

# Equity and excellence in English language education in the USA: A literature review from the 1960s to 2020s

Kim H. Song <sup>1</sup>, Gregory Child <sup>2</sup>, Jinsuk Lee <sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> University of Missouri-St. Louis, Department of Educator Preparation and Leadership, St. Louis, MO, USA

<sup>2</sup> Michigan State University, Assistant Professor, Teacher Education Department, East Lansing, MI, USA

<sup>3</sup> Sangmyoung University, Adjunct Faculty, Department of Education, Seoul, Republic of Korea

## Abstract

This study examined the trends in English language education (ELE) using a literature review from the 1960s to the 2020s as a research method. After reading the 1012 journal article abstracts, 210 articles emerged using the 37 keywords, which were supposed to embrace racial and linguistic equity. After multiple iterations of reading and open coding these abstracts, thirty-two articles were selected for the final analysis. One research question guided this study, “What were the emerging trends of PK-12 ELE in the USA in terms of equity and excellence from the 1960s to the 2020s?” Three phases were identified: Phase 1 (1968-1999) on remedial service; Phase 2 (2000-2007) on test accountability; and Phase 3 (2008-2020) on asset-based ELE. We integrated Feiman-Nemser’s central tasks into the four themes: 1) gaining EBLs’ funds of knowledge (FoK), 2) enacting EBLs’ racial, linguistic, and cultural repertoires, 3) forming teacher beliefs, and 4) deepening knowledge of the curriculum. The findings revealed shifts in three phases under each theme: from assimilating to the target language and culture and devaluing EBLs’ assets in Phase 1 to interweaving EBLs’ FoK but with racialized attitude towards EBLs in Phase 2 and valuing EBLs’ FoK as assets, seeing them as ‘language architect’, and integrating translanguaging and resisting raciolinguistic ideologies into ELE in Phase 3.

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## Introduction

The number of emergent bilingual learners (EBLs) or multilingual learners in the US was higher in fall 2019 at 10.4 percent, or 5.1 million, than in fall 2010 at 9.2 percent, or 4.5 million (NCES, 2022). In 2018, the percentage of public school students who were EBLs ranged from 0.8 percent in West Virginia to 19.4 percent in California (NCES, 2022). However, historically, the study of immigrants’ English language education (ELE) dealing directly with equity and excellence was largely excluded from the mainstream teacher education field. In-depth inquiries on equity in ELE that value EBLs’ racial, linguistic, and cultural repertoires as assets have been absent until recently (Kubota & Lin, 2006). This study focuses on equity and excellence in US PK-12 ELE through a literature review (LR) spanning more than 60 years, beginning in the 1960s and carrying forward to the 2020s.

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**Corresponding Author** Kim H. Song  [songk@umsl.edu](mailto:songk@umsl.edu)  University of Missouri - St. Louis, One University Boulevard, 363 Marillac Hall, St. Louis, MO 63121, USA

Literature regarding the nature and outcomes of ELE reveals that opportunities for teachers to practice equity and excellence should give primary emphasis on engaging in inquiry about their practices and transforming their vision, beliefs, and identities (Feiman-Nemser, 2001). The direct effect of conducting a literature review (LR) as a research tool could help readers gain an understanding of the existing research; it presents the knowledge in an emerging field, e.g., equity and excellence in English language education in the history of USA immigration. This study explores policies, acts, and laws that are related to equity and excellence in English language education for language minority students. This literature study, thus, directly contributes to introducing the bulk of the literature in light of equity and excellence by exploring and organizing journal articles chronologically to inquire for emerging themes from the 1960s to the 2020s. Indirectly, this literature review provides researchers with the research skills on how, what, and why to select certain journals by showing the process of data coding (Appendix A) and analysis. One research question guided this study: *What were the emerging trends of PK-12 ELE in the US in terms of equity and excellence from the 1960s to the 2020s?*

### Conceptual and Analytic Framework

This study adopted Feiman-Nemser's (2001) central tasks of teacher learning as a guide when analyzing the literature on ELE in the US. Feiman-Nemser's central tasks emphasized a curriculum for learning about "things that matter" (Lucas et al., 2018, p. 158) for three different levels of teachers: 1) preservice teachers, 2) induction, and 3) early inservice teachers. Among Feiman-Nemser's (2001) fourteen central tasks of teacher learning, five tasks focus on teacher induction, five on preservice teachers, and four on professional development for early inservice teachers. These central tasks addressed the competencies that EBL teachers should develop. For our substantive analysis, we integrated the fourteen central tasks into four tasks, which we used as the units of emerging themes. These four themes were:

- 1) *Teachers' Gaining Knowledge of EBLs in Local Contexts.*
- 2) *Teachers' Enacting EBLs' Racial, Linguistic, and Cultural Repertoires.*
- 3) *Teachers' Forming Beliefs, New Visions, Ideologies, and Identities for EBLs; and*
- 4) *Teachers' Deepening and Extending Knowledge of Content Curriculum and Instruction for EBLs.*

Within Theme 1, *Teachers' Gaining Knowledge of EBLs in Local Contexts*, we analyzed the literature using four of Feiman-Nemser's (2001) fourteen central tasks: a) learning about students, curriculum, and school community; b) developing an understanding of learners, their learning, and diversity; c) creating learning environments; and d) developing the tools and dispositions for ELE (Table 1). Within Theme 1, we examined empirical research addressing EBLs' funds of knowledge (FoK), equal access to learning resources (curriculum, instruction, and laws), racially, linguistically, and culturally inclusive learning environments, and support from families, educators, and communities to practice equity in ELE.

Theme 2, *Teachers' Enacting EBLs' Racial, Linguistic, and Cultural Repertoires*, encompassed three of Feiman-Nemser's tasks on repertoires: a) develop a beginning repertoire for reform-minded teaching, b) enact a beginning repertoire in purposeful ways, and c) extend and refine 'repertoire' in curriculum instruction and assessment (Table 1). Therefore, the focus for Theme 2 was on EBLs' racial, linguistic, cultural, and communicative repertoires, resulting in an exploration and analysis of empirical research articles focused on EBLs' various racial, linguistic, and cultural repertoires for the development of EBL curriculum, instruction, and assessments.

Theme 3, *Teachers' Forming Beliefs, New Visions, Ideologies, and Identities for EBLs*, integrated four of Feiman-Nemser's (2001) fourteen tasks: a) examining critical beliefs and vision, b) developing professional identity and ideologies, c) extending leadership and responsibilities, and d) strengthening dispositions (Table 1). We focused on empirical research concerning teachers' sociocultural mindsets or stances that included their vision, dispositions, and language ideologies in ELE. We examined the transformation of EBL teachers' mindsets and leadership.

