



**Bi-/multilingual Education Research Around the World:
Advances in the International and Comparative Dialogue**
**A pesquisa em educação bi-/multilíngue no mundo:
avanços no diálogo internacional e comparado**
**La investigación en educación bi-/multilingüe en el
mundo: avances en el diálogo internacional y comparado**

Cristian R. Aquino-Sterling

Texas Tech University

Antonieta H. Megale

Universidade Federal de São Paulo

María Luisa Pérez Cañado

Universidad de Jaén

Corresponding authors:

Cristian R. Aquino-Sterling, Texas Tech University, c.aquino-sterling@ttu.edu

Antonieta H. Megale, Universidade Federal de São Paulo, megaleunifesp@gmail.com

María Luisa Pérez Cañado, Universidad de Jaén, mlperez@ujaen.es

To Ana Celia Zentella (*la pro-fe*) and Alexander W. Wiseman,
as we continue this *multilingual* journey toward “an infinite field”—and back!

Bi-/multilingual education continues to build momentum across the globe, yet if we are to create the necessary conditions for systematically internationalizing the field, it is essential we continue to foster sustained scholarly collaboration and dialogue across cultural, linguistic, and national contexts—especially between Global North and Global South epistemological and geographical landscapes (Makoni & Pennycook, 2024; Ortega, 2025; Tupan & García, in press). This international special issue of *The Bilingual Review/La revista bilingüe*—comprised of contributions representing seven national contexts, namely, Brazil, China, Italy, the Philippines, Turkey, Spain, and the United States, as well as a multinational literature review on elite bi-/multilingual education—has been brought to fruition with the intention to contribute meaningfully to the realization of such a timely and significant goal.¹

At the same time, we recognize that in doing so we are engaging with a tradition of international and comparative-international education research² (see Bartlett & Krawczyk, 2017; Bereday, 1964; Bray et al., 2014; Jules et al., 2021; Marshall, 2024; Phillips & Schweisfurth, 2014; Thomas et al., 2025; Wiseman & Wolhuter, 2019, for example) that—although vibrant and dynamic—often remains peripheral to mainstream bi-/multilingual education scholarly circles (Aquino-Sterling & Kayode, 2025; Benson et al., 2020). This is particularly evident in the United States, where due to historical pendulum swings between “permissive” and “restrictive” language education policies (Gándara & Hopkins, 2010; Ovando, 2003) and the constant struggle to advocate for the educational and linguistic rights of racialized and minoritized bi-/multilingual

¹ This special issue was developed in response to the call made by Aquino-Sterling et al. (2022) in the introduction to *Innovative Curricular Designs in Bilingual Teacher Education: Bridging the Distance With School Contexts* (Information Age Publishing, 2022), in which they stated: “[A]s we continue to experience what it means to live in a truly interconnected global village, the field in the U.S. could continue to develop structures and opportunities to systematically and intentionally collaborate with BTE scholar-practitioners around the world. The sustained and substantive development of comparative studies of bilingual education, particularly that of curricular and pedagogical innovations being developed, implemented and researched across nations, could help inform the education of bilingual learners across national borders and provide opportunities for *making the familiar strange*; the cognitive dissonance needed to continue to grow and to reimagine ourselves anew. Works such as Sciriha (2024); Hartford, Valdman, and Foster (1982); Guzmán Johannessen (2019); Petrovic (2010), as well as symposia aimed at engaging international scholars in constructive dialogue [see Aquino-Sterling et al., 2025], could serve as initial steps not only for advancing our knowledge and understandings of the state of the art in BTE across the world, but also for systematically and intentionally internationalizing the BTE curricula. Arguably, most bilingual teachers prepared in the U.S. are not aware of the realities of bilingual education in other nations and how these realities could inform their local contexts [...]. Ultimately, it is important to consider the question of what kind of world does bilingual dual language education envision and how do actors in the field serve as models for bringing such a world into fruition? How do we go about our ostensible ends in ways that are not counterproductive to realizing our democratic and transformative project? How is the current moment inviting us to re/imagine, reconceptualize and push the boundaries of our work? How do we re-envision BTE curriculum and pedagogy for teaching and learning in a world on fire (Delpit, 2021)?” (p. xxi).

