variable throughout the semester. While CT responses remained relatively stable across phases, STs demonstrated greater movement away from assimilation-oriented beliefs over time.

4.5. Subquestion Five

Which belief areas show the greatest change over time?

The belief areas demonstrating the greatest change across Phases 1, 2, and 3 were beliefs related to language assimilation and English first instruction, particularly among STs. The most notable shift occurred in response to the statement that speaking English is necessary to be considered American. During Phase 1, two STs agreed with the statement, while by Phases 2 and 3 only one ST agreed and disagreement increased from two participants in Phase 1 to four participants in Phase 2 and three participants in Phase 3. Similar shifts appeared regarding the belief that students should learn English before grade-level content. In Phase 1, two STs agreed with

the statement, whereas by Phases 2 and 3 only one ST agreed while disagreement increased.

Smaller changes were observed regarding teacher preparation for working with linguistically minoritized students. In Phase 1, four STs agreed or strongly agreed that teachers should receive training, while by Phase 2 all five STs agreed or strongly agreed. In contrast, CTs responses remained relatively stable across the three phases in most belief areas. Overall, the findings suggest that STs demonstrated greater movement away from assimilation-oriented beliefs across the semester, while CT beliefs remained more consistent over time.

4.6. Subquestion Six

How do CTs and their paired STs' beliefs align over the course of the semester?

Phase 1 was excluded from the paired analysis because the survey did not include identifiers distinguishing CTs from STs. Therefore, alignment between CTs and STs was examined using paired responses from Phases 2 and 3 only.

The S1-T1 pair demonstrated the strongest alignment across both phases. During Phase 2 and 3, both participants disagreed or strongly disagreed that speaking English is necessary to be considered American. Both participants also

strongly supported multilingual students' access to grade-level academic content and disagreed that students should focus on learning English before grade-level content. Across both phases, the beliefs of S1 and T1 remained stable and closely aligned, particularly regarding resistance to assimilation-oriented beliefs and support for instructional access (see Table 8).

The S3-T3 pair demonstrated alignment regarding multilingual students' access to grade-level academic content and the importance of teacher preparation for linguistically minoritized students. However, differences emerged regarding English-first instruction and language assimilation beliefs. Across both phases, T3 demonstrated more neutral or agreement-oriented responses related to English acquisition and language use, while S3 demonstrated stronger disagreement with English-first beliefs during Phase 3.

The S5-T5 pair demonstrated the greatest variation across

phases. During Phase 2, both participants supported multilingual students' access to grade-level academic content; however, their response differed regarding English-first instruction. By Phase 3, S5 demonstrated stronger disagreement with multilingualism-related statements and stronger variation across belief areas, while T5's responses remained more stable across phases.

Overall, CT-ST pairs demonstrated the strongest alignment regarding multilingual students' access to grade-level academic content and the importance of teacher preparation for linguistically minoritized students. Differences between pairs appeared more frequently in beliefs related to language assimilation and English-first instruction. Across phases, CT responses remained relatively stable, while ST responses demonstrated greater variation and stronger disagreement with assimilation-oriented beliefs over time.

Table 8. Alignment Between CTs and their Paired STs Across Phases 2 and 3.

Belief Area	Pair	Phase 2	Phase 3
Speaking English is necessary to be considered American	T1–S1	T1: 1SD; S1: 1D	T1: 1SD; S1: 1D
	T3–S3	T3: 1N; S3: 1A	T3: 1N; S3: 1A
	T5–S5	T5: 1A; S5: 1A	T5: 1N; S5: 1A
Students should have access to grade-level content	T1–S1	T1: 1SA; S1: 1A	T1: 1SA; S1: 1D
	T3–S3	T3: 1A; S3: 1SA	T3: 1A; S3: 1SA
	T5–S5	T5: 1A; S5: 1D	T5: 1A; S5: 1N
Students should learn English before grade-level content	T1–S1	T1: 1SD; S1: 1A	T1: 1SD; S1: 1A
	T3–S3	T3: 1A; S3: 1N	T3: 1A; S3: 1N
	T5–S5	T5: 1N; S5: 1A	T5: 1A; S5: 1A

5. Discussion

The current study explored the nature of the relationship between cooperating teachers and student teachers in terms of their beliefs about emergent bilinguals. The belief which garnered the strongest agreement was the notion that parents should speak English at home (item two). The time with the lowest level of agreement stated that non-English speaking students negatively impact the learning of English speaking students. The difference in these two items could be seen as contradictory, and aligns with the assertion that individual's beliefs about the appropriateness of languages other than English can present in contradictory reporting [1, 6, 23]. Additionally, the findings from item two could align with the notion from other studies that use of the home-language could be a

detriment to acquiring English proficiency [11, 18].

