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LANGUAGE LITERACY AND FUNDS OF KNOWLEDGE: SOMALI REFUGEE WOMEN
IN CLARKSTON, GEORGIA

by

CASSIE D. LEYMARIE

Under the Direction of Gayle Nelson & Eric Friginal

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to investigate how Somali refugee women experience language and literacy in their community of Clarkston, Georgia, and to identify their funds of knowledge (Gonzales, Moll, & Amanti, 2005), or unseen practices. The aim of this investigation is to strengthen and challenge their current modes of language socialization and to combat negative discourses that represent them as ‘vulnerable victims and cunning crooks’ (Horst, 2006). Clarkston, Georgia was chosen by private resettlement agencies as a refugee resettlement site in the early 1990s. In Clarkston, although there are several refugee serving agencies that focus on refugee education and integration, many Somali refugee women are still facing obstacles during the process of language socialization. In order to investigate the language

socialization of Somali refugee women, a holistic case study was conducted. Participants included five Somali refugee women who were affiliated with one specific community of practice, a Somali-ethnic based community organization for refugees. Data collection involved my participant observation and field notes, interviews with the participants, and photographic documentation of the linguistic landscape (Landry & Bourhis, 1997) in Clarkston. Findings reveal the diverse language and literacy practices and language socialization pathways among participants, and shed light on some of the barriers to language socialization, including gender-based ideologies and textually-mediated social interactions, as well as some of the successful strategies they have used. In addition, the case of one exceptional Somali refugee woman, Mama Rita, presents funds of knowledge that may help enhance the language socialization of Somali refugee women and help to understand citizenship as practice rather than status.

INDEX WORDS: Literacy, Somali Refugees, Funds of Knowledge, Language Socialization, Linguistic Landscape, Discourse

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CASSIE D. LEYMARIE

A Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of

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Georgia State University

2014

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DEDICATION

To Mama, this is your dissertation, too.

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1 INTRODUCTION

In this dissertation, I investigate the language and literacy practices of Somali refugee women in Clarkston, Georgia in order to better understand how to strengthen or challenge the existing ways they are socialized to and through the use of language or their language socialization (Shiefflin & Ochs, 1986). I utilize existing theories of language, literacy, discourse, and funds of knowledge, in order to understand the dynamics of language socialization in a particular community of practice. Specifically, I investigate the language environment in Clarkston, Georgia; this part of the study was based upon the investigation of the linguistic landscape (Landry & Bourhis, 1997) of Clarkston and the case of Somali refugee women in a community of practice that I participate in. I employ a qualitative methodology combining longitudinal field notes, interviews, and visual documentation of language in order to investigate language, literacy, and funds of knowledge among Somali refugee women.

The study was carried out during my time volunteering with a Somali ethnic based organization whose mission is to help refugees with social and cultural adjustment services. This first chapter of the dissertation presents the background and problem that serves as the motivation for the study, states its purposes, and important terms that inform and orient the study. I conclude the chapter with a brief overview of the content of the dissertation.

1.1 Background of the Problem

Somali refugees began resettling in Clarkston in the early 1990s and despite a prominent community of refugees and refugee service providers they, along with other refugee groups, continue to face obstacles in integrating into and participating in their new community. Obstacles that inhibit individuals' integration include issues related to social and cultural adjustment and language learning and language socialization. Recent research on refugee education emphasizes the

need for culturally sensitive pedagogies (Watkins et al., 2012) as well as program policies that take into account the diverse needs of refugees (Cranitch, 2010) rather than a one size fits all approach to refugee education. In addition to linguistic and educational needs, refugees face negative perceptions based on popular national and local discourses that affect their daily life (Van Dijk, 2005).

Clarkston, Georgia's population is approximately 7,500, and it is located about ten miles northeast of Atlanta. The city was founded in the 1830s after it became a connection point for the Georgia Railroad rail line for merchants between Athens and Augusta, Georgia as well as various locations in South Carolina (City of Clarkston, 2013). In the 1980s Clarkston consisted of a 90 percent white-only population and that number dropped to less than 14 percent by 2010 (Rossenwasser, 2012). This demographic shift was spurred by private relief and resettlement agencies' decision in the early 1990s to render Clarkston a refugee resettlement site. Clarkston was chosen as a resettlement site by agencies based on factors such as the metro-Atlanta job market, highways, access to public transportation, and affordable housing. Since resettlement has occurred, the population has dramatically shifted from a small community consisting of mostly native born American citizens to a community in which half of the current residents are foreign-born. Somalis are not the only group that has resettled in Clarkston; others include Burmese, Bhutanese, Iraqi, Eritrean, and Sudanese populations. Today Clarkston is home to refugees from more than 40 nations (Rosenwasser, 2012). Clarkston can be characterized by what Vertovec (2007, 2010) has described as 'superdiverse'. Superdiversity is characterized by population complexity or the "dynamic interplay of variables among an increased number of new, small and scattered, multiple-origin, transnationally connected, socio-economically differentiated and legally stratified immigrants" (Vertovec, 2007, p. 1). Clarkston is an example of a complex small city with multiple

new, small, multiple-origin, transnationally connected, and socio-economically differentiated refugees.

1.2 Somalian History and Context

1.2.1 The Somali People

Putnam and Noor note that “while Somalis have traditionally fought among themselves, their greater identity as Somalis takes hold in front of strangers” (1993, p.2). In my experience working in the Somali immigrant and refugee communities, this statement holds true. A large portion of my curiosity toward Somali refugees lies in the paradox that exists in the Clarkston, among the Somali people. The existence of a tightly knit Somali community, one that seemingly is trying to unite its members, is even evident to outsiders. With the belief that it is best to understand community needs on a case by case basis through a very holistic and ecological look at a situation, this section aims to introduce a historical background of the Somali people. A description of Somalia, its culture and language, will be shared in the following sections to foreground the social and political occurrences that have led to the displacement and forced migration of the Somali people.

1.2.2 The Somali Nation

Somalia is located in East Africa, east of Ethiopia and bordering the Gulf of Aden and the Indian Ocean. Somalia’s population in 2011 is estimated to be 9,925, 640, though it is difficult to report exact figures due to the large amount of nomads, and displaced people, and refugees (1.1 million total, are estimated (CIA, 2011). The capital of Somalia, which is just slightly smaller than the state of Texas, is Mogadishu. Despite its lack of federal governance, Somalia has kept a healthy informal economy based on livestock, remittance companies, and telecommunications (CIA, 2011). The figure below shows a map of Somalia.



Figure 1.1, Map of Somalia (Source: wikimedia.org)

1.2.3 Somali Culture

Somalis are traditionally pastoralists and agropastoralists (80%), with remainder relying on urban jobs (small businesses, factories, etc.), and a very small amount of fishermen (CIA, 2011).

Males are generally the center of the family and community, at least in public. Women have a very important and productive economic role, normally farming or conducting business. Increasingly due to the civil war, droughts, and other harsh factors, women are becoming heads of the households (Putnam & Noor, 1993). Also, since the socialist revolution of the 1960s in Somalia, many more women are educated, though traditions such as female circumcision and waiting to have sex until marriage are widely practiced and valued (Putnam & Noor, 1993).

Somalis are organized ethnically by clans. Most Somalis belong to one of six clans: the Darod, Dir, Hawiye, Isaaq, Digil and Rahanweyn (Hesse, 2010). The first four, together are known as “Samalee” clans, and have similar culture and language. They make up about seventy five percent of ethnic Somalis and are historically known as nomads (Hesse, 2010). The Digil and Rahanweyn from Southern Somalia together comprise about twenty percent of ethnic Somalis. These two clans are known as farmers and pastoralists. They are known for assimilating members of other clans and even former slaves, unlike the Samalee clans whom are “borderline xenophobic” (Hesse, 2010, p.249).

Somalis will further divide themselves into subclans and beyond. Hesse illustrates the clan system this way:

Classification can even extend right down to the household level: if a man has more than one wife, for example, some in the household might stress the clans, subclans or sub-subclans associated with one maternal line over another. What is more, not all Somalis agree to which lineage lines other Somalis belong. Somali genealogy presents individuals with a seemingly infinite number of ways to affiliate with, or disassociate from, fellow Somalis- which may be the point. Whether one is looking at those in a day-to-day nomadic existence in a semi-desert, day-to-day existence in an urban area of a failed state, or day-to-day existence as newly-arrived émigré’s in a foreign land, Somalis need to have durable yet

malleable ways to negotiate limited opportunities and limited resources. The Somali lineage system accomplishes this. Whereas outsiders usually see an impractically complex, shifting system of genealogy, many Somalis see a practically complex, shifting one. (2010, p. 249)

It is important to note that Somalis historically divided themselves into *diya*, or ‘blood wealth’, groups which would deal with other *diya*-groups collectively whether they were indebted or owed a debt. Hesse describes these groups’ dynamics, in the scenario of a murder:

[...] in the case of murder, a killer is expected to have his *diya*-group deliver just compensation to the victim’s *diya*-group. Should compensation not be received, then the victim’s kin are expected to exact blood revenge not only on the perpetrator, but also on any member of the perpetrator’s lineage- which often touches off even more claims and counter-claims for *diya* payments or revenge. (2010, p. 251)

1.2.3.1 Somali language (and literacy)

The main language in Somalia is Somali, which belongs to the lowland eastern Cushitic group of languages (Putnam & Noor, 1993). There are two major Somali dialects and they are mutually intelligible. Many Somalis also speak Arabic, Italian, and English, and near the Kenyan borders some speak Swahili. Italian and English were primary languages of education during the colonial era. In 1972, the first ever Somali script was created using the Roman alphabet, leading to the spread of its use in the Somali government (Putnam & Noor, 1993). Many educated Somalis still do not have a strong grasp of the Somali orthographic system as they were educated in one of the colonial languages. The CIA World Factbook (2011) states that only 37.8% of Somalis over the age of 15 can read and write. The Somali oral culture is highly valued, as is one’s ways with words, no matter a person’s occupation. The prominence of the spoken word is evidenced by the Somali people’s frequent use of proverbs and parables.

Somali people are primarily Sunni Muslim, though some religious traditions are evident from folk rituals as well as Sufism, a thread of Islamic mysticism. A rise in fundamentalist Islamic beliefs is apparent among Somalis due to the many tragedies that have struck the Somali nation, and hence the visibility and pull of such groups as Al Shabaab, a clan-based insurgent and militant group (Putnam & Noor, 1993).

1.2.4 Somalia's Sociopolitical History

Some claim Somalis are descended from Arabians who settled on the Somali coast a thousand years ago. Somali origins are still contentious, though it is agreed upon that Somalis were in the region now known as Somalia some seven hundred years before their names were first recorded in the 15th century (Putnam & Noor, 1993). Somalia was known as the land of Punt by the ancient Egyptians and the presence of the Somali people has been fairly well documented. According to Putnam and Noor, documentation of the northern inhabitants' presence can be found in:

[...] *The Periplus of the Erythrean Sea*, an A.D. 60 Greek guide to sailors, and in Ptolemy's *Geography*, compiled between the 2nd and 5th centuries; contact with Egyptian, Phoenician, Persian, Greek, and Roman traders dates to this time. (2010, p.5)

By the 10th century Arab and Persian merchants had settled on the Somali coast and Chinese merchants were visiting and buying goods for the empire (Putnam & Noor, 1993). Somali people's conversion to Islam probably happened soon after in the 11th and 12th centuries with regional wars occurring among Muslims and Christians between the 13th and 16th centuries. Establishment of present day clans occurred by the 12th century though the southward movement of other clans continued until the 19th century (Putnam & Noor, 1993). The region that constitutes present day Somalia was set by colonial powers in the late 1800s after the introduction of the Suez Canal in

1969 (Putnam & Noor, 1993). The British occupied north central Somalia and the Italians occupied Southern Somalia.

The occupation of Somalia was more strategic than economic (Putnam & Noor, 1993). Only the Italians introduced western economic principles; they started banana and sugarcane plantations in the south which led to commercial agriculture. The British used their territories to supply meat to Aden (Putnam & Noor, 1993). One effect of colonialism was the emergence of a working class or salaried Somalis, that is, Somalis that attended colonial schools and worked in the colonial government (Putnam & Noor, 1993). The conflicts between European Allied and Axis powers were apparent in Somalia when in 1940 Italy invaded British Somaliland and forced the British out. The British retaliated a year later and retook their former territory as well as the Italian portions of Somalia. Putnam and Noor assert that it was during this decade that Somalis' awareness of the effects of colonialism became heightened, calling colonial powers into question while questioning the need for political and national unity. In November 1949 former Italian Somalia was lost by the British when it became a United Nations (U.N.) trust territory. With British Somaliland in the North and the U.N. Italian Somalia in the South, Somali nationalists worked until July 1st, 1960 when independence was granted and the two territories merged to form the Somali Republic. Putnam and Noor note that the next nine years were characterized by unity and democracy. Many Somalis participated in politics, none were excluded by background, and clan and regional differences were set aside for frequent multi-party elections. Hesse's characterization of the 1960s is slightly different and paints a picture of a Somalia whose clan differences were heightened by independence. Hesse maintains that

In what was to be a unified Somalia, northern clansmen from former British Somaliland (the Isaaq mostly, but also some Dir) came to fill most technical posts. Clansmen from former Italian Somaliland (mostly the Darod and Hawiye, at the exclusion of the

Rahanweyn and Digil) came to fill many political ones. Why this happened is sometimes attributed to the educational preparedness the British and Italians meted out before independence. (2010, p. 250)

In other words, educational differences were significant; in the north the British made education an elite privilege, while the Italians in the south introduced mass education. Hesse notes that “certain Somalis were better positioned to seize political and economic spoils, but almost always in the company of clansmen” (p.250). He asserts that if the government had not been so segregated, a united Somali nation may have succeeded.

The 1960s foreign relations in Somalia were characterized by military and economic aid from the Soviet Union, developmental assistance from China, and some developmental aid from the U.S. (Putnam & Noor, 1993). Ethiopia was the U.S.’s primary ally in the region at that time. Government powers were generally associated with clans and not the state. In October 1969 president Abdirashid Ali Shermaake (a Darod) was assassinated, the military took control and evolved into the well-known dictatorship of president Major-General Mohammed Siyaad Barre (also a Darod) (Hesse, 2010).

Barre attempted to eliminate clannism through ‘scientific socialism’ which was a mixture of ideas from Lenin, Marx, Mao, Mussolini, and the Qur’an. Under this ideology, which associated political parties as having specific clan affiliations, Barre’s Somali Revolutionary Socialist Party was the only party allowed in the nation (Hesse, 2010). In the same vein, Somalis were made to live in communes constituted of many different clans where they were not allowed to inquire under any circumstances into their fellow Somali’s lineage and were told to call each other ‘jaalle’ meaning comrade (Hesse, 2010). This is especially powerful because Somalis family and lineage are central to their identity. As Putnam & Noor highlight, “The importance of family is reflected in

the common Somali question, *tol maa tahay?* (What is your lineage?)” (1993). This question is asked in place of “where are you from?”

In a change of sentiment meant to strengthen his failing power, Barre completely changed his ways and began to emphasize clan differences. During this time, the *diya*-groups were still outlawed, even though Barre was trying to use a similar system to his favor. In 1991, the Barre regime collapsed when overthrown by opposition clans, which led to more clan fighting and a civil war; though none of the clan warlords were able to centralize their powers (Kimenyi, Maku, & Moyo, 2010). In May of the same year, Northern clans declared the region the independent Republic of Somaliland, which is a territory not recognized by any other government, but one working toward constitutional democracy (CIA World Factbook, 2010). The year after the regime collapse 45% of the Somali people were either displaced internally or fled the country, and the death of several hundred thousand Somalis due to conflict, disease, and famine occurred (Putnam & Noor, 1993). Also, it is estimated that one quarter of the population or 1.5 million people were subject to famine at that time (Putnam & Noor, 1993). This is the reality that led the first wave of Somali refugees to their eventual resettlement in Georgia, among other places.

The United States, under two UN Security Council Resolutions, led Operation Restore Hope on December 4th, 1992 near Mogadishu, the capital. This operation is well known as it resulted in the shooting down of two U.S. helicopters, the death of 18 U.S. soldiers, and a few dozen Pakistani Peacekeepers (Grünwald, 2012).

After the failure of Restore Hope, the country, including Mogadishu, was led by various opposing warlords, still none gained supreme power. Puntland, another semi-autonomous state not recognized by other governments despite its progress, declared independence from Somalia (Kimenyi et al., 2010). Two autonomously functioning regions now exist in Somalia.

In 2000, with the help of the international community and the Djibouti Arta Peace Conference, the Transitional National Government (TNG) was created, though its presence did not go beyond a few Mogadishu neighborhoods (Kimenyi et al, 2010). TNG failed due to various problems, and in 2004, the Transitional Federal Government (TFG) replaced it. According to Hesse (2010) the TFG's composition,

Reflecting the influence of clans, the TFG adopted [...] a '4.5 Formula'. Representation in the parliament is evenly divided amongst four main clan groups- the Darod, Hawiye, Dir and Digle-Mirifle- plus five minority constituencies. The minority constituencies include 'minor clans', non-ethnic Somali groups, members of the Somali diaspora, citizens' groups, and various Islamist organizations. In total the TFG's parliament has 550 representatives, having grown from an original 275 members (p. 252)

In 2006 the Islamic Courts Union (ICU), a "coalition of local Islamic leaders and business executives, promoting the primacy of Sharia law over clan laws" took control over the majority of the south and central regions and opened the Mogadishu port once again (Grunewald, 2012, p.S111). According to Grunewald, thereafter

Heavily-armed Ethiopian troops started to operate in the south and central regions in 2006. These were soon followed (in spring 2007) by troops sent by the African Union (AU) to confront the Muqawama (Resistance), composed of the ICU, nationalists, militias, and other movements opposed to the TFG. (2012, p. S111)

The Ethiopian leaders who sent the troops were in opposition to ICU as they claimed the Union had ties to Al Qaeda. ICU maintained control over much of the country until 2010, when Al Shabaab became a major ruling force (Putnam & Noor, 1993.). According to Hesse, at this time although it may have appeared to be Al Shabaab versus all other factions, in fact the loyalist to Al Shabaab

were really maintaining loyalty to members of their clans and subclans whom were operating within Al Shabaab (2010).