Under Theme 4, *Teachers' Deepening and Extending Knowledge of Content Curriculum and Instruction for EBLs*, we included three of Feiman-Nemser's tasks: a) developing subject matter knowledge for preservice teachers, b) extending and deepening content knowledge for in-service teachers, and c) designing responsive curriculum and instruction for novice teachers (Table 1). We searched and analyzed empirical research articles related to teachers' content knowledge, critical pedagogies, and assessments. The table below shows the four themes consolidated from Feiman-Nemser's fourteen central tasks.

**Table 1.** Integrated four themes from Feiman-Nemser's fourteen central tasks

Four Themes	Feiman-Nemser's Fourteen Central Tasks
1) Gaining knowledge about EBLs in local contexts	➤ Learn the context - students, curriculum, school community (induction)
	➤ Develop an understanding of learners, learning, and issues of diversity (preservice)
	➤ Create a classroom learning community (induction)
	➤ Develop the tools and dispositions to study teaching (preservice)
2) Developing and enacting EBLs' racial, linguistic, and cultural repertoires	➤ Develop a beginning repertoire (preservice) – reform-minded teaching
	➤ Enact a beginning repertoire in purposeful ways (induction)
	➤ Extend and refine repertoire in curriculum, instruction, and assessment (in-service)
3) Exploring and developing visions, beliefs, ideologies, and identities for EBLs	➤ Examine beliefs critically in relation to the vision of good teaching (preservice)
	➤ Develop a professional identity (preservice)
	➤ Strengthen dispositions and skills to study and improve teaching (in-service)
	➤ Expand responsibilities and develop leadership skills (in-service)
4) Deepening and extending knowledge of content curriculum and instruction for EBLs	➤ Develop subject matter knowledge for teaching (preservice)
	➤ Extend and deepen subject-matter knowledge for teaching (in-service)
	➤ Design responsive curriculum and instruction (induction)

## Method

This paper carries forward what has happened to the ELE trends for the US PK-12 immigrant/refugee children from the 1960s to the 2020s by analyzing peer-reviewed journal articles on ELE using equity and excellence as a critical lens of inquiry. For too long, research on ELE has been excluded in the field of mainstream teacher education. After concentrated efforts, English language educators have brought the matter of equity in ELE into 21st-century teacher education (Kubota & Lin, 2006). The research question that guided this study was: *What were the emerging trends of PK-12 English language education in the US in terms of equity and excellence from the 1960s to the 2020s?*

We chose a literature review (LR) as a research method as it collects and analyzes empirical research articles as data to argue the importance of a problem or need (Nakano & Muniz, 2018). In the LR, researchers select, map, and assess a body of literature to support and justify the research question (Snyder, 2019); the LR creates "a better understanding of the topic through synthesis, by integrating existing and new ideas to create a new formulation for the topic or issue" (Nakano & Muniz, 2018, p. 3). An LR as a research method offers a variety of perspectives in terms of analytical frameworks and avenues for future research by investigating arguments and gaps in the current research. Popay and Muniz (2018) provided the following guidelines for those who use an LR as a research method (Nakano & Muniz, 2018, p. 2):

- Different sources and journals should be explored;
- The sample must be selected in a purposeful way, guided, and shaped by theory. It must give attention to the diverse contexts and meanings that the study is aiming to explore;
- Interpretation needs to follow a clear and explicit process, and
- Claims and assertions must be logically supported, theoretically grounded, and amenable to generalization; they should be applicable in different contexts.

## Data Sources and Analysis

Following the guidelines of an LR as a research method, journal articles were searched and selected using an academic database, 'Web of Science.' The terms utilized to find the initial set of articles included: 'immigrant and refugee ELE,' 'immigrant English learners,' 'refugee English learners,' 'English language learners (ELLs),' 'emergent bilingual learners (EBLs),' 'immigrant ESL,' 'refugee ESL,' 'immigrant ELLs,' and 'refugee ELLs.' During the initial filtering, articles that did not fit within the scope of PK-12 ELE in the US or equity and excellence in ELE in the US were removed from the dataset (e.g., adult ELE, ELE outside of the US). We also noticed that several articles had been repeated or reprinted, and these duplicates were similarly removed.

After refining the dataset, 1012 articles remained. The research team used KM+ (Knowledge Matrix Plus) to extract keywords from the 1012 articles. KM+ is a software program that supports data processing through data reduction, expansion, and noun extraction (KM+, n.d.). KM+ extracted keywords from the 1012 papers. The original keywords were refined through the integration of synonyms and the combination of conceptually similar terms, resulting in thirty-seven keywords, which were then organized into six keycodes. Table 2 shows the six keycodes with the corresponding 37 keywords.

**Table 2.** Six keycodes and thirty-seven keywords were extracted by KM+

<b>Keycodes</b>	Equal Opportunity vs. Equity	Funds of Knowledge	RLC* Responsive Teaching	Bi/Multilingualism	[Cognitive] Teaching Strategies	Translanguaging Content-Teaching Pedagogies
	Equal opportunity	Linguistic Diversity	RLC responsive teaching	Bilingualism	Cognitive Strategies	Communication Strategies
	EL's English proficiency	Race	Culturally Responsive Teaching	Multilingual Education	Reading Strategies	Culturally Responsive Teaching
<b>Keywords</b>	LEP (limited English proficiency)	Opportunity	Linguistically Responsive Teaching	Multiculturalism	Assessment	Translanguaging
	segregation	Identity/Racial Identity	Dual Language Education	Multilingualism	Teaching Strategies	Identity/ Racial Identity
	Discrimination	Cultural Backgrounds/ Education	Multicultural Approach	Monolingualism	Achievement	Social Context
	Equality	Language Development		Bilingual Education	Writing Skills/ Strategies	Content-Based Instruction
					NCLB**	Community-Based Programs

**Note.** RLC\* refers to 'racially, linguistically, and culturally'. NCLB\*\* refers to no child left behind.

### Identifying Three Phases of ELE Trends in the US from the 1960s to the 2020s

Once articles were identified, the research team read the abstracts chronologically; they met regularly and discussed topics, research methods, and any contributions to the field of ELE regarding equity and excellence. Initially, the team found that before the 1960s, ELE in the US was largely in a 'swim or sink' situation; there was little to no effort to provide any service to help EBLs improve their English and home language proficiency. As the research team continued to review the articles and discuss the ELE trends over the last sixty years, they found emerging topics that were categorized into three phases. What follows is a description of the ELE research topics that emerged in each of the three phases.

