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Academic tutoring as a human development process. Using semantic field analysis to explore the concept

Tutoring akademicki jako proces rozwoju człowieka. Wykorzystanie pola semantycznego do analizy pojęcia

Abstract: This article demonstrates the application of semantic field analysis to the interpretation of interview data, with a particular focus on the integration of quantitative methods. The aim of the study was to determine how students participating in academic tutoring understand the term "academic tutoring" and what meanings they attach to it. The study formulates the following research question: "What images of tutoring in terms of its contexts and meanings do student participants in it, have?" The

research base consisted of transcripts of two focus interviews conducted with 11 tutees. A qualitative and quantitative approach was used to analyse the research results - the method of semantic field analysis. The background of the analysis was the constructivist concept, which is rooted in the creative role of language. The conclusions of the analysis indicate that thanks to the reconstruction of the network of meanings, it is possible to define the term *tutoring* from the perspective of students participating in the program in a more accurate way. The results of these studies contribute to research in the field of social sciences related to the development of humans, while at the same time being a source of recommendations for a wider inclusion of personalised education strategies in higher education.

Introduction

In 2019, the Polish Ministry of Science and Higher Education initiated the implementation of a non-competitive project titled "Masters of Didactics" aimed at enhancing the educational environment of higher education institutions in Poland through the implementation of tutoring in didactic practice. The implementation of the tutoring model was to be based on an in-depth examination of practices and experiences of European universities where tutoring is present, including Aarhus University, Ghent University, University College London, University of Groningen, and University of Oslo. The main pillar of the program consisted of training in the form of study visits conducted at the designated universities for academic and research-didactic staff from Polish academic centres.

The original assumptions of the "Masters of Didactics" project indicated that it would benefit up to a thousand academic teachers from 40 Polish universities (*Invitation to submit proposal...*, 2018). The scale of the undertaken activities and their numerous consequences for the shaping of didactic processes make the implementation of tutoring one of the most significant and noticeable processes occurring in Polish higher education in terms of didactic development in recent years. Therefore, it is natural that this phenomenon becomes an area worthy of research reflection. This also applies to the referenced research project, which involved conducting focus group interviews in February 2022 with a group of 11 tutees participants in the "Masters of Didactics - implementation of tutoring model" program at the Maria Grzegorzewska University in Warsaw, followed by an analysis

of the obtained results based on the methodology of semantic analysis, where the main area of empirical exploration by the researchers was the various semantic categories of the word "tutoring".

Tutoring in the perspective of the literature

The term "tutoring" encompasses a broad range of meanings. In the publication resulting from the conclusion of the "Masters of Didactics" project, the authors acknowledge that this concept has a significant number of definitions, primarily indicating its reference to personalised education and relationships with mentoring and coaching (Brdulak et al., 2022, p. 12). Such ambiguity in the concept of tutoring has consequences for the statement appearing in the publication that its form of application constitutes an autonomous decision of each university (Brdulak et al., 2022, p. 10), which can adapt it to its own organisational culture and resources.

Given the origin of tutoring in the native literature, definitions suggest that it is an obligatory "(...) universal, fundamental method of educating students at the University of Oxford and the University of Cambridge" (Master, 2019, p. 32). One of the characteristic descriptions of tutoring indicates that "(...) it is a method of individual care for the student, based on the master-student relationship, which, through an integral view of human development, seeks the full realization of their potential" (Czekierda, 2015, p. 20). The emphasis on the master-student relationship (masterly relationship) in tutoring, as well as referring to patterns originating from the University of Oxford, may suggest, on the one hand, the elitism of tutoring and its uniqueness, which directs it towards the term "innovative". Regarding the first aspect, observing the practice of tutoring, it can be noticed that "[in Polish conditions, tutoring is usually a form of classes offered to selected, even if such a program is directed to everyone, it uses forms of recruitment (qualifying interview, application essay, motivational letter) through which it is possible to reach the, if not the best, then the most engaged, open students" (Czyżewska, 2018, p. 170). On the other hand, the above-mentioned "uniqueness" of tutoring can be related - as Józefa Bałachowicz points out, to the assumption that it is a method that gives "(...) a chance to enrich and modernize the teacher's workshop. It can be perceived as an innovative way of working for teachers - educational leaders" (Bałachowicz, 2013, p. 21), or - as Beata Karpińska-Musiał notes, it is "(...) education tailored to measure" (Karpińska-Musiał, 2016, p. 72).