² In this work, “international” research in bi-/multilingual education refers to studies conducted by scholars working from a particular national context focusing on any aspect of bi-/multilingual education beyond that national context, for example: a U.S.-based scholar studying bi-/multilingual teacher education in the Dominican Republic. “Comparative-international” research refers to studies explicitly conducted with the aim of comparing any aspect of bi-/multilingual education across two or more national contexts. In this sense, an “international” study is not necessarily comparative. Comparative studies, on the other hand, are international in nature unless the comparison is made between regions and/or dynamics within the same national context. For further discussions about the meaning/s of “comparative-international” see Phillips & Schweisfurth (2014) and Marshall (2024).

learners (Arias, 2007; Crawley, 2021; Faltis, 2002; Flores & García, 2017; Frieson, 2022; Gándara & Escamilla, 2016; García et al., 2025; Lê et al., 2025; McCarty, 2002; Rolstad et al., 2025; Valdés, 1996; Valenzuela, 1999; Vaughn et al., 2025; Zentella, 1997)—*generally* and *often*—scholars have been compelled to focus attention and advocacy–activism on urgent and persistent issues affecting the field at regional, state, and/or national levels. Thus, it is not surprising that, within a U.S. context, even a cursory review of doctoral program curricula intended to prepare bi-/multilingual education scholar–researchers, as well as an initial analysis of citations within the existing body of scholarship, reveal a pressing need for the systematic and sustained development of an *explicit* orientation toward international and comparative-international approaches to doctoral education and scholarly dialogue. Similarly, it is fair to say that, *generally*, the field remains engaged in nationally relevant and bounded conversations, limiting the scope and relevance of its contributions to local, regional, and national contexts. In other words, bi-/multilingual scholars in the U.S. (as in many other parts of the world) primarily consume the research and scholarship that is locally produced and disseminated (Aquino-Sterling & Kayode, 2025).

However, there is no question that the call of our contemporary “knowledge society” (Castelfranchi, 2007)—characterized by global movements in the production, dissemination, and consumption of knowledge through educational “borrowing and lending” (Steiner-Khamsi, 2004, 2021)—and significant advances in higher education internationalization (Deardorff et al., 2022; de Wit & Altbach, 2021; Leask, 2015; Thondhlana et al., 2021) urge all bi-/multilingual education scholar–researchers across national contexts to move beyond the insular dimensions and capacities of our work to incorporate more international and comparative-international perspectives to advocacy, research, and scholarship in our increasingly global field. Working from such orientations would not only provide new ways of seeing, but also help—through acquiring global and multidimensional understandings—make evident the universal impact that bi-/multilingual education could have in advancing educational equity and attainment, promoting intercultural dialogue and understanding, and contributing to peace and the common good in a fractured, war-torn world (Oxford et al., 2020; Reimers, 2020; Stein-Smith, 2016, 2021; United Nations, 2015; United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization, 2025).

Beyond U.S. Centrism: Bi-/multilingual Education Research in a New Key

Bi-/multilingual education—defined from a U.S. standpoint as “the use of two [or more] languages in the instruction of curriculum content in the school [and] intended to promote bilingualism and biliteracy, academic achievement, and cross-cultural awareness” (Baker & Wright, 2017, p. 3)³—has come of age as a nationally and internationally consolidated field of research,

³ From a European perspective, an approach to defining “bilingual education” is framed from the curricular and pedagogical logics of Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL). Coyle et al. (2010) indicates that “CLIL is a dual-focused educational approach in which an additional language is used for the learning and teaching of both content and language” (p.1). For a thorough review of CLIL in Spain and Europe, please see Pérez Cañado (2011, 2023). Similarly, for approaches in conceptualizing bi-/multilingual education in Brazil, please see Megale (2024) and El Kadri et al. (2024, 2025).

