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Exploring Linguistic Capital and Social Reproduction in Elite Bilingual Schools Across the Globe

Exploración del capital lingüístico y la reproducción social en escuelas bilingües de élite a nivel mundial

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Abstract
de Mejía (2002) defines "elite" bilingual schooling as a privileged educational choice for families seeking to access or preserve prized symbolic capital and economic advantage through bilingual education in two or more high-status languages. This systematic literature review examines 48 entries from peer-reviewed journals, edited volumes, and books investigating so-called "elite" bilingual K–12 schooling across 35 global contexts. The review outlines various characteristics of these "elite" bilingual schools, including school types, language policies, and teaching staff. Additionally, I apply Bourdieu's (1977) concept of symbolic capital to explore how these schools function as sites of social reproduction, where learners are positioned to access and reproduce high-status linguistic and cultural capital. Findings describe the neoliberal language and institutional policies, as well as stakeholder attitudes, that frame bilingual education in these "elite" contexts as an investment in the market-based competitiveness of both the schools and their students. These findings suggest that so-called "elite" bilingual schools represent a fruitful yet understudied context for investigating social reproduction and the interrelationship between bilingual education, social class, and political economies.

Keywords: Bilingual education, elite bilingualism, international and comparative education, social reproduction, symbolic capital

Resumen
de Mejía (2002) define la educación bilingüe de "élite" como una opción educativa privilegiada elegida por familias que buscan acceder o preservar capital simbólico valioso y ventajas económicas mediante la educación bilingüe en dos o más lenguas de alto prestigio. Esta revisión sistemática de la literatura examina 48 publicaciones provenientes de revistas académicas arbitradas, volúmenes editados y libros que investigan la escolarización bilingüe K–12 denominada "élite" en 35 contextos globales. La revisión describe diversas características de estas escuelas bilingües "élite", incluyendo los tipos de instituciones, las políticas lingüísticas y el personal docente. Además, se aplica el concepto de capital simbólico de Bourdieu (1977) para explorar cómo estas escuelas funcionan como espacios de reproducción social, donde los estudiantes son posicionados para acceder y reproducir capital lingüístico y cultural de alto estatus. Los hallazgos describen las políticas lingüísticas e institucionales de corte neoliberal, así como las actitudes de los actores implicados, que enmarcan la educación bilingüe en estos contextos "élite" como una inversión en la competitividad orientada al mercado tanto de las escuelas como de sus estudiantes. Estos resultados sugieren que las escuelas bilingües denominadas "élite" representan un contexto fértil pero aún poco estudiado para investigar los procesos de reproducción social y la interrelación entre educación bilingüe, clase social y economías políticas.

Palabras clave: Educación bilingüe, bilingüismo de élite, educación internacional y comparada, reproducción social, Capital simbólico

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Introduction

The term "folk bilingualism" has often been used to describe a type of bilingualism where the individual (often from linguistically minoritized communities) must become multilingual involuntarily to survive, often because of contact between language groups (Boyd, 1998; de Mejia, 2002; Fishman, 1977; Guerrer, 2010; Paulston, 1978). In contrast, Paulston's (1978) term "elite bilingualism" has been used to describe the type of bilingualism where individuals (often from dominant language communities) have become multilingual in two or more high-status international languages by their own free choice. In her book *Power, Prestige and Bilingualism*, de Mejía (2002) further defines "elite bilingualism" "as a necessary attribute for those who wish to preserve or gain access to prized symbolic capital represented in attractive lifestyles and economic advantage" (p. 41). In this sense, developing elite bilingualism is a matter of acquiring or maintaining status rather than survival.

Similarly, scholars such as Flores, Tseng, and Subtirelu (2021) point out there are distinct differences between bilingualism (and bilingual education) for members of linguistically minoritized communities and those from elite majority communities. For the former, for instance, bilingual education is often vital to protect or revitalize linguistic and cultural capital in the face of systemic oppression and threats of purposeful erasure. de Mejía (2002) clarifies that "elite" bilingual education instead functions as a privileged choice for "upwardly mobile, highly educated, higher socio-economic status" families who wish for their children to develop bilingualism in high-status languages (p. x). Elite bilingual schools are defined in this review as K–12 schools designed to provide learners from socially elite or affluent backgrounds access to "elite bilingualism" in high-status international languages through education in more than one language of instruction. As explored in detail below, these private bilingual schools are high tuition-based institutions that typically serve affluent immigrant and/or local populations. The word "elite" is used in this review not to imply that these schools offer a superior approach to bilingual education or that students leaving these schools are better prepared than those from other bilingual schools; instead, this label highlights ways in which these particular schools operationalize bilingual education for a privileged class of families around the globe. The current study provides a systematic and critical review of scholarship on "elite" or "prestigious" bilingual school contexts to date and contributes to understanding the role bilingual education plays in Bourdieu's (1977) suggested interrelationship between language, social class, and the political economy. Barakos and Selleck (2019) argue that elite bilingual schools, where learners access, reproduce, and convert high-status linguistic and cultural capital into social and economic capital, provide a particularly ripe setting for investigating how language operates as a means of social reproduction. However, studies of these so-called "elite" bilingual K–12 contexts remain sparse. Finally, as scholars such as Delavan et al. (2024) raise concerns about the gentrification of bilingual programs in the US, this review offers a critical perspective on the ways these schools have continued to establish, exchange, and maintain their elite status and operate as sites of social reproduction for the middle and upper-class communities they serve across the globe.

Theoretical Framework

Bourdieu's vision of language as a source of cultural or symbolic capital (linguistic capital) is central to the theoretical framework underpinning this literature review. In this vision, certain languages receive different values depending on the demands of the language or linguistic market. Bourdieu (1977) saw the education system as central to establishing and maintaining the demands of this language market because the system has "a monopoly over the production of the mass of producers and consumer, and hence over the reproduction of the market on which the value [of a language] depends, in other words, its capacity to function as linguistic capital" (p. 652). Providing access to high-status linguistic capital through elite bilingual education, therefore, provides potential access to valuable social and economic capital for students attending these schools. As Barakos and Selleck (2019) clarify, elite bilingual education is "a phenomenon that brings social and/or material capital, a sense of belonging, prestige, excellence, privilege, and access through the use of specific linguistic resources for certain social groups and individuals… an access code to a local, national or global perceived elite (way of life)" (p. 365). Elite bilingual education in the studies included in this review serve as a powerful conduit for upper and upwardly mobile middle-class families to gain and maintain access to high-status symbolic capital and, eventually, material capital through access to bilingualism in high-status world languages and cultures.