Considerations about tutoring often relate to aspects associated with its organisation. Here, an important clarification is the adoption that tutoring

is "(...) the name of the entire developmental and educational process - a cycle of regular meetings" (Master, 2019, p. 32). Tutoring is also understood as a specific method of pedagogical interaction involving the cooperation of a tutor with a student or a small group of students, utilising planned, formal, as well as informal and spontaneous actions (Sarnat-Ciastko, 2015; Thurston et al., 2021). Tutoring can also focus attention on its personal aspect, enabling students to develop relationships with academic staff and other students through formal and informal activities (Grey and Osborne, 2020; Lochtie et al., 2025).

Definitions of tutoring appearing in the subject literature also encompass that it relates to both the didactic (educational, academic) and educational (developmental) spheres. Academic/didactic tutoring is perceived as a process "(...) of deepening knowledge, specific issues by the student under the supervision of a tutor, who stimulates cognitive enthusiasm and directs the student's scientific interests" (Gębska, 2013, p. 26). Perceiving tutoring as an educational method (Krzychała, 2018) allows highlighting the educational (formative) function of universities (Dziedziczak-Foltyn et al., 2020). Peer tutoring is also seen as a social approach to changing learning habits and improving student performance in higher education (Pugatch and Wilson, 2018).

It is indicated that developmental tutoring "(...) may aim primarily to enhance the social competencies of the tutee, and thus, their upbringing, including equipping them with skills that enable effective functioning in society" (Gębska, 2013, p. 26). Not insignificantly in this context, tutoring is understood as a method "(...) of building a new learning space, exchanging intergenerational experiences, and meetings of people in the process of development" (Taraszkiewicz, n.d., p. 5). The term "meeting" used in the definition quoted here becomes a kind of door pointing to yet another direction of defining tutoring. This concerns its reference to theoretical sources, among which are philosophy and the pedagogy of dialogue. Mariusz Budzyński described the characteristics of the latter when defining tutoring, acknowledging that "(...) it is a form of pedagogical work, carried out in direct and individual contact with the student, with particular emphasis on the dignity of the student and the educator, stemming from the fact of their humanity; the inter- and intra-activity of the educational process and its embedding in specific life reality" (Budzyński, 2009, p. 31). The above definition emphasises that tutoring is not treated solely as a didactic method, which may associate it with instrumentality, and as Jarosław Jendza notes - with the effectiveness of means or spectacular effects (Jendza, 2016).

Seeking a way in which tutoring is understood along with the experience of the tutor-tutee relationship, it is worthwhile to consider that this (as a tutorial system implemented at the University of Oxford) "(...) fits perfectly into the ideal of university education, whose main task is to prepare young people to seek the truth, ask critical questions, defend their theses, and develop and build their own concepts" (Hejwosz, 2010, p. 211). Therefore, thinking in this direction, insight into how tutoring is perceived by students, the tutees of tutors, who often seek suitable descriptions for it for their own use, making room for it in their previous teaching experiences, is also very important.

Educational constructivism and tutoring

The fundamental theoretical assumption underlying the conducted analyses was the constructivist concept, which is based on the creative role of language. The authors assume that the conceptual system is a socio-cultural product, hence language is the most important category "constructing reality". Dan Sperber and Deirdre Wilson (2011) attribute both a cognitive and communicative function to language. Language is one of the conditions for the creation of a cultural space of intersubjectivity. This perceived process can be equated with the social construction of reality as presented by Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann (1983).