The year 2012 marked the transition into yet another governmental system, yet little has been written about its exact composition and procedures. Hassan Sheikh Mohamud has taken the head of the new parliament, with a six pillar plan that he promoted during his campaign and that he recently handed over to the UN as his strategy for changing and developing Somalia. According to Somali news network, *Garowe Online*, the policy is vague with little potential for solutions (2012). Today, U.S.'s involvement in Somalia is controversial. According to Scahill (2011) "US policy on Somalia has been marked by neglect, miscalculation and failed attempts to use warlords to build indigenous counterterrorism capacity, many of which have backfired dramatically." (2011, p.14). For example, there is uncertainty related to an alleged secret prison buried in the basement of Somalia's National Security Agency (NSA). It is the said headquarters for suspected Shabaab members caught in Kenya and internally, led by the United States Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) (Scahill, 2011). According to Scahill (2011), the US is reluctant to interact with Somali political leaders, and instead they are hiring former warlords and Al Shabaab members to work for them at their secret prison site at Somalia NSA. This meager assistance and contentious interaction of the US government is often criticized by Somalis and other commentators.

If the sociopolitical realities of Somalia aren't enough to cause forced migration, Somalia has recently experience drought and famine. In 2011, Somalia had a severe drought causing what UN officials called 'the worst humanitarian disaster in the world' (Muhumed & Van Kemenade, 2011). In the July report from Dadaab, Kenya, reporters noted yet another wave of Somalis were traveling into Dadaab refugee camps, now home to close to half a million refugees. The report told stories of families walking for weeks in order to find food and shelter. At the time of the report, 10,000 refugees were arriving to Dadaab seeking aid per week, which was six times the normal

amount. The drought in East Africa in the past year has forced migration yet again amongst the Somali people. It will take several years for these refugees just arriving in Dadaab to be resettled, though there is a great chance that many of these Somalis will also eventually be resettled in Clarkston, justifying the need for resettlement reform even more.

1.2.5 Somali Refugees

In the 2012 report on the state of the world's refugees, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees characterizes Somalia as a microcosm of the state of the world's refugees (United Nations High Commission for Refugees [UNHCR], 2012). They assert that the crisis in Somalia and among Somali people represents the entire range of issues plaguing refugees and that the unpredictable nature of Somali conflict coupled with drought has severely strained host countries and resulted in few durable solutions for Somali refugees. Somalis fled their native lands in response to a civil war which broke out after the collapse of General Mohammed Siyaad Barre's regime in 1991. In 1992, the year after the regime collapsed, 45% of the Somali people were displaced and many others died due to the conflict, disease, and famine that occurred (Putnam & Noor, 1993). The region has since been characterized by clan warfare, military activity, and political conflict, and dozens of failed peace initiatives and external interventions (UNHCR, 2012). In 2011, a drought once again displaced a large number of Somalis, creating yet another wave of migration (Muhumed & Van Kemenade, 2011).

At the end of 2011 there were approximately one million Somali refugees registered in countries in the Horn of Africa: 520,000 in Kenya, 202,000 in Yemen, 186,000 in Ethiopia, 18,700 in Djibouti and within Somalia itself and estimated 1.4 million internally displaced peoples (UNCHR, 2012). In 2011, the Census Bureau's American Fact Finder estimated that there are over 127,000 Somali-born persons living in the United States.

Statistics from UNHCR show that 90,000 Somalis were resettled as refugees during the period of 1991-2010 principally to the United States of America, Canada, and a few Nordic countries (2012). UNHCR sought resettlement sites for 35,000 Somalis in 2011 in spite of the reluctance of the resettlement countries. Resettlement countries cite integration challenges and security issues as reasons for their disinclination to settle Somalis although it is duly noted that the Somali diaspora is very strong in North America and Europe. Given that Somali refugees represent a large portion of refugees in the United States and given recent crises, it is important to expand knowledge of this community and its people

1.3 Statement of the Problem

1.3.1 Clarkston as a site for refugee language socialization

Clarkston, its residents, and the various agencies that aim to serve the needs of newcomer refugees are struggling to accommodate the newcomer refugee population. The city was highlighted as a case study in a report given to the members of the Committee on Foreign Relations in the United States Senate, entitled “Abandoned Upon Arrival: Implications for Refugees and Local Communities Burdened by a U.S. Resettlement System that is not Working” (S. Rep. No. 111-52, 2010). Clarkston was characterized as a place of tumult laden with stories of prejudice against refugees from residents and city police (S. Rep. No. 111-52, 2010). According to the report, the actions and discourse of the general Clarkston population do not convey a welcoming, understanding community.

The attitudes among the Clarkston community are in part due to the reality of resettlement and the time period in which refugees are allotted to integrate into the community. After three months resettlement agencies no longer serve their refugee clients. Many of these new residents have not fully integrated and their tribulations are left up to them to solve along with assistance from the local community. Some problems consist of navigating a new way of living, for instance,

refugee residents experience problems with housing and often cause apartment fires, one time leading to the tragic death of four refugee youth in 2008 (S. Rep. No. 111-52, 2010). Navigating housing is not the only problem; refugees also have difficulties accessing and understanding legal and educational systems and programming (S. Rep. No. 111-52, 2010). In order to resolve such issues the community is left to create and implement educational programming that promotes social and cultural adjustment including English language learning and socialization. These circumstances produce national and local discourses that lead residents to believe refugees "burden" local governments, schools, police, hospitals, and social services (S. Rep. No. 111-52, 2010).

Especially relevant to the present study is that in Clarkston "resources for language instruction are inadequate. Unlike migrants in search of economic opportunities, who can access extensive friend and family networks to navigate language or other cultural barriers, new refugee populations lack this type of community resource upon arrival." (S. Rep. No. 111-52, 2010, p.2) and "efforts to address the special needs of refugee students are ad hoc, adding strain on local education funding" (S. Rep. No. 111-52, 2010, p.2). A primary factor contributing to unfit resources is that "each refugee is initially afforded one-size-fits-all assistance" (S. Rep. No. 111-52, 2010, p.3). The community was not ready for a vulnerable population of refugees, without a network of social, cultural, and linguistic support, and had to create a few programs without any resources to rely on.

In order to lessen the burden on communities like Clarkston there is a call to work with state and local leaders to deepen understanding about backgrounds and quantities of refugees to be resettled using both qualitative and quantitative input from local communities (S. Rep. No. 111-52, 2010). This understanding would help implement programs that increase access to English as a Second Language (ESL) courses and eliminate the one-size-fits-all approach to refugee resettlement, language learning, and education and give way to innovative models that improve

accountability and promote community engagement (S. Rep. No. 111-52, 2010, p.4). This study offers insight into context specific knowledge that can challenge existing methods of language socialization and strengthen program models.

1.3.2 Public perception of refugees and Somalis

Another major motive of this research project is to contest the negative and subtractive discourses about refugees, and Somalis, in particular, which are spread by local and national media. Assuming discourse is a social practice, media portrayals as discursive practices have ideological effects based on the representation and positioning of people (Fairclough, 2003) These negative ideas that persist throughout society have an effect on the daily lives of refugees (Horst, 2006). Language socialization is a complex process in part affected by the way the community perceives those to be socialized (Schiefflin & Ochs, 1986). In Clarkston, refugees face misperceptions held by the local community and are also subject to the media discourses that are propagated about refugees and more specifically Somalis. Often times Somali refugees are presented as cunning crooks or vulnerable victims (Horst, 2006) and portrayed in the media as warlords and pirates. Such portrayals reproduce discourses and contribute to social realities (Van Dijk, 2005). In the small community of Clarkston, Somali refugees are subject to mass mediated and local discourses. In addition to the media and discourses surrounding Somalis, local residents are influenced by discourses that are anti-refugee or that portray refugees as draining local resources. Such discourses inhibit the language socialization and integration into the local community.

Looking to movie, television, print, and musical discourses surrounding Somalis, then, is useful because they represent technologically and institutionally based mass produced and distributed discourses (Gerbner, 1972). Take the critically acclaimed movie, *Blackhawk Down* (Bruckheimer; Scott, 2001) as an example. This film misrepresents Somalis and has been criticized for doing so. Mitchell (2001) wrote

In "Black Hawk Down," the lack of characterization converts the Somalis into a pack of snarling dark-skinned beasts, gleefully pulling the Americans from their downed aircraft and stripping them. Intended or not, it reeks of glumly staged racism. (p. 1)

Ethnographically speaking, whenever I meet people unfamiliar with the large refugee populations near to Atlanta and tell them about the community I work with, I am often met with "Oh, you work with pirates?" This is not surprising though, as the Somali pirate is a commonly reoccurring character in media discourse. Figure 1.3.2.1 shows an image of the Staten Island Ferry, with New York City's Statue of Liberty in the background, encountering Somali pirates with a comment from someone on board stating the "Somali pirates are officially out of control".

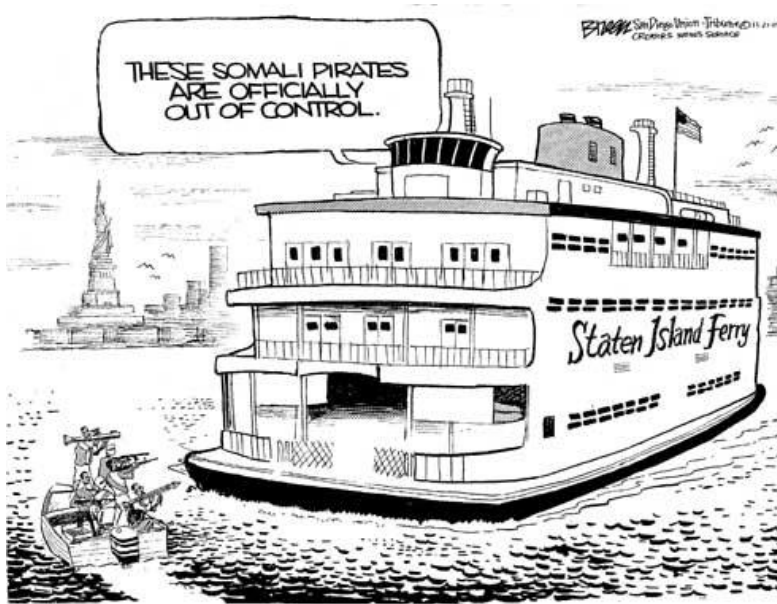


Figure 1.1.3.2.1 Somali Pirate Cartoon (Breen, 2008)

I found another example of the mainstream association of Somalis to pirates in a newspaper crossword puzzle. Figure 1.3.2.2 shows crossword item 63 which asks the reader for a word that describes many modern day pirates. Figure 1.3 shows that the appropriate answer was 'Somali'. This puzzle is representative a mainstream discourse that portrays Somalis as pirates.

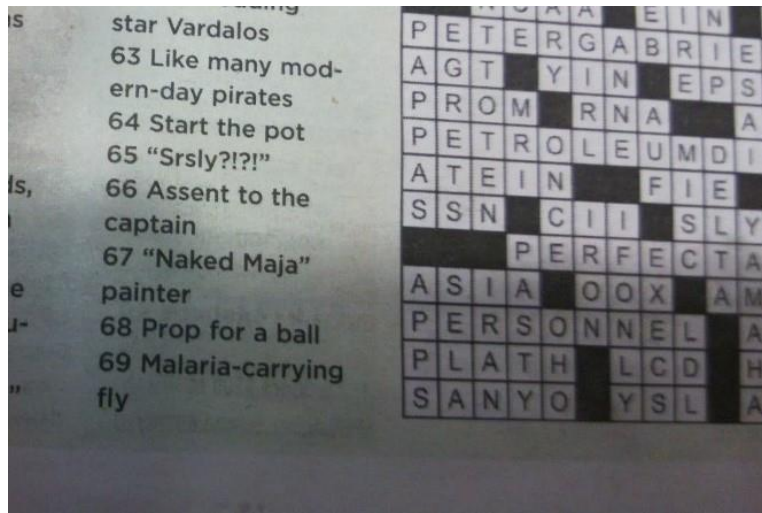


Figure 1.3.2.2. Crossword puzzle item, '63', Creative Loafing, Atlanta, 2013



Figure 1.2.2.3. Crossword puzzle answer 'Somali', Creative Loafing, Atlanta, 2013

The animated series *South Park* provides yet another example of the discursive representation of Somalis as pirates. In the episode "Fatbeard", one of the characters Eric decides he is destined to be a pirate, and promises his friends if they join him in his travels to Somalia they will reap the benefits. Eric and his entourage go to Somalia to meet Somali pirates (Parker & Stone, 2009). The most recent media portrayal of Somalis as pirates was the feature film, *Captain Phillips* featuring Tom Hanks (Rudin, Bernetti, & De Luca; Greengrass; 2013)

K'naan, a Toronto-based Somali musician, uses music to discuss the plight and reality of the Somali people and such discourses. K'naan's career began when he performed a spoken word piece criticizing the UN for its failed attempts to help in Somalia in front of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) (Takiff, 2010). In his song, "Blues for the Horn" he acknowledges the way media creates a certain image of Somalis as warlike:

In a conservative form I wanna ask you a few things before I conform
 To the popular belief about where I was born
 Are they still illin', still killin' poppin' the corn?
 How's the horn, how's the love wavin' the ocean morn'?
 How 'bout the young, do they still possess the poetry tongue?
 And do they still greet sincere like the depth of the lung"
 How's the nomad, did the herd graze well this year?
 From the news to what I know, the growin' gap ain't clear! (K'naan, 2005).

His lyrics reflect his disapproval of the discourses of Somalis and the gap in knowledge between this discursive ideology and the realities of Somalis' practices. K'naan indicates that popular belief is that Somalis are violent. He then questions if the oral tradition of spoken word and poetry is still alive and traditions like those of nomads are still occurring. He expresses that he would think so, though living in the United States it would seem there is a gap between his knowledge and the portrayal of Somalis in the news.

These "standardized discursive and representational forms" of Somalis as "cunning crooks" create a sustained image of refugees (Horst, 2006). Refugees are also often portrayed as "vulnerable victims" (Horst, 2006) depicted by images of masses of people, vulnerable women and children, and a rudimentary humanity. These media representations "both influence and are part of the policies and politics that determine the lives of refugees" (Horst, 2006, p. 14).

1.4 Purpose of the Study

Several studies suggest that language is a primary and complex challenge of refugee resettlement (Fong, 2004; Martin, 2004; McBrien, 2005). Understanding the way in which

refugees use language in social interaction can give insight into effective language socialization strategies, that is, how practices organize the life span process of becoming an active, competent participant in one or more communities” (Ochs, 2000, p.230) or “socialization through the use of language and to the use of language” (Schiefflin & Ochs, 1986, p. 163).

This study aims to explore the processes of language socialization of Somali refugee women associated with one community of practice in Clarkston by investigating the city’s linguistic landscape, and the life stories and language and literacy practices of the women. Gaining insight through participants’ life stories and language and literacy practices contributes to the understanding of what factors may contribute to their language socialization and becoming an active competent participant in the community (Ochs, 2000, p. 230). Although several studies have investigated Somali immigrants’ educational experiences, identity, and ability to acquire print literacy (Hopkins, 2010; McBrien, 2005; Oikonomidou, 2009; Tarone, Bigelow, & Hansen, 2009) few have explored Somali refugee women’s socialization through language and literacy practices. The study serves strengthen and challenge existing ways of viewing Somali refugee women’s language socialization.

1.5 Scope of the Study and Terms

This section describes the notions and concepts that guide the study, inform the research questions, and contribute to understanding the participants and the communities where they reside.

1.5.1 Examination of Linguistic Landscape

Linguistic Landscape (LL) is a new approach to the study of multilingualism in the public space. LL facilitates the understanding of the linguistic diversity of a particular space and gives insight into participants’ language exposure in their community and everyday life. Basically, LL refers to language that is visible in the public space in an area specified by the researcher (Landry & Bourhis, 1997). The common definition of LL is:

The language of public road signs, advertising billboards, street names, place names, commercial shop signs, and public signs on government buildings combines to form linguistic landscape of a given territory, region, or urban agglomeration. (Landry & Bourhis, 1997, p.25)

LL studies may focus on particular types of signs such as shops' signs and names (Dimova, 2007; MacGregor, 2003), and others use main shopping streets and include all visible or displayed texts (Cenoz & Gorter, 2006). The visible language serves as data for characterizing the space. Data aren't meant to represent the linguistic composition of the city as a whole, but serve to illustrate linguistic diversity (Huebner, 2006).

The description of LL can deepen understanding about language use in a specific context. Landry and Bourhis (1997) speak to the notion of LL's informative contribution stating "the linguistic landscape may act as the most observable and immediate index of the relative power and status of the linguistic communities inhabiting a given territory" (p.29). In this sense, an LL approach provides a method of empirical investigation into the presence of specific languages or linguistic communities in a given area signaling the sociolinguistic composition in a territory and uncovers the power and status of languages and the purposes they serve in public. LL in the same sense, uncovers the social realities of a designated space (Ben-Rafael, Shohamy, Amara, & Trump-Hecht, 2006).