Methods

In the current study, I systematically reviewed existing literature in the field of elite bilingual education to answer the following research questions:

1. What are the characteristics of elite bilingual schools across different global contexts?
2. How do elite bilingual schools operate as sites of social reproduction across the globe?

I addressed these research questions by first conducting a three-phase systematic search for all peer-reviewed publications related to bi- or multilingual schooling in K–12 contexts that the authors identified as "elite" or "prestigious." Figure 1 summarizes the search and selection process and indicates the number of excluded publications based on each criterion.

Phase 1: Hand Search

In Phase 1 of this search, de Mejía's book, *Power, Prestige and Bilingualism: International Perspectives on Elite Bilingual Education* (2002), served as a cornerstone source to build an initial corpus of hand-selected entries on the topic. I started this phase by employing bibliographic branching while searching for articles that had cited de Mejía's text. Doing so revealed a range of ethnographic research mainly in Latin America and Europe. Exploring citations in these new studies, I found additional relevant publications, which, in turn, provided several empirical studies, books, and historical and descriptive overviews looking at elite bilingual educational contexts across South America and Asia and resulted in an initial corpus of 22 relevant entries collected by hand.

Phase 2: Systemic Database Search

In Phase 2, I took a systematic approach to searching academic databases for book chapters, texts, and peer-reviewed articles that used terms related to elite bilingual K–12 schooling. In May 2024, a search through titles, abstracts, keywords, and full articles was conducted through five key academic databases (ERIC, Academic Search Complete, Education Source, Web of Science, and Linguistics and Language Behavior Abstracts) that featured work on education and language. As this is a small body of literature, I did not include a date range but included all up-to-date articles on the topic in the database search. The phase involved searching for key terms across two categories. The first category of terms attempted to capture entries that focused on elite contexts and contained the terms elite or prestigious. These two terms were chosen to reflect the common language that authors of the 22 initial entries identified in Phase 1 used to describe schools that were associated with high social status, exclusivity, or access to elite forms of cultural and linguistic capital. The second category targeted bi- or multilingual school contexts and used a wildcard character (*) to return all entries containing any of the following terms: bilingual school*, multilingual school*, dual-language school*, bilingual education, multilingual education, or dual-language education. The list of terms and concepts aimed to capture the range of labels used across the globe to refer to instruction in more than one language. To return all entries that contained a combination of at least one term in the two categories I used Boolean operators AND and OR and parentheses to group the terms in the following search input: ("elite" OR "prestigious") AND ("bilingual school*" OR "multilingual school*" OR "dual-language school*" OR "bilingual education" OR "multilingual education" OR "dual-language education"). The five database searches yielded 238 entries, which I combined with the 22 initial records identified in Phase 1. After removing all duplicate entries, Phases 1 and 2 resulted in 206 unique entries.