scholarship, and practice. However, arguably, no country in the world with a recognized history of advancing bi-/multilingual education can match the global influence and impact that the United States currently holds in the field. According to the most recent international bibliometric study, covering a 50-year period from 1969 to 2018 (see Sánchez-Pérez & Manzano-Agugliaro, 2021),⁴ the United States—followed by Canada, the United Kingdom, Spain, China, and Australia—ranks highest in (a) the production and impact of scholarly publications, (b) the number of highly influential scholar–researchers, (c) the development of national and international research clusters and networks, (d) the level of scholar–researcher internationalization, and other relevant measures. Ironically, the United States has reached such a preeminent global standing despite the fact that, as Sánchez-Pérez & Manzano-Agugliaro (2021) have indicated,

for the collaboration of authors in bilingual education research, a limited level of internationalisation was observed, with only three clusters found, all composed of scholars from U.S. institutions, revealing that despite the existence of research cooperation among countries, at the level of research collaboration among authors, *studies seem to be mostly carried out within borders, especially in the U.S.* (p. 18, our emphasis)

The continued global impact of studies on bi-/multilingual education that are conducted in and focused on the United States, and authored by U.S. scholars, raises two initial questions:

- (1) What does the global spread of U.S.-based bi-/multilingual education scholarship—mostly produced monolingually (in English) and rooted in powerful Global North institutions—reveal about the privileged and hegemonic position of U.S. perspectives on bi-/multilingual education worldwide?
- (2) How might the field of research and scholarship in bi-/multilingual education in the United States—perhaps unknowingly and unintentionally to its scholars—affect power dynamics that mirror and reinforce unequal patterns of global knowledge production, dissemination, and consumption in today’s knowledge and network societies (Castelfranchi, 2007; Castells, 1996; Collyer, 2016; Fukuyama, 1992; Makoni & Pennycook, 2023)?

Irrespective of the multiple ways one could respond to these questions, the reality is that even a cursory bibliographic review of U.S. bi-/multilingual education scholarship points to the fact that scholars in the field are not *generally* conversant with bi-/multilingual education research–scholarship produced beyond U.S. borders (Aquino-Sterling & Kayode, 2025);

⁴ In their study, Sánchez-Pérez and Manzano-Agugliaro (2021) addressed the following two research questions: (1) “What is the evolution of the scientific production of bilingual education worldwide in the last 50 years in terms of the number of publications, document types, countries, affiliations, funding sponsors, cooperation relation networks, the level of internationalization of authors, the impact of publications, and sources?” (2) “What is the evolution of the scientific production on bilingual education worldwide in the last 50 years in terms of research topics (i.e., keywords) both overall and in the most productive countries and affiliations of bilingual education research?” In their bibliometric study, Agulló and Cerezo Herrero (2020) reached similar conclusions about the dominance of U.S. bi-/multilingual education research and scholarship worldwide.

therefore, this persistent inward and insular orientation, although it is understandable (as noted, the United States has much to grapple with politically to continue to advance public bi-/multilingual education nationally), contributes to broader dynamics that fuel inequities and the underrepresentation of bi-/multilingual education scholarship emerging from other world contexts, including the Global South (Demeter, 2020; Makoni & Pennycook, 2023). In other words, the field of bi-/multilingual education research in the United States not only exerts exclusive global influence and dominance but also generally reveals a prevailing tendency among its scholar-researchers to prioritize and rely on knowledge produced and validated within its guarded national and epistemological borders.

Nevertheless, holding a less privileged influential status in the field is not an indication of a strategic commitment to advancing bi-/multilingual education research from *explicitly* comparative-international scholarly orientations and dispositions. Yet, as the field of international and comparative-international bi-/multilingual education research continues to evolve in the U.S. and abroad (Aquino-Sterling & Kayode, 2025; Benson et al.,⁵ 2020), we view this approach as a potential means to challenge the current imbalances and inequities in knowledge production and consumption in this increasingly global field—particularly those that elevate U.S.-based research and scholarship as dominant on the global stage. As Paulston (1993) suggested, “[t]oday, no one world view or way of knowing can claim to fill all the space of vision or knowledge” (p. 101).