The greatest change across all three phases occurred for the belief that speaking English was a requirement to be considered American. During phase one, two student teachers agreed with this statement, whereas in phase two and three only one agreed with this statement. The other belief that changed over-time was regarding English proficiency as a requirement for access to grade level content. Again, in the first phase two student teachers agreed with this statement and only one agreed in phases two and three. Shifts in belief could be attributed to latent ecological and cultural environmental factors in the school placement [3], or it could be attributed to influences from the relationship with cooperating teachers [17, 20].

5.1. Implications for Practice

Teacher education programs ought to explore methods for

assessing preservice teachers' feelings about serving emergent bilingual students. Accordingly, teacher preparation programs need to conduct their own assessments regarding cooperating teachers' language perceptions, and how they are shaped in field experiences. This data will help instructors plan for meaningful learning about linguistic diversity. Considering the potential for transfer of language perceptions, assessing these biases prior to placing preservice teachers in classrooms would be beneficial.

Preparing future teachers to serve emergent bilinguals should include work that fosters compassion and acceptance for all students within the classroom setting. More time could be devoted to appreciating linguistic diversity, and not treating it purely as a challenge to overcome. Teacher preparation should spend more time helping future teachers understand that linguistic diversity is not threatening or distressing. When teachers learn to normalize differences, it seems less intimidating, which can result in feeling more equipped to approach challenges that come with diversity. Instructors in teacher preparation programs can plan activities such as linguistically diverse guest speakers, or taking a field trip to visit an organization who serves individuals from linguistically diverse backgrounds.

The study also points to the importance of making language beliefs explicit. Beliefs about whether students should learn English before accessing grade-level content, whether families should use English with their children, or whether linguistic diversity represents a resource or a challenge can shape instructional expectations and opportunities for students. When such beliefs remain unexamined, they may be implicitly reproduced through the teacher preparation process. Conversely, structured opportunities for student teachers and cooperating teachers to discuss language ideologies, examine assumptions, and consider the implications of instructional decisions may create opportunities for reflection and transformation. Such conversations are particularly important because beliefs about language are often connected to broader assumptions about culture, identity, belonging, and academic ability.

5.2. Implications for Future Research

More research should be conducted to explore the influence of cooperating teachers' language beliefs on preservice teachers. The current study could be replicated with a larger sample size which would yield higher statistical significance. There are some challenges with recruitment and timelines. Sometimes field placements are not finalized until days before the semester begins, then there is a very small window of time to recruit cooperating teachers. During that window of time cooperating teachers are very busy and might be leery of taking on more tasks. It is crucial to start collecting data early in the semester in order to establish a baseline of perceptions for which to compare later findings.

There are also challenges in recruiting pairs of participants.

For example, in order to ensure a relationship between variables (cooperating teachers and preservice teachers), both the cooperating teacher (CT) and student teacher (ST) who are working together should consent to participate. In the current study this limited participation due to the ST wanting to participate but the CT did not, or vice versa.

The nature of the relationship between CTs and STs regarding language beliefs could also be researched as a case study by taking a closer look at one set of participants. This could include data sources such as individual interviews, classroom observations, personal reflections from participants. An advantage of this would be more convenient recruitment of a small sample size. With a case study design research could offer thick descriptions of experiences which may be more helpful for understanding the nature of the relationship.