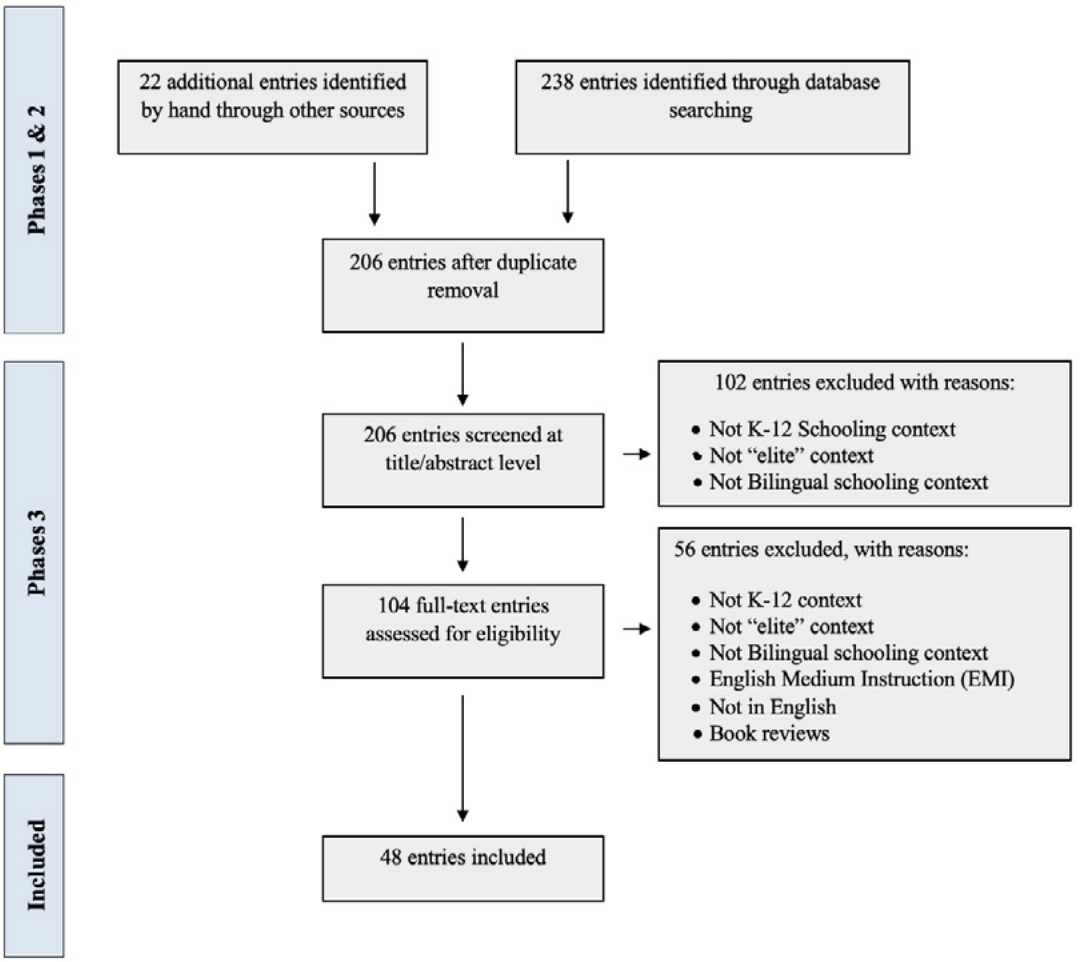
Phase 3: Inclusion and Exclusion

In Phase 3, I first used the CADIMA evidence synthesis online software (see Kohl et al., 2018) to screen the title and abstract of each entry and select all entries that met the following criteria: a) focused on bilingual schooling (i.e., formal instruction in more than one language); b) focused on elite or prestigious school contexts (as described by the authors); and c) focused on K–12 contexts. After reviewing titles and abstracts for the 206 unique entries, I identified 104 entries that met the three criteria. I then reviewed the full text of each entry, again selecting studies based on the three criteria above (bilingual, elite, and K–12 contexts) as well as excluding more theoretical or conceptual entries that did not provide details on specific educational contexts relevant to the research questions guiding this review. Selected entries included quantitative, qualitative, and mixed-methods studies as well as historical and descriptive overviews of specific contexts from peer-reviewed journals as well as texts, edited volumes, and book chapters. The most common reason for excluding entries in this review was that the authors did not clarify if their focus was on bilingual K–12 contexts in elite or prestigious contexts. Additionally, I excluded multiple studies that focused on K–12

English Medium Instruction (EMI) contexts[1] that did not clarify whether additional languages were used in instruction. I also excluded multiple studies published in languages other than English (namely Spanish and Portuguese) due to my own language abilities. This systematic search process resulted in a final database of 48 entries. See Figure 1 for an outline of the search process and Table 1 for a full list of each included entry and associated global context and languages of instruction.

Figure 1

Flowchart for Entry Search and Screening



[1] Although EMI programs typically designate English as the sole, *de jure* language of instruction, *de facto* instruction and language use in EMI classrooms has been shown to be more multilingual in practice, with students and teachers using their full linguistic repertoires (see Paulsrud et al., 2021). Additionally, EMI contexts are often positioned as "elite" schooling choices for reasons similar to those of many of the bilingual programs featured in this review. Nevertheless, EMI contexts have been excluded from this review to focus on examining *de jure* bilingual school contexts with more than one official language of instruction.

Table 1

List of Included Entries

Entry Author, Year	Country/Region/Context	Languages of Instruction
Ahåt & Shinya (2017)	Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region (China)	English, Mandarin, Uyghur
Bae (2013)	Singapore, South Korea	English, Korean, Mandarin
Bagwasi (2021)	Botswana	English, Setswana
Banegas et al., (2020)	Latin America (Overview)	English, French, Spanish
Banfi & Day (2004)	Argentina	English, French, Spanish
Banfi & Rettaroli (2008)	Argentina	English, French, German, Italian, Spanish
Barrera (2015)	Castilla-La Mancha (Spain)	English, French, Spanish
Becker & Knoll (2022)	Switzerland	English, German
Bettney (2022)	Colombia	English, Spanish
Bulwer (1995)	European Schools (Overview)	English, Danish, Dutch, German, French, Greek, Italian, Portuguese, Spanish
Canagarajah & Ashraf (2013)	South Asia (Overview)	English, Hindi, Urdu
Chung (2020)	United States	English, Mandarin
Codó & Sunyol (2019)	Spain	English, Catalan, Mandarin, Spanish
Collins (2017)	South Africa	Afrikaans, English
Cui (2022)	China	Chinese, English, Uyghur
Curran (2021)	South Korea	English, Korean, Mandarin
Dashti (2015)	Kuwait	Arabic, English
de Mejía (2002)	Multiple Countries/Contexts	Multiple Languages
Garrido & Codó (2024)	Switzerland	English, French, German
Gomez-Vasquez & Guerrero Nieto (2018)	Colombia	English, Spanish
Guerrer (2010)	Colombia	English, Spanish
Haidar (2019)	Pakistan	English, Urdu
Hamel (2008)	Latin America (Overview)	English, French, German, Italian, Portuguese, Spanish
Hélot (2003)	France	English, French, German, Italian
Hu (2005)	China	English, Mandarin

Entry Author, Year	Country/Region/Context	Languages of Instruction
Kanno (2008)	Japan	English, Japanese
King (2004)	Andes (Overview)	English, French, Spanish
L'nyavskiy-Ekelund & Siiner (2017)	Estonia	English, Estonian, Russian
Lee (2020)	South Korea	English, Korean
Liberali & Meagle (2016)	Brazil	English, Portuguese
Maldonado-Valentín (2016)	Puerto Rico	English, Spanish
Malloy & Mallozzi (2007)	Mexico	English, Spanish
Martínez Novo & de la Torre (2010)	Ecuador	English, Kichwa, Spanish
Mayer & Koerner (2022)	Brazil	English, Portuguese
Ordóñez (2004)	Colombia	English, Spanish
Ordóñez (2011)	Colombia	English, Spanish
Paquet & Levasseur (2019)	Canada	English, French
Prošić-Santovac & Radović (2018)	Serbia	English, Serbian
Relaño-Pastor & Fernández-Barrera (2019)	Spain	English, Spanish
Rydenvald (2015)	European Schools (Overview)	English, Swedish
Sander & Admiraal (2016)	Netherlands	English, Dutch, German
Selleck (2020)	Wales	English, Welsh
Sharma (2018)	Nepal	English, Mandarin
Silva-Enos et al. (2022)	Unnamed Central American Country	English, Spanish
Takam & Fassé (2020)	Cameroon	English, French
Usma Wilches (2009)	Colombia	English, Spanish
Valencia (2013)	Colombia	English, Spanish
Vamos (2018)	Hungary	Hungarian, Russian

Analysis

After the selection and exclusion process, each of the 48 selected entries was read in full, coded, and analyzed to answer the two research questions. I first used a structural coding approach (Saldaña, 2016) and coded segments of each article that provided general descriptive information about the school (context, languages of instructions, school type, students, teachers,

language arrangement, etc.). The top-down, deductive approach allowed me to answer the first research question and outline and describe the essential characteristics of the various elite bilingual schools and contexts featured in the entries. To answer the second research question, I borrowed from Glaser's (1965) constant comparative method of qualitative analysis and conducted multiple iterative rounds of reading, of analytic memo writing, and of open coding the larger structural excerpts and findings from the entries related to Bourdieu's concepts of social, cultural, and linguistic capital.

