

# Presentation

## Bi/Multilingual Education: Complexities and Practices

---

Michele Salles El Kadri  
Antonieta Megale  
Luciana C. de Oliveira

We are pleased to present the thematic issue Bilingual/Multilingual Education: Complexities and Practices, of *Signum: Estudos da Linguagem*. This special issue results from an effort to bring together research, experiences, and reflections committed to a critical, inclusive, and transformative view of bi/multilingual education. Through the public call, we sought contributions that could expand theoretical debates, document insurgent practices, and challenge hegemonic linguistic and educational models.

We understand bi/multilingual education as a contested field, crossed by tensions between normative monolingual discourses and counter-hegemonic practices that seek to legitimize subjects, ways of speaking, and repertoires historically silenced or devalued by colonial language policies and power dynamics shaping the school space. In this sense, it is urgent to recognize that bilingual subjects do not operate with two isolated linguistic systems, but rather mobilize an integrated and situated repertoire, composed of multiple semiotic resources that make sense in specific interactional contexts (Otheguy et al., 2015, 2019). This perspective requires breaking with hierarchical and colonial views of language that have historically rendered invisible forms of expression considered "inferior" and reduced cultural and linguistic diversity to a problem to be corrected (García et al., 2021).

In the Brazilian context, marked by deep social, racial, and linguistic inequalities, bilingual education must be seen as a practice of justice and a concrete possibility for subverting the norms that have historically regulated who can speak, what can be said, and in which language. In Brazil, the logic of the market has advanced in a predatory manner over both public and private schools, turning bilingual labeling into a competitive advantage that promises to add behavioral value and performance surplus attributed to learning English from early childhood (Megale, 2024).

In light of this context, this issue aims to strengthen proposals in bilingual education aligned with principles of social justice, linguistic diversity, and critical student formation, rather than reproducing market-driven models focused on performance and the symbolic capital associated with specific languages. We believe that the role of bi/multilingual education goes far beyond the instrumental teaching of an additional language; it is about promoting learning processes that foster new ways of engaging and participating in an increasingly interconnected and plural world (Megale; El Kadri, 2023). As Megale (2024) previously argued, although the development of complex linguistic practices is central, bi/multilingual

education must also confront students with other narratives and discourses, opening space for the construction of less colonial subjectivities and for the emergence of new ways of acting in the world.

The works included in this issue reflect this vision by proposing alternatives to colonial and exclusionary logics that still prevail in many educational contexts, while valuing situated knowledge and repertoires and breaking with the centrality of the "native speaker" as a legitimate reference for language teaching and learning. The collection of articles presented here showcases the diversity of topics, approaches, and contexts that shape the field.

This issue mirrors the complexity and richness of the debates surrounding bi/multilingual education in Brazil and beyond. By bringing together studies from different perspectives that challenge monoglossic discourses, embrace translanguaging practices, recognize the complexity of teacher education, and value situated experiences, this issue seeks to broaden the theoretical, methodological, and political horizons of bi/multilingual education.

We thank all authors for the quality of their submissions and the editorial team at Revista Signum for their care and professionalism throughout the editorial process. We hope this issue inspires new research, practices, and policies committed to linguistic plurality, the appreciation of differences, and the construction of a more just and humanizing education.

## References

- García, O., Flores, N., Seltzer, K., Wei, L., Otheguy, R., & Rosa, J. (2021). Rejecting abyssal thinking in the language and education of racialized bilinguals: A manifesto. *Critical Inquiry in Language Studies*. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15427587.2021.1935957>
- Megale, A., & El Kadri, M. S. (2023). *Escola bilíngue: (trans)formando saberes na educação de professores*. Santillana.
- Megale, A. (2024). *Bilingual education in Brazil: Navigating global and local dynamics*. Macmillan.
- Otheguy, R., García, O., & Reid, W. (2015). Clarifying translanguaging and deconstructing named languages: A perspective from linguistics. *Applied Linguistics Review*, 6(3), 281–307.
- Otheguy, R., García, O., & Reid, W. (2019). A translanguaging view of the linguistic system of bilinguals. *Applied Linguistics Review*, 10(4), 625–651.