1.5.2 A Social view of Literac(ies)

An idea central to this study is that literacy is more than just reading and writing. It is what people do with language and social practice. As Street (1995) notes, there are two general notions of language and literacy: a standard one that sees literacy as reading and writing or a set of skills that "autonomously" take effect on people's cognitive and social practices and an "ideological" view that sees literacy as culturally grounded social practices. In contrast to the traditional view,

the social view of literacy breaks the traditional dichotomizing concepts of literacy and orality and allows for a view of language and literacy that exists on a spectrum. The social view originates from Gee's (1986) definition of literacies as sets of discourse practices. He states that different societies and social subgroups have different types of literacy, and literacy has different social and mental effects in different social and cultural contexts. Literacy is seen as a set of discourse practices, that is as ways of using language and making sense both in speech and writing. These discourse practices are tied to the particular world views (beliefs and values) of particular social or cultural groups (p.719).

Gee's definition of literacy emphasizes the social aspects of language used for meaning making among particular groups of people. In recent discussions of literacy, Gee (2008) promotes an even more broadly conceived view of literacy. He states that "[...] language is not the only important communicational system. Images, symbols, graphs, diagrams, artifacts, and many other visual symbols are significant, more so today than ever" (p.17). Gee asserts that "literacy in any domain is actually not worth much if one knows nothing about the social practices of which that literacy is a part" (Gee, 2008, p. 18). For the purposes of this study, literacy is not just what can be read or written, but what people do with language, how people use language, or, language as social practice in context. Literacy is assumed as language that is dialectically tied to the context of its use; language use is created by and creative of social understanding and social reality. This view allows for the investigation into language, participation, and the process of language socialization.

1.5.3 Communities of practice and language socialization

The notion of community of practice (CoP) is used in this research study to frame learning as situated and social. It also provides a way to deepen the understanding of the place from which my knowledge is created and articulated. A CoP is a group of people who continually participate in some common endeavor (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Wenger 1998). The concept of CoP was

developed by Lave and Wenger (1991) as a basis for a social theory of learning and later brought into sociolinguistics as a way of theorizing about language. This notion contributes to sociolinguistics and linguistic anthropology because it conceives of social grouping as embedded in shared practice. CoPs are an

[...] integral part of our daily lives. They are so informal and so pervasive that they rarely come into explicit focus, but for the same reasons they are also quite familiar. Although the term may be new, the experience is not. Most communities of practice do not have a name and do not issue membership cards. (Lave & Wenger, 1991, p.7)

CoPs are fundamental parts of our daily lives and thus the notion offers a rich basis for investigating situated learning.

There are three main features that characterize a CoP, they are *mutual engagement*, *joint enterprise*, and *shared repertoires*. The term *mutual engagement* indicates that members regularly interact with each other in many ways. The term *joint enterprise* helps to characterize CoPs as having shared practices. Further, the term *shared repertoires* denotes community resources for negotiating meaning such as language and routines (Wenger, 1998).

For the purposes of the current investigation, understanding the shared practices and regular interactions are central to understanding socialization of Somali refugee women and the community resources that may or may not be utilized to negotiate meaning during the language socialization process. In addition, *situated learning* as a concept becomes central to this study because it refers to engagement in the CoP and *participation* in the CoP then becomes essential to the process of learning (Wenger, 1998).

Another concept central to the understanding of the use of a CoP model of learning is *legitimate peripheral participation* (LPP). This term describes a context-specific process in which

newcomers acquire the skills needed to perform the practices by actually engaging in the practices in order to master them and move toward full participation (Wenger, 1998).

The CoP at the center of this study is made up of a community of refugees that are mutually engaged in the joint enterprise of helping newcomer refugees adjust to and participate in their new community. Adjustment and participation involves navigating social services, the American education system, and practices that are integral to refugees functioning in their community. The shared repertoires relevant to this CoP include community resources that include language and knowledge of how language is used in specific contexts, specific texts that are important for participating in the community (bills, school forms, job applications, assistance applications). Newcomer refugees experience LPP as they meet regularly with established refugees in order to learn how to engage in practices. Thus, refugees' participation in this CoP is a fundamental element in learning how to successfully and more fully participate in the greater Clarkston community and various aspects of American society. The CoP under investigation is a part of larger *constellations of practices* (Wenger, 1998, p. 126) in Clarkston. *Constellations* refer to a grouping of objects that are seen as a type of configuration, with relation, even though "they may not be particularly close to another, of the same kind, or of the same size" (Wenger, 1998, p.127). The CoP I have been referencing is centered on a small, ethnic-based, place of social learning ('the Center', to be discussed in more detail in section 3.6, The Research Context). The constellation that the CoP belongs to, includes the Center, and the other ethnic refugee serving agencies, as well as the larger, mainstream refugee serving agencies, and the many other institutions (schools, Board of Health, Housing Authority). The CoP, then, is a place where refugees can go to learn about the *constellations of practices* that exist in the Clarkston community.

I am a part of this CoP. During my time volunteering within the CoP I, myself, was socialized into learning what many refugees need to do with language in and around the Clarkston

community. Once I knew enough about the practices in the CoP, I began to serve as a case manager and help newcomers. I accumulated a repertoire of understanding. Most of the members of the CoP are refugees as the main site of this CoP is a nonprofit organization run for refugees by refugees. Although I am not a refugee, I engage in the shared practices and regular interactions which include solving newcomer refugees' problems adjusting to language and culture and navigating the various new institutions and groups they belong to. In this way, I have also gone through the socialization process through shared practice. The shared practice is in many ways, is the practice of being a participant in the city of Clarkston. Newcomer refugees are LPPs and old timer refugees are the experts and case managers that are meant to guide them toward fuller participation.

Understanding participation in this specific community has implications for *language socialization* or how one gains communicative competence, membership, and legitimacy (Duff, 2007). The principles of language socialization, as summarized by Garrett and Baquedeno-Lopez (2002), are

- Social interaction is contextualized in certain regular activities
- Experts and novices can help each other
- Language and other semiotic systems mediate the process
- Language socialization is a lifetime process
- Language socialization can lead to non-language specific outcomes (e.g., new identities or values)

The notion of CoP facilitates the investigation of Somali refugee women's language socialization and helps to delineate the boundaries of my research.

1.5.3.1 *Beyond CoP*

Everyday literacy practices, investigated through the notion of CoP, should be framed by theories of language, literacy, discourse, and power. Barton and Hamilton (2005) assert that

The framings provided by theories of language, literacy, discourse, and power are central to understanding the dynamics of communities of practice, but they are not made explicit in Wenger's formulations. (p.14)

One can more explicitly discuss these dynamics by examining how social interactions are textually mediated, and how textual mediation "shapes, structures, and constrains" the interactions (Barton & Hamilton, 2005, p.14). By looking at language socialization, and the barriers faced and overcome during the lifelong language socialization process one can understand how text, and ultimately literacy, play a role in social interaction and greater participation in society. The key to linking literacy studies to CoP work is the concept of *reification* (Barton & Hamilton, 2005).

Reification is

the process of giving form to our experiences that produce objects that congeal this experience into 'thingness'. In doing so, we create points of focus around which the negotiation of meaning becomes organized. [...] Any community of practice produces abstractions, tools, symbols, stories, terms, and concepts that reify something of that practice in a congealed form. (Wenger, 1998, p, 58-59)

Reification is both a process and a product of participation in a community of practice. CoPs must exist for reification to exist and vice versa. Reification is characterized by the negotiation of shared understandings, and enables particular social relations to be shaped in the process of participation. Wenger offers four ways to categorize reifications, including succinctness and power to evoke meaning, portability across times space and context, durability or physical persistence, and the focusing effect, or ability to draw attention to distinctions in social reality.

These categories of reification make reification observable. For example, one can observe that the Statue of Liberty, a reification of freedom, is highly durable but not portable and that spoken discourse is may be portable, and draw attention to social reality and new concepts, but it is not as durable as written text. In Wenger's discussion of reification, he focuses on the productive and positive aspects of reification and his descriptions are extremely wide so that most of his reifications are literacy artifacts which are high on categories of reification (Barton & Hamilton, 2005). Take Wenger's (1998) vignette of the claims processing department of an insurance company, he discussed reification in light of the written texts attended to by the workers. In this sense, it would be fruitful to discuss reifications in settings that are less privileged, because that would increase the power of the concept of reification. Literacy studies offers to the idea of reification that text in social interactions can either reify or solidify power, and can either transform or reinforce certain social realities. The notion of CoP can be used in literacy studies to look at sites where all members of a group do not share the same common goals, and whose tasks are not as well-defined. Barton & Hamilton state that

The work on communities of practice starts out from constrained and well-defined task-oriented organisations such as individual work places. These ideas do not transfer so well to interconnected but dispersed networks – more loosely framed fields of social action – and they are weak on issues of power and conflict where groups do not share common goals and interests. [...] in ethnographies of everyday literacy practice [...] we encounter fields of social action that are not characterized by stable or well bounded shared purpose; they have diffuse and unclear membership without clear rights or direct channels of communication for negotiating meaning; there is often ambivalent engagement (which can also be seen in many classrooms and workplaces and other coercive communities) and incomplete repertoires of shared resources. (2005, p. 25)

From this view, the original concept of CoP is too idealistic, and does not fully acknowledge the greater social world which is characterized by multiple membership, unresolved boundaries, the existence of various CoPs which exist in one CoP, and the relationships that are supporting and competing. These CoPs are not to be viewed negatively, but “are often the creative lifeblood of social challenge and change” (Barton & Hamilton, 2005, p. 25).

1.5.4 Funds of Knowledge

The concept of *funds of knowledge* (González, Moll, & Amanti, 2005) lends itself to understanding the practices of Somali refugee women. *Funds of knowledge* as a construct provides a meaningful method for researchers to observe and investigate daily practices of marginalized people. Simply defined *funds of knowledge* (FoK) are people’s daily practices that educators and policy makers may fail to notice. The FoK conceptualization facilitates “a systematic and powerful way to represent communities in terms of resources, the wherewithal they possess and how to harness these resources [...]” (González et al., 2005, p. x). In essence, FoK help to bridge the gap in knowledge and understanding between people and their communities at large.

FoK include literacy practices, social relationships, and strategies that have been developed and accumulated; the bodies of knowledge integral to the functioning and well-being of people and their households. For example, understanding ways in which refugees participate and interact within their community can inform educational activities and policies that are geared toward progressing their language socialization and integration into their community. Or, one may find that an individual greatly values one on one conversation rather than a small group format for exchanging knowledge.

The FoK approach allows for theorizing based on “the lives of ordinary people, their everyday activities, and what has led them to the place they find themselves” (Gonzalez, 2005, p.1). Thus, the concept

[...] opens up spaces for the construction of new fields wherein students are not locked into an assumed unilineal heritage [...] allows for variability within populations rather than only between populations. More importantly the funds of knowledge of a community occupy that space between structure and agency, between the received historical circumstances of a group, and the infinite variations that social agents are able to negotiate within a structure. (p.43)

The FoK perspective emphasizes theorizing based on practices and acknowledging that “practices do not emerge from nowhere; they are formed and transformed within sociohistorical circumstances” and “constructed by and through discourses” (p.1). The FoK research model aims to discredit the view that culturally and linguistically diverse minorities lack knowledge or have a deficit for learning. In this sense using FoK to conceptualize practice is a deliberate reactive choice to make a statement against deficit views of refugees’ linguistic and cultural resources.

1.5.5 CoP and FoK

The notions CoP and FoK lend themselves to the current research project because they have allowed me to set case boundaries in when investigating Somali refugee women. The concept of CoP has afforded me the ability to describe the particular shared endeavor I have been involved in as a participant with refugees for refugees and a place for the creation of knowledge. FoK as a notion has allowed me to operationalize my observations of language, practice, and social interaction of Somali refugee women from my perspective within the CoP, because it gives me a way to talk about the unknown practices of these women that may carry some currency in the CoP.

1.5.5.1 *FoK and Bourdieu's Capital*

The FoK approach may seem to have some commonality with Bourdieu's notion of cultural capital. Bourdieu states

[Capital] in its objectified or embodied forms, takes time to accumulate and which, as a potential capital to produce profits and to reproduce itself as in identical or expanded form, contains a tendency to persist in its being, is a forced inscribed in the objectivity of things so that everything is not equally possible or impossible. (1986 p. 15)

Bourdieu describes three different forms of capital and suggests they contribute to the reproduction of inequality in society. They are:

[...] economic capital, which is immediately and directly convertible into money and may be institutionalized in the form of property rights; [...] cultural capital, which is convertible, in certain conditions, into economic capital and may be institutionalized in the form of educational qualifications; and [...] social capital, made up of social obligations ('connections'), which is convertible, in certain conditions, into economic capital and may be institutionalized in the form of a title of nobility [...]. (Bourdieu, 1986, p.16)

Bourdieu (1991) discusses the notion of linguistic capital as a form of cultural capital. Cultural capital may be in the form of dispositions of the mind and body, cultural goods, and/or educational qualifications and membership to professional organizations. He goes on to say that the value and influence of cultural and social capital are often overshadowed by analyses of economic capital.

Going back to the FoK approach which focuses on resources within households, the cultural capital notion of Bourdieu suggests that the passing on of cultural capital in the home reproduces inequality of educational achievement, and because it is less visible than economic capital, it may not be as readily recognized as capital and may be seen as legitimate competence. Bourdieu emphasizes that cultural capital is not inherently valuable but is given or not given value by the

dominant class. Thus, the concept of capital challenges dominant discourses and cultural hegemony.

Oughton (2010) discusses an important distinction between FoK and cultural capital. She suggests that FoK is not a subset of cultural capital. First, as pointed out by Coben (2002) who applied the economic metaphors of use-values and exchange-values to domains of adult numeracy practice, numeracy and literacy practices that may include budgeting or cooking may have a high use-value in the household but low exchange-value elsewhere. In contrast, an academic certification may have low use-value and a higher exchange value. Oughton contends that

Practices encompassed by the term ‘funds of knowledge’ tend to be *dismissed as low-status, or common-sense, possessed in some form or other by everyone, and often regarded as having little exchange-value, though a high use-value*. Contrast this with Bourdieu’s cultural capital, exchangeable for symbolic and economic capital, and privileged and legitimated by a dominant elite. (Oughton, 2010, p. 69, my emphasis)

FoK then can be seen as cultural capital if legitimized and privileged through a dominant group or discourse. FoK, may not all be privileged, and thus FoK in its nature are overlooked practices. Another distinction between capital and FoK is in the orientation to the term *culture*. The FoK approach does not necessitate the use of the term *culture* as the term may lead to “expectations of group norms and often-static ideas of how people view the world and behave in it” (Gonzalez, 2005, p.10). Instead FoK research focuses on individuals and households and provides an alternative to generalizing about peoples’ lives and backgrounds based on their *culture*, instead looking at individual lived experiences as resources. As noted by González the examination of individuals’ practices rather than the examination of *culture* “supplies us with a panorama of activities that may or may not coincide with normative cultural behavior” (2005, p.43). Thus, FoK contributes a more precise lens to investigate the language socialization and practices of the

participants that are necessary for becoming competent members of the community (Garrett & Baquedano-López, 2002).

1.6 Organization of the Study

This dissertation is organized into several chapters. In Chapter 2 I review the literature pertaining to refugee resettlement, language, and education, Somali refugees, and the refugee experience, and then introduce the research questions. Chapter 3 discusses the methodological approaches that inform the study, my positionality and orientation to the study, site and participant selection, the research contexts, methods of data collection, management and analysis, ethical considerations and issues of trustworthiness. Chapter 4 provides descriptions of each of the participants and brief demographic introductions as well as information about how I met them. In Chapter 5 I answer the first research question by characterizing the LL of Clarkston and discussing the findings in light of language socialization and participation in the CoP. Chapter 6 responds to the second research question and illuminates the language and literacy practice of the participants, and implications for language socialization in the CoP. Chapter 7 presents the outstanding case of Mama Rita and highlights her FoK and their implications for language socialization in the CoP. Finally, Chapter 8 presents the practical outcomes of the study as well as implications for language socialization and further research.

2 REFUGEE CONTEXT AND RESEARCH: A FOCUSED LITERATURE REVIEW

Chapter 2 provides a definition of a refugee and describes the basics of refugee resettlement. In Chapter 1, I discussed Somali history and context, and in this chapter I provide a review of U.S.-based research that has investigated language in the lives of Somali refugees in the U.S. context, and then I state the research questions.

2.1 Refugees and the Resettlement Scenario

A refugee, according to the 1951 Geneva Convention, is a person who has left his or her country “owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group, or political opinion” (*Convention relating to*, 1951). It is important to distinguish between refugees and other migrants. The United Nations Refugee Agency (2013) differentiates the two categorizations as follows:

Migrants, especially economic migrants, choose to move in order to improve the future prospects of themselves and their families. Refugees have to move if they are to save their lives or preserve their freedom. They have no protection from their own state - indeed it is often their own government that is threatening to persecute them. If other countries do not let them in, and do not help them once they are in, then they may be condemning them to death - or to an intolerable life in the shadows, without sustenance and without rights. (p. 1)

The United Nations Refugee Agency emphasizes the notion of migration choice and life threatening situations in order to extricate the differences between an individual considered a refugee and various other migrants.

In 2009, the World Refugee Survey reported there were over 13 million refugees worldwide, 80% of whom were women and children. The United States accepts 80,000 refugees a year. The world’s refugee protection system was started through the creation of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for refugees (UNHCR) in 1950 and the United Nations Convention relating to the Status of refugees in 1951 (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, 2012). The creation of the system was a response to the aftermath of the Second World War which destabilized and forced the migration of various populations. The main purpose of the system is to support the rights of refugees and the countries hosting them.

The UNHCR leads and coordinates the international actions to protect refugees. As noted by UNCHR (2012) the current patterns in forced displacement are more difficult to manage than they have ever been. At the beginning of 2011, 33.9 million people worldwide were categorized as ‘people of concern’ to the UNHCR up from 19.2 million in 2005 (UNHCR, 2012). UNHCR is responding to new refugee situations in places such as Libya and Cote d’Ivoire while they continue to deliver aid to countries with enduring displacement issues. These countries include Afghanistan, Iraq, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Sudan, and Somalia. UNCHR names the recognition of diversity as a top priority when considering the needs of the various refugee programs and is dedicated to ensuring equitable outcomes in its respective programs (2012). Programming includes a range of activities including ground-aid in refugee camps as well as the processes of resettlement and sometimes repatriation. In 2011 UNHCR estimated that 805,000 refugees necessitated third country resettlement, which is resettlement from their secondary country (usually a refugee camp) to a host country. It was estimated that there were only places for 10 percent of the 805,000 in need.