Results

Characteristics of Elite Bilingual Schools

In answering the first research question many of the authors included in this review offered formal definitions of what they considered to be "elite" bilingual contexts, highlighting notions of choice, prestige, and the pursuit of symbolic and material capital via education in more than one language (Barakos & Selleck, 2019; Codó & Sunyol, 2019; de Mejía, 2002; Lee, 2020). The specific elite bilingual schools in the review included mostly private K–12 schools across 35 countries and six global regions. In nearly all cases, English was included as one of the languages of the instruction, employing an additive, monoglossic language arrangement where the languages were purposefully kept separate by teacher, subject, time of day, or classroom space. These characteristics are outlined in Tables 1 and 2 and described in more detail below.

School Types

The schools discussed in this review took various forms, with most operating as private institutions serving wealthy upper-middle-class to upper-class communities (de Mejía, 2002) across the globe. Schools featured in this review fit into the three general categories. The most common type of school featured in this review is a private international school or government-funded European school, which are both designed to serve enclaves of foreign communities working in a host country where their home language is not used in local schools (e.g., Banfi & Rettaroli, 2008; Hamel, 2008; Kanno, 2002). The second type is best described as a private or public K–12 school that explicitly serves elite, affluent local populations, providing instruction in the local language and other high-status languages (e.g., Banfi & Rettaroli, 2008; Codó & Sunyol, 2019; Kanno, 2002; Lee, 2020; Liberali & Megale, 2016; Relaño-Pastor & Fernández-Barrera, 2019). Similarly, the third type included private or public K–12 schools that serve a combination of local and foreign student populations and provide instruction in high-status languages and the local language (Bettney, 2022; Canagarajah & Ashraf, 2013; Collins, 2017; Hu, 2005; Maldonado-Valentín, 2016; Valencia, 2013; Vamos, A, 2018).

Countries and Contexts

The 48 entries in this review examined elite bilingual schooling contexts in 35 specific countries and autonomous regions, 4 global regions, and 1 unnamed country in Central America. Table 2

below outlines the various contexts and languages of instruction listed in the studies of elite bilingual schools included in this review. As some countries were mentioned across multiple entries, the second column in Table 2 lists the number of times each country was mentioned across the 48 entries as well as the languages of instruction listed in all entries that examined that context. It is beyond the scope of this review to explore the social, political, and cultural contexts in each of the 40 unique countries or regions included in this review, but this section offers a brief overview of the three most prominent contexts: Colombia, Argentina, and Brazil. These three contexts also offer illustrative examples of the various social and political factors that influenced the development of elite bilingual schools, such as national policies, immigration patterns, shifting student demographics, and the proliferation of English as a global language that many authors cited in other contexts included in this review.

Although Argentina had the second most mentions (after Colombia), with specific elite bilingual schooling contexts included in five entries across the corpus (Banfi & Day, 2004; Banfi & Rettaroli, 2008; de Mejía, 2002; King, 2004; Malloy & Mallozzi, 2007), these entries offer some of the most detailed historical analyses of the development of elite bilingual schools in one context. These authors noted that the abundance of elite bilingual schools in Argentina is closely tied to the historical development of the country, especially the wave of European immigration during the 19th and 20th centuries. Offering the most detailed historical overview of the Argentinean context, Banfi and Day (2004) note that as immigrants from Italy, Germany, France, the UK, and other countries established communities in Argentina in the mid-19th century, they developed their own schools to provide families with education in their home languages. Although many of these schools offered bilingual instruction in the community immigrant language and Spanish, Banfi and Day (2004) compare these initial schools to Heritage Schools as they aimed to revitalize or maintain home language learning within a language minority community. Banfi and Day (2004) clarify that as immigration to Argentina began to slow down throughout the 20th century and these communities continued to evolve due to intermarriage and generational separation, the bilingual schools needed to adapt to changing student demographics. These schools began adapting their language arrangements and curricula to incorporate more students outside the initial immigrant language communities. Shifting student demographics led many schools to shift from a heritage model to what is often referred to as a dual-language model in US contexts (see Lindholm-Leary, 2001), which features instruction in Spanish and an additional European language paired with a purposeful combination of typically immigrant students whose home language matched the additional European language. Typically, these immigrant students learned Spanish for the first time and local students whose home language was Spanish and were learning the additional language for the first time. Banfi and Day (2004) suggest that additional waves of economic growth and contraction, increased foreign investment, privatization across the country, dropping student enrollment, and the proliferation of English as a global language in the late 20th century led many of these schools to evolve yet again. Authors conclude that many of the schools that started as heritage schools for immigrant language communities shifted to the high-tuition, private, bilingual schools seen across the country today, offering instruction in Spanish and

English as two high-status languages to children of socially elite and affluent families across the country.

Colombia was featured prominently in de Mejía's (2002) text and had the most mentions across the corpus, with elite Colombian bilingual school contexts included in nine different entries (Bettney, 2022; de Mejía, 2002; Gómez-Vásquez & Guerrero Nieto, 2018; Guerrer, 2010; King, 2004; Ordóñez, 2004, 2011; Usma Wilches, 2009; Valencia, 2013). All nine entries noted that Colombia's National Bilingual Program, a 2004–2019 government initiative that aimed to transform Colombia into a Spanish-English bilingual country, contributed to a rapid increase in private, prestigious bilingual schools in the country, making it a rich context for studies of elite bilingualism and education. Reporting more broadly on the Colombian context, Hamel (2008) clarifies that, although the National Bilingual Program was designed to develop bilingual programs in both public and private K–12 contexts across Colombia, a lack of trust in public institutions resulted in significant investment in (and profit for) private and international schools. Bettney (2022) provides a more recent look at how language ideologies and bilingual education have continued to evolve in Colombia and notes that, although the initiative officially ended in 2019, the number of private, elite bilingual schools continues to steadily increase across the country despite very little oversight and evaluation in the effectiveness and quality of these programs.