To the extent that we internationalize our academic selves (Sanderson, 2008), engage in collaborative comparative-international research with scholars beyond our local borders, and participate in sustained, equity-minded dialogue with bi-/multilingual education scholars across nations—recognizing, valuing, and disseminating knowledge produced beyond our own borders—we enhance our ability to understand diverse perspectives and approaches to bi-/

⁵ As early as 1980, Bernard Spolsky (University of New Mexico) recognized the Welsh scholar E. Glyn Lewis (1972, 1978, 1980) as one who “led the way in recognizing not just the universality of bilingual education but the universal significance of the basic issues it is concerned with” (p. xiv). In the United States, the tradition of examining bilingual education beyond national borders arguably began with the work of James E. Alatis (1978) at Georgetown University. Since then, the field has produced additional important contributions (Aquino-Sterling, 2021; Aquino-Sterling & Megale, in press; Benson & Kosonen, 2013; de Oliveira & Höfling, 2021; Gándara & Jensen, 2021; García, 2009; García & Otheguy, 2019; Guzmán Johannessen, 2019; Hartford et al., 1982; Hornberger, 2006; Hornberger & Vaish, 2009; Hornberger & Limerick, 2019; Lewis, 1978, 1980; Mordechay & Alfaro, 2019; Morita-Mullaney et al., 2025; Petrovic, 2010; Seltzer, Rajendram, & García, 2024; Torres-Guzmán & Gómez, 2009; Wong & Benson, 2019, and other works). Although scholars in bi-/multilingual education in the United States have made significant contributions from internationally minded orientations without explicitly framing their work within comparative-international education research proper, this approach remains underdeveloped and needs to be meaningfully integrated into mainstream bi-/multilingual education scholarship (see Aquino-Sterling & Kayode, 2025). However, the insularity or “provincialism” we generally find in U.S. bi-/multilingual education research-scholarship is not unique to the field; it is a challenge shared by other areas of educational scholarship and practice. For example, Tobin (2021) alerted us to this same dynamic in the field of early childhood education: “In practice as well as scholarship in early childhood education (as in other subdisciplines of education) suffers from provincialism. This is perhaps particularly (but by no means uniquely) true of the United States, with its long and continuing belief in American exceptionalism and its tendency to conflate knowledge produced by its citizens and based on U.S. educational settings with universal truths. Comparative international studies can push back against this provincialism by challenging taken-for-granted assumptions, expanding the menu of the possible, and illuminating the processes of global circulation of early childhood education policies and practices” (p. 298). Nevertheless, as in the field of bi-/multilingual education, early childhood education also exhibits glimpses of international and comparative-international orientations toward research (see Swadener et al., 2000; Tobin et al., 2009). Similar dynamics are at play in the field of general and mainstream teacher education in the United States. Yet here too we find works moving the field toward international orientations to research-scholarship and practice (e.g., Sulemain & Huber, 2022).

multilingual education research, policy, advocacy, curriculum, and practice. In doing so, we create dialogic opportunities for shared understandings that can contribute to the advancement of the field in meaningful ways both nationally, internationally, and transnationally.⁶

The Contributions Featured in this Special Issue

The articles featured in this special issue collectively provide a nuanced overview of the current state of bi-/multilingual education within and across particular national contexts (i.e., Brazil, China, Italy, the Philippines, Turkey, Spain, the United States, and a multinational literature review). Particularly, the contributing authors address current significant advances, challenges, opportunities, and future directions in bi-/multilingual education research, policy, advocacy, curriculum, and practice. Drawing on the latest and most influential research, the authors respectively present conceptual-analytical and empirical studies that provide timely insights into the sociocultural, political, and academic-professional landscapes of bi-/multilingual education within the respective national contexts studied. Taken as a whole, these novel contributions illustrate diverse and multidimensional approaches to conceptualizing, implementing, and enacting bi-/multilingual education across national settings. Respectively, the authors highlight the role of historical legacies, national ideologies, and local initiatives in shaping the lived experiences of bi-/multilingual learners, educators, and communities within and beyond national contexts (to indicate “beyond the U.S. context” is to continue to privilege the U.S. as the main point of reference).