#### Phase 1.

Phase 1 (1960-1999) was characterized by an emerging awareness of the remedial service that schools provided for EBLs rather than 'wait to see them sink.' Multilingualism and multiculturalism in the US education system began to receive greater attention in 1968 with the Bilingual Education Act (BEA) (Bankston & Zhou, 1996). The BEA of 1968 marked a major shift in terms of awareness and tolerance towards EBLs (Bankston & Zhou, 1996), but the BEA did not provide specific guidance regarding services for EBLs. It wasn't until the *Lau v Nichols*

decision in 1974, which mandated affirmative remedial efforts, that special attention was paid to linguistically deprived San Francisco Chinese children. Equal opportunity education became a powerful educational slogan throughout the 1970s and 80s. However, in Phase 1, language minority communities were not given a voice or ownership in policy making and the instructional implementation process; the focus was more on policies and laws for the sake of the lawmakers rather than EBLs and their families. The remedial service in Phase 1 was derived from a deficit view of EBLs, in which EBLs' racial, linguistic, and cultural assets were not valued and ignored (Bankston & Zhou, 1996).

### *Phase 2.*

We identified 2000-2007 as Phase 2, when the status of bilingual education in the United States remained complicated and seemingly contradictory. During this period, however, the use of EBLs' home languages gained recognition as a stepping stone toward raising their English language proficiency. Nevertheless, once EBLs acquired the English language, home language use was abandoned, further perpetuating English-only education, i.e., transitional bilingual education (TBE); this practice continued throughout this phase. Throughout Phase 2, some states established English-only policies (e.g., Arizona and Massachusetts) while others adopted dual language programs enhancing EBLs' English language acquisition rather than developing dual language proficiency. Research in Phase 2 was also largely impacted by No Child Left Behind (NCLB) enacted in 2002, which addressed EBLs' low English language proficiency as a problem inhibiting their ability to pass state content examinations. Research in this phase showed assimilationists' language ideologies (Evans & Hornberger, 2005) combined with test-based accountability (Kieffer et al., 2008) to solve the problem of EBLs' low English language proficiency. Under NCLB, all students were expected to meet or exceed the State's content standards. However, the research did not provide strong evidence of NCLB's impact on practicing racial and linguistic equity when educating EBLs.

### *Phase 3.*

Empirical research in Phase 3 (2008-2020) demonstrated a great shift towards validating and sustaining dual language immersion programs, multiliteracy, and translanguaging, giving voices and identities to EBLs and families (Maxwell, 2012). The deficit lens found in research from Phases 1 and 2 evolved into an asset-based perspective. During this phase, translanguaging appeared as an ELE teaching theory and a pedagogy (Li, 2018) that leveraged EBLs' various language repertoires and multimodalities as assets for content learning (Lewis et al., 2012; Fang & Liu, 2020) and a means to express their messages and identities in more fluid, complex, and comprehensive ways (Li, 2011, 2018; Pacheco & Smith, 2015).

In summary, research during Phase 1 (1968 -1999) focuses on remedial services for EBLs and on policy making for civil rights and equal opportunity rather than practicing equity in ELE in classroom settings. Phase 2 (2000-2008) centers on the contradiction introduced by dual language programs championing bilingualism while maintaining English as a preferred language to increase test accountability (Maxwell, 2012). Phase 3 (2009-2020) emphasizes raciolinguistic perspectives by enacting a multiliteracy and translanguaging stance and pedagogy to practice equity and excellence in ELE (Flores & Rosa, 2015; Li, 2018). Table 3 summarizes and illustrates the ELE trends in terms of equity and excellence through legal cases and acts in each of the three phases.

**Table 3.** Selective legal cases and acts on ELE in each of the three phases

Phases	Years and Laws	ELE Policies
Phase 1	1920s-1960s: "Swim-or-Sink"	Very few services, supports, or policies were available for EBLs.
	1964: Civil Rights Act	This act prohibits discrimination based on race, color, or national origin in the operation of all federally assisted programs.
	1968: Bilingual Education Act	The Bilingual Education Act formed the foundation of US policy for meeting the needs of EBLs, but it expired in 2002.
	1974: Lau v. Nichols & The Equal Opportunities Act (EEOA)	The ruling in Lau v Nicholas started providing the same education, which is not equal because language barriers prevent EBLs from accessing education programs and resources in English only. The EEOA stated that schools had to take appropriate action to overcome language barriers without explicit 'hows.'
	1981: Castañeda v Pickard	This case established a three-part test for determining if ELE programs are founded on 1) a research-based theory, 2) reasonable resources and staff, and 3) frequent and regular assessment with adjustments. However, it did not require districts to implement bilingual education programs or home language use.
	1982: Plyler v. Doe	Under the 14th Amendment of the U.S. Constitution, the State did not have the right to deny a free public education to undocumented immigrant children (Stewner-Manzanares, 1988).
Phase 2	2002: No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB)	The reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), initially enacted in 1965, provided funds for programs to improve outcomes for EBLs under Title III. NCLB emphasized accountability, requiring states to test all K-12 EBLs annually in 4 language modalities and comprehension across the core content areas with annual ACCESS test scores from 2003. English language development standards were also developed.
Phase 3	2015: Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)	The law allowed states to include vital information in the state content test so states could measure EBLs' progress toward the state content standards. State education agencies (SEA) were responsible for holding individual public schools accountable for implementing a LIEP (language instruction educational program) for their EBLs to meet the three criteria (i.e., Castañeda v Pickard Case) of the tests (ESSA, 2015).

Figure 1 below illustrates the ELE trends with the description in each of the three phases that helps understand how EBL teachers' deficit-oriented beliefs and/or ELE strategies (e.g., Phases 1 and 2) became asset-oriented (e.g., Phase 3).