Brazil had the third most mentions across the corpus, with specific elite bilingual school contexts described in three different entries in this review (de Mejía, 2002; Liberali & Meagle, 2016; Mayer & Koerner, 2022). It is important to note that the systematic database search also returned additional entries written in Portuguese that may also be relevant to this review, but these entries were excluded due to my own language limitations. Offering a detailed historical analysis, Liberali and Megale (2016) note that, despite systematic government efforts to deny or even erase indigenous and immigrant languages and culture, Brazil is, by nature, a multilingual country. To fully understand Brazil's development as a multilingual country and the emergence of elite bilingual schools in this particular context, the authors highlight the complex political, economic, and cultural global relations and immigration patterns over the past 50 years. Similar to Argentinian examples described above, after an economic boom in the 1960s and 1970s, authors report that Brazil has welcomed immigrants from China, South Korea, Bolivia, Peru, Ecuador, Senegal, and Angola as well as refugees fleeing from various natural disasters around the globe. Liberali and Megale (2016) highlight ways in which these transnational flows have resulted in a "superdiversity" of languages and cultures in Brazil and, subsequently, the emergence of bilingual schools; they note that although these bilingual schools were initially designed to serve local immigrant populations, Brazil has recently experienced an ideological shift that "acknowledges and stimulates Brazilian plurilingualism" on a national level (p. 99). With this ideological shift and rising interest in bilingualism came the emergence of a new type of private bilingual school in Brazil, specifically for the social elite. Despite the rich, localized linguistic diversity across the country, the authors note that these elite bilingual schools exclusively taught (and continue to teach) in English and Portuguese. Liberali and Megale (2016) cite the growing belief that English is essential to success, to career advancement, and that

attending a bilingual school is a marker of high-status among the middle and upper classes. The authors explain that the greatest concentration of private bilingual schools can be found in the south and southeast regions of the country, in areas like São Paulo, Paraná, Rio de Janeiro, and Santa Catarina and conclude that the rapid growth of elite bilingual schools in these areas is likely due to the concentration of socially and economically elite families who can afford the high-tuition fees of these schools.

Table 2

Countries and Languages of Instruction

Country/Context	# of mentions	Languages of Instruction				
Argentina	5	English	Spanish	French	Italian	German
		Hebrew	Armenian	Japanese	Korean	
Australia	1	English	French	German		
Belgium	1	Danish	Dutch	English	French	German
		Greek	Italian	Spanish		
Botswana	1	English	Setswana			
Brazil	3	English	Portuguese			
Brunei Darussalam	1	English	Malay			
Cameroon	1	English	French			
Canada	1	English	French			
Castilla-La Mancha (Spain)	1	English	Spanish	French		
Central America (Unnamed Country)	1	English	Spanish			
China	2	English	Mandarin	Uyghur		
Colombia	9	English	Spanish	German		
Ecuador	2	English	Spanish			
Estonia	1	English	Estonian	Russian		
France	1	English	French	German	Italian	
Hungary	1	Hungarian	Russian			
India	1	English	Hindi			
Japan	2	English	Japanese			
Korean Study Abroad Schools in Singapore	1	English	Korean	Mandarin		
Kuwait	1	English	Arabic			
Mexico	2	English	Spanish	German		
Morocco	1	English	Arabic	French		
Nepal	1	English	Mandarin			
Netherlands	1	English	German	Dutch		
Pakistan	2	English	Urdu			
Puerto Rico	1	English	Spanish			
Serbia	1	English	Serbian			
South Africa	1	English	Afrikaans			

Country/Context	# of mentions	Languages of Instruction				
South Korea	2	English	Korean	Mandarin		
Spain	2	English	Spanish	Catalan	Mandarin	
Sweden	1	English	Swedish			
Switzerland	2	English	French	German		
United States	1	English	Mandarin			
Wales	1	English	Welsh			
Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region (China)	1	English	Uyghur	Mandarin		
Andes (Overview)	1	English	Spanish	French		
European Schools (Overview)	1	English Greek	German Spanish	Danish Italian	French Portuguese	Dutch
Latin America (Overview)	2	English Italian	Spanish	Portuguese	German	French
South Asia (Overview)	1	English	Urdu	Hindi		
Swedish European & International schools (Overview)	1	English	Swedish			

Languages of Instruction

Across the 48 entries and 35 countries and autonomous regions, 29 unique languages were listed as languages of instruction in the elite bilingual schools addressed in this review (see Table 2). As many entries explored multiple elite bilingual schools across a specific country or region, Table 2 includes all the languages of instruction listed across the different schools in each context. English was listed as one of the languages of instruction in all but Hungary (Vamos, 2008), as this entry provided a historical overview specifically of Hungarian-Russian bilingual schools during the Soviet occupation of Hungary from 1945 to 1989. It is important to note that English listed in each context does not mean that all of the individual bilingual schools surveyed in this review included English as one of the languages of instruction. Rather, all entries and contexts (except Vamos, 2008) examined at least one elite bilingual school that listed English as one of the languages of instruction. In all cases, one of the two or more languages of instruction included that region's official or dominant language and typically included an additional high-status language like French, Spanish, or another European language that had gained elevated status in that context due to historical language contact and/or colonization. Indigenous languages were listed as languages of instruction in elite bilingual schools in three contexts: Setswana in Botswana (Bagwasi, 2021), Kichwa in Ecuador (Martínez Novo & de la Torre, 2010), and Uyghur in the Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region in China (Ahåt & Shinya, 2017). While these three indigenous languages were present in the official policies and language arrangements of the elite bilingual schools described in these entries, the authors concluded that parents, administrators, and students in these schools typically favored instruction in higher-status languages like English, Mandarin, or Spanish. Additionally, Martínez Novo and de la Torre's (2010) ethnographic investigation of elite bilingual schools in Ecuador showed that,

despite official policies and documents including Kichwa as a language of instruction, education in these schools was conducted almost entirely in Spanish, with instruction in Kichwa limited to one or two hours a week.

