

Centering Multilingualism in Critical Qualitative Research: Meaning-making, Reflexivity, Ethics, and Power Relationships

Call for Contributions

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Qualitative research is increasingly conducted in linguistically diverse, mobile, and transnational contexts. Yet, despite the *multilingual turn* (May, 2013) across the social sciences and applied linguistics, qualitative methodology continues to be shaped by deeply entrenched monolingual and English-centric assumptions. Language is often treated as a neutral conduit for meaning rather than as a site of power, ideology, epistemology, and ethical struggle (Burkhard & Park, 2024; Temple & Young, 2004; Zhao & Warren, 2025; Zhao et al., 2025). As a result, critical questions about how language shapes research design, data construction, analysis, interpretation, and knowledge mobilization remain marginalized or relegated to technical discussions of translation.

This special issue, accepted for publication in the *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, explores and advances critically oriented multilingual qualitative methodologies as a necessary reorientation of qualitative inquiry. Rather than positioning multilingualism as a methodological complication to be managed, the special issue conceptualizes multilingualism as a constitutive condition of contemporary research and a critical resource for knowledge production (Goodman & Seilstad, 2025; Holmes et al., 2022; Li, 2022; Warriner, 2019). Grounded at the intersection of the broadly defined critical qualitative traditions (e.g., Carspecken, 1996; Dennis, 2020; Fine, 2008; Ladson-Billings, 1998; Smith, 2019), culturally responsive methodologies (e.g., Berryman et al., 2013; Chouinard & Cram, 2019; Jordan & Hall, 2025), critical applied linguistics (e.g., Pennycook, 2017; Pennycook & Otsuji, 2015; Piller, 2016) and critical translation studies (e.g., Venuti, 2008), the special issue foregrounds critical multilingual reflexivity & language awareness (García, 2017) as an ethical, epistemological, and methodological commitment.

Contributions to this issue interrogate how language practices reproduce or disrupt relations of power across the research process. It centers criticality as both a commitment and a stance and foregrounds research that is attentive to the lived realities of linguistically minoritized communities, non-western contexts, Indigenous and diasporic populations, and minoritized and transnational researchers working in additional languages.

Themes of the special issue include:

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- **Critiquing monolingualism in qualitative methodology** and its implications for epistemology, ethics, and rigor
- **Researcher positionality and multilingual reflexivity**, including insider/outsider dynamics, linguistic vulnerability, and collaboration with translators and interpreters
- **Translation, translanguaging, plurilingual, and culturally responsive analysis** as methodological and analytic practices
- **Validity, trustworthiness, and quality** in multilingual qualitative research
- **Critical engagement of digital technologies, AI, and infrastructure** in multilingual data construction, analysis, and dissemination
- **Multimodal, arts-based, and participatory approaches** in multilingual contexts and with linguistically minoritized communities
- **Writing, publishing, and knowledge mobilization** that challenge dominant monolingual norms in academic communication
- **Ethics, power, and linguistic justice**, particularly in research with marginalized and minoritized communities

Timeline:

1. **Call for submission: Early June**
2. **Title and Abstract submission: 31 July**
3. **Acceptance of Abstract: 31 August**
4. **Full paper submission: November 30**

All proposal submissions should include: **1) a manuscript title (no more than 12 words); 2) a 500-word abstract; and 3) author bio(s) of no more than 100 words.**

To submit a proposal, please use [this Google Form](#) or scan the QR Code below. For questions, please contact Pengfei Zhao (peng-fei.zhao@mcgill.ca) or Amber Warren (amber.warren@vanderbilt.edu).



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