When refugees are resettled, they do not decide their country of destination, but are told where they are able to be resettled and given a travel loan to migrate to that region. In 2010, an estimated 94 percent of refugees were being resettled to Australia, Canada, New Zealand and the United States. The UNHCR is currently advocating for more countries to implement resettlement programming. Upon arrival in the country of resettlement, refugees have six months allotted to find employment; refugees are required to take English language classes to qualify for governmental assistance in the form of Medicaid and food stamps (Immigration and Nationality Act, 2011). Though they are compelled to learn English during their first six months in the country, if during that time they secure employment they may terminate their class attendance.

2.2 The Refugee and Somali experience

This section discusses research that investigates language learning and language related issues related to refugees and Somalis. To date, much of the research on the refugee experience explores issues dealing with refugees in the American education system. McBrien (2005) provides a comprehensive overview of the research conducted on the refugee schooling experience in the United States. McBrien's review highlights the themes of the educational struggles of students with interrupted formal education as well as the identity issues that refugee students have adjusting to the American way of life. The findings, which synthesized 25 years of research, showed that teachers' attitudes, school environments, and limited English proficiency were the greatest hindrances in refugee students' success. The literature points to the need for schools, educators, and the like to be more sensitive to refugee needs, concluding that there is insufficient literature that makes a distinction between immigrant needs and refugee needs (McBrien, 2005).

Due & Riggs (2009) investigate refugees in two primary schools in Australia. They utilize teacher questionnaires and observations on the playground to examine the assumption that central to English language learning is 'integration' of refugees, that the work of integration but be undertaken by refugees rather than the broader community rather than migrants, and to explore the dynamics between English language proficiency and interaction between non migrant and native students on the playground. They suggest that schools need to move beyond the idea of English language acquisition as a requirement for 'fitting in' and argue for "education that is situated in global contexts of colonization and power relations" (Due & Riggs, 2009, p.55) in which conditions for inclusion are mutually negotiated rather than predetermined.

In addition to the studies mentioned above, there is a thread of research that discusses the experiences of Somali refugees. Fridland and Dalle (2002) describe a participatory program for Somali refugees using a community partnership approach to English language literacy that seeks

students input and empowers them to become involved in their own learning and adapts to the students' needs. They suggest curricular flexibility that accommodates the everyday needs of students and advocate that educators must start with what the students know and build on the knowledge that they have.

While much of the research on refugees focuses on issues related to schooling, and the English language classroom, another thread of research consists of experimental studies testing Somalis' ability to acquire print literacy. Research focusing on print literacy includes Tarone, Bigelow, and Hansen's (2009) investigation into the relationship between low levels of alphabetic print literacy and L2 oral language processing in Somali adolescents. Their research findings suggest that differences persist in the processing of second language input based on their level of print literacy. Alphabetic print literacy affects oral second language processing and use in various ways. Literacy level significantly affects English language learners' ability to accurately recall corrective feedback are given in oral interaction (Tarone, Bigelow, & Hansen, 2009). The more literate the participants in the study were, the greater ability they had to produce correct or modified recall of recasts based on their own errors using English questions. Higher literacy levels were also positively related with the ability to recall, in correct or modified form, more complex recasts, those two or more changes from the original trigger question. The accuracy of recall was not significantly related to the length of the recast, particularly in light of the fact that this was a highly significant factor in previous research on more literate L2 learners (Tarone, Bigelow, & Hansen, 2009).

Low levels of print literacy affect the ability to recall oral recasts of grammatical errors and accuracy in decontextualized elicited imitation tasks. Findings suggest that lack of native language literacy impedes second language literacy and may also impede the acquisition of oral skills in a second language. Lack of literacy may make the acquisition of certain grammatical forms of the

second language more difficult perhaps because learners have less exposure to these forms which present in written discourse. Also, alphabetic print literacy improves verbal memory (Tarone, Bigelow, Hansen, 2009).

Their findings suggest an extreme need to teach alphabetic literacy skills to Somalis with low levels of literacy in their first languages. They add that our study suggests that, because previous SLA research has not systematically studied the impact of the individual variable of literacy on oral SLA processes and outcomes, current conclusions about SLA sequences, processes and outcomes may simply not apply to less literate populations such as those we studied, much less to illiterate populations elsewhere in the world. Future SLA research studies documenting oral L2 learning must focus on non-traditional language learners and social contexts, particularly on low literate and illiterate learners in social contexts beyond university and school settings (Tarone, Bigelow, Hansen, p.118)

Focusing on non-traditional language learners and social contexts, beyond university and school settings is a necessary factor in understanding the effects first language literacy levels on second language acquisition.

Another area of research that focuses on Somalis investigates identity. For example, Bigelow's (2010) longitudinal ethnographic study considers the experiences of young Somali high school girls' identity formation in an American high school. She found that these young girls' identities were influenced by majority-students' and teachers' racialized ideas of them, for example one teacher would tell majority students to watch the Somalis' behavior while she left the classroom, creating a chasm of privilege. Despite this finding, Bigelow notes that the adolescent girls "persisted through many demoralizing failures" (p. 90) and were capable of navigating between nationalities, cultures, and languages. She concludes that "the way Somali adolescents

imagine themselves within their local and global worlds influences the meaning they find in learning English, persisting through school, and envisioning options for themselves beyond school” (p. 4). Oikonomidou’s (2009) study investigates the multi-layered identities of newcomer Somali high school girls as they navigate a new educational system. Oikonomidou’s investigation of seven Somali females revealed that despite the experience of racial and religious discrimination in school, the girls were successful and desired to continue their education. They attributed their success to resources in their community, and the network of more advanced Somali speaking peers that were able to help them navigate the language barriers and experiences with discrimination.

Hopkins (2010) explores the transnational identities of Somali women in Toronto. The focus of the study is on highlighting the shifting indicators of belonging through the experiences of these women, and how their local and distant networks of Somali nationals make aspects of Somali language, culture, and dress have both positive and negative realities in their local context. She argues that the Somali women’s adherence to Islam and wearing hijab was an act of agency in identification connecting them to their families and cultures and providing them with a transnational space. Another investigation into the identity of Somalis is Valentine, Sporton, and Nielson’s (2009) study of Somali refugees and asylum seekers in the United Kingdom and Denmark. In particular, using the concept of communities of practice, they look at Somali adolescents’ sense of identity in light of their forced migration and also their sense of belonging in their current contexts based on their religion, Islam. Finally, they look at how and if the Somali youth identify as British, Danish, or Somali in their new place. They find that these adolescents have a lot of tensions and uncertainty pertaining to their identities and sense of ‘Somaliness’, and provide suggestions for integration policies that may affect these youth’s sentiments.

Studies on everyday language and literacy among refugees are uncommon despite research that suggests that language is a primary and complex challenge for refugees in resettlement.

Considering her observations of Somali women, Hopkins (2010) remarks that “language is one of the most important aspects of Somali culture for many Somali women and is important in creating “Somaliness” (p. 529). Given the current research trends that show the complexity of issues that refugees and Somalis face in education, and that language is an integral part of not only resettlement, but “Somaliness”, there is a need to understand Somali refugee’s women language and literacy practices in context. While the studies have provided insight into the Somali refugee experience by exploring educational aspects of language learning, identity issues among adolescents and women, and first language influences on acquiring print literacy they have not investigated their everyday language and literacy practices, their perceptions of those practices, and how their life histories and backgrounds play into language socialization in their new communities. Nor have they looked at Somali refugee women’s practices through a *funds of knowledge* lens.

2.3 Research Questions

The following research questions have been generated in order to understand existing ways Somali refugee women are being socialized to and through language in light of existing research and theories of language, literacy, knowledge, discourse, and power in order to enhance and challenge the existing ways in which these women are being socialized. The three questions are as follows:

1. What characterizes the linguistic landscape of Clarkston? How might the linguistic landscape impede and/or aid in language socialization and participation?
2. How do Somali refugee women perceive their language and literacy practices? What are their language and literacy practices? To what factors do they attribute their success and/or struggles? How might these factors affect to the process of language socialization in the refugee serving CoP?

3. What are the funds of knowledge among the participants that could be utilized in the language socialization of Somali refugee women in the CoP?

3 METHODOLOGY

This chapter will explain the methodology of the present study. I have chosen interrelated qualitative approaches to investigate the research questions. I characterize this study as a participant action research study that utilizes a case study approach and combines qualitative methods from various fields including education, anthropology, and applied linguistics. I will begin the chapter by discussing my reasons for a qualitative approach. The next section will introduce the approaches that inform the methods of data collection. I will then discuss my role as a researcher and the selection of the research site and participants and give an overview of the research design and methods of data collection. I will then describe how I analyzed and synthesized the data and finally will discuss ethical considerations and issues of trustworthiness.

3.1 The Qualitative Research Paradigm

Given the context and pursuit of my research, I have chosen to use qualitative methodology in order to investigate the ways Somali refugee women are socialized in a particular context that I am also a part of. Qualitative research is

[...] a situated activity that locates the observer in the world. Qualitative research consists of a set of interpretive, material practices that make the world visible. These practices transform the world. They turn the world into a series of representations including field notes, interviews, conversations, photographs, recordings and memos to self. At this level qualitative research involves an interpretive, naturalistic approach to the world. This means that qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make

sense of, or interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011, p.3).

This methodological approach emphasizes discovery and description, and generally focuses on obtaining and interpreting meanings of experience through multiple representations and therefore using qualitative approaches fits the current investigation of Somali refugee women.

3.2 Qualitative Approaches

3.2.1 Participant Action Research

This research project uses the principles of *participatory action research* (PAR) to inform the study because the overall goal of the project is to bring about change in the participants' social situations, generate theoretical and practical knowledge about the situation, and collaborate with participants to affect change in the community (Burns, 2010). PAR research emphasizes building community partnerships and utilizing knowledge from immigrant and refugee communities in order to accomplish more for the common good (Auerbach, 2002). Participatory approaches to learning were first advocated by Freire (1968) and promote the idea that stakeholders should be at the core of program building and curriculum design (Auerbach, 2002). Instead of utilizing competency based curricula that outline language tasks to be mastered, curricula should be constructed with the intention of building upon stakeholders' strengths, qualities, and skills (Tollefson, 1989).

Researchers using participatory approaches intend to incorporate the lives of the learner into the classroom in order to change the learner's situation (Auerbach, 1992). With PAR, research should be "context-specific, grounded in the particular realities of each group of participants, and based on a collaborative investigation of critical in family and community life" (Auerbach, 1992, p. 8-9). I have chosen PAR because the participants' contributions to the study and the study findings will directly influence study participants' language socialization because I intend to use ideas from

the study to inform new programmatic models within the CoP and at the refugee-based organization I work in. Findings will be analyzed to glean implications for educational models that eliminate a one-size-fits all approach to language socialization and promotes Somali refugee women's community engagement.

3.2.2 Case Study Approach

Within the qualitative research paradigm, I have chosen a case study approach as the most appropriate fit for this study. According to Yin (2009), case studies give researchers the ability to investigate a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context. Merriam (1998) precisely specifies that case study research is ideal for understanding and interpreting phenomena. She explains:

A case study design is employed to gain an in depth understanding of the situation and meaning for those involved. The interest is in the process rather than outcomes, in context rather than a specific variable, in discovery rather than confirmation. Insights gleaned from case studies can directly influence policy, practice, and future research. (p.19)

The present study uses a case study approach because I seek to better understand the language environment in Clarkston and gain an in-depth understanding of the processes in the community that affect Somali refugee women's language socialization. Another aim of this research is to discover FoK of these women. According to Yin (2003) the cases in this project are both descriptive and explanatory. Descriptive case studies present "a complete description of a phenomenon within its context" and explanatory case studies present "data bearing on cause-effect relationships- explaining how events happened" (p.5).

I could further characterize this research study by its multiple cases. Cases include the linguistic landscape of Clarkston, language and participation among several Somali women, and FoK in a particular CoP. I do not characterize the study as a multiple or collective case study

because I am not analyzing within each case and across all cases to understand similarities and differences (Yin, 2003). Instead I will characterize it as a single case that incorporates subunits of analyses and allows for a more complex or embedded research design. By adding the embedded subunits I have more significant opportunity for extensive analysis and insight into the single case (Yin, 2003). In sum, this research study presents the case of Somali women's language practices and participation in a particular CoP by analyzing the linguistic landscape, the women's' language experiences and life histories, and the FoK in the particular CoP.

3.3 The Case of a Researcher

In this section I will describe the decisions I made before launching my research study, how I became involved in the local refugee-serving community, and the various roles I have taken on and maintained throughout the course of the study. I would like to make it clear that I write using a case study approach to understanding a phenomenon, and that does not exclude me from my looking reflectively and reflexively at myself as a case of an interdisciplinary qualitative research. This having been said, this case discusses my experiences of site selection entering the field and establishing rapport with the particular community. I wanted to be accepted and trusted among community members in order to conduct qualitative research and to investigate the daily language environment, language and literacy practices, language socialization, and FoK of Somali refugee women.

3.3.1 Positionality

My positionality in this research has developed and changed dynamically over time. In January of 2012 I was a volunteer who wanted to teach English at a small ethnic-based non profit organization. After initially volunteering and holding weekend English classes, I soon became an afterschool teacher. I went from being a teacher, to doing some casework part-time over the summer, and by the fall of 2013 I was helping direct the after school program, manage the office,

document services, write grants, coordinate volunteers, and develop various curricula. My positionality in this research is that of a participant-observer. I work alongside the executive director on whatever matters needed to be attended to. My influence within the organization, specifically my influence on educational programming and policy making is significant as I help write grants to develop and carry out educational programming.

3.3.2 Trajectory

At the beginning of 2012, during my final semester of coursework in my PhD program, I decided to begin a small pilot research program as a precursor to my dissertation proposal. I had made the decision that I wanted to work with a community that was not my own and that needed considerable research attention. As a novice applied linguist and qualitative research methodologist interested in politics, policies, and how social power and relations affect various diaspora and minority communities, I decided that I wanted to do qualitative work among the refugee community. I knew I wanted to use qualitative methods of data collection. I also knew that I wanted to emphasize the *emic* (local/insider) perspective while juxtaposing it against the *etic* perspective (my outsider point of view) to provide insight into the lives and language practices of refugees. My goal was to be able to shed light on the ‘unseen’ lives of refugees, their practices, and social interactions that educators and policy makers may not be familiar with. I really wanted to represent their daily lives and activities, and to do so, I felt the need to build relationships within and become engaged in the community. Living only 12 miles from a refugee resettlement site in Clarkston, Georgia, made this decision more feasible, although I knew that I would have to build rapport with a community and that certainly would take time. If I wanted to carry out a research project, I would first need to learn to collaborate with members of the community. Doing so would help me to initiate an ethical and critical research study that represented the lives and stories of that community.

3.4 Site identification, Selection, and Access

This section discusses my decisions leading to my site selection (i.e., the specific place within the Clarkston resettlement site where I would conduct my research) and some of the emotions and difficulties I experienced once I made a final decision.

Entering the ‘field’, that is, gaining access to the community one would like to research, is a component of anthropological field studies that scholars and researchers have devoted whole chapters to in their volumes on research methodologies (Creswell, 2012; Heath & Street, 2008). Because I was still engaged in coursework when I decided to enter the field, I had been reading quite a bit on the subject. I knew that I had the ability to teach English as a second language by trade, so I assumed that I could volunteer in the refugee community and offer my teaching skills. To help me decide on my research site, I began to go to various volunteer orientations. As a literacy volunteer with one organization, I would have to go through weeks of training in order to fill the role as English teacher. Another organization which helped refugees resettle told me I could teach an English course, but once I arrived at the location, they only needed me to help sort donations. A final volunteer agency asked whether I could do fundraising. I needed to make contact with people, refugees, in order to begin to understand their communities, and that was not happening. Although I had met many individuals and groups providing services for refugees, I still had not met any refugees. The organizations were helping me to understand the refugee situation with much more depth, although they were still providing me with the etic (outsider) perspective. A lot of what these agencies discussed in their orientations included differences between refugees and native-born Americans. For example, one organization shared that most refugees won't know how to use a microwave when they first arrive. Another organization suggested that they may struggle with the cold weather. I wanted to gain my information from the inside. I wanted to ask refugees themselves what they felt their struggles were and also what they thought they were good at. After

various attempts to find a location to volunteer, I decided I wanted to find an organization that was run by refugees themselves or where refugees were employed. Also having learned about the various English language learning (classroom) contexts at various volunteer orientations, I decided that I wanted to look beyond the classroom context in order to investigate language learning and socialization.

3.4.1 Deciding to conduct research outside of the classroom

For years, much of the research conducted in my field, applied linguistics, has been classroom based (Doughty & Williams, 1998; Ellis, 1994, 2002; Lightbown, 2000). This is because many scholars in the field aim to conduct research that contributes to the understanding of the best practices and approaches for teaching and learning second languages. I wanted to gain a sense of the ‘every day’ of refugees to understand the best practices and approaches to developing language. As I have taught in language classrooms, I generally know what goes on. The research available on refugees is not that plentiful but is mainly concerned with refugees in educational settings (McBrien, 2005). To really capture the essence of the refugee experience and the etic perspective, I was going to have to build relationships beyond that of a teacher and a student.