Opening the special issue, in “Exploring Linguistic Capital and Social Reproduction in Elite Bilingual Schools Across the Globe,” James fills a timely and underexplored niche: research into elite bilingual schools across different global contexts as sites of social reproduction. The study makes a unique contribution to comparative and supranational dialogue on bilingual education by conducting a comprehensive and systematic literature review of 48 publications on elite K–12 schooling across 35 global contexts and 29 different languages. Applying Bourdieu’s vision of language as a source of cultural and symbolic capital, the author addresses two key research questions that hinge on the features of elite bilingual schools across diverse contexts and the ways in which they operate as sites of social reproduction globally. The key characteristics distilled through the review include mostly private schools across 35 countries and six global

⁶ In alignment with these aspirations, we celebrate the publication of an innovative special issue of the *Bilingual Research Journal*—a well-established U.S. publishing venue that historically and primarily has focused its attention on disseminating critical research pertaining to how bi-/multilingualism, biliteracy, and language policy affect minoritized and racialized bi-/multilingual learners and communities in the United States. The issue titled “Bilingual Contexts Within and Beyond the United States” (Morita-Mullaney et al., 2025), centers on non-U.S. based and transnational studies of bilingualism, with research conducted in Hong Kong, Pakistan, Germany, Guatemala, and a U.S. Chinese-English program. As the editors indicate, the contributing authors highlight the persistent impact of coloniality on language policy, practice, and identity despite dominant forms of language planning (official language policies), the many ways in which multilingualism is a constant across national contexts, shaping local educational and societal ecologies. The issue emphasizes the importance of international and comparative perspectives in understanding bilingualism, and showcases how different sociopolitical contexts shape language ideologies, teaching practices, and learners’ identities—offering vital insights that transcend U.S.-centric models. The editors invite us—scholar-researchers and practitioners in bilingual education research—to embrace international, comparative, and transnational perspectives.

regions, where English holds a hegemonic role and an additive, monoglossic language arrangement is favored; where languages are purposefully siloed; and where native teachers with limited pedagogical experience are central. In turn, in response to the second research question, the analysis illustrates the cloak of equality in education; it reveals that these schools tend to prioritize access to high-status languages (most notably, English), value native speakers to teach them, and spread neoliberal language policies that respond to market-based competition. The article finishes by mapping out future pathways for progression on this front and by calling for increased research that draws on stakeholder attitudes and student experiences to de-cloak systemic inequities in this type of schooling across the globe.

Turning to the largest country in South America, in “Bilingual Education in Brazil: Navigating Global and Local Dynamics,” Megale, Liberali, El Kadri, and Clemesha provide a comprehensive and critical examination of bilingual education in Brazil, exploring the tension between global language policies and local sociolinguistic realities. Drawing on critical and decolonial frameworks, the authors interrogate the country’s historical erasure of linguistic diversity and its current embrace of English–Portuguese bilingual education, particularly in the private sector. Through a detailed analysis of policy developments, market trends, and educational practices, they expose how neoliberal rationalities shape both access and pedagogical orientations, often reinforcing linguistic hierarchies and social inequality. The article is organized into four key sections. First, it traces Brazil’s rich multilingual heritage and the legacy of monolingual language policies, debunking the enduring “myth of monolingualism.” Second, it examines the expansion of bilingual education in private institutions, highlighting the commodification of English and the dominance of proficiency-based, monoglossic models. Third, it investigates the emergent and still fragile landscape of bilingual education in the public sector, emphasizing the role of university–school partnerships in reimagining more inclusive and context-sensitive approaches. Finally, the authors propose conceptual frameworks—such as *funds of perezhivanie*, *engaged multiliteracies*, and *heteroglossia*—to envision a socially just, intercultural, and plurilingual education. This contribution sheds light on the ambivalent potential of bilingual education in Brazil: It can either reproduce existing inequalities or foster transformative practices rooted in local knowledges and diverse subjectivities. Ultimately, the authors call for an ethically and politically engaged bilingual education that transcends market logic and prepares students to participate critically and compassionately in a globalized, plural world.