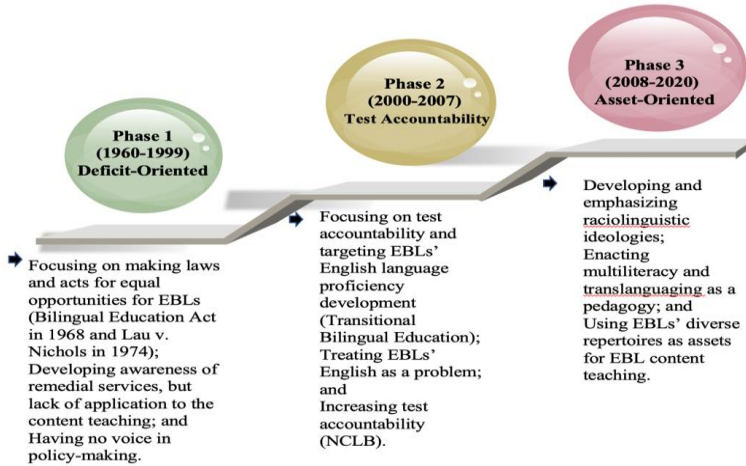


Figure 1. ELE trends and descriptions in each of the three phases

Data Selection Process

To begin our data selection process, we counted and separated the articles into each of the three phases. Among 1012 articles, more articles were published in Phase 3 ( $n = 753$ ) than in Phases 1 ( $n = 102$ ) and 2 ( $n = 157$ ) even though Phases 1 and 2 covered a longer period (47 years) than Phase 3 (13 years). We further refined the data by removing articles that did not address ELE inside the US, articles that did not deal with K-12, and those that were reprinted. It should be noted that the research team read the abstracts of all 1012 articles and met weekly to share insights, discuss questions, and determine whether specific articles should be included as part of the dataset. To conduct an in-depth analysis of the data, the research team decided to reduce the number of articles. After the team used the 37 keywords that were supposed to embrace racial and linguistic equity, we reduced the number of articles to 210 (Table 2). Following multiple iterations of reading and open coding the abstracts of these articles using the 37 keywords as a guide, combined with checking the frequency with which each article had been cited by other researchers, we selected thirty-two articles to explore and analyze in greater depth. Figure 2 illustrates the process of selecting the 32 articles for the final analysis in this LR study.

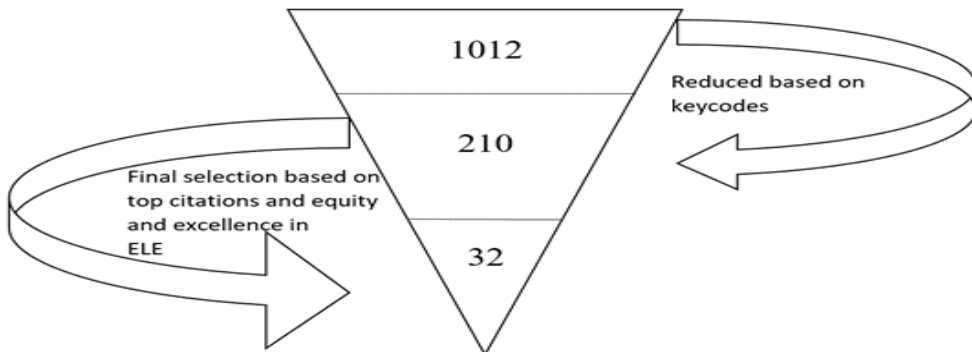


Figure 2. Data selection and analysis procedures



Using an LR as a research method (Torraco, 2005) requires researchers to identify patterns and themes from the selected publications. Three major components are also required to build LR as a viable method: “(i) planning, (ii) execution, and (iii) summarization/reporting” (Nakano & Muniz, 2018, p. 3). Many empirical research studies identified 20 to 35 articles for their in-depth analysis (Lucas et al., 2018; Nakano & Muniz, 2018; Villages et al., 2018). Therefore, in accordance with previous research, we chose eight articles for each of the four themes. Of the eight articles in each theme, we chose two for Phase 1, two for Phase 2, and four for Phase 3. The reason for choosing four articles in Phase 3 was to account for the unequal distribution of ELE publications with the majority in Phase 3. In total, we chose eight articles for Phase 1, eight for Phase 2, and sixteen for Phase 3. At the conclusion of the analysis, we looked for and used articles other than those selected to support the arguments and findings in each phase under each of the four themes.

A codebook was developed based on the four themes mentioned above. After developing the codebook, we conducted collaborative two-part analyses (Charmaz, 2014). Each researcher completed an in-depth reading of the full articles and an initial coding using the codebook. After the first analysis, we conducted a second level of analysis, drawing from the two-dimensional codebook; under each of the four themes, we sought keycodes and evidence from the selected articles for each of the three phases. The researchers met eight times, shared their analyses and the codebook, engaged in axial coding, agreed and disagreed about the results of the initial analysis, and revised the codebook accordingly (Charmaz, 2014). Appendix A shows a codebook sample that includes the two dimensions (the first table with a title, a year, author(s), a journal, (a) method(s), and a location of each article, and the second table with keycodes, page numbers, and excerpts from Theme 2, *Enacting EBLs’ Racial, Linguistic, and Cultural Repertoires*).

## Results

Results of the analyses were first categorized by each of the four themes to examine if they supported the research question, “*What were the emerging trends of PK-12 English language education in the US in terms of equity and excellence from the 1960s to the 2020s?*” Under each theme, we reported the findings in each of the three phases with the selected keycodes, narratives, and interpretations. The four emerging themes were: 1) Gaining Knowledge of EBLs in Local Contexts, 2) Enacting EBLs’ Racial, Linguistic, and Cultural repertoires, 3) Analyzing EBL Teachers’ Beliefs and Forming New Visions/Identity, and 4) Deepening and Extending Content Knowledge of Curriculum and Instruction for EBLs.

### Theme 1: Gaining Knowledge of EBLs in Local Contexts

#### *Phase 1. EBLs’ English Language as a Problem*

Two articles were identified and analyzed for the theme of gaining EBLs’ funds of knowledge (FoK) in Phase 1: one quantitative study and one qualitative case study (Collier, 1987; Schumann, 1986). The most prominent keycodes found in this phase were EBLs’ assimilation to the target language (e.g., English) and target culture (Schumann, 1986). Schumann’s (1986) qualitative case study used an acculturation model emphasizing that EBLs’ assimilation to the target culture would be a success indicator even though EBLs had to give up their own “lifestyles and values and adopt those of the target language group” (Schumann, 1986, p. 381).

Collier's (1987) quantitative study with 1548 EBLs reported that their English language proficiency was a problem that produced a significant challenge to be successful in US schools. Collier(1987) mentioned that there was no shortcut to acquiring English and called attention to contributing factors in the speed of language acquisition, such as age at arrival, prior education, and length of residence (e.g., EBLs' FoK).

Schumann (1986) argued that acculturation mattered, and EBLs should change their sociopolitical beliefs and stances brought from their native countries and that they need to be assimilated into target cultures since sociocultural factors impacted EBLs' English language acquisition (Schumann, 1986). Both of these studies approached ELE from a language-as-a-problem orientation with English acquisition as the priority (Ricento, 2005). Research in Phase 1 weighed more on assimilation to the target culture and language rather than the integration of the multiple languages and cultures representing a true sense of equity.