Going ‘off-site’ to collect data was a very big decision. ‘Off-site’ at my institution means collecting data not from within the institution or among one of its affiliates. Going ‘off-site’ and getting the Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval requires getting a letter of permission from the off-site location where participants will be recruited. I would have to find a business or organization that would allow me to recruit voluntary participants for my investigation into the daily practices of refugees. I decided that I would need to start talking with organizations and businesses that employed refugees or that were ethnic or community based.

After reading more about Clarkston, the town where the refugee resettlement was located, I found out that there were many small businesses owned by refugees. I assumed I could collect

some pilot data about the everyday language and literacy practices by recording conversations of workers at one of these businesses. I could even offer to work as a volunteer at these businesses. I filled out an application with the IRB at my university. I created interview questionnaires that asked questions about the immigration process, finding work in the United States, and language use at the workplace. I also decided to keep a researcher journal to document my process of meeting the community and my research experience. The final piece I needed for the project to be approved was a letter from an organization that gave me permission to recruit and collect data from their site. I made the decision to go door to door, business to business, at the various strip malls that were predominantly refugee and immigrant owned and to ask whether anyone was willing to help me on my scholarly endeavor. Just before I began my attempt, I wrote my first entry in my researcher journal:

I am writing this as the first entry in my researcher journal. Today, I've been reading *On Ethnography*, a book by Brian Street and Shirley Brice Heath in order to gain inspiration. I am going to try to 'enter the field' in the next few days, and I am nervous. I really want to find a site that aligns with my ideas and sees the greater intentions of my pursuits. I also worry about entering the field as a young white woman. The population I aim to study is very different than me, so I keep thinking that they won't understand that I want to empower them. (Field notes, January 27th, 2012)

3.4.2 *Site identification and access*

When I read my field notes after having completed my project, I am able to step back and analyze my feelings and observations. After reflecting on my notes, I see that I was quite naive at the time—I wasn't very sure of what it would be like to work with refugees, for refugees. These later observations of my own experiences have been an important part of the analysis stage of research. Many times, the analysis of field note data will change the nature of a qualitative research project as it sheds light on nuances and ideas that the researcher hadn't considered while writing the notes. For example, upon analysis of my notes, I see a reoccurring theme of my initial 'outsider'

mentality. This is something that changed over time and now I acknowledge my active participation in the CoP.

So, it is evident that I did not feel completely comfortable about entering the field, but I was determined to do it. Below I share the entry from my researcher journal to illustrate how discouraged I felt the day I went to find a community to work with and how I began to identify potential locations for a pilot study:

I just returned from my first attempt to visit potential research sites. It was both good and bad. I was definitely nervous before I arrived to the shopping center. The first small business I entered was called XXXXXXXX. I waited in line, and when the other customers were finally gone I asked if the owner was in. The man said no. He inquired why I wanted to know. [...] So, after some explaining, and discussing (I told the man I wanted to help people because I knew how difficult it was to find work when you were an immigrant or refugee), the man shared with me that he came as a refugee, and yes it was hard. He is from Guinea. It also came out that he was a partner in the business, so really he had the authority to sign my paper. And he did sign my paper [...] I went into another store, XXXXXX, and the cashier said the owner was out of the country. Okay ... I'll come back. I went into another store, and walked out. It was a discount goods store and I wasn't sure it would work out. The final store I went to in the plaza was a meat market. There was one man in the back obviously dealing with the meat. He was well dressed. I approached him and asked if the owner was in. He said that he was around somewhere. And that he was in and out a lot. I told him what I was doing, again, he was impressed that I was doing my PhD. He seemed hesitant, but said he would tell his brother what I was doing. I showed him the paper I wanted to sign. I then asked where his family was from and he said Somalia. [...] I would work with the Somali population. Really? I said ... I would like to talk to Somalis. The man said that I should go to one specific shopping center to talk to Somalis [...]

(Field Notes, February 3rd, 2012)

Finding the site of my future volunteer work happened by word of mouth. I went to the Somali Plaza, and eventually found a small ethnic based community organization that consisted of refugees helping refugees. Largely, my success in site selection was based on the identification of community leaders. Shortly after finding the Somali Plaza and the community center, I met with the executive director of the Center and we were able to talk about my goals and expertise and he saw that my goals aligned with the goals of the organization. Volunteering at the organization over a period of a few years and continuously taking on more responsibility and working with more

people was vital to building rapport with various types of community members in the Somali refugee community.

3.5 Participant Selection and Invitation

For the selection of the participants, I engaged in purposeful sampling, selecting individuals that were accessible and instrumental to investigating the issues related to my research questions (Creswell 2012). According to Stake (2000), when using purposeful sampling to select cases, one must consider balance, variety and, most importantly, opportunity to learn. He suggests considering matters such as how accessible the case is and/or how much time the researcher can spend investigating the case. In applied linguistics typical multiple case studies have two to six participants (Duff, 2008).

I purposefully identified the women in my study by first building relationships in the community and meeting various women over the years. After hearing particular women's stories, identifying their willingness and even eagerness to share and educate their communities, I would explain my research agenda and ask if they were interested in participating in and collaborating with me in my research project, which would eventually benefit the community. On all occasions of recruitment I communicated with the women in one of the locations of the Center.

When considering potential participants for my study, I chose to research Somali women who identify as refugees. I chose women as research participants because firstly, the majority of refugees are women. Second, during my experience and time working in the community the majority of refugees who I observed seeking assistance and services were women. Even more noticeable was the significant amount of women who were single with or without children and visiting the Center often.

Another criterion for selection was that the women were interested in sharing their life stories for the betterment of their community. To reiterate, I used purposeful sampling, selecting

individuals that were accessible and instrumental to investigating the issues related to my research questions (Creswell 2012).

I identified the women in my study mainly through the network I established during my time volunteering in the community. My aim was to have a range of adult women from the community participate in the study. I expected variation in age and the length of time they have lived in the United States. Some of the women I met teaching English class, some I knew because their children were my students in the Center's after school program, and the remaining women were women who I worked alongside of or have seen working in the refugee serving community whom were interested in contributing to my study. After hearing particular women's stories, and sharing my research story, I would ask if they were interested in participating in and collaborating with me in order to complete my study. Conversations with potential participants occurred in the Center and the Somali Plaza where it was located. In some instances my colleagues at the center volunteered to collaborate with me on my study and helped me to identify other potential participants. In cases when I could not communicate the details of the study and the Informed Consent Form from the Georgia State IRB, I had assistance from a professional Somali interpreter. The Informed Consent Form indicated to potential participants that they would be reimbursed 10 dollars per hour for their time spent.

3.6 Research Context

I would like to describe the CoP that is central to this study and the three locations that have been primary sites of data collection throughout my research process. I described the city of Clarkston in Chapter 1 and the additional thick descriptions will give a more in-depth understanding of the boundaries of the case. The CoP is centered on a nonprofit refugee lead refugee serving Somali community organization which I refer to as "the Center" (introduced in

Seciton 1.5.3). The locations include the ‘Somali Plaza, ‘Thriftown Shopping Center’, and ‘Market Street retail district’

3.6.1 The CoP

The CoP I have referenced, observed, and participated in is centered on the Center, a non-profit founded in 2009 by leaders in the Somali community. The Center’s aim is to help their community, particularly newcomer refugees, with social and cultural adjustment and to provide socially and culturally sensitive services that contribute to the adjustment process. The Center’s board of directors as well as its employees are refugees. The common endeavor of the CoP is to help each other, as refugees, to acclimate to and navigate American life. The organization offers language and translation services and youth programming which primarily involves an afterschool program for newcomer refugee children in elementary school. The situated learning of newcomer refugees involves trying to teach them how to participate in their new community, so they can participate at a very basic level, although full participation is an ideal outcome.

I consider myself a member of the CoP at the Center although I am not a refugee I regularly participate in the common endeavor of helping newcomer refugees to navigate their new community. The people in the greater *constellation of practice* know my work within the CoP and associate me with it. Newcomer Somali refugee women represent the majority of members of the CoP that are participating on periphery, as well as some Somali refugee men, and a handful of newcomer refugees from Iraq, Congo, Eritrea, Sudan, and elsewhere. Established Somali refugee men make of the majority of the old-timers who are teaching the newcomers about the tools, resources, and practices need to participate more fully, in addition to the occasional women that works at the Center as a caseworker, after school teacher, or volunteer.

Most mornings when I arrived at the Center, several returning clients and a few prospective clients would be gathered outside waiting. Usually the clients would be holding documents, many

times in Ziploc bags or worn envelopes. These documents are usually forms or notice letters that have come in the mail. Sometimes they are pertaining to matters having to do with their children's schooling, receiving food stamps or social security benefits, or Medicaid. Many times these documents include bills. Also, frequently people come in because they needed affidavits of birth or death, help applying for or navigating the citizenship process. Sometimes they were attempting to collect the appropriate paperwork in order to have a loved one resettle in the United States. Other times they came in looking for help finding employment or feeling so disenchanted with the lack employment they would seek assistance in leaving the state of Georgia. During winter months, clients would seek assistance with utility bills through special programs.

Once the Center opened usually there would be one or two case managers sitting inside of the small cluttered office. There was little privacy for clients. Several people usually are waiting while the main case manager, who is also the executive director of the center of the Center, sees them one at a time. The Center usually has one female case manager present in the office to try to better serve the needs of the majority of clients whom are women.

The Center's office in in a shared suite so the men from the neighboring businesses would often pop in to see if anyone wanted water or coffee or to see if there was a small task they could help the waiting clients complete. The Center has a few elderly Somali men who would pass the time outside of the office door acting as interim janitors and office maintenance staff and sometimes helping to sign people in.

Visitors to the office also included the Somali men who served on the Center's Board of Directors. These men represented the main clans from the Somali ethnic group, and are refugees themselves. The system organizing the board was representative in a sense but completely dysfunctional in another. Many of the men did not understand or resisted the role of board member instead treating their title as if they were a part of a tribal council. This creates many problems for

the Center as there is a large gap between what is needed to be done at the Center (fundraising, extra casework, grant-writing, etc.) and what is presently practiced.

The Center, as I mentioned, usually has one female case manager, though this position tends to have a large turnover as the various board members often put pressure to have a woman from their clan be present in the office. In addition, the women caseworkers, some of whom are participants in this study, express larger influences that keep them from working in the CoP.

I have observed many of the clients seeking assistance to be quite demanding and sometimes I have seen them become very frustrated when they cannot talk to a case manager. Most matters that they come to the office for are high priority to their livelihood or the wellbeing of their household and children. Often clients need assistance that involves interpretation or translation, and sometimes case managers have to leave the office with them in order to serve their needs. In this way, I often sat at the Center and helped do ‘behind the scenes’ work, writing grants, creating reports, and working on curriculum for the after school program and the ESL program offerings. Many of the men in the CoP would take time to talk with me about my studies at Georgia State, and how I could help the Center.

3.6.2 The Somali Plaza

The Somali Plaza is nucleus of the CoP and home to the Center. This plaza is mentioned in my first field note entries. I learned, by word of mouth, from a Somali man and owner of a Halal butcher shop in the Clarkston Village Shopping Center that if I wanted to meet more Somalis, there was an entire plaza of Somali businesses.



Figure 3.6.2.1 The Somali Plaza

The Somali plaza consists of a few different restaurants and cafes, several fashion boutiques, various tax preparation businesses, hair salons, and other miscellaneous specialty shops. The plaza will have a few patrons in the early morning but really begins to populate in the late morning when children are in school. The plaza is characterized by a constant motion of cars and people, coming and going. On Fridays the plaza has extra patrons as people are preparing for or coming from congregation at the Masjid (place of worship for followers of Islam).

One will notice mostly men walking and talking together, or sitting outside of the cafes leisurely in the Plaza. There are also families that shop together in the plaza and small groups of women that will sometimes shop together. Occasionally students from the neighboring Georgia Perimeter College, Clarkston campus will visit the plaza as well.

I have observed that mostly males frequent the plaza and I am one of the women that goes there regularly other the few other women that work in the plaza. The café that occupies the far left side of the plaza (pictured on the far left in Figure 3.6.2.1 above) is characterized by a façade of men sitting outside, and men inside watching news stations or soccer matches. I have gone into the café multiple times, and on one occasion a two young men approached me and one commented that

he “had never seen a women in the shop before”. After talking to them, I found out that they were students at Georgia Perimeter College on their lunch break.

The plaza is a location where I have observed countless social interactions and is home of the Center, the small nonprofit organization started in by a group of Somali refugee leaders. On the far right of the plaza (pictured far right in Figure 3.6.2.1), is the largest of the fashion boutiques. This boutique is managed and owned by a Somali couple. The wife runs the day-to-day business operations and I have spent many of my lunch breaks in her store with Mama Rita, the focal participant in my research. In contrast to the male dominated café, her store is frequented by mostly women and occasionally couples and families. On multiple occasions I sat in her store and listened to her, participant Mama Rita, friends, and regular patrons engage in friendly arguments and gossip about other community members. These conversations often happened in Somali, and usually if I listened closely I could pick up portions of their content from English loan words and the various but few words I understood in Somali and Arabic.

3.6.3 Clarkston Village Shopping Center

The Clarkston Village Shopping Center is home to Thriftown, a locally owned grocery store, a pharmacy, butcher shop, small convenience stores, variety stores, and ethnic cuisine restaurants. The shopping center stretches approximately .10 miles on Montreal Road. Thriftown is probably the most frequented establishment in the shopping center. It is where many of the resettlement agencies bring newcomer refugees in order to show them where to find items that they may be looking for from their home countries. A mixture of old and new Clarkston residents can be seen shopping there. Thriftown is owned by a Clarkston native and his wife and they have made a point to adjust to the newcomer refugee community by buying and selling goods their patrons’ request. The store also employs many refugees. This shopping center is significant as most of my participants’ cite it as one of the places they frequent. Also, this is the location where Mama Rita,

the focal participant of this study spends the majority of her time. Figure 3.6.3.1 shows a view of the Thriftown shopping center. Thriftown is shown on the far left.



Figure 3.6.3.1 Clarkston Village Shopping Center

3.6.4 Market Street

Market Street runs perpendicular to the Clarkston Village Shopping Center and is characterized by strip malls of shops on both sides of the street. The length of this portion of the street is approximately .10 miles. The businesses on this retail strip are all either specialty stores or restaurants. Stores on the strip include barber shops, beauty stores, specialty food stores, and small ethnic markets. This area has many Ethiopian owned and frequented business as well as some Vietnamese, Korean, and Nepali shops. This portion of Market Street was first introduced to me by my focal participants, and by a Somali man who volunteers at the Center. Later I became more familiarized with the area when focal participant Mama Rita took me around to introduce me to the various store owners whom she was well acquainted with.

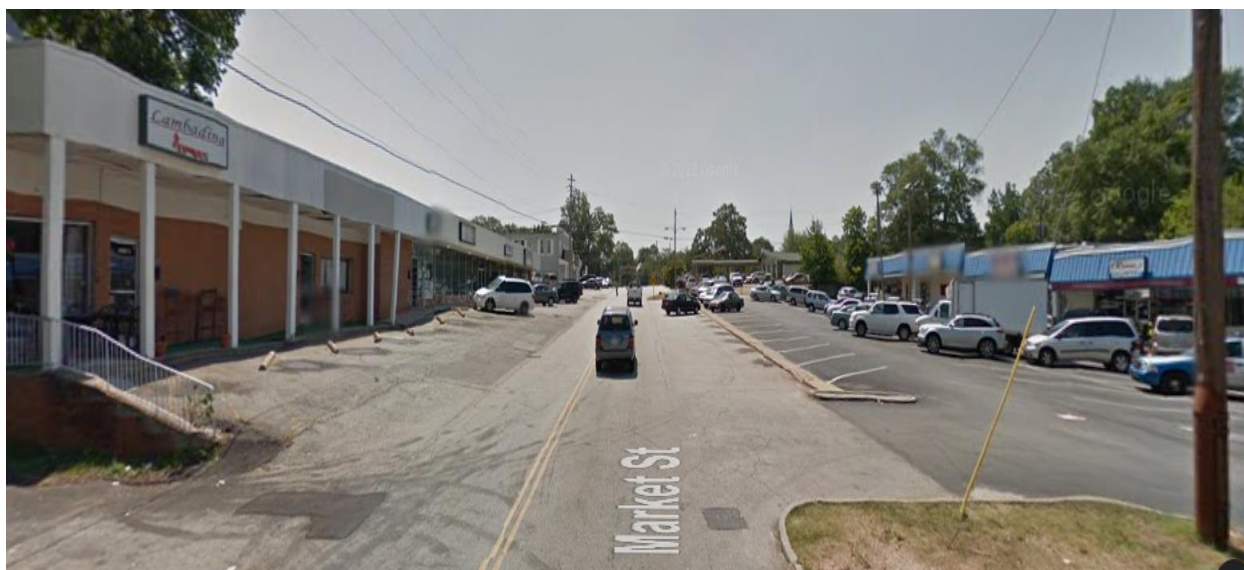


Figure 3.6.4.1 Market Street

Figure 7 above shows Market Street in Clarkston. This area is to be revitalized by 2018 with a grant received by the City of Clarkston to improve streetscapes. If one were to continue down in the street in the direction pictured above, they would reach a stoplight and railroad crossing. Immediately after the crossing is the location of Clarkston City Hall.

3.7 Data Collection

In order to investigate my research questions involving the language environment in Clarkston and language, literacy, and FoK among Somali refugee women, I have used various forms of data collection: interviews, participant-observation, and collection of life stories, informal conversations, and photographic documentation. The collection of multiple sources has allowed for triangulation of the data or investigating the research problem from different perspectives “in order to provide possibly more complex and ideally more valid insights” (Duff, 2008, p.144). The concept of triangulation is an important concept in current qualitative research that promotes both the insider (emic) and outsider (etic) perspective of phenomena (Duff, 2008). Below, I describe the

methods I employed throughout my time in the CoP. They enable the collection of both the insider (participant) and outsider (researcher/analyst) perspectives.