In everyday communication, especially verbal communication, a great deal of information that people convey to each other is imbued with contextual elements. Each act of communication is based on a set of premises that are accepted by its participants. A mutually accepted context of the statement enables its interpretation. Interpretation also depends on the preceding discourse, cultural conditioning, mutual expectations, thematic knowledge, as well as attentiveness to the other person. A shared context of the statement by the sender and receiver is a condition for good understanding (Kecskes, 2023).

In the cultural space of intersubjectivity, information and "common knowledge" are generated, which is shared by participants in properly occurring communication. We thus have the ability to communicate on various issues, which consists of correctly interpreting intentions and responding in a typical manner, in typical situations (Schütz, 2008). Sperber and Wilson (2011) propose introducing the concept of "cognitive environment". Therefore, language is a relatively stable system. This stability is ensured by constant interactions involving the use of conceptual schemas in social interactions.

Constructivists have shattered the image of language as a means of conveying thoughts, meanings, information, and knowledge from one interlocutor to another. The interpretation of language productions is always carried out using concepts and conceptual structures that have been formed by the interpreter from elements of their own experience, which is cultural but subjective (Glasersfeld, 2010).

Research methodology

The aim of the conducted research was to determine the ways in which students who participate in tutoring understand the concept of tutoring. Therefore, it was assumed that the fundamental research problem would be the question of what images of tutoring, in terms of its contexts and meanings, students who participate in it have. This posed problem had an exploratory nature and thus did not allow for the identification of any research hypothesis. The method of semantic field analysis was applied to analyse the research results, with its theoretical foundation being the theory of semantic fields.

The theory of semantic fields (Trier, 1931; Zhou, 2001) posits that language is a construction consisting of words connected in groups. Words define each other, creating semantic boundaries and a network of semantic relations. Word groups form specific categories, known as semantic maps. Linguist Ryszard Tokarski (2012) defines a semantic field as an organised group of words related by membership in a common semantic category. In the analyses, the rules of semantic field analysis developed by Regine Robin and her colleagues (1980), and subsequently modified by Barbara Fatyga (2000), were utilised.

Robin, in her adopted methodology, proposed the selection of a specific key word, which for the authors conducting the research was "tutoring". Simultaneously, a selection of texts containing this word is to be made. In the presented article, these texts were transcripts of interviews conducted with students participating in academic tutoring. The next step, according to Robin, is to determine phrases and words that serve a specific function in relation to the specific occurrence of the key word, in our case, "tutoring", in the analysed text. The mentioned phrases and words are intended to fulfil specific functions, termed associations: attributes, oppositions, equivalents, descriptions of the actions of the word, descriptions of actions towards the word. Thus, the method of analysing the semantic field of the word "tutoring" was to consist of recognising these networks, namely:

    a.   attributes - indicating the characteristics of tutoring, what tutoring is like;

b. associations - indicating what tutoring is associated with, linked to, what accompanies it;
c. oppositions - showing what tutoring is not, what opposes tutoring;
d. equivalents - occurring interchangeably with tutoring, informing what words, phrases tutoring can be replaced with;
e. actions of the subject - indicating what tutoring "does" and what the consequences of these actions are/can be;
f. actions towards the subject - indicating actions directed towards tutoring, describing actions taken towards tutoring (based on: Fatyga, 2014; Kłosiński, 1994).

In the mentioned modification of Robin's method, Fatyga proposed an additional assignment of emotional temperature to each of the identified networks. It was therefore necessary to examine the context of each use of the word "tutoring" and determine the emotional connotations. The author (Fatyga, 2000) proposed the following temperatures: positive (+), negative (-), ambivalent (±), neutral (Ø), and in cases where making a choice was impossible, indifferent.

Characteristic of the source material

The research material consisted of transcriptions of two focus group interviews conducted in February 2022 by the researcher (one of the authors of the text) with participants enrolled in the "Masters of Didactics - Implementation of Tutoring Model" program at the Maria Grzegorzewska University (MGU). The researcher is not employed by this university and was not known to those interviewed.