Language Arrangements and Policies

Most of the bilingual programs in this review would be considered additive bilingual programs, where students add a second language while continuing to learn in their home language (see Cummins, 2017). García (2009) has insisted that additive bilingual programs are monoglossic in nature, meaning that "the desired outcome was either proficiency in the two languages according to monolingual norms for both languages, or proficiency in the dominant language according to monolingual norms" (p. 115). An additive, monoglossic approach was present in many of the reviewed schools, where the languages were purposefully kept separate by teacher, subject, time of day, or even the actual classroom space (e.g., Banfi & Rettaroli, 2008; Codó & Sunyol, 2019; Hamel, 2008; Kanno, 2002; Liberali & Megale, 2016). As an example, in examining elite bilingual education in Latin America, Hamel (2008) clarified that "two separate curricula and their teaching staff exist side by side with little communication and acquaintance with the other language and curriculum" (p. 83). Similarly, Liberali and Megale (2016) noted that teachers in elite bilingual programs in Brazil often forbade the students to speak in a language other than the official language of instruction for that particular class. Prošić-Santovac and Radović (2018) described an elite bilingual preschool context in Serbia with a language policy based on the "one person-one language" approach, where each teacher was assigned either Serbian or English. Despite a range of bilingual proficiency in the two languages among the teaching staff, the school's strict language policy dictated that teachers were required to pretend that they were monolingual and were not allowed to use the other language in their interactions with students. Although teachers were required to maintain the illusion of being monolingual when they spoke with students, they clarified that they never acted as if they didn't understand what the students were saying. While the additive language arrangements and policies across these elite bilingual contexts may serve a guarded pedagogy to ensure structured language input and output in contexts where the target languages are not widely spoken, these arrangements also represent monoglossic language ideologies, which stand in contrast to much of the recent scholarship on bilingual education, which suggests that students should have access to all of their language resources at all times (e.g., Flores, 2017; García, 2009).

Teachers

Only six entries examined teacher backgrounds and identities in elite bilingual contexts (Banfi & Rettaroli, 2008; Gómez-Vásquez & Guerrero Nieto, 2018; Mayer & Koerner, 2022; Ordóñez, 2011; Prošić-Santovac & Radović, 2018; Relaño-Pastor & Fernández-Barrera, 2019). However, most schools included in these six entries employed either two sets of monolingual teachers in the two languages of instruction or one set of "native" teachers in one of the schools' high-status languages of instruction (typically English) and another set of bilingual teachers who

were proficient in both languages of instruction. The "native" teachers in these contexts were often foreigners with limited pedagogical experience and teaching qualifications. In contrast, bilingual teachers were typically local, credentialed teachers with extensive teaching experience and qualifications who also spoke both of the languages of instruction. In an overview of staff profiles in prestigious bilingual programs in Argentina, Banfi and Rettaroli (2008) found that the teachers possessed a range of experience, certifications, and language proficiencies, but in general, most schools in their survey employed two monolingual teachers, one in Spanish and one in the additional language of instruction. However, similar to elite bilingual programs examined in Colombia (Gómez-Vásquez & Guerrero Nieto, 2018; Ordóñez, 2011) and the autonomous region of Castilla-La Mancha in Spain (Relaño-Pastor & Fernández-Barrera, 2019), Banfi and Rettaroli (2008) reported that some programs in Argentina had one set of monolingual teachers and another set of bilingual teachers that the school strongly associated with one of the languages of instruction. Mayer and Koerner's (2022) study of teacher autonomy in elite bilingual schools in Brazil was the only article that described a program where all classroom teachers were bilingual in the school's languages of instruction. In contrast, four of the other entries (Banfi & Rettaroli, 2008; Gómez-Vásquez & Guerrero Nieto, 2018; Ordóñez, 2011; Relaño-Pastor & Fernández-Barrera, 2019) reported that the elite bilingual schools in their contexts favored foreign-born teachers who administrators would market as "native" English speakers regardless of teaching experience or qualifications. For example, Relaño-Pastor and Fernández-Barrera (2019) examined the teaching staff at one elite Spanish-English bilingual program in Castilla-La-Mancha in Spain that employed teachers from the UK as "native speaker" teachers. Authors reported that the "native" teachers were assigned to teach various content-area classes in English despite lacking any formal pedagogical experience or qualifications to teach those subjects.

Elite Bilingual Schools as Sites of Social Reproduction

In answering the second research question the analysis revealed several ways in which the elite bilingual K–12 contexts examined across the 48 entries aimed to position their students to access, reproduce, and convert high-status linguistic and cultural capital into social and economic capital. In writing on how educational systems contribute to the reproduction of social structures, Bourdieu and Passeron (1990) argued that, even in contexts that espouse ideologies of equal opportunity and meritocracy, few educational systems "do anything other than reproduce the legitimate culture as it stands and produce agents capable of manipulating it legitimately" (p. 59). Flores (2017) suggested that while modern bilingual education has served as a tool for social transformation, it also operates as a site of social reproduction, which produces "governable subjects to fit the political and economic needs of modern society" (p. 525). The following sections explore the various ways the elite bilingual schools included in this review operated as sites of social reproduction–namely, by prioritizing access to high-status languages, hiring "native" speakers to teach those languages, and implementing neoliberal language and school policies that frame bilingual education as an investment in the market-based competitiveness of both the school and its students.

Language Choice and Linguistic Capital

Language choice was the most salient representation of social reproduction in schools examined in this review. Authors described concerted efforts by parents and school administrators in these elite bilingual school contexts to provide students with access to perceived high-status languages (such as English) as linguistic capital, often with the explicit purpose of eventually converting that linguistic capital into economic capital through access to globally competitive, high-paying jobs. For example, parents of children in elite bilingual school contexts in Spain (Codó & Sunyol, 2019), Japan (Kanno, 2002), and South Korea (Lee, 2020) all reported that they decided to enroll their children in exclusive bilingual programs explicitly as a way to provide their children access to what they perceived to be high-status linguistic and cultural capital that they believed to be perceived as linked to future economic and job prospects. As seen in one Spanish-English-Mandarin trilingual school in Barcelona (Codó & Sunyol, 2019), some parents were more concerned with simply exposing their children to what they perceived to be high-status languages and culture (in this case, Mandarin and Chinese culture) than gaining any functional proficiency in the languages. Liberali and Megale (2016) and Banfi and Rettaroli (2008) found that in many elite bilingual contexts in Brazil and Argentina, respectively, schools used the phrase "bilingual education" in promotional materials to market their educational program as "elite," even though many of the schools were not providing what would typically be considered bilingual education (i.e., not providing formal instruction in an additional language outside of a dedicated language class).