3.7.1 Interviews

Interviews serve as one of the sources of data and “generate data which reflect vernacular interpretations and theories [...] in a more direct way than is possible from research which does not involve asking questions but relies on the interpretations of an outside participant observer” (Barton & Hamilton, 1998, p.64). Using interviews as a data source has enabled me to explore the research questions directly with the informants. All but one participant was interviewed two times. Interview techniques were used to gather information about the participants’ life stories and histories (Ghorashi, 2008; Linde, 1993) including experiences related to resettlement, their immigration process and their educational and vocational past. I utilized another interview technique used by Barton & Hamilton to ask questions that focused on participants’ self-perception of their literacy practices and their engagement and participation in the community, asking what they did with language, with whom, and why. Interviews were also integral method in uncovering FoK (González et al., 2005) and discussing issues that emerged from my observations. Barton and Hamilton (1998) advocate for repeated interviews. They state that initial interviews are not enough and sometimes interview data, which is essentially self-report, may be superficial or misleading. Thus interviews were semi-structured and I would repeat portions of interviews that needed to be elaborated upon in more depth or that seemed to be answered superficially in the second interviews when possible.

However, given the diverse backgrounds of the participants, interviews questions I set out to ask were not always relevant. For example, I found out that many of the questions pertaining to language and literacy practices and educational and vocational experience were irrelevant to some

of my participants who attended very little school, never learned to read or write in any language, and had never worked.

Although Barton and Hamilton (2008) advocate for repeated interviews I found that some of my participants did not understand the need to be asked the same questions multiple times. In addition, some of them found interviews to be very formal, and they did not always understand why I tried to ask the same questions repeatedly. I found, that some of them preferred candid conversations to recorded interviews. In these cases I would ask follow up and clarification questions candidly and record these instances in my field notes.

A professional Somali interpreter helped to facilitate the interviews when I could not communicate with the participants in English. Interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed. Transcripts were safe guarded in an online, password protected data storage locker as well as a password protected data set in the qualitative software program, NVivo 10.

3.7.2 *Life stories*

Life stories are discourse units that consist of stories and associated discourse units including explanations and chronicles and the connections between them told by individuals over the course of the lifetime (Linde, 1993, p. 21). In other words, a person may tell their life story in a manner that is punctuated, and not chronological, throughout their life. Two criteria that characterize life stories are that they are about the speaker, not about the way the world is and they are ‘tellable’ or able to be told and retold. I have chosen to discuss life stories as a separate method of data collection because although I prompted the telling of life stories during interviews, the telling of life stories was not limited to the interview sessions. Some of the participants preferred informal, unrecorded conversations about their life as an alternative to the more formal interview. This may be because some of them had experienced various forms of trauma and the interview

process was too formalized or perhaps reminded them of the many times they had to recount their persecution to the United Nations and related organizations in order to receive refugee status.

I gathered details about participants' lives over various periods of time, and sometimes information about the women's lives came in small units and recounted in a non-chronological order. Pieces of the participants' life stories were shared when they wanted to share them, sometimes without my prompting. I never pushed for all of the details of the participants' lives, and if I sensed that they didn't want to share something, I did not force any topic.

In research on refugees, life stories open up spaces for refugees' stories to be shared and told, a practice that is not frequently used (Ghorashi, 2007). Life stories were recorded in my field notes, either written or audio-recorded. Audio recordings were transcribed and saved in password secured qualitative software NVivo10.

3.7.3 Participant observation

Participation observation served as a primary source of data collection. This technique of data collection means I had prolonged engagement in a particular setting (Starfield, 2010) that I was immersed in the day-to-day lives of people (Creswell, 2013). I have observed the Clarkston community and the local Somali community in the three primary locations I previously described and in the context of the CoP, with the Somali refugee organization as the Center of my participation and observation, in order to give a descriptive case of context and research site. Second, I have used participant observation as a means to collect information about the various focal participants in the study. Duff (2008) notes that participant observation in applied linguistics includes systematic, focused observation of focal participants in their natural contexts. Depending on the participant and their preferences, observation took place in the homes of the women or if they preferred, places they visited regularly. I will describe the observation contexts for each individual participant in greater detail in Chapter 4. After observations, I either recorded my notes

via computer or I used an audio recorder to take field notes after observation periods. Audio-recorded notes were later transcribed for the purpose of analysis. In addition to my observations, my notes were interspersed with journal like commentary and reflections in order to “take note of [...] impressions, questions, emerging themes, decision making, or any other issues that arise” (Duff, 2008, p.142)

As I mentioned earlier, I consider myself a participant as well as an observer because of my interpersonal relationships with the individuals in the study as well as my role as at the Center and as an advocate for their self-sufficiency. Duff notes that

In [case study] participant observation, the research plays another social role in the research site (e.g., as student, teacher, or co-worker, a co-participant within the local culture). (2008, p.138)

In my case study research, my social role is primarily as a co-participant in the local refugee serving CoP, in particular the Somali organization where I have volunteered. I consider myself a refugee advocate, and I have served in the role of teacher for either the participants or their children. I have also served as a co-worker and on some occasions as friends. Observations took place when I visited the women for interviews and spent time with them as they carried out their daily routines. I also, over the period of three years, was able to observe some of the women in the local community as they worked at the Center or sought advice at the Center. Additionally, I observed the participants in various community events that they participated in. I will detail when and where I was able to observe these women when I introduce them in Chapter 4. My participant-observation has been recorded in my field notes after each observation that I believed to be relevant to the research study.

3.7.4 *Artifacts*

Artifacts include documents related to reading, writing, and language use (bills, letters from school, religious materials) as well as other artifacts that may be considered *funds of knowledge*. These artifacts serve as a secondary form of data and were documented as I encountered them, in order to enhance the findings to my research questions and in order to understand the participants' language and literacy practices and the items and resources they are exposed to on a daily basis. For example, I consider the types of documents brought to the Center as artifacts as well as the items that participants emphasized using in their daily lives. I will present documentation of artifacts only when it contributes to the discussion of the language, literacy, and FoK of the focal participants.

3.7.5 *Linguistic landscape*

In order to contextualize the community where the focal participants reside and the areas they frequent I used digital photography to document visual environments. In studying language and literacy practices photography can help to illuminate participants and “what they do with literacy” (Barton & Hamilton, p. 68, 1998). The types of literacy predominantly included signs that they are exposed to in their public environments where they made most of their daily social interactions. Photography is a rich source of data for documenting literacy practices and language environments (Barton, Hamilton, Ivanic, Ormerrod, Padmore, Pardoe & Rimmershaw, 1994). In fact, “the attention to language in the environment, words and images displayed and exposed in public spaces, that is the center of attention in [the] rapidly growing area referred to as linguistic landscape (LL)” (Shohamy & Gorter, 2009, p. 1). The documentation of the visual environment of the participants added an additional source of data for the study of the community and its context.

In order to systematically investigate the linguistic landscape of Clarkston, I first observed the areas that the focal participants frequented. All of the focal participants frequented three major

areas. These areas included the “Somali Plaza” which is the commercial center for the Somali community in Clarkston and where the Center is located. The other areas included a strip mall on a stretch of Montreal Road called Clarkston Village Shopping Center which is home to Thriftown and several other small businesses owned by various ethnic/migrant populations. Near to this strip mall is another strip of small businesses, on Market Street, arguably the downtown or city center of Clarkston (this area was chosen to be revitalized in a multi-part streetscape project by 2018). Criteria for what was documented and included as data were simply and systematically defined. All signage was documented using a digital photography that was in public space. In other words, any linguistic landscape that was in plain view on public property was fair game for documentation.

As a former photojournalist, I know the limitations of what is considered private and public property. You are allowed to take photos of anything as long as it is in plain view when you are standing on public property (a sidewalk). In LL studies, codification of different pictures presents some difficulties and ultimately it is up to the researcher to establish the unit of analysis. My approach involved taking digital pictures of all of the texts that could be seen from the sidewalks of the three data collection sites. I took photos of all of the public signage at the sites. I included all signs in plain view from the sidewalk. This excluded stickers that were smaller than the size of my palm as they were difficult to read in plain view while standing on the sidewalk. There were not many of these style stickers, and when I did take note of them, they were usually mostly graphic with small text. Examples of excluded items include dated and faded Clarkston business association stickers and small stickers indicating the acceptance of some form of credit card. In many cases I made the choice to take one photo to document multiple signs.

Due to the high resolution of the camera I was using I was able to zoom in on the photos with the help of photographic software programs and parse out LL items individually. In total, I

captured 178 photos. I then printed the photos so that I could hand number each LL item as a unit of analysis and ensure that I was including all of the LL items. After carefully making sure to assign each sign a number only once, I identified 291 units of analysis.

3.8 Data Management, Coding and Analysis

This section reports how I managed, organized, and transcribed the data from the project. I then discuss how I analyzed the data in preparation to write my findings for each set of research questions and I detail how I analyzed the data and coding processes leading to the interpretation and synthesis of the findings. I discuss how the research questions are answered by the findings and are triangulated by my sources.

3.8.1 Management of the Data

My primary data sources were interviews, and field notes, and photographs of LL items. I recorded LL items by using a high resolution digital camera. I then transferred the photos to an online password protected storage locker and divided them into three folders by locality (Clarkston Village, Market Street, and the Somali Plaza).

After I interviewed a participant, I transferred my audio recording to a password protected online storage locker. I did the same with my audio-recorded field notes. Each audio recording was transcribed for what was said and by whom. I employed the help of students in the department of Applied Linguistics Master's degree program to transcribe some of the follow up interviews. These transcriptions were then uploaded to NVivo 10, a qualitative data management program.

3.8.2 Analysis and Coding for RQ1

In total, I captured 178 photos in order to document LL items. I then printed the photos so that I could hand number each sign as a unit of analysis and ensure that I was including all of the LL items. After carefully making sure to assign each sign a number only once, I identified 291

units of analysis. I coded the data by first creating an Excel spreadsheet that indicated the number of the unit of analysis as well as a summary of the language that was present on the sign so that each unit had its own row in the Excel spreadsheet. I then associated each column with a code with the plan of placing a '1' in a column if the characteristic was present in the unit of analysis. I then coded each sign for the following characteristics according to variables used by Ben-Rafael, Shohamy, Amara, & Trumper-Hecht (2006):

- Top-down
- Bottom-up
- Bottom-up 1 (Private business sign: indicating name)
- Bottom-up 2 (shop sign other than sign indicating name (e.g., Bread sold here!))
- Bottom up 3 (sign placed by third party; private announcements wanted ads)
- English only
- Language other than English
- English and language other than English (bilingual or multilingual signs)
- Rules or regulations (signs indicating a law, rule, or regulation)

The LL items coded as top-down are those issued by national and public bureaucracies- public institutions, governmental, municipal. Bottom-up signs, in contrast, include signs that are issued by individual social actors such as shop owners and companies or private citizens (Ben Rafael et al. 2006). Bilingual and multilingual signs were then categorized according the languages used and the purpose of each sign (Ben Rafael et al. 2006). During the process of coding multilingual signs I enlisted the help of community volunteers as well as some of participants. They helped me code the signs and interpret them.

3.8.3 *Analysis, and Coding for RQ2*

In order to analyze the data in reference to my second research question I used a “case analysis” approach which involves “organizing the data by specific cases for in-depth study and comparison” (Patton, 2002, p. 447). Case analysis includes presenting highlights of each participants’ cases in order to present the case in reference to the research questions (Patton, 2002). Case study analysis allows several case studies to be compared and contrasted, but the basic unit of analysis remains the distinct cases (Patton, 2002). Initially each case “must be represented and understood as an idiosyncratic manifestation of the phenomenon of interest” or a “unique holistic entity” and “later it is possible to compare and contrast cases (Patton, 2002, p.450). The phenomenon under investigation in RQ2 are the language and literacy practices of Somali refugee women. In each case, multiple sources of information were brought together to offer a comprehensive picture of each woman’s experiences with language and literacy practices and their language socialization experiences. The case data for each woman included

- (1) Observations of participants at the Center, in their homes, or socially (recorded in field notes)
- (2) 1-2 semi-structured interviews discussing life history, immigration process, educational and vocational past, and language and literacy practices
- (3) Informal discussion with participants and caseworkers at the Center (recorded in field notes)

Information from these sources was integrated to produce a readable case that could be used to better understand the paths of language socialization for each individual. The case study approach that I employed describes what happened over time to portray the life of a person and the lifelong process of language socialization (Patton, 2002, p.439).

In sum, I have utilized case study analysis to highlight the language and literacy practices of each woman and their successes and struggles with language socialization in order to represent their diverse language socialization processes. After presenting each case, I compare the cases in order to analyze implications for the language socialization of Somali refugee women in the CoP.

I analyzed interview transcripts and field notes in order to investigate RQ2. NVivo allows researchers to engage in three types of coding for data analysis: descriptive, topical, and analytical (QRS International, 2006). I employed the descriptive and topical coding functions while analyzing the data. In NVivo, descriptive coding enables the researcher to associate each transcript with a particular case or participant. The descriptive coding mechanism helps to analyze data within each particular case as opposed to analyzing across all of the cases. I used the descriptive coding category in order to associate data with each participant, using their pseudonyms as codes (Hannah, Faith, Caaliyah, Mama Mouna, and Mama Rita). I associated each of the interview transcripts with the appropriate code and then I also analyzed my field notes line by line and associated the same code to stretches of data that reference interactions or observations of the respective participants. In this way I constructed a case record for each participant by organizing the unedited raw data from interviews and observations.

I used topical coding to assign topics or concepts to stretches of text within each case. The topical codes were deduced from research questions related to RQ2. Deductive analysis is where the data are analyzed “according to an existing framework” (Patton, 2002, p.453). Deductive codes were directly related to the research questions and included the following themes:

- Language learning in school/ESL class
- Strategies for language socialization
- Language socialization in the family
- Perceptions of language and literacy practices

- Experiences in the CoP
- Barriers to language socialization
- Absence of literacy practices
- Educational/career goals
- Textual mediation a barrier
- FoK

Given that each woman's case and language and literacy background are different, each of the deductive themes are not present within each woman's case.

After constructing the illuminating cases of Somali refugee women, I analyzed the cases using cross-case comparison to discuss the following themes related to the research questions and the deductive codes above: Successful strategies for language socialization, Barriers to language socialization, and FoK. Within each of these themes are inductive themes that were relevant across cases.

3.8.4 Analysis, and Coding for RQ3

The third research question emerged after one of my participants' cases stood out from the other cases. While I had planned on using a case study analysis across all cases, I spent extra time with one participant, Mama Rita and she exhibited many practices that I observed to be unseen by the CoP and that would be useful for deepening understanding of or challenging the language socialization or barriers to language socialization among Somali refugee women. Mama Rita's proficiency in English, along with her willingness to share her life and her community with me, and in some ways her schedule flexibility, also enabled me to look at her case more closely. For this question I analyze Mama Rita's practices (based on observations, field notes, conversations, and interviews) and "theorize based on practice" in order to uncover FoK (Gonzalez et al., 2005). In order to do this type of inductive reasoning, I coded data for emerging themes and specific

categories. In sum, after coding the case to identify Mama Rita's FoK, I coded the data labeled 'FoK' inductively to find themes within the FoK code. The codes, which I present as themes in Chapter 8 include Mama Rita's

- Purveying of information
- Participation in politics
- Participation in religious activities

Mama Rita's FoK are organized and described thematically and then discussed in light of language socialization for Somali refugee women in the CoP.

3.9 Ethical Considerations

Several ethical considerations should be discussed in light of the current research project. First, Barton and Hamilton's (1998) discussion of confidentiality and anonymity brings salient points forth about conducting local qualitative research on language, literacy and funds of knowledge: there are conflicting traditions in terms of anonymity. In most social science research anonymity is not only a right, but a set ethical standard. On the other hand, it is common in community and adult education studies to have a right to be named in research in order to give voice and prominence to participants' lives. I believe it is important to provide anonymity and confidentiality for the participants; therefore I have asked that each participant provide a pseudonym. It may be the case that for future publication a participant may want to be considered as a co-author. If this happens, by consent of the participant, their identity may be revealed. One aspect of confidentiality to be considered is the revealing of the identity of the city where I have carried out the study. Barton and Hamilton argue that for a study that approaches everyday practices as anchored in particular people's practices in particular times and places, it is "impossible and undesirable to try to hide the identity of the city" (p.63, 1998). In addition to the focus on the particular, openness about the location of the research site is integral as I have

explored and discussed historical details and information about social services, school systems, and other local institutions. If naming Clarkston as the research site becomes an issue, I have decided that I can give the city a pseudonym. In order to protect the anonymity of the individuals, I will give specific neighborhoods, organizations, agencies, and schools pseudonyms.

3.10 Issues of Trustworthiness

In qualitative research design, trustworthiness consists of efforts by the researcher to address issues of validity and reliability which traditionally are more of an issue in quantitative research methodology. Within in the context of this study I will use Lincoln and Guba's (1985) terms of credibility, dependability, confirmability, and transferability in order to establish the trustworthiness of the study. Lincoln and Guba offer these terms as alternatives to the traditional quantitative concepts of validity and reliability.

The term credibility is the qualitative counterpart to quantitative methodology's validity. Credibility is used to establish whether or not the findings of a study are accurate from the perspective of the researcher, the participants, and the reader. In order to enhance credibility, I have used triangulation in my data collection methods and my sources. I have used multiple perspectives (my own, that of case managers who are refugees, newcomer refugees), as well LL data to enhance contextual understanding. I also conducted member checks, by reading and paraphrasing portions of my data to participants and stakeholders in order to verify the accuracy of my findings (Burns, 2010). I used member checking at various stages of the research process. Sometimes I would member check immediately after interviewing a participant and summarize some of the first themes that I noticed. In cases when I had an interpreter present during an interview, the interpreter also served as their case manager, and a stakeholder herself and due to her familiarity with the CoP, I would verify information with her. I found it useful after interpreted interviews to discuss the interviews and their contents with the interpreter, and it also served as a

form of member checking. In addition, I shared my ideas and interim reports with peers in the CoP.