A total of 72 students were enrolled in the Masters of Didactics program at MGU. During the course of the project, the tutoring research team decided to approach 12 randomly selected students participating in the program, asking them to take part in research regarding the shape of tutoring at MGU and to share their reflections and experiences related to it. Initially, they all agreed to take part in the study. They were assigned to two focus groups of six participants each, conducted in an online format via a link-accessed application, with no login required. The tutees introduced themselves during the interviews with fictitious nicknames to preserve their anonymity, and they did not have their cameras on. In the first interview all participants took part, in the second interview one person was unable to join. In the end, therefore, 11 tutees (15.3% of those eligible), participated in the study, including nine females and two males. The predominance of women is due to the student structure, which is typical for a pedagogical university in Poland. According

to program rules (that is, first-year students at the time of recruitment to the program in October 2020), they were second-year students (M_{age} = 20.6, *SD* = 0.8, Range 20-22), representing the fields of study: pedagogy (4 tutees), special education (2 tutees), pre-school and early childhood education (2 tutees), psychology (2 tutees) and sociology (1 tutee).

Since neither of the two interviews was directly focused on gathering information about the understanding of tutoring, the collected research material reflects the way it is understood based on the experiences of students who have been involved in the program for almost 1.5 years, expressed in everyday language in response to questions related to the issues mentioned above. This specificity of the material seems to justify its high empirical value, especially in the context of constructing the semantic field of the tutoring concept.

The interviews, which were conducted in Polish, were recorded and then transcribed for further analysis. The transcriptions totalled 48 pages of standard manuscript, including 25 pages based on the first interview and 23 pages based on the second interview. Consistent with the adopted method of conducting interviews with students, the transcriptions consist of questions posed by the researcher and responses given by tutees in the order of their volunteering or selection by the interviewer.

The MAXQDA software was utilised in the data analysis process. Although each document was coded individually in the MAXQDA program by 2 researchers, they were collectively included in the semantic analysis process. The program allowed for highlighting text fragments and assigning them specific codes (in our case, established a priori) as well as notes (in our case, justifications of each network). The research material was subjected to analysis in its original Polish form, with the extracts employed for the purposes of presentation in the designated article having undergone translation.

Research findings

The concept of tutoring in various forms appears in the text transcriptions of two focus group interviews a total of 104 times. In particular, there were 11 equivalents, 14 attributes, 9 oppositions, 22 associations, 43 actions of the subject and 16 actions towards the subject. In the subsequent section, each of the six networks will be described sequentially. Finally, based on the analyses, a detailed definition of tutoring will be constructed.

Actions of the subject

In the transcriptions of interviews with tutees, researchers identified the most phrases (n=43) corresponding to the semantic field component of the term tutoring called actions of the subject. The analysis of their content allows for the conclusion that all of them have a positive character, and it is also possible to distinguish several main internally differentiated actions of tutoring that correspond with each other.

Within the first category related to actions of the subject (n=2), which, despite its generality, corresponds to the usefulness/practicality of tutoring, the emphasis is placed on its usefulness and the benefits gained by its participants. The pivotal categories for the next distinguished category of tutoring actions (n=6) are the verbs "help" and "support." This help and support can be generally described or refer to certain activities with which the tutee struggles ("which we are not good at"), those shaping the academic path of its participants (conducting their own research, participating in team research, project participation, writing articles, conference preparations), or those related to functioning in studies (e.g., help in public appearances).