6. Conclusion

Although the findings should be interpreted cautiously given the small sample size, they highlight the importance of examining the clinical classroom as a site of teacher belief formation. However, findings suggest important implications for teacher education and school-university partnerships. Teacher preparation programs may benefit from intentionally incorporating language ideology and linguistic diversity into coursework while also creating mechanisms for discussing these issues during clinical practice. Cooperating teachers could be provided with professional learning that supports mentoring around linguistically responsive practices, while student teachers could be encouraged to critically examine the beliefs they encounter in their placement classrooms rather than simply adopting existing practices. Rather than positioning cooperating teachers as either positive or negative influences, teacher education programs can conceptualize the cooperating teacher-student teacher relationship as a space for collaborative inquiry in which both participants examine how their beliefs influence teaching and learning.

Abbreviations

CT	Cooperating Teacher
ST	Student Teacher
EPP	Educator Preparation Program

Author Contributions

Marilyn Nicol: Formal Analysis, Investigation, Writing – original draft

Julia Sainz: Formal Analysis, Investigation, Writing – original draft

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

Appendix

Appendix I

Demographic Survey

(Adapted from Bernstein et.al., 2023)

This demographic survey collects essential background information to contextualize participant data. All responses are confidential and will be used solely to strengthen the accuracy of the study.

Gender

Male

Female

Prefer not to say

Other:_____

Lived outside the U.S.

Yes

No

Age

18-22

23-29

30-39

40-49

50-59

59-69

Race

Black/African/African American

East Asian

Hispanic

Latin American

Native American

Southeast Asian

White

Other:_____

Bilingual/Multilingual

Yes

No

What languages do you speak other than English?

How many years of teaching experience?

1-2 years

3-5 years

6-8 years

9-11 years

12-15 years

more than 15 years

What is the highest level of education you have completed?

Bachelors Degree

Masters Degree

PhD

Which teaching certification program did you attend?

What additional certifications do you have?

Have you held other positions in education, such as department chair or instructional coach?

Appendix II

Language Attitudes of Teachers Scale (Bernstein et.al., 2023)

This survey includes items from the J/M Language Attitudes of Teachers Scale (Bernstein et al., 2023). Your responses will help us understand a range of teacher perspectives; there are no right or wrong answers, and your honest opinions are valued.

- 1) To be considered American, one should speak English.
 - a) Strongly disagree
 - b) Disagree
 - c) Neutral
 - d) Agree
 - e) Strongly agree
- 2) Parents of non- or limited-English-proficient students should be counseled to speak English with their children whenever possible.
 - a) Strongly disagree
 - b) Disagree
 - c) Neutral
 - d) Agree
 - e) Strongly agree
- 3) It is important that people in the US learn a language in addition to English.
 - a) Strongly disagree
 - b) Disagree
 - c) Neutral
 - d) Agree
 - e) Strongly agree
- 4) It is unreasonable to expect a regular-classroom teacher to teach a child who does not speak English.
 - a) Strongly disagree
 - b) Disagree
 - c) Neutral
 - d) Agree
 - e) Strongly agree
- 5) The rapid learning of English should be a priority for non-English-proficient or limited-English-proficient students even if it means they lose the ability to speak their native language.
 - a) Strongly disagree
 - b) Disagree
 - c) Neutral
 - d) Agree
 - e) Strongly agree
- 6) Having a non- or limited-English-proficient student in the classroom is detrimental to the learning of the other students.
 - a) Strongly disagree
 - b) Disagree
 - c) Neutral
 - d) Agree
 - e) Strongly agree
- 7) Regular-classroom teachers should be required to receive pre-service or in-service training to be prepared to meet the needs of linguistic minorities.
 - a) Strongly Disagree
 - b) Disagree
 - c) Neutral
 - d) Agree
 - e) Strongly Agree
- 8) Most non- and limited-English-proficient children are not motivated to learn English.

- a) Strongly disagree
 - b) Disagree
 - c) Neutral
 - d) Agree
 - e) Strongly agree
- 9) At school, the learning of the English language by non- or limited-English-proficient children should take precedence over learning subject content.
- a) Strongly disagree
 - b) Disagree
 - c) Neutral
 - d) Agree
 - e) Strongly agree
- 10) Students with limited English proficiency should have full access to grade-level academic content.
- a) Strongly disagree
 - b) Disagree
 - c) Neutral
 - d) Agree
 - e) Strongly agree
- 11) Students should focus on learning English before they are expected to learn grade-level content.
- a) Strongly disagree
 - b) Disagree
 - c) Neutral
 - d) Agree
 - e) Strongly agree

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