Dependability is a more appropriate term than reliability when discussing qualitative research findings. In quantitative studies reliability refers to the extent that research findings can be replicated when other similar studies are conducted. Lincoln and Guba (1985) argue that in qualitative research it is important to ask whether or not the findings are dependable and consistent with the data collected. This study establishes dependability by documenting procedures clearly and demonstrating that the coding schemes and themes have been used consistently. Additionally, the practice of member checking, or sharing research findings with participants, has added a level of dependability that has helped to confirm that the findings are consistent with the data collected.

Confirmability in qualitative research correlates with the notion of objectivity in quantitative research. In order to maintain confirmability I used data triangulation (Creswell, 2013, p.251), meaning multiple method and sources (visual documentation, interviews with participants, and my observations) as well multiple observers, meaning I investigated the research questions along with the participants in order to provide multiple perspectives. I practiced reflexivity through reflecting on my field notes and my positionality as a researcher and a participant in the study. Reflexivity involves understanding the inseparability of the researcher self and the personal self (Creswell, 2003). In others I recorded my beliefs, values, roles, preconceived notions and misconceptions. I have also clearly identified and shared the decisions I have made throughout my research process including how, when, and why data was collected.

Finally, transferability replaces the quantitative concept of generalizability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Qualitative findings may not be generalizable but one can determine whether or not the findings can transfer to another similar context. Patton (1990) discusses this in terms of “context-bound extrapolations” (p.491) which can be defined as “speculations on the likely

applicability of findings to other situations under similar, but not identical conditions” (p.489).

This study has addressed this through thick description of the study participants and context. This description provides a basis for speculating on the likelihood of transferability in another context.

4 PARTICIPANTS

This chapter serves to introduce and describe each of the participants individually. In each section I will share varying degrees of detail about the participants’ lives, how I met them, the way they participated in the CoP, my relationship with each person, and aspects of their lives and personalities that I believe to be significant. Each woman contributes to the research project differently, and I aim to represent the diverse paths of each woman’s lives in order to enhance the understanding of their case studies. The descriptions come from my personal perspective on the individuals, the conversations and interviews I had with them, as well as conversations with other people that I have had about the individuals. Therefore, the following descriptions reflect my subjectivity. These descriptions are introductions, and more details about their language practices will be shared in Chapter 6. The following table provides an overview of the 5 participants, their pseudonyms, brief biographical information, and how I collected information from each of the individual women.

Table 4.1 Overview of the 5 participants in this study

Participant Name (pseudonym)	Biographical Information	Method of Data Collection
Hannah	Hannah has lived in the United States for over 20 years after living in Egypt and Syria and moving to Minnesota with her family at the age of 12.	2 interviews Field notes on observations and interactions at the Center
Faith	Faith has been in the United States for almost 20 years. She came at age 6 to Clarkston after living in Kenya.	2 interviews Field notes on observations and interactions at the Center
Mama Mouna	Mama Mouna has live in Clarkston for about 5 years. She is a single mother of five children.	2 interviews Field notes on observations and interactions at the Center
Caaliyah	Caaliyah was resettled in Clarkston approximately 2 years ago. She is a single mother of four children two of whom are students in the after school program I help coordinate.	1 interview Field notes on observations and interactions at the Center
Mama Rita	Rita has been in the United States for almost 5 years. She is a single woman, having lost her entire family during the civil unrest in Somalia. She is in her 80s though her documents have her as being in her 50s. Rita lived as a refugee in Burundi for approximately 15 years before her resettlement.	2 Interviews Field notes on observations and interactions during her daily routines and activities over the period of three months

Table 4.1 Overview of the 5 participants 1

4.1 Hannah

Hannah is a matter-of-a-fact yet sweet and compassionate woman who has made helping the Somali community a part of her life. I met Hannah at the Center at the beginning of 2013 when she became a case manager at the Center. The case manager position is a part-time position though it very easily takes up additional time. Hannah is an experienced case manager and a professional interpreter, and she was an integral participant in the research project because she is not only a participant, but she served as an interpreter for me during interviews with Mouna and Caaliyah. She is their case manager at the Center. She explains her job in her own words

I'm a case manager, so basically um, what I do is, um, you know, help most of the refugees find employment, help them with paperwork, read their mail, you know, make phone calls

for them, and do referrals if they wanted, like, to make a doctor's appointment or things like that, basically give them community resources, tell them where the mosque, you know, where things are around here in the community. (Hannah, Interview 1)

Hannah was born in Mogadishu in 1981. She is the middle child of five children. Her father was the Director of Tourism for Somalia and her mother was a homemaker. Her father attended a British university in Ethiopia, and her mother attended school until sixth or seventh grade. In 1987, with her father's foresight into the political unrest going on in Somalia, Hannah moved with her family to Egypt. They stayed in Egypt for a few years, but didn't have access to education, so then moved to Damascus, Syria where Hannah started fourth grade. In 1992 her parents started the process to come to the United States.

Hannah considers herself a refugee, though her family did not come to the U.S. with the refugee status. She was first a refugee in Syria, and there, her father applied and qualified for the United States' Diversity Visa program. To qualify for the Diversity Visa program, applicants must have a high school education, or its equivalent, or two years of qualifying work experience. They do not receive any loans or government assistance and the visas are awarded through a lottery system. In 1993 her family was offered an interview and soon after they moved to Minneapolis, Minnesota.

At 12 years old, Hannah began public school in Minneapolis. After high school she attended Century Community College in White Bear Lake, Minnesota and obtained her associate's degree in Liberal Arts 2004. She became a professional interpreter and worked as a case manager for the county, but eventually began to interpret full-time. In 2006 she married her husband and moved to Atlanta, Georgia. She worked for some time as an interpreter before becoming a caseworker at the Center. She is a proud mother of two elementary-aged boys and a 10 month old daughter.

4.2 Mama Mouna

Mama Mouna is one of the first clients I had the privilege to work with at the Center. She attended a Saturday ESL class that the Center used to hold at an apartment in her apartment complex. I've also helped her to navigate the public education system for issues related to her children. She is a small, quiet, conservative woman, and she knows very little English. Despite her low level of English, when she interacts with someone she lights up like a light bulb and smiles warmly. During my data collection she came to the Center almost daily. She is in her 40s and is a single mother to five children, four of whom live with her. Mama Mouna was resettled in Clarkston just under 5 years ago. She was born in Kismayo, Somalia. She attended school for some of her childhood and then stopped. She lived with her parents who owned a business; her father also did human resource work for a factory owned by Italians. In 1985 Mama Mouna married and happily lived with her husband and family in Kismayo. Her family realized the situation in Somali was getting bad when people began to flee to Kismayo from Mogadishu. She fled in 1992 after warriors came to her family's home, killing her brother, and causing her father to have a stroke. The family went to Liboi refugee camp in Kenya (a now defunct camp on the Somalia-Kenya border). Eventually, Mama Mouna returned to Kismayo to take her ailing father back home; he could no longer live in the condition he was living in the camp.

Upon return to Kenya, Mama Mouna and her family moved to another camp where she eventually gave birth to more children. Her husband passed and soon she was the sole provider for her family. In order to provide she established a store. As she told me, there was no brick, so she collected bushes and trees to make shade. She built this structure by the camp distribution center where people went for their rations. She began to trade food and also give cash for food, and began a resale business. Eventually, she sold sugar and vegetables on one side of her store and used and

new clothing on the other side. From time to time she would go to the large cities in Kenya to buy new clothes to sell in her store.

“And then the magic happened”, as Mama Mouna said, and her family, after staying in the camp from 1993 -2011, was called to be resettled. She was resettled in Clarkston, along with her five children. She said that after six months she no longer received any type of assistance from her resettlement agency. She worked doing several different production jobs but ultimately decided to stay unemployed in order to support her children. Her oldest daughter married and moved to Iowa. Today, Mama Mouna has two children in high school and two children in middle school. One of her sons has a disability, and so she has had to give him extra support.

4.3 Faith

I met Faith at the Center. Faith is a bright, happy, and hardworking individual. She is a serious and career driven young woman. In the spring of 2013 she graduated with her Master’s degree in Community Health Education from Minnesota State University in Mankato, Minnesota, where she had also earned her B.A. in Community Health. She came back home to Georgia for the summer to seek out employment and agreed to help do casework at the Center. I worked with her part-time and we became acquainted rather quickly. In addition to interacting with Faith at the Center, she would frequently invite me to social events including her birthday party and other gatherings she had organized with her friends.

Faith was born in Mogadishu, Somalia in 1988. At that time she was living with her parents and sisters and near to her immediate and some of her more extended family. Faith told me her parents came from two different walks of life, and in her parents’ case, her mother had graduated from high school and her father had little schooling. Her family lived in Mogadishu until the war began. Her family’s decision to leave Somalia was made clear when they received a knock on the door from some men who wanted to rob them at gunpoint. The family left for Kenya where they

had extended family, staying in a refugee camp for a short amount of time, before moving into the city. Faith attended Qur'an school and was generally homeschooled. She did not begin elementary school until 1996 when her family was resettled in Clarkston. Faith has 8 brothers and sisters, and she was the first in her family to obtain her undergraduate degree. She has many friends from many different backgrounds and she also has Somali friends. After several months working at the Center, she moved to Richmond, Virginia to work as a mental health counselor for adolescents.

4.4 Caaliyah

Caaliyah is a tall woman, and she has been described as 'aggressive' and 'demanding' by some of the case managers at the Center. She is one of the mothers whose children attend the Center's after school program and she is also a regular visitor to the Center's main office. I met Caaliyah when she started to come into the Center, about a year after her initial resettlement. She often has to take donations from the community to pay her rent and she seeks assistance at the Center frequently. Her two boys attend the after school program, and they are in sixth and third grade ages 14 and 9 respectively. She also has two daughters, one is 3 and one is 1. Caaliyah is from Mogadishu, Somalia. Her husband, and the father of her two sons, passed away before she left Mogadishu in 2008. She went to Djibouti where she lived in a refugee camp for about 10 months. She built herself a shelter in the camp but struggled to live on monthly rations and asked for her case to be transferred into the city. She and her two sons moved to the city where she would have a 15 dollar a month allowance. She couldn't find a place to live and didn't know how to take care of her family, so she decided to remarry. She remarried and lived with her husband and had another child, a daughter. She couldn't afford to send her sons to public school; it is not free in Djibouti, so they attended Qur'an school on the weekends. Not long after her new marriage, she was offered resettlement. She didn't apply with her husband, so she decided she would move on her own, while pregnant, with her two sons and small daughter. In 2012, Caaliyah was resettled in

Clarkston. She had the baby soon after which meant she was granted “maternity leave” from her resettlement agency, meaning she did not have to attend English classes or secure employment immediately. She has recently started English classes and is currently unemployed.

4.5 Mama Rita

Mama Rita is an elderly Somali women, in her 80s. She is good-humored, outgoing, and charismatic. The first time I met Mama Rita was early in 2013 at the apartment community where the Center does community programming including ESL classes and an after school program.

Mama Rita had met with an Eritrean man who was homeless and staying on the street and brought him to the community apartment where I was meeting with a few children and a former colleague. She had seen we were there and figured we could help out. This first meeting with Mama Rita, the way she brought the man to seek assistance at a known resource site, is just a glimpse of one of her regular practices, and what I see as one of her strengths. Before really getting to know her, I would see her often in the community, at the grocery store, helping newcomer refugee families. When I was just about to officially launch my research project, Mama Rita fit my criteria and eagerly agreed to help me.

Since that time, Mama Rita and I have formed a very close and special relationship. She helps me “write my book” (that is what she calls my research), and I help her with whatever she needs whether it be taking her to a doctor’s appointment, helping with groceries, or reading a ticket or bill for one of her friends. In this way our relationship is mutually beneficial. We also meet regularly in the city’s various retail plazas. Mama sits in her friend’s store and helps her sell goods. She has an “office” set up in front of one locally owned grocery stores. It is in these spaces I have observed her interacting with various types of people, sometimes finding out who is a new refugee, or helping people find jobs, medicine, food, or whatever else they need.

Mama Rita was born in Mogadishu, Somalia circa 1928 (her immigration documents say she was born in 1950). She came from an affluent family who was in the business of farming and selling cattle. She, along with her husband, brothers, and sisters would follow suit and also become involved in the business. Mama Rita went to school until she was about 12 years old and was married shortly after. She recounted to me that when she was married she went to her father and asked why he was trying to sell her like one of his cattle. Nonetheless she was married. Over the years she gave birth to and raised 10 children. She had five sets of twins. Each set came as a boy and a girl.

It was years later in the early 1990s when her children were grown, and when the civil war broke out in Somalia that Mama Rita and her family were attacked. The story of the attack is told in fragments; I've never tried to pressure Mama Rita into telling me what exactly what happened. She told me that her family was killed right in front of her eyes. She was also attacked, tortured, and left for dead. She spent three days in the morgue when an American Red Cross worker saw her throat move. She was taken to Kenya and was in the hospital, in a coma, for one year and seven months. She stayed an additional eight months in the hospital healing after she regained consciousness. From there she moved to Burundi as a refugee. In Burundi she worked as a storekeeper for the Red Cross. She lived there for 15 years and made many friends. She lived in a house with a single mother and two boys who she adopted as her family. She said during her time there that she made many friends and was even friends with the Burundian president and his wife. Mama Rita was resettled to the United States in 2009. She said shortly after her resettlement she started working as a housekeeper in the home of some Somalis and she also volunteered at a local community center. Shortly after her arrival she also began to participate in local government campaigns. After only about one year in the community she had made many friends and started to participate more fully.

5 THE LINGUISTIC LANDSCAPE OF CLARKSTON, GEORGIA

This chapter addresses the first research question and presents an analysis of the linguistic landscape (LL) of Clarkston. By using the notion of LL I refer to the linguistic objects that mark the public space in three of the major retail and business areas in Clarkston, Georgia. The three sites under investigation include the Clarkston Village Shopping Center, Market Street retail district, and the Somali Plaza. These sites were introduced in Section 3.6.

Clarkston as a refugee resettlement site with a superdiverse population presents an opportunity to investigate and illuminate the complex structures of a superdiverse sociolinguistic system in contemporary society (Blommaert, 2013). The following research question is used to illuminate such complex structures:

1. What characterizes the linguistic landscape of Clarkston? How might the linguistic landscape impede and/or aid in language socialization and participation?

First, I will characterize the LL of Clarkston by discussing the composition of the LL in terms of ‘public’ and ‘private signs’ in each locality and across localities. Public signs are those issued by public authorities (e.g., government, municipalities, or public agencies) while private signs are issued by individuals, associations, or private businesses that operate autonomously within the limits authorized by official regulations (Landry & Bourhis, 2007). The distinction between public and private is also discussed using the terminology ‘top down’ and ‘bottom up’ (Ben Rafael et al., 2006). ‘Top-down’ items include those issued by national and public bureaucracies including public institutions and signs on public sites while ‘bottom-up’ signs are comprised of signs issued by individual social actors including shop owners, companies, and private citizens. I will then further characterize the LL items by distinguishing between English only signs and multilingual signage, and describing which languages are being used at each site

and across sites. Then, I will discuss the social agents who administered the signs that were documented and finally, the implications for language socialization and participation.

5.1 Characteristics of the LL of Clarkston

Table 5.1.1 characterizes the linguistic landscape by distinguishing between signs that are top down and bottom up. A total of 291 items were analyzed across three locations. At the first location, Clarkston Village shopping plaza, I analyzed 92 items. Of the 92 items only 4.4% (n=4) were top down items and 95.6% (n=88) were bottom up items. The second location, Market Street retail district, yielded 79 LL items, none of which were top down items. That is 100% of the LL items (n=79) were bottom up. The final location, the Somali Plaza, contained 119 LL items of which .07 % (n=8) were top down and 93.3% (n=111) were bottom up. Across all three of the sites 4.1% (n=12) represented top down LL items and 95.9% (n=279) represented bottom up items.

Table 5.1.1 Top Down and Bottom Up LL items by area (% and number)

LL areas and total items	Top Down items	Bottom Up items.
Clarkston Village (n=92)	4.4 (n=4)	95.6 (n=88)
Market Street (n=80)	.0 (n=0)	100.0 (n=80)
Somali Plaza (n=119)	.07 (n=8)	93.3 (n=111)
Total (n=291)	4.1 (n=12)	95.9 (n=279)

The 12 top down items were all in English text and related to municipal parking rules and regulations.

In order to characterize the LL of each of the areas I chose to look more closely at the composition of bottom up LL items (n=279) by language usage. I first took note of the English only signs, the signs that were monolingual and those in a language other than English, and signs that contained two or more languages (multilingual signs). Table 5.1.2 characterizes the bottom up

LL items by individual location and language usage, across the three LL locations, and by the total English only versus multilingual signage.

As shown in Table 5.1.2, the first location, Clarkston Village retail district, had 88 bottom up LL items of which 85.2% (n=75) were English only. The remaining 14.8% (n=13) of the LL items include a language other than English. Of those signs, 6.8% (n=6) were in a language other than English, and 7.9% (n=7) contained two or more languages.

The second LL location, Market Street retail district, included 80 bottom up items of which 52.5% (n=42) used English only. The remaining 47.5% (n=38) included languages other than English. Of those signs, 21.3% (n=17) were in a language other than English, and 26.2% (n=21) included two or more languages.

The final location, the Somali Plaza, included 111 bottom up items of which 91.9% (n=102) used English only. The remaining 8.1% (n=9) included languages other than English. Of those signs, 3.6% (n=4) were in a language other than English and 11.8% (n=33) included two or more languages.

Across all three LL locations 78.5% (n=219) were English only while 21.5% (n=60) included languages other than English. Of the 60 signs 9.7% (n=27) used a language other than English and 11.8% (n=33) used two or more languages.