### *Phase 2. EBLs' Funds of Knowledge (FoK)*

The two selected articles in Phase 2 from Theme 1 showed a shift in keycodes from the perspective of EBLs' English language proficiency as a problem: they saw EBLs' language, culture, and experiences as interwoven with their content learning contexts rather than unidirectional assimilation, i.e., target language and culture (Ricento, 2005). Phase 2 research began to recognize EBLs' funds of knowledge (FoK) as contributing factors to their learning outcomes. Luykx et al. (2007), for example, examined how science assessments assumed a shared understanding of EBLs' backgrounds, such as their linguistic and cultural FoK, which might be different from mainstream students; these FoK must be taken into consideration when preparing to deliver and assessing them. Phase 2 research's focus was not on EBLs' low English language proficiency as a problem as was the research focus of Phase 1 but broached on the issue of equity. From their research on elementary science assessment, Luykx et al. (2007) reported:

... the cultural, linguistic, and lingua-cultural influences evident both in test items and in students' responses reveal how scientific information is inevitably embedded within interpretive frameworks. (p. 917)

It was interesting that Luykx et al. (2007) mentioned that "children's own FoK may lead them away from, rather than toward, the intended interpretations of test items" (p. 917) due to the teachers' oppression against using EBLs' FoK as an asset for content learning. ELE research in Phase 2 showed awareness of EBLs' FoK but did not present empirical evidence on how teachers incorporated their students' racial, linguistic, and cultural assets in their content teaching.

On the other hand, Keis (2006) demonstrated the usefulness of connecting children's literature that represented EBLs' families and communities' FoK in helping to give a voice to immigrant children in schools (Keis, 2006). Keis described a monthly family literacy program that introduced children's books related to difficult topics that were common to participants of the program (e.g., racism, immigration, discrimination). Parents in the study reported that they wanted the teachers to use such literature to broach difficult topics with their children and even counteract some of the topics their children might have experienced at school.

However, what Keis (2006) failed to demonstrate was how the literacy practices were incorporated into the school curriculum apart from the specifically designed family literacy

program. Even so, Keis (2006) concluded, “If we are to provide a truly meaningful and relevant education, we must recognize the talents and knowledge that exists in these families and make them an integral part of our curriculum” (p. 19). Even though the ELE research in Phase 2 showed awareness of EBLs’ FoK as an asset, there was no strong empirical evidence that teachers incorporated EBLs’ FoK into their school content curriculum and instruction.

### *Phase 3. True Sense of Equity*

Within Theme 1, there was a clear shift in the ELE trend in Phase 3. We analyzed four articles (Callahan et al., 2010; Han, 2012; Hoover & DeBettencourt, 2018; Villegas & Lucas, 2002), including an article by Villegas and Lucas even though it was originally published in 2002. Villegas and Lucas’ (2002) article was used as a reference in Hoover and DeBettencourt’s publication in 2018. In addition, their argument aligned with the trends of incorporating EBLs’ multiple identities and repertoires into content teaching.

Some examples of the ELE pedagogies during this phase were using multilingual texts and bilingual resources, valuing racial, linguistic, and cultural capitals as assets, and promoting EBLs’ linguistic, family, and cultural FoK as one of the success indicators in school. Research in Phase 3 no longer considered EBLs’ low language proficiency as a problem like Phase 1, nor did it solely assess their content language acquisition on the standards established by states as in Phase 2. Rather, researchers in this phase investigated how ELE practices overlooked the disadvantages that EBLs had to deal with. Callahan et al. (2010), for example, questioned how the label of ‘ESL’ adversely demarcated EBLs’ academic success; they argued that many researchers did not consider the multitude of intersecting factors that similarly impacted educational outcomes such as poverty and immigrant status by “inadvertently [limiting their] access to academically rigorous courses” (p. 4). They further argued that the labels imposed upon EBLs by educational institutions had impacts on their educational outcomes and opportunities (Callahan et al., 2010). Han’s (2012) data from a longitudinal early childhood context reported on components of “the school environment” other than “stand-alone bilingual programs,” (p. 301), which might impact EBLs’ success. Han (2012) indicated that bilingual programs needed to be “packaged with an effective school model that maintained high academic expectations” for EBLs and encouraged their “parental involvement and demonstrated clear support for bilingualism and multiculturalism.” (p. 301). Along those lines, Hoover and DeBettencourt (2016) posited that language had to be “interconnected with culture ... [and] bring their cultural values, teachings, and heritages that directly affect teaching, learning, and assessment.” (in Hoover & DeBettencourt, 2018, p. 179). Villegas and Lucas demonstrated the role of language and culture and how EBL educators need to be prepared:

... the role of culture and language in how learners think, learn, and communicate. Educators must be taught how students’ primary language and cultural backgrounds are seen as assets to learning and must be taught how to actively collaborate with students’ families and communities. (in Hoover & DeBettencourt, 2018, p. 186)

The results in Theme 1 showed the shift from assimilating to the target language and culture (Phase 1, deficit-oriented perspective) to incorporating EBLs’ FoK (Phase 2, not integrated into content teaching yet), and in Phase 3, valuing EBLs’ language and culture as assets where teachers were encouraged to work with EBLs and families collaboratively.

## Theme 2: Enacting on EBLs' Racial, Linguistic, and Cultural Repertoires

### Phase 1. Devaluing EBLs' Home Language Repertoires

A major keycode in this phase was teachers' devaluing EBLs' home language repertoires in transitional bilingual education (TBE) programs, as demonstrated by the two analyzed articles (Auerbach, 1993; Rossell & Baker, 1996). Phillipson (1992) argued, "the dominance of English was asserted and maintained by the establishment and continuous reconstruction of structural and cultural inequalities between English and other languages." (p. 47). Historically, "monolingual approaches to the teaching of English have by no means always been the norm to draw on their language resources and strengths" (Auerbach, 1993, p. 12), which was determined by political rather than pedagogical factors (Baron, 1990; Crawford, 1991; Daniels, 1990). In many TBE programs in this phase, EBLs' home language was "used only in the rare instances when the student cannot complete a task without it" (Baron, 1990; Crawford, 1991; Daniels, 1990). The issue of home language use was "a source of classroom tension, feeling that it wasted time and created bad feelings" (Auerbach, 1993, p. 23). In TBE of Phase 1, students were taught to read and write in the home language, and English was initially taught for only a small portion of the day. As EBLs progressed in English, the amount of instructional time in the home language was "reduced, and English increased until they were proficient enough in English to join the regular instructional program" (Rossell & Baker, 1996, p. 10). EBLs' home languages were treated as a temporary or remedial resource; educators in this phase did not value non-English languages as assets or resources for teaching content to EBLs.

### Phase 2. Raciolinguistic Profiling Toward EBLs

The emerging keycode from the two articles was: *racialized and marginalized attitudes toward EBLs' raciolinguistic repertoires* (Kubota & Lin, 2006; Tong et al., 2008). Kubota and Lin (2006) described:

... how students of color in schools in North America are often labeled as lacking culturally, socially, linguistically, or academically and often excluded from having mainstream educational experiences because of the gate-keeping and tracking function that ESL has as an institutional label because of the unwillingness among mainstream teachers and students to socially engage with ESL students in a meaningful way. (p. 481)

In Tong et al.'s (2008) quantitative study with elementary EBLs, the treatment group with structured instructional strategies and bilingual education showed more academic improvement compared to the control group. Tong et al. (2008) reported that "learning in L1 is not detrimental to the learning of L2" (p. 1036).