The third type of tutoring action is awareness-raising (n=3) in the form of providing a sense of access to the university and its resources, thereby adding energy, showing that despite the early stage of studies, the tutee has unlimited possibilities, and creating opportunities for a better understanding of the world of science, politics, or university operations. In the students' reflections, there are also references to development associated with supplementing education during studies (n=5) through learning "something new", deepening knowledge, or broadening horizons. Equally important seems to be the tutoring action of creating opportunities for realising ideas beyond the education program pursued during studies (n=8). These opportunities are scientific in nature, involving research and projects, ideas, building networks, fulfilling dreams, recognising the specifics of scientific work and verifying one's predispositions to it, as well as participating in conferences and interesting events. Students' perception of tutoring is also linked to its provision of opportunities for receiving systematic feedback (n=2), characterised by non-directiveness and openness to the tutee's subjectivity ("(...) we can take into account her suggestions or not").

An important category of tutoring actions, reflected in a large number of tutee statements, is those corresponding to its relationality (n=11). In this sense, tutoring allows for exchanging experiences, gaining inspiration, understanding another person's perspective, acquiring knowledge from more experienced individuals, asking questions, deeper understanding of the

425

ideas of scientific texts, building relationships with academic teachers, and gaining confidence to talk to them or feeling secure by dispelling doubts. Other tutoring actions include initiating further activities and motivating participation in them (n=2). Equally important are tutoring actions related to influencing self-esteem (n=3), meaning it makes the tutee feel important, more self-assured, or notices a change in themselves. The last distinguished action is diversifying studying (n=1).

Associations

Associations, or associations, relate to what externally conditions the semantic field of interest to us. The network of associations (n=22) of the semantic field of the term tutoring concerns expressions that indicate circumstances or conditions related to the functioning of tutoring, but also connections with its environment. These may also be activities accompanying tutoring, but not directly describing it (as these are described by the "tutoring actions" component). The associations found in the text were analysed and divided into several distinct categories (of which the first three are decidedly positive, and the last two have a neutral emotional tone).

The first category of formulations is associated with the decision to join the tutoring program. The respondents point out aspects of this work method that most encouraged them: the fact that they work in a small group or pair with a tutor, the hope to "get a bit more out of studies than the usual course offers", the opportunity for better adaptation to university life, and the convergence of the program's goal with their previously recognised needs for working with someone like a tutor. In some contrast, there are cases of spontaneous decisions to join the program despite a lack of knowledge of what tutoring actually is and what it entails (n=6). Directly from the first category emerges the second category: tutoring creating conditions for expanding the perspectives of tutees' development, which in the case of our respondents means that the tutoring experience gives them new experiences, opportunities for development ("even substantial"), self-improvement (e.g., in any research areas of their choice), discussions about what is happening at the university (n=3). Associations also include "closer relationships" - firstly with other students ("our group of tutees"), secondly with teachers, which means experiencing a new kind of contact with other participants in educational processes at the university.

In the context of tutor-tutee contacts, the voices of participants in the study indicate that tutoring is accompanied by an unprecedented quality of contact with the teacher, revealing his "human face". This is partially related to a semi-informal relationship, assuming sharing information about one's

aspirations, educational needs, but also more personal ones ("we share what's happening in our lives"), which seemed particularly valuable during remote teaching (n=6). At the intersection of relationship issues and organisational matters is the circumstance of conducting tutoring in a personalised manner (adapted to the expectations, possibilities of the given tutee), and thus constitutes another category of associations (n=1). The last category of formulations focuses on purely organizational conditions - these are statements showing tutoring as classes conducted remotely or in person, in groups or individually, with different frequencies (n=6).

Actions towards the subject

For the semantic field of the term tutoring referred to as 'actions towards the subject', the researchers identified 16 phrases (n=16). An analysis of their content allows for the conclusion that they are most often expressed in the language of benefits.

The first category (n=9) encompasses actions taken towards tutoring consciously (n=5), represented by verbs such as "I used", "I tried", "I chose", as well as actions taken instinctively (n=3): "I didn't quite know what to expect from it", "not fully understanding what it's about", or even accidental ones (n=1): "I ended up in tutoring". The next category consists of actions related to the way information about tutoring is acquired (n=4) and transmitted (n=2). Both subcategories were represented by similar expressions: "I found out about tutoring", "someone told me", "I read descriptions", "I will recommend it".