Table 5.1.5.2 Bottom Up LL items by Location and Language Usage (% and number)

Unofficial items by Location	English Only	Language Other than English	Two or more languages (multilingual)	Using languages other than English TOTAL
Clarkston Village (n=88)	85.2 (n=75)	6.8 (n=6)	7.9(n=7)	14.8 (n=13)
Market Street (n=80)	52.5 (n=42)	21.3 (n=17)	26.2(n=21)	47.5 (n=38)
Somali Plaza (n=111)	91.9 (n=102)	3.6 (n=4)	4.5 (n=5)	8.1 (n=9))
Total SAMPLE (n=279)	78.5(n=219)	9.7 (n=27)	11.8 (n=33)	21.5 (n=60)



Figure 5.1.1 Shop sign at a small Ethiopian business indicating in Amharic that they sell bread 'Injera' (Clarkston Village)



Figure 5.1.2 LL item utilizing three languages, English, Vietnamese, and Arabic (Clarkston Village)



Figure 5.1.3 LL item using Amharic and English. 'Balageru' means 'countryside', the Amharic says 'Balageru' (Market Street)

I further characterized the LL by documenting which languages were being used on the signs.

Table 5.1.3 indicates which languages were used across all three localities. The sample (n=60) is too small to make a significant claim, but one can see which languages are being used and perhaps see a preference pattern. Documentation of languages used on the LL gives depth to understanding the environment in Clarkston.

In Clarkston Village shopping plaza, I noted that 3 of the 13 multilingual signs were in Nepali language (only), and an additional sign was in Nepali and English. Three signs were in Burmese. Quantifying the LL items (n=38) on Market Street, I documented 12 Amharic and English signs and 6 signs using Amharic only. The 18 LL items that use Amharic demonstrate a tendency of using Amharic on public signage at the Market Street location. The Somali Plaza had the fewest occurrences of languages other than English and despite the overwhelming amount of Somali-owned businesses, the occurrence of Arabic occurred more frequently (on signage that referenced the Quran and Allah), and Amharic was present on two LL items on a music store's shop signs. Somali only occurred once on the public signs, and the sign used English with only one Somali word *Xawala* which means 'money transfer'. A total of 14 different languages were document in the LL sample location in Clarkston representing some of the languages people are using and their everyday literacy exposure.

Table 5.1.5.3 LL items by language and locality

Languages in use on LL items	Localities			TOTAL
	Clarkston Village (n=13)	Market Street (n=38)	Somali Plaza (n=9)	Overall documentation
Amharic	1	7	2	10
Arabic	---	---	3	3
Burmese	3	---	---	3
Korean	1	---	---	1
French	1	---	---	1
Lao	---	1	---	1
Nepali	3	1	---	4
Tigrinya	---	1	---	1
Vietnamese	---	1	---	1
English/Amharic	1	12	2	15
English/Arabic	1	2	---	3
English/Nepali	---	6	---	6
English/Tigrinya	1	2	---	3
English/Vietnamese	---	3	---	3
English/Vietnamese/Arabic	1	---	---	1
English/Somali	---	---	1	1
English/Hausa/Oromo	---	---	1	1
English/Vietnamese/Simplified Mandarin	---	1	---	1
English/Spanish	---	1	---	1

I further analyzed the LL items in order to look at what the individual social actors were doing with the language on the signs. Within the category of bottom up items I coded the items by type, Type 1, Type 2, and Type 3, indicating what kind of information the signs shared and who issued the use of the sign (Ben Rafael et al., 2006). The types of bottom up signs are:

Shop signs: e.g., food, clothing, bread (signs indicating items and services at a business)

Private business signs: offices, stores (signs indicating the name of the business)

Private announcements: sales or rentals of houses or apartments, job ads, ‘wanted’ ads

Table 5.1.4 shows the typology of the signs utilizing languages other than English, by locality and also the figures for total amount of each type across all three sites. It may be notable that 27 of the

signs were private announcements, mostly indicating rental opportunities. That is to say that many of the bottom up items, using languages other than English, were not store or shop signs, but signs posted by private citizens.

Table 5.1.5.4 Bottom up LL items by type within and across localities

Bottom up items by Type	Localities			TOTAL
	Clarkston Village	Market Street	Somali Plaza	
Type One (shop signs)	5	10	6	21
Type Two (private business signs)	4	6	2	12
Type Three (private announcements)	4	22	1	27



Figure 5.1.4 Type One- Nepali LL item, 'Namaste', (Clarkston Village)

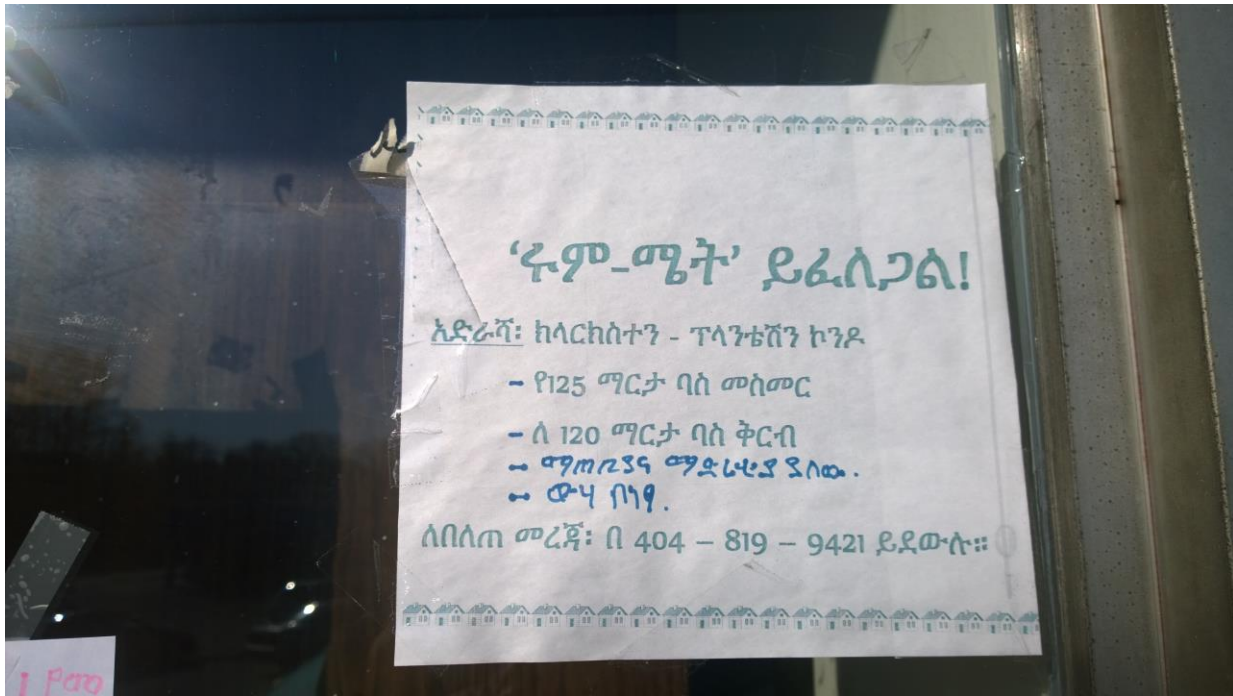


Figure 5.1.5 Type 3- Seeking Renter, Market Street

5.2 LL, Language Socialization

The documentation and characterization of the LL items serve multiple purposes. First, it documents the languages in use in a contemporary space and time and sheds light on what languages are being textually presented and used in public spaces.

It is evident that English is dominant in the three locations in Clarkston. All of the top down signage was in English. Top down signs are often related to rules and regulations, and this indicates the rather obvious importance of learning English in order to be law abiding and a good resident and citizen.

The languages in use on the LL items gives insight that can help us think about citizens of Clarkston and what their language and literacy background may look like. On the other hand, the languages that are not being used may also offer insight. The characterization of the LL of the three localities in Clarkston may give some indication of *symbolic condition value*, or the preference for

writing signs in one's own language or in one that you want to be identified (Spolsky & Cooper, 1991). The rule of *symbolic condition value* comes from Spolsky and Cooper's three rules to explain what factors account for language use on public signs. The other two rules reference the linguistic proficiencies of sign writers and readers essentially noting that people like to write in languages that they know, and like to write signs in languages their readers may read. The primary motivation of *symbolic condition value* is more of political or sociocultural preference (Spolsky & Cooper, 1991).

In line with this framework, the self-evident observation of the LL items in Clarkston is that they represent the languages that individuals know, that they like to write in, and that others' can read. The documentation of various language use (in this study, 14) indicates that the languages used by the people that frequent the three localities.

The LL items in Clarkston may reveal symbolic value:

From a desire to assert power (by controlling the languages of the sign, I declare power over the space designated) or to claim solidarity or identity (my statement of socio-cultural membership is in the language I have chosen (Spolsky & Cooper, 1991, p. 84)

Thus, the LL items I documented in Clarkston may also assert 'power' and 'solidarity' dynamics among the people. Backhaus (2006) asserts that language choice on top down or official signs is determined by power relations, but bottom up signs tend to make use of other languages in order to express solidarity. The LL items also allow sociolinguistics to pay more attention to literacy as it takes shape in public spaces (Blommaert, 2013).

It is evident that English is the de facto official language of the United States of America and in turn Clarkston as indicated by the top down English only signage as well general institutional and governmental practices, indicating power over a multilingual Clarkston. This

does not indicate that some institutions and organizations are not attempting to create multilingual items, but is what the LL items sampled may represent.

Turning attention to the concept of solidarity I can factor in the multiple occurrences of Amharic in the public signage as perhaps a community's tendency to indicate sociocultural membership (Spolsky & Cooper, 1991) In analyzing the Somali Plaza I noted that English was dominant, and there was a lack of Somali language on public signage. Applying the three rules of the framework I may assume that this may be due to the overall proficiency of Somalis ability to read and write the Somali language (Putnam & Noor, 1993). I have observed many social interactions in the plaza, and Somali is mostly being used in everyday conversations. It seems that the preference is not to use Somali on public signage, but orally. This does not come as a surprise after considering that the Somali language was only recently orthographized in the 1970s and many Somalis are not familiar with the writing system.

Perhaps the tendency to use English on the signs of Somali businesses is a mark of solidarity with the greater English speaking community, or an indication of who the business owners want to or assume will read the signs of their shops. The dominance of English in the Somali plaza's LL items raises important questions for language socialization and language learning. Does the Somali community particularly prefer English language literacy? If so, how is the greater community and the community serving newcomers choosing to linguistically socialize new refugees? It reminds me of some of my participants, and their own language use, and how it relates to their participation in both Somali constellations of practice and refugee serving CoP as well as the greater Clarkston community.

Another applicable analysis of the LL items has implications for integration, particularly in complex and superdiverse spaces (Blommaert, 2013). Superdiversity is characterized by population complexity or the "dynamic interplay of variables among an increased number of new, small and

scattered, multiple-origin, transnationally connected, socio-economically differentiated and legally stratified immigrants” (Vertovec, 2007, p. 1). Clarkston residents represent this type of population complexity. The complexity of the situation indeed presents difficulties when considering integration and also should be considered in terms of “codes, norms, inclusion, exclusion, and membership” (Blommaert, 2013, p. 50).) Blommaert asserts that LL offers insight into a space and therefore integration because it

involves learning these codes, norms and criteria – enskillment – and acting habitually in relation to them. Whenever we use space, we orient towards the messages we pick up in such spaces and we act accordingly. We identify a space as a no-go area, and area where someone like us is not welcome, and we avoid entering it. Recognizing the codes, norms and criteria of semiotized spaces is part of the vast array of knowledge that we often label as ‘social skills’ or as ‘cultural competences’. Being enskilled in them, and consequently being capable of acting by orienting towards them, is probably a good definition of ‘integration’.

Blommaert’s ideas indicate that the multilingual spaces in Clarkston offer a rich place for language socialization because they may serve as places to learn codes, norms, and criteria, or the ‘social skills’ and ‘cultural competences’ in the space. By becoming oriented to the LL and through the LL in these spaces one may in turn become more integrated.

Blommaert asserts that LL has the potential to analyze the social, cultural, and political and that it:

offers, enables, triggers, invites, prescribes, proscribes, polices or enforces certain patterns of social behavior; a space that is never no-man’s-land, but always somebody’s space; a historical space, therefore, full of codes, expectations, norms and traditions; and a space of power controlled by, as well as controlling, people. (Blommaert, 2013, p. 3)

This passage agrees with my earlier point that perhaps the dominance of English, specifically in the Somali Plaza may prescribe a particular influence on the language socialization of newcomer refugees to the community and also a power in knowing English. LL analysis is useful for “casting an ethnographic gaze” on LL items towards “insights into the social structure in which they fit.”(p.50). LL may then shed light on language, literacy, and become a participant communally because:

Signs lead us to practices, and practices lead us to people: individuals and groups who live in a given area in a particular configuration, with a particular degree of regulation and order, and with different forms of social and cultural organization in relation to each other. (Blommaert, 2013, p.50)

English usage in the Somali plaza, then, may play a role in understanding configurations and regulations among the community.

5.3 Chapter Findings

The descriptive findings in this chapter shed light on the language environment in Clarkston. Upon analysis of the LL items across three retail and business localities in Clarkston, this chapter’s findings indicate that:

- English is the dominant language and the language of top down signage
- There are 14 languages documented across three localities
- The languages present on signs indicates some description concerning the language and literacy backgrounds of individuals in the community
- The presence of signs in languages other than English may indicate solidarity among certain people (for example Amharic speakers)

- The presence of signs in English in areas such as the Somali Plaza may indicate a greater proficiency of written English in the Somali community and has implications for language socialization of newcomers in the community.
- The preference for English on LL items in the Somali Plaza may indicate a preference to move toward integration with the greater English speaking community and may indicate certain community configurations and regulations, which may be important for language learning and socialization.

6 LANGUAGE AND LITERACY: ILLUMINATING CASES OF SOMALI REFUGEE WOMEN

In this Chapter, I address the second research question:

2. How do Somali refugee women perceive their language and literacy practices? What are their observed language and literacy practices? What factors do they attribute their success and/or struggles? How might these factors affect the process of language socialization in the refugee serving CoP?

A major motivation for this research is to better understand the historical, political, and social processes that affect the language socialization of Somali refugee women. There is little information about the everyday literacy practices of refugees, in particular, Somali refugee women. I have chosen to present the participants' perceptions of their language and literacy and accounts of success and struggle individually, by each participant, in order to represent their unique experiences and practices. Due to the participant's various backgrounds and experiences each section below differs slightly in length and topical areas.

I have incorporated extracts from the interviews that represent participant's views and experiences. I utilize their own words as much as possible in order to reflect "vernacular interpretations" of their experiences with language and literacy (Barton & Hamilton, 1998, p.64). I discuss the themes relevant to the research questions in the case of each participant, although it is important to note that there are varying levels of contributions made by the participants. Some of the participants divulged more about their lives and experiences while others shared less. I will also include my observations and excerpts from my field notes when they are relevant. I have also included participants' experiences participating in the CoP in order to deepen the understanding of the context. After discussing each woman's case individually, I will share a cross case analysis of what their experiences may contribute to their language socialization, FoK, and implications for language socialization of Somali refugee women in the CoP.

6.1 Hannah

Hannah's case highlights her experiences with language and literacy and her first experiences with formal schooling. It also demonstrates how ideologies (Van Dijk, 2005; Schiefflin & Ochs, 1986) play a role in language socialization processes. Hannah's case begins with her first encounter with formal schooling and discusses her experiences across her lifespan up until the period when she began working in the CoP. A critical incident in Hannah's case includes her family's decision and the unique measures her family took to help her language socialization and participation in American society. Her case also reveals how language, Somali and English, became a key element for her professional development.

Early on in her childhood Hannah and her family moved from Somalia to Damascus, Syria as refugees. Hannah and her family experienced an array of challenges after resettling, but Hannah indicated that entering the school system in Syria was perhaps her biggest challenge. It was a difficult transition not only because she was in a new place, with a new language, but because she

was also exposed to racialized discourse. She recalls her classmates in Syria calling her ‘Kit Kat’ in a demeaning manner, in reference to her darker skin tone. The environment for starting in a new school, for her, was not welcoming and remains a critical incident she reflects on in her life.

Hannah’s experience aligns with Bigelow’s (2008) assertion that racialization of Somali adolescent occurs across contexts for Somali immigrants and is in part used to maintain an “us and them” status quo.

6.1.1 Hannah’s language and literacy practices

Hannah’s experience with learning multiple languages started fairly early on. In her Syrian elementary school she was learning Arabic as a second language and as she also started to study English. She described her classes in Syria, as follows:

I studied Arabic. I had to go to special classes like a ESL but it’s like in Arabic, like a second language course, just for me. And, also, we learned, we had an Islamic study class and we had English class. One English class once a week. And French. So you had to select either English or French. So English was easier for me so, 5th grade I took English.
(Hannah, Interview 1)

When she moved to Minnesota, at age 12, Hannah was placed in the 8th grade. She recalls her first experiences with learning English, as seen below:

H: We took ESL.

C: Ok.

H: From, yeah, I mean we came in May so I only attended 8th grade about a month or so

C: Mm-hmm.

H: So, then they didn’t count that as any credit, but after you know August when school started again, September, I went to high school 9th grade, and that’s when I too like long period of ESL classes.

(Hannah, Interview 1)

Hannah’s first experiences learning English in America are important to consider in light of her language socialization; she was placed in school when her family resettled, and only attended a few weeks before the beginning of summer break. She spent an entire summer living in the United States without learning English. Hannah recalls that learning English was very difficult for her.

She didn't speak English with her family at home, though her younger brothers eventually began to speak English to each other. She describes the languages that were used in her household, in her own words:

H: We only spoke Somali inside the house, but then, you know my brothers were younger, so they started speaking