Although Kubota and Lin (2006) made strong arguments calling attention to the marginalization of diverse populations, their article lacked empirical data to support racialized or raciolinguistic profiling toward EBLs. Tong et al.'s study (2008), on the other hand, stayed at the level of satisfaction in terms of using EBLs' diverse language repertoires rather than using them with a more asset-based perspective. The research in this phase still treated EBLs' home language and culture as temporary resources but not as significant assets. Furthermore, the racialized attitude towards EBLs has not yet been measured with empirical data in this phase.

### *Phase 3. Communicative Repertoires and Translanguaging*

The articles in Phase 3 (de Jong & Howard, 2009; Hornberger & Link, 2012; Otheguy et al., 2015; Li, 2018) showed three emerging keycodes: *integrated two-way immersion education*, *communicative repertoires*, and *translanguaging*. De Jong and Howard (2009) indicated that, unlike other bilingual programs such as TBE in Phases 1 and 2, two-way immersion (TWI) programs in Phase 3 focused on “enrichment rather than remedial, compensatory programs” (p. 84). Hornberger and Link’s (2012) ethnographic study recognized EBLs’ communicative repertoires as “the wide range of varieties of Spanish and English that Beatriz [their study participant] uses for different functions throughout multiple activities over the course of her day” (p. 241). Otheguy et al.’s (2015) study extended the role of translanguaging to enhance EBLs’ content learning against English-only, emphasizing various linguistic repertoires in lexical and structural features. Li’s (2018) article introduced transcending translanguaging as a bridge between named languages, language varieties, and other language semiotic systems. Li (2018) described translanguaging as an effective pedagogy in a variety of educational contexts:

... where the school language or the language of instruction is different from the languages of the learners. By deliberately breaking the artificial and ideological divides between indigenous versus immigrant, majority versus minority, and target versus mother tongue languages, the translanguaging pedagogy also helps to re-examine an age-old question of the role of L1 in second, foreign, and additional language teaching and learning. (pp. 15-16)

The data from Theme 2 illustrated a shift across the three phases: starting in Phase 1 with remedial use of EBLs’ home language and devaluing of their racial, linguistic, and cultural repertoires, to ‘somewhat’ acknowledging the benefits of the one-way bilingual program in Phase 2 but lacking an asset-based mindset. Finally, in Phase 3, there was a shift to incorporating EBLs’ racial, linguistic, and cultural repertoires into content teaching (e.g., TWI).

## **Theme 3: Analyzing EBL Teachers' Beliefs and Forming New Visions/Identity**

### *Phase 1. Teachers' Theoretical Beliefs with Deficit Raciolinguistic Ideologies*

We analyzed two articles (Carranza & Bouchard, 1975; Johnson, 1992): One quantitative study and one qualitative study with rural and suburban teachers. The emerging keycodes were: *teachers' theoretical beliefs* and *deficit language ideologies toward EBLs' home language use*. Carranza and Bouchard’s (1975) quantitative study demonstrated that teachers gave a positive value to students who had “the ability to speak English, and possession of English-language skills becomes a means to achieve better education, better employment, and a higher income.” (p. 83). This type of orientation might generate strong linguistic pressure on EBLs from teachers to acquire the English language. Furthermore, due to the fear that using Spanish might delay EBLs’ acquisition of English, some Spanish-speaking parents did not allow their children to speak Spanish at home (Barker, 1947; Krear, 1969). Johnson’s (1992) qualitative study with thirty in-service teachers reported that instructional practices were “found to be consistent with teachers' theoretical beliefs” (p. 84). In Phase 1, the research discussed teachers’ ‘theoretical’ beliefs with deficit-oriented, raciolinguistic ideologies focusing on English language acquisition.

### *Phase 2. Teachers' Recognition of EBLs' Home Language as an Asset*

From the selected articles that were analyzed (Escamilla, 2006; Jiménez, 2000), the emerging keycodes were: *teachers' negative and positive beliefs and recognition of home languages*. Jiménez's (2000) qualitative study reported that successful "teachers recognized [EBLs] as fully competent speakers of a particular variety of Spanish, which helped avoid many of the difficulties associated with a deficit perspective" (p. 977). Jiménez's (2000) study with the elementary Spanish-speaking EBLs used the work of Moll et al. (1980) in which "they encouraged Latina/o students to use Spanish in their discussions while reading English text, a clear and successful example of how a formative experiment can foster student success" (Jiménez, 2000, p. 980). Using Spanish and English, EBLs showed "higher levels of participation, more sophisticated and more extended discourse, and more complex forms of thinking as a result" in the dual language code-mixing contexts (Jiménez, 2000, p. 980). Unlike Jiménez (2000), Escamilla's (2006) qualitative study on assessments with elementary Latino EBLs found that teachers' deficit beliefs were associated with assessment outcomes and were further considered as "a result of interference or negative transfer from Spanish to English." (p. 2342). Escamilla (2006) argued that "all teachers had perceptions that [negative] interference was a problem in the writing development of these children (p. 2345).

EBL teachers' vision and beliefs in Phase 2 challenged their deficit-oriented preconceptions of EBLs' multilingual identities. Researchers warned that EBL teachers' deficit-oriented beliefs on the negative interference from Spanish to English could be a major problem for EBLs in improving their biliteracy development.

### *Phase 3. Translanguaging as an Integrating Tool to Practice Equity*

Four articles (Flores, 2017, 2020; Flores & Rosa, 2015; Johnson, 2012) were analyzed, and the emergent key code in Phase 3 was *subjugating a minority group while privileging the mainstream group*. Johnson's (2012) three-year ethnographic study in four schools reported that educational language policies across the United States became "increasingly restrictive – to such an extent that, in many states, languages other than English were considered 'forbidden' in public schools" (p. 53), even if educational policies provided a space "to satisfy the needs of the district's high number of Spanish speaking students" (p. 71). Johnson (2012) concluded that the district's official policy document was difficult to understand and laden with contradictions. "Submitting the proper paperwork and keeping current with accreditation requirements is a priority, but how the 'official' policy translates into services is hard to describe" (p. 66).

