



Afterword:

Context, Convergence, and Collaboration in Bi-/Multilingual Education Research

Epílogo:

Contexto, Convergencia y Colaboración en la Investigación en Educación Bi-/multilingüe

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At a time when debates over language, equity, and education are especially pressing, this special issue brings together a crucial set of perspectives on bi-/multilingual education. Through its comparative scope, spanning South America, Europe, Asia, and North America, the issue showcases the diversity of complex, multilingual experiences while also underscoring challenges that are common across contexts. Collectively, the contributions demonstrate how deeply language education is intertwined with questions of ideology, history, equity, and social justice.

Looking retrospectively, one of the most striking insights is how persistent myths of monolingualism and assimilationist ideologies continue to shape policies and practices, even in societies that are profoundly multilingual. Whether through the privileging of a national language, the hegemonic positioning of English, or the assimilationist logic of ‘integration,’ the articles vividly show that monolingual norms remain resilient. Yet, alongside this persistence, the special issue also documents emerging counter-narratives. The studies showcase practices and policies that seek to affirm linguistic diversity, legitimize translanguaging and other multimodal, *heteroglossic* practices, and recognize learners’ repertoires as resources rather than deficiencies. The duality that is incorporated in the endurance of old paradigms and the rise of new ones captures the transitional moment that the field is currently facing.

The significance of this collection lies thus in its ability to situate local practices within global dynamics. Although the contexts represented are highly diverse, they speak to common pressures: the commodification of English under neoliberal logics; the tension between linguistic diversity and national cohesion; the uneven distribution of resources and opportunities; and the gap between progressive policy rhetoric and the realities of implementation, among others. By emphasizing these recurring themes, the special issue makes clear that the study of bi-/multilingual education cannot be confined to individual contexts; it requires comparative, transnational, and interdisciplinary perspectives and collaboration.

At the same time, the contributions show that solutions are context-dependent rather than universal. The strategies that may foster equity and inclusion in one national setting cannot simply be transferred to another. What crosses contexts are not ready-made solutions but principles that can inform research and practice globally: reform is never purely technical, bi-/multilingual education is always situated within broader social and historical struggles, and the disconnect among research, policy, and practice remains a critical obstacle.

Looking forward, several directions emerge with particular clarity. First, there is a pressing need to decenter dominant perspectives, such as U.S.-centric frameworks, English-focused models, or the continuous reliance on and normalization of the monolingual *habitus*. A genuinely global and pluriversal field must engage with the knowledges, practices, and innovations emerging from the Global South and from marginalized communities whose experiences often remain underrepresented in scholarship.

Second, the field must continue to examine the political and economic forces that shape language education. Neoliberal policies, global migration flows, and international pressures often determine which languages are valued, which learners gain access to resources, and which practices are considered legitimate. Future research should comparatively explore how these

forces reinforce social hierarchies, privilege certain languages over others, and simultaneously create openings for more equitable, context-sensitive approaches.

Third, it is essential to strengthen the research–policy–practice relationship. Across contexts, this special issue illustrates how disconnects among these domains limit the transformative potential that bi-/multilingual education can have. Closing the gap among research, policy, and practice will require more than dialogue; it will require partnerships across sectors and scholarship that is both empirically rigorous and practically relevant.

Finally, the future of the field depends on an explicit commitment to equity and justice. Bi-/multilingual education must be more than a technical matter of language allocation or curriculum design; it is fundamentally about belonging, dignity, and democratic participation. Whether by sustaining minority languages, legitimizing translanguaging, or ensuring that programs serve not only elites but also marginalized learners, the challenge is to reimagine education as a space where linguistic diversity is a right and an asset rather than a privilege—or worse, a liability.

In bringing these diverse studies into conversation, this special issue underscores both the persistence of old challenges and the emergence of new possibilities and responsibilities for bi-/multilingual education. While contexts differ, the underlying questions of ideology, equity, and access resonate across borders. What the volume makes especially clear is that the field cannot advance if it remains bound by national silos or fragmented debates. There is a pressing need for the sustained development of explicitly international and comparative approaches in research, doctoral education, and scholarly collaboration, especially in a world marked by resurgent nationalism, growing polarization, and increasing resistance to scientific knowledge. Such orientations would not only enrich our understanding of bi-/multilingual education across varied contexts but also cultivate the kind of scholarly community capable of addressing global, complex challenges while remaining attentive to local realities. In this sense, the special issue extends beyond documenting the field as it stands; it points toward the kind of transnational dialogue and commitment that will be essential for its future.