The last statement refers to the direct benefits gained through tutoring, namely using tutoring as a way to establish contacts, create social relationships through participation in the program.

Attributes

The network of descriptors (n=14) constitutes another component of the semantic field of the term tutoring, referring to phrases and words that describe, taking the form of epithets or other expressions, what tutoring is like. Most of the quoted expressions are emotionally positive.

A closer examination of these attributes allows for the identification of common categories, which can be characterised as follows: the category of the most general attributes contains those phrases that indicate that tutoring is valuable, even elite, and participating in it is "an amazing thing". The relationship with the tutor is particularly valued (n=4). In the second category, tutoring is perceived as "providing an opportunity" and "a great

opportunity, regardless of its form" (n=2). In the next category, indicating that tutoring is engaging, there are attributes suggesting that tutoring is interesting, and its programmatic framework allows for the organisation of activities shared by several tutees, whose scope may sometimes extend beyond the university (n=2). Another category of attributes indicated the developmental nature of tutoring for students: tutoring allows for acquiring knowledge at a higher level and in greater quantity than in the case of regular group classes ("conducting research, we later perform calculations that are at a much higher level than the things we learn in classes, in statistics at this moment") (n=3). Tutoring is also enjoyable (n=2) and motivating (n=1).

Equivalents

Another semantic field of the term tutoring, due to its frequency of occurrence, was equivalents (n=11). In the statements of the respondents, the word "tutoring" was most often replaced by the noun "meeting" (n=5), but also correlates such as "program" (n=3) or "project" (n=2) appeared. One of the students, referring to tutoring, alternatively described it as a "private academic path".

Oppositions

The least frequently encountered phrases in the transcripts of interviews with tutees were those (n=9) that have a negative character or emphasize what tutoring is not.

Within the first category (n=4), tutoring sessions were opposed to traditional lectures or exercises, with students' statements highlighting the shortcomings of the latter, accentuated by the individualisation of tutoring education: "so as not to feel like a part of the grey mass of students", "the distance is very significant". Within the second category, students recommended tutoring not as education in the direction of their own interests, but as developing other areas (n=4), related to the choice of a tutor and thus directing his/her research interests. The last category was marked by a statement regarding the conduct of some tutoring sessions online, perceived as the inability to utilise the potential of tutoring, associated with difficulties in focusing attention (n=1).

The mind map showing the networks of interrelationships between the analysed categories is presented on Figure 1.

Discussion and conclusion

The final step of the analysis is an attempt to construct the concept of tutoring based on the semantic network. Based on the results of the analysis of the semantic field of the term "tutoring", a solution to the research problem emerges: what images of tutoring in terms of its contexts and meanings do students who participate in it have? Below is its reconstructed image, as well as an attempt to formulate a definition, which consists of:

a. Attributes - tutoring is valuable and elitist, and offers opportunities;
b. Associations - tutoring is associated with new experiences and development opportunities; it is accompanied by the development of close relationships with other participants in this process (lecturers and students);
c. Oppositions - tutoring is not "traditional" classes (exercises and lectures);
d. Equivalents - tutoring is a meeting and an individual path;
e. Descriptions of tutoring actions - it supports, gives a sense of access to the university and its resources, creates opportunities for better understanding the world, allows for the exchange of experiences, inspirations, and in-depth studying;
f. Descriptions of actions towards tutoring - it can be chosen, tried, and utilised, and recommended to others.

According to the respondents, tutoring is a valuable, even elitist process. In their statements, the respondents specified tutoring as a kind of meeting, program, or project that allows for gaining knowledge at a higher level compared to traditional lectures or exercises during studies.