In “Diversity and Uniformity in Multilingual Education of China: Tension, Balance, and Sustainability,” Feng and Wang examine the tensions that have emerged in the post-pandemic era between the ideologies of language diversity and language uniformity in education in the People’s Republic of China. As the second-most populous country in the world, with 17.20% of the global population (United Nations, 2024), China presents a particularly relevant context due to its complex multilingual social and educational landscape. The authors explore the concept of linguistic diversity as an ideological orientation and a universal value to achieve quality education. They trace the interesting history of the linguistically diverse mainland China, where orchestrating a balance between the preservation of linguistic diversity and the promotion of *Putonghua* is no mean feat. Considerable strides have been taken by the government, especially

in the last decade, to preserve linguistic diversity in the country. A notable push has also been documented for the introduction of English through bilingual education approaches (such as immersion or EMI), particularly in the past 20 years, bolstered by governmental aspirations for reform and modernization. However, in post-COVID-19 times, rife with sociopolitical tensions with the West, languages other than English (LOTEs) have begun to gain momentum in schools, and discussion on trilingualism has equally gained traction. This dovetails with the role that *Fangyan* (topolects and dialects) should have in mainstream language education and official policies, which seems to be neglected. The reflection on these pivotal issues, which is promoted in this article, helps navigate the delicate balance between protecting local languages, acknowledging the role of English, incorporating LOTEs, and maintaining the *Putonghua*, a particularly worthy endeavor in the unpredictable and uncertain times we are currently experiencing in language education not only in China but across the globe.

In response to Italy's recent shifts from a country of emigration to one of immigration—a society now characterized by increasing numbers of students from Eastern Europe, Asia, and North Africa, in “Evolution of Language Policies in Italian Public Schools: A Focus on Multilingual Inclusion,” Facciani presents an analysis of national language policies in Italian public education and examines how institutional discourses have addressed—or neglected—multilingual inclusion over time. Anchored in qualitative content analysis, the study reviews 15 official policy documents issued between 1989 and 2022, tracing shifts in how cultural and linguistic diversity have been framed in the school context. The findings reveal a gradual, although inconsistent, progression from generic notions of “intercultural education” toward a more explicit (yet still limited) recognition of multilingualism. Whereas earlier policies emphasized integration and tolerance, more recent documents begin to refer to students' plurilingual repertoires and the value of maintaining home languages. However, this evolution is marked by ambiguity because multilingualism is often subordinated to Italian language acquisition and framed through assimilationist lenses. Concrete implementation strategies for mother tongue support and inclusive multilingual pedagogies remain largely absent. Facciani argues that despite rhetorical advances, the dominant language ideology in Italian schools continues to uphold a monolingual norm rooted in national identity and historical anxieties about fragmentation. The article calls for a paradigmatic shift—from merely recognizing multilingualism to actively promoting it through policy, teacher education, and classroom practice. By foregrounding the Italian case, the article contributes to broader international discussions on how education systems navigate the tensions among linguistic diversity, national cohesion, and social equity.

Focusing on teacher preparation in the Philippines—a country recognized for having one of the earliest comprehensive bilingual education experiments in the world (Tupas & Lorente, 2014)—in “Pre-Service Teachers' Experiences With Multilingual Practices in Bontoc (Philippines): A Thoughtful and Agentive Approach to Translanguaging,” López, Martínez-Álvarez, Pangket-Rósario, Puma-at, and Wangwang investigate how pre-service teachers (PSTs) in the multilingual region of Bontoc make sense of and engage in translanguaging practices during their practicums or field-based experiences. Drawing on qualitative data from teaching journals and reflections written by five PSTs, the study applies a Cultural-Historical Activity Theory lens to examine