In 2015, Flores and Rosa (2015) introduced raciolinguistic ideologies by emphasizing the listening subjects and undoing the notion of appropriateness regarding named languages and language varieties. Flores and Rosa questioned the underlying assumptions about the discourse of 'appropriateness' that:

Involve the conceptualization of standardized linguistic practices as objective sets of linguistic forms that are understood to be appropriate for academic settings. In contrast, we seek to highlight the racializing language ideologies through which different racialized bodies come to be constructed as engaging in appropriate academic linguistic practices. (p. 150)

Flores and Rosa (2015) explicitly critiqued the focus on the speaking subject rather than the listening subject in appropriateness-based models of language education. "Conceptions of accent in the U.S. context demonstrate the ways that listening subjects systematically perceive

some linguistic practices and ignore others" (Flores & Rosa, 2015, p. 152). Flores (2017) argued that teachers' raciolinguistic ideologies "co-constructed language and race in ways that overdetermined Latino students to be linguistically deficient in ways that are unrelated to empirical language practices" (p. 76). Flores (2020) later called EBLs 'language architects' who could co-construct and practice their language repertoires through translanguaging.

As the results of Themes 1 and 2 demonstrated, the results of Theme 3 also showed the shifts from Phase 1 to 3, from theoretical, deficit-oriented beliefs toward EBLs (Phase 1), to 'somewhat' valuing their home language repertoires but still with deficit-oriented beliefs (Phase 2), and finally to undoing teachers' racialized beliefs toward EBLs' assets (Phase 3).

#### **Theme 4: Deepening and Extending Content Knowledge of Curriculum and Instruction**

##### *Phase 1. Deficit-Oriented Attitude and Low Expectations toward EBLs*

The Phase 1 articles for Theme 4 (Brown & Perry, 1991; Cohen & Swain, 1976) revealed emerging keycodes: *low expectations toward EBLs*, *no home language use*, and *semantic processing method for vocabulary learning*. Cohen and Swain's quantitative study reported that teachers' expectations for EBLs were lower mainly because of the perceived inferiority of their English use. Cohen and Swain (1976) stated:

Mexican American teachers had *lower expectations* for the academic success of Mexican American pupils than for Anglos, maybe due to their imperfect English. ... There was little effort to provide reading or subject matter instruction in the students' home languages. (p. 46)

Furthermore, efforts to provide home language support for EBLs were nonexistent. Brown and Perry's (1991) study compared three teaching strategies for EBLs, and the results showed that "semantic processing methods demonstrated beneficial effects over long periods" (p. 659). However, Brown and Perry (1991) did not explore how home language and culture were used in the semantic processing methods; home language and culture still stayed as a remedial service rather than an equity-based strategy to help EBLs deepen their content learning.

##### *Phase 2. Emphasizing Decoding and Concept Mapping as Learning Strategies*

The emerging keycodes in this phase were: *developing decoding skills*, *providing supplemental reading instruction*, and *using concept mapping* as meaningful learning tools/strategies for EBLs (Chularut & DeBacker, 2004; Gunn et al., 2000). Gunn et al.'s (2000) quantitative study found that EBLs "who received supplemental instruction performed significantly better on oral reading fluency than did those who did not receive supplemental instruction" (p. 101). Similarly, Chularut and DeBaker (2004) indicated success with the cognitive approach to decoding skills and concept mapping.

However, the research in this Phase did not deal with an in-depth investigation of EBLs' identities in terms of their racial, linguistic, and cultural FoK. Research in Phase 2 focused on skill-based cognitive methodologies rather than valuing EBLs' home languages and racial and cultural FoK, which could have been helpful in preparing and delivering meaningful and equity-based content instruction.

### *Phase 3. EBLs' Home Language Use and Sheltered Instruction*

The four articles from Phase 3 (García & Gaddes, 2012; Peercy, 2011; Short et al., 2011; Song, 2016) revealed the keycodes: *EBLs' home language use for academic literacy development, explicit and inquisitive reading strategies, sheltered instructions, and linguistically and culturally responsive teaching with authentic texts*. Short et al.'s (2011) quantitative study revealed that "treatment teachers incorporated more features of sheltered instruction than comparison teachers" (p. 370) using content and language objectives and evidence-based assessments. Song's (2016) qualitative study reported Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocols (SIOP) and coaching as a PD tool to measure one urban-like district's secondary teacher attitudes toward EBLs. The results showed that most of the participating teachers perceived that "they improved their instructional strategies for EBLs and attributed this improvement to SIOP and guided coaching" (Song, 2016, p. 767). Most of the participating in-service teachers in this study considered their roles for EBLs positively and attributed their attitude change and EBL teaching strategies to PD training.

García and Gaddes' (2012) writing workshop with Latina/o teens indicated that EBLs responded better to culturally relevant authentic texts. Furthermore, engaging with culturally relevant texts allowed participants to incorporate their cultural identities into the production of texts. Peercy (2011) likewise reported the importance of using EBLs' home language as a "support in Spanish during class" (p. 342). An example of an explicit and inquisitive reading strategy came from an instance where an instructor was teaching a new term, 'Bunsen burner' - a burner named after Robert Bunsen. The instructor asked, "What's a Bunsen burner?" No student responded. So, she elaborated, "You burn things with it in the chemistry lab. I think you might be using it tomorrow" (Peercy, 2011, p. 338). In this way, the students were ready to meet this new word, "Bunsen", which was somebody's last name that had little to do with the chemistry content.

The results from Theme 4 showed a shift in teachers' attitudes and their curriculum and instructional practices. In Phase 1, they had low expectations and deficit-oriented attitudes towards EBLs. Teachers in Phase 2 progressed to cognitive teaching strategies such as decoding and concept mapping skill development without incorporating any racial, linguistic, or cultural equity. Finally, in Phase 3, they demonstrated the importance of racially, linguistically, and culturally responsive and reflective content curriculum and instructional practices (e.g., translanguaging as a pedagogy).

### **Discussion**

This study examined how PK-12 ELE trends have evolved in the US in terms of equity and excellence from the 1960s to the 2020s by using an LR as a research method. While reviewing the abstracts of the journal articles ( $n = 1012$ ) on equity and excellence in the EBLs' ELE, three phases appeared with certain trends: Phase 1 (1960-1999) focusing remedial services for ELE with deficit perspectives, Phase 2 (2000-2007) recognizing the importance of using EBLs' home language but as a tool to improve English language proficiency and their standardized test results, and Phase 3 (1008-2020) validating EBLs' identities, home language use or translanguaging, and cultures (Lewis et al., 2012; Li, 2011; Otheguy et al., 2015).

It was interesting to see that research in Phase 1 focused on making laws and acts for equal opportunities, such as the Bilingual Education Act in 1968, *Lau and Nichols* and the *Equal*



*Education Opportunity Act* in 1974, and *Castañeda v Pickard's Case* in 1981, which established three criteria on how ELE programs should be founded - research-based, meaningful resources and staff, and frequent assessments with adjustments. However, none of the laws and acts made in Phase 1 were applied to developing the ELE curriculum to practice equity and excellence. These acts and laws did not require districts to implement bilingual education programs or incorporate EBLs' home languages (Table 3).