English was listed as a language of instruction in nearly every school profiled across all global contexts except for one historical overview of Hungarian-Russian bilingual education in Hungary in the 20th century (Vamos, 2018). Authors reporting on Serbia (Prošić-Santovac & Radović, 2018), Argentina (Banfi & Day, 2004), Colombia (Wilches, 2009), and Latin America more broadly (Hamel, 2008) attributed the large number of schools that included English as one of the languages of instruction to the proliferation of English as a global language and wider forces of globalization. However, Codó and Sunyol (2019) offer a similar explanation for the institutionalization of Mandarin as a language of instruction in the elite Spanish-English-Mandarin school in Spain described above. Codó and Sunyol (2019) explain that school officials added Mandarin as a third language of instruction in response to decreasing enrollment and an attempt to re-brand the school as more elite and competitive in the local market of private, high-tuition bilingual schools. Authors clarify that school officials and parents saw Mandarin as a rising global language and adding it to their existing Spanish-English program allowed "institutional agents to mobilise both the discourse of cognitive/attitudinal benefits [of multilingualism] and forms of linguistic capitalisation" (Codó & Sunyol, 2019, p. 436). Other authors exploring bilingual school contexts that included Mandarin also cited similar motivations and attitudes toward Mandarin among parents, students, and administrators in elite bilingual schools in the US (Chung, 2020), the Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region in China (Ahåt & Shinya, 2017), China (Cui, 2022), Nepal (Sharma, 2018), and Singapore's study abroad schools for Korean students (Bae, 2013).

'Native' vs. Bilingual Teachers

It is important to note that the teachers described in the elite bilingual programs reviewed were rarely bilingual themselves. Furthermore, school language policy in some contexts explicitly restricted bilingual teachers to use only one of the languages of instruction when teaching or interacting with students (see Banfi & Rettaroli, 2008; Prošić-Santovac & Radović, 2018). Similar to many dual-language programs in the US, employing monolingual teachers or strictly assigning bilingual teachers to one specific language may serve to ensure students have structured exposure to the target languages of instruction, especially in global contexts where the target languages are not widely spoken. However, findings about attitudes toward teachers in selective elite bilingual programs in Colombia (Bettney, 2022; Gómez-Vásquez & Guerrero Nieto, 2018) and Castilla-La Mancha (Relaño-Pastor & Fernández-Barrera, 2019) included in this review suggest that teachers were valued by administrators and parents based on their proximity to "nativeness" in the schools' high-status languages of instruction (typically English) rather than their bilingual or cultural proficiencies. Additionally, teachers in many of these programs who were bilingual in the languages of instruction were often local teachers who, despite having more formal teacher preparation and pedagogical experience than their "native" teacher counterparts, were relegated to less central teaching roles, such as supporting the often less experienced "native speaker" teachers. For example, reporting on elite bilingual education in the autonomous community of Castilla-La Mancha in Spain, Relaño-Pastor and Fernández-Barrera (2019) concluded that despite unclear instructional roles and lack of experience and formal qualifications to teach certain subjects, the school relied on the "native" teachers as "guarantors of educational elitism, distinctiveness and linguistic prestige in the highly commodified market of English," a role highly disputed among all teachers at the school (p. 421). Furthermore, the authors point out that the school charged parents an additional monthly fee specifically to hire and keep these "native" teachers on staff, noting that the less experienced "native" English-speaking teachers were "fundamental for the [school's] sustainability of prestige and elitism in the local school market" (Relaño-Pastor & Fernández-Barrera, 2019, p. 426). Similarly, Gómez-Vásquez and Guerrero Nieto (2018) found that local "non-native" English-speaking teachers in elite bilingual schools in Colombia had more formal teaching qualifications, pedagogical knowledge, and experience with local cultures and languages but were paid less and had more intensive workloads compared to the foreign teachers hired as "native" English speaking instructors. Such a bifurcation of roles between the often monolingual, less experienced "native" teachers and their local bilingual teacher counterparts in these contexts suggests that, ironically, when it comes to desired teacher qualities in these elite bilingual schools, "nativeness" in a high-status language like English may be more valuable than teachers' bilingual or cultural proficiency.

Neoliberal School Policies

Stakeholders in elite bilingual schools included in this review described school policies and other decision-making driven by neoliberal logics, which responded to market-based competition and framed bilingual education as an investment for advancing both the school and individual students' marketability. As was the case for adding Mandarin as a third language of instruction

in a Spanish-English bilingual school in Barcelona (Codó & Sunyol, 2019), administrators and parents in some elite bilingual schools explicitly positioned student access to perceived high-status linguistic capital (like Mandarin) as the most important way to help both the school and its students stay competitive under rapidly changing economic and cultural circumstances. Parents and school staff in other elite bilingual contexts in the US (Chung, 2020) and South Korea (Lee, 2021) also described the schools as sites for students to accumulate linguistic capital in high-status languages under the belief that students would eventually be able to convert this linguistic capital into economic capital through access to globally competitive, high-paying jobs. Some schools even advertised that their programs were more competitive than local schools because they offered linguistic and cultural immersion that was explicitly distinct from that of the host countries: the hiring of "native speaker" teachers from other countries (Relaño-Pastor & Fernández-Barrera, 2019), the displaying national emblems around the school, the multilingual school signage, and the introduction of other cultural artifacts and experiences associated with a dominant, high-status culture (Codó & Sunyol, 2019). Codó and Sunyol (2019) point out that the addition of Mandarin as one of the three languages of instruction was promoted to offer students "a rare type of linguistic capital that will confer distinction on students as future job-seekers in a global context" (p. 445).

The pursuit of linguistic capital in high-status languages also extended to the national level, as seen in Colombia's "National Program of Bilingualism." Hamel (2008) clarifies this initiative "represents a prospect launched to catch up with globalization via the language highway of the world's most globalized language and the international society it represents" (p. 75). Usma Wilches (2009) cites Bourdieu explicitly in her analysis of bilingual schooling in Colombia and suggests that members of socially elite and affluent communities in Colombia enroll their children in elite bilingual schools in high-status languages like English all as part of broader efforts "to retain and transform economic, social and cultural capital… to maintain their position in society" (p. 135). Authors across the corpus often suggested that these ideologies were products of the "neoliberal preoccupation" with and commodification of English language learning across the globe (Kubota, 2014). Bettney (2022) notes that the proliferation of elite Spanish-English bilingual schools in Colombia is aligned with wider neoliberal policies implemented across South America in the past three decades, "which emphasize individualism, competition, private capital, and capitalism" (p. 264). Finally, as authors like Codó and Sunyol (2019) and Relaño-Pastor and Fernández-Barrera (2019) suggest, language ideologies observed in these elite school contexts also serve as indicators of the increasing marketisation and commodification of education, as schools selectively design bilingual programs in high-status languages (like English and Mandarin) as part of wider efforts to sustain profit-making, prestige, and elitism in increasingly competitive local school markets.