In tutoring, students work in small groups or pairs with tutors, experiencing a new type of contact with other participants in educational processes at the university. The goals of the program adopted here are often consistent with the individual needs of the students. This way of working creates conditions for broadening the perspectives of the tutees' development and provides an opportunity for better adaptation to university life.
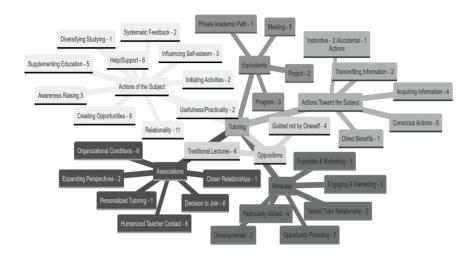
Figure 1. The mind map showing the networks of interrelationships between the analysed categories

Tutoring allows for the exchange of experiences, gaining inspiration, understanding the perspective of others, acquiring knowledge from more experienced individuals, deepening knowledge, or broadening horizons. It supports the possibility of realising ideas beyond the educational program pursued during studies. It influences self-esteem, making tutees feel important and more confident.

The respondents used various levels of generality in terms related to tutoring, emphasising its positive aspects and the use of tutoring as a means of gaining contacts and creating social relationships.

The results of the analysis indicate that the reconstructed definition of the concept of tutoring is in many aspects consistent with the previously cited definitions found in the literature. The respondents indicated that it is a program in which they participate, similar to the concept presented by B. Master as "(...) the entire developmental and scientific process - a cycle of regular meetings" (2019, p. 32). The image of tutoring as primarily cooperation between the tutor and the tutee, presented by A. Sarnat-Ciastko in the work "Tutoring in Polish Schools" (2015, p. 10), corresponds to the perception of tutoring by the respondents. Students also pointed out the developmental aspect of tutoring, similar to the considerations of S. Krzychała (2018) and A. Dziedziczak-Foltyn, B. Karpińska-Musiał, and A. Sarnat-Ciastko (2020) in their discussions on this method of work.

Tutoring as a process of "(...) deepening knowledge, a specific issue by the student under the supervision of a tutor who stimulates cognitive zeal and directs the student's scientific interests", defined in this way by M. Gębska (2013), is almost identically described by the students. The image of tutoring as an exchange of experiences, a new type of contact with other participants in educational processes emerging from the analysis of students' statements, is consistent with its perception by M. Taraszkiewicz (year of publication not available). The description of tutoring as a kind of meeting by M. Budzyński (2009) or J. Jendza (2016) aligns closely with the way it is perceived by the respondents.

Due to the lack of tutoring as a mandatory method of work at Polish universities, the definition reconstructed by the authors differs from that used at the University of Oxford or the University of Cambridge as "(...) a common, basic method of educating students" (Master, 2019). In Polish conditions, tutoring is a program that students could join under certain conditions, which the best or most engaged students were able to fulfil.

In summary, the conducted analyses confirm the ambiguity of the term tutoring (Brdulak et al., 2022; Fernandes and Flores, 2013). At the same time, it is worth emphasising that in practice, it depends on the users which aspects of tutoring they pay attention to and for what purpose they use it. The respondents often have the need to specify this process, to define it for themselves, for their own use, in order to adapt it to their own previous educational experiences. Understanding the concept of tutoring can vary greatly, as confirmed by research conducted in Polish and international contexts, including by S. Fernandes and M.A. Flores (2013), B. Suárez-Lantarón, I. Castillo Reche and A. López-Medialdea (2023), L. Da Re, R. Bonell and A. Gerosa (2022), and can also be linked to its development with new social phenomena such as cloud schools or distance learning (Rabiej-Sienicka, 2018; Ponce Ceballos et al., 2022).

The presented research results demonstrate that semantic field analysis can be effectively employed not only in linguistic exploration, for which it was originally developed, but also in social research. Although the results obtained cannot be considered representative, primarily due to the qualitative nature of the study, but also due to the small research sample resulting from the specifics of the programme, they shed new light on the research area explored. The application of semantic field analysis in the social sciences expands the range of available research methods, facilitating a more comprehensive understanding and interpretation of qualitative data.

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