In Phase 2 (2000-2007), not many laws and policies were made, with the exception of NCLB in 2002. In this phase, some districts adopted one-way dual language immersion programs (Evans & Hornberger, 2005; Kieffer et al., 2008), but their priority was to improve EBLs' English language proficiency so they could improve state assessments (Evans & Hornberger, 2006). Phase 3 (2008-2020) did not claim any ELE-related laws or policies except the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA, 2015). This act allowed states to be responsible for holding districts accountable based on *Castañeda v Pickard's* three criteria to measure EBLs' educational programs. This was the phase when research dealt with equity and excellence in ELE by introducing two-way dual language programs, translanguaging design, stance, and pedagogy, raciolinguistic ideologies, which had EBLs at the center as language architects (Flores, 2020).

Another interesting phenomenon was that there were more ELE articles published in Phase 3 ( $n = 753$ ) over 13 years compared to a total of 258 articles from Phases 1 ( $n = 102$ ) and 2 ( $n = 157$ ) spanning 47 years. This could be interpreted as authentic, equity-based research on ELE had been ignored until Phase 3 when asset-based perspectives on EBLs' racial, linguistic, and cultural repertoires started to be valued in ELE even though this shift is still in progress (Kubota & Lin, 2006).

One research question guided this study: *What were the emerging trends of PK-12 ELE in the US in terms of equity and excellence from the 1960s to the 2020s?* We integrated Feiman-Nemser's fourteen central tasks into the four themes for this study: 1) Teachers' Gaining Knowledge of EBLs in Local Contexts, 2) Teachers' Enacting EBLs' Racial, Linguistic, and Cultural Repertoires, 3) Teachers' Analyzing & Forming Beliefs, New Visions, Ideologies, and Identities, and 4) Teachers' Deepening and Extending Knowledge of Content Curriculum and Instruction for EBLs (See Table 1).

The findings showed shifts in ELE trends from Phase 1 to Phase 3. In Theme 1, *Gaining knowledge in local contexts*, the data on ELE moved its focus from deficit-oriented perspectives (Collier, 1987; Schumann, 1986) in Phase 1 to interweaving EBLs' language, culture, and experiences in local contexts in Phase 2 (Luykx et al., 2007), and finally integrating EBLs' linguistic, family, and cultural FoK in Phases 3 (Callahan et al., 2010; Han, 2012; Hoover & Barletta, 2016). In Theme 2, *Enacting EBLs' racial, linguistic, and cultural repertoires*, the shift occurred from devaluing EBLs' home language repertoires in Phase 1 (Phillipson, 1988, 1992; Rossell & Baker, 1996) to normalizing and adopting monolingual approaches (Auerbach, 1993), and maintaining racialized and marginalized attitudes toward EBLs' linguistic repertoires (Kubota & Lin, 2006) in Phase 2, and ultimately to integrating EBLs' racial, communicative and linguistic repertoires, and translanguaging in Phase 3 (Li, 2018; Otheguy et al., 2015).

Theme 3, *Analyzing teachers' beliefs and new visions*, shifts from generating theoretical beliefs and deficit language ideologies in Phase 1 (Carranza & Bouchard, 1975; Johnson, 1992) to

recognizing teachers' beliefs and EBLs' home languages (Jiménez, 2000) while preserving deficit beliefs (Escamilla, 2006) in Phase 2, and to culminating with resistance towards raciolinguistic ideologies where the conceptions of 'accent' and the notion of 'appropriate' language are challenged in US contexts in Phase 3 (Flores & Rosa, 2015). In Theme 4, *Deepening and extending knowledge of curriculum and content for EBLs*, the shifts were from low expectations, English-only, no home language use (Cohen & Swaine, 1976) in Phase 1, then developing decoding skills, supplemental reading instruction, and concept mapping (Brown & Perry, 1991) in Phase 2, and to arriving at adopting multi-language use, culturally, and racially responsive teaching strategies, and explicit and inquisitive strategies in Phase 3 (Percy, 2011).

### Conclusion

The purpose of this investigation was to dive deeper into English language education in the US for the last sixty years in terms of its equity and excellence for EBLs using an LR as a research method. Using an LR, we were able to explore and choose the research articles and analyze them to measure the shifts of the ELE trends in each of the three phases under each of the four emerging themes. This study, with the limitation of a rather small number of articles ( $n = 32$ ), may contribute to understanding the shifts of the ELE trends from remedial service (deficit-oriented perspectives, one-way TBE, and policy-making focus) to valuing and applying EBLs' diverse linguistic and cultural repertoires to the content curriculum and instructional practices.

We selected, mapped, and assessed a body of literature and research articles (Nakano & Muniz, 2018) to support and justify our one research question (Snyder, 2019) on shifts toward equitable and excellent ELE trends in the US. An LR made it possible for researchers to collect existing and new ideas from the literature and formulate new ideas or suggestions based on the findings (Torraco, 2005). In LR, researchers purposely select the sample data by exploring and choosing diverse contexts (e.g., time, subjects, locations, methods, and findings) for logical and cohesive interpretations and assertions (Popay et al., 2006).

### Implications

Through the literature review (LR) and analysis, we were able to focus on a larger time, which was instrumental in developing the overarching themes and trends in US PK-12 ELE education. This line of research, thus, created further avenues for research and questions: *What were the driving factors (sociopolitical, legal, and academic) behind the research for each of the three phases this study identified? Why were they important?* Such questions can only be answered through continued investigation and literature reviews.

By exploring a sixty-year history of ELE trends in the US, this study contributes to how the 'Equal Opportunity Education Act (1974)' has impacted immigrant children's English language education. Using an LR as a research tool, especially in an emerging area of equity and excellence in ELE for multilingual learners, this study represents value-laden inquiry through the chronology of journal articles over sixty years. Literature reviews are valuable in light of the knowledge explosion and the consequent impossibility of reading everything. Those who would replicate this study need to understand the two major reasons for conducting a literature review: to conduct primary research themselves or as an end in itself (Mertens, 2019).

Researchers may need to further pursue their critical inquiry on equity for ELE so immigrant/refugee children can be granted freedom to use their racial, linguistic, and cultural repertoires as assets when learning new content concepts. Furthermore, this study can serve as a guide for continued research on equity and excellence for EBLs' English language education.

## Declarations

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## Orcid ID

Kim H. Song  <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-5228-0962>

Gregory Child  <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-1500-3872>

Jinsuk Lee  <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-4064-0606>

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