Discussion, Conclusion, and Future Directions

In addition to summarizing the pertinent literature, this review offers insight and future directions related to understanding global contexts, languages of instruction, and other features of

so-called "elite" bilingual schools, as well as the roles these schools play in reproducing social, linguistic, and cultural capital across the 35 global contexts included in this review. As Table 2 shows, most of the literature examining elite bilingual education has focused on countries in South America, namely Colombia, Argentina, and Brazil. Authors across the review suggest that the specific national policies, immigration patterns, shifting student demographics, and the proliferation of English as a global language in these South American contexts have contributed to the proliferation of elite bilingual schools (and subsequent research) in these three countries. However, as shown in Table 1, the breadth of countries included in this review spanned North and Central America, Asia, Africa, and Europe, suggesting that elite bilingual education is truly a global phenomenon. Multiple authors linked the spread of elite bilingual education with the spread of neoliberal language ideologies and the commodification of English language learning across the globe (see Kubota, 2014). Further research in less studied areas like Asia and Africa may offer additional global perspectives to understanding how these language ideologies and the increasing marketisation and commodification of bilingual education have continued to spread across the global market.

Additionally, as authors like Prošić-Santovac and Radović (2018), Banfi and Day (2004), and Wilches (2009) have suggested, the prevalence of English as a language of instruction in nearly all of the 48 entries is further evidence of the persistent elitism and hegemony of English observed across other global educational contexts (Pennycook, 2010; Song, 2011). However, with Mandarin included as an additional language of instruction in the US (Chung, 2020), Spain (Codó & Sunyol, 2019), and South Korea (Lee, 2021), further study on Mandarin as a language of instruction in elite bilingual schools may provide new insights on its rise in the global language market. Finally, although the earliest entry in this review was published nearly three decades ago (Bulwer, 1995), the number of entries has steadily increased since 2016, suggesting that scholarship on these elite bilingual contexts is still a relatively new but potentially up-and-coming research topic. However, as some of the historical entries have shown, bilingual education for elite social and political groups is certainly not a new phenomenon, with the earliest example of elite bilingual education included in this review occurring in Hungary in 1945 (Vamos, 2008).

In the elite bilingual school settings identified in this literature review, where influential middle and upper-class families (or their employers) pay top money for their children to access high-status linguistic and cultural capital, often with the express purpose of eventually converting that symbolic capital into social, material, and economic capital in their adult lives, Bourdieu's (1977) suggested an interrelationship between language, social class, and the political economy is laid bare. This interrelationship between bilingual education and elite social status aligns with the contemporary neoliberal phenomenon that De Costa et al. (2016) described as linguistic entrepreneurship, where learners "strategically exploit language-related resources for enhancing one's worth in the world" (p. 696). Like many parents and administrators in this review who emphasized the eventual material and economic benefits of enrolling children in elite bilingual schools, De Costa (2019) explained that linguistic entrepreneurship compels learners to acquire perceived elite linguistic capital "to acquire and assemble the 'appropriate'

linguistic credentials to succeed in school and society" (p. 458). For children from upwardly mobile or higher socio-economic status families, bilingual education in high-status languages can provide an additional space to access, maintain, and reproduce symbolic linguistic and cultural capital as a means to secure future economic and material capital. These dynamics underscore how elite bilingual school contexts may perpetuate existing social stratification, as access to perceived elite linguistic and cultural capital becomes a means through which existing class distinctions are maintained and reproduced.

Although most authors in this review apply a critical lens in their analyses, exploring these schools as sites of power, privilege, and social reproduction, de Mejía is more cautious. de Mejía (2002) reminds us that, as a result of globalization and shifting economies and geographies, many of these schools serve as necessary enclaves for communities "who, because of lifestyle, employment opportunities or education, need to move frequently from one country to another, or who, because of the multilingual-multinational nature of the organisations they work for, need to interact with speakers of different languages on a daily basis" (p. 41). de Mejía (2012) and Banfi and Rettaroli (2008) argue for a reconciliation between what they see as a false dichotomy between elite and non-elite (folk) bilingual programs, such as indigenous or community bilingual schools. Although less critical than others reviewed, these authors are hopeful that modern developments in bilingual teaching prevalent in elite bilingual programs could improve language education in folk bilingual programs and that the dual nature of linguistic and cultural experiences at the heart of folk bilingual programs may enrich elite bilingual programs beyond simply accumulating languages as linguistic capital. However, I am more cautious to suggest that bilingual school administrators should look to these so-called "elite" schools for inspiration, as this review has revealed potentially harmful monoglossic language ideologies and language arrangements across most of these elite bilingual contexts. Despite many schools in this review explicitly marketing and advertising themselves as "elite" institutions for developing proficiency and understanding in multiple languages and cultures, findings reveal that these exclusive bilingual schools primarily serve as a means for children of socially elite and affluent families around the world to acquire high-status linguistic and cultural capital, with the express purpose to convert that symbolic capital into social, material, and economic capital, thereby more likely maintaining and reproducing their elite status across generations.

A majority (27) of the 48 articles in this review were historical analyses or overviews of specific countries or global contexts. The remaining 21 entries were empirical studies conducting mostly qualitative studies of specific (and sometimes multiple) topics, including student, parent, teacher, and administrator attitudes or beliefs (13 entries), classroom teaching (ten entries), and school-wide phenomena (two entries) in elite bilingual school contexts. Despite limited empirical studies at elite bilingual school sites, Barakos and Selleck (2019) argue that these sites provide a particularly ripe setting for investigating how language contributes to social reproduction, noting that "a specific focus on eliteness [emphasis added] may illuminate further the existing complexity of the dynamic field of multilingualism and the growing literature on social class and language" (p. 363). The findings described in this review similarly emphasize the

need for further research on language policies, instructional practices, stakeholder attitudes, and student experiences in elite bilingual school contexts. Such research would help illuminate how these institutions function as mechanisms of social reproduction within elite communities and offer further insights into the ways in which educational institutions maintain or challenge social inequalities across the globe.

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