how translanguaging operates within the everyday realities of classrooms where multiple local and national languages intersect. The findings show that PSTs use their multilingual resources—particularly English, Filipino, Ilocano, and Bontoc—to respond to instructional challenges and facilitate meaningful learning. Their language choices are shaped by classroom dynamics, student needs, and their own understandings of what constitutes effective pedagogy. As they reflect on their experiences, PSTs begin to recognize translanguaging as a purposeful and pedagogically sound practice rather than an act of deficiency or linguistic confusion. This study contributes to scholarship on translanguaging by grounding it in the Philippines, a Global South context (Seltzer et al., 2024), where multilingualism is deeply embedded in daily life. It highlights the tensions that arise when classroom stakeholders—including PSTs, mentor teachers, and students—hold different assumptions about language use, such as strict English-only expectations versus inclusive language practices. In response, the authors propose a thoughtful approach to translanguaging, one that intentionally integrates moments of new-language focus while embracing the fluid, agentive use of multiple named languages comprising a single linguistic repertoire. This perspective is especially relevant in contexts where English may not be widely used outside the classroom and where translanguaging reflects lived linguistic realities, not an exception.

In “Embracing Linguistic Diversity: Notes Towards a Comprehensive Study of Bi-Multilingual Education in Spain,” Ramón Ramos and Mata offer a descriptive analytic overview of bi-/multilingual education in Spain, emphasizing the complex relationships among linguistic diversity, regional autonomy, and educational policy. Ramón Ramos and Mata explore how Spain’s unique sociolinguistic landscape—where Spanish coexists with regional languages and foreign languages are gaining importance—shapes different educational approaches. In monolingual regions, programs mainly combine Spanish with foreign language instruction via Content and Language Integrated Learning, while bilingual regions also center regional languages as key parts of instruction. These programs aim both to strengthen multilingual competence and to support regional linguistic heritage. In the study, Ramón Ramos and Mata lay out the historical, legal, and pedagogical foundations of these programs then present a detailed breakdown of the 17 regional models. Their comparative analysis highlights differences in policy, teaching models, and goals, yet also shows a shared national commitment to multilingualism, intercultural learning, and equity. Ultimately, the study makes evident how Spain’s decentralized education system adheres to degrees of both complexity and flexibility in meeting the challenges of linguistic diversity.

Addressing linguistic equity in the context of migration, in “Unlocking the Linguistic Wealth: A Call for Bilingual Education in the Republic of Türkiye,” DiCarlo and Hoş examine linguistic and educational challenges facing Türkiye as it transitions from a migrant-sending to a migrant-receiving country, particularly in light of the large influx of Syrian refugees. It outlines how Türkiye’s historical language policies, rooted in the construction of a singular national identity, have suppressed linguistic diversity—especially among minority communities such as Kurdish speakers—and continue to shape current educational practices. The authors trace the history of Türkiye’s language reforms, from the Ottoman era to the early Republican period, showing how language purification and assimilation policies prioritized Turkish and marginalized other languages. They argue that Türkiye’s multilingual reality today—with more

than 100 languages spoken in cities like Istanbul—demands inclusive and responsive language education policies. The article highlights the educational difficulties faced by students from minority and refugee backgrounds due to limited Turkish proficiency. It critiques the current monolingual education system and inconsistent implementation of bilingual support programs. Drawing on successful bilingual education models in Sweden and the United States, the authors advocate for systemic reforms in Türkiye, including the implementation of dual-language immersion and transitional bilingual programs, targeted teacher training, and development of materials in minority languages. The authors call for a shift from assimilationist language ideologies toward multilingualism as a resource. Bilingual education is presented not only as an educational necessity but also as a tool for social justice, integration, and national cohesion. The article concludes with policy recommendations and urges Türkiye to invest in inclusive bilingual programs that honor and sustain its rich linguistic diversity.

Concluding the special issue, in “Bridging Divides: Interrogating the Research–Policy–Practice Nexus in U.S. Bilingual Education and Bilingual Teacher Education,” Aquino-Sterling, Ataíde Pinheiro, Carrizales, Chávez, Coronado, Kramba, Mata, Molina Naar, and Valle analyze the complex relationships among research, policy, and practice in these two intimately related fields. Although there have been significant advances in research–scholarship and practice, there are still pressing systemic challenges that are rooted in contradictions in policy, barriers to implementation, and persistent political tensions. Moreover, despite existing research on effective programs and approaches for educating emergent bi-/multilingual students and future bilingual teachers, misalignments across research, policy, and practice have contributed to persistent gaps in opportunity and achievement for racialized bi-/multilingual learners attending public schools. These issues are especially urgent in today’s political climate, where ethnocentric and nativist ideologies have led to the demise of institutions such as the U.S. Department of Education Office of English Language Acquisition, undermining decades of progress in the field. Within this context, the contributing authors explore contemporary dynamics in the research–policy–practice nexus mismatch in K–12 bilingual education and bilingual teacher education. They conclude by making a call for policies that are research informed, equity driven, and culturally sustainable and that support bilingualism, biliteracy, and the preparation of teachers to serve bi-/multilingual learners in ways that advance academic achievement and promote well-being and belongingness.

Conclusion and Future Directions

The articles comprising this special issue evidence converging and diverging dynamics and orientations in language planning (Ruiz, 1984) across bi-/multilingual world societies and national school contexts. Collectively, these works could be conceived as international cases that, to different degrees, reflect macro, meso, and micro dimensions of case-based research (Bartlett & Vavrus, 2017), offering thus an opportunity to engage in comparative-international analysis on shared and divergent challenges, opportunities, and context-specific dynamics along the research, policy, advocacy, curriculum, and practice bi-/multilingual education

research continuum. As a conceptual analytic framework, such a continuum could assist us in opening venues for sustained international collaboration and dialogue—through the creation of interdisciplinary communities of practice (Becker, 2024) and interculturally aware forms of academic writing (Rice & Aquino-Sterling, in press)—that could help us acquire a better understanding of our own local realities as we “[learn] from the experience of others” (Phillips & Schweisfurth, 2010) and continue to “internationalize [our] academic selves” (Sanderson, 2007) as a way to foster the internationalization of bi-/multilingual education research–scholarship in systematic and sustained ways. From this comparative-international orientation, we are prompted to ask the following:

- (1) How are research, policy, advocacy, curriculum, and practice around bi-/multilingual education shaped by national contexts?
- (2) What divergent–convergent themes and challenges–opportunities emerge across the cases comprising this special issue?
- (3) How can these insights inform more inclusive and effective models of bi-/multilingual education locally and globally?
- (4) What can we learn from “the experience of others”?
- (5) How can comparative-international inquiry—when applied in explicit and strategic ways—promote more inclusive research dynamics between the Global North and Global South, while contributing to the internationalization of the field?

Identifying responses to these initial questions will be the focus of a future comparative-international study using the works comprising this special issue as secondary data to model such analyses (Marshall, 2024; Thomas et al., 2025). Employing the thematic analytic framework discussed above (i.e., research, policy, advocacy, curriculum, and practice), will allow us to identify initial common themes (e.g., tensions between monolingual ideologies and bi-/multilingual and dynamic-heteroglossic realities; the role of English, official languages, and language hierarchies; historical and political dynamics shaping bi-/multilingual language policy; calls for bi-/multilingual education as an instrument for equity and justice; discontinuities in the research, policy, and practice nexus; recognition of educators and stakeholders as agents of change; and other relevant themes addressed) as well as divergent realities (e.g., sociolinguistic contexts and language status; advocacy, policy, practice, and/or ideology as the focus of inquiry; framings of bi-/multilingualism in education and society; and degrees of bi-/multilingual education policy centralization) across national contexts. The analyses could also lead to underscoring how local sociocultural and sociopolitical conditions, institutional structures, and global market forces shape distinct approaches to bi-/multilingual education relevant to the countries examined in this work. This approach to comparative-international inquiry could lay the foundation for sustained international dialogue, offering key questions and directions for future cross-national research in the field.

We hope that scholars and practitioners in the field—both in the United States and beyond—find the articles in this special issue meaningful and useful in their work. We also

invite scholar–researchers interested in international and comparative bi-/multilingual education research to consider engaging with the work of the International and Comparative Bi-/multilingual Education Research Group (icberg.org)—an emerging global community of mindful, open-minded, and collaborative scholar–practitioners dedicated to forging a new transnational path for bi-/multilingual education research, practice, professional development, and advocacy from a variety of conceptual, theoretical, and research traditions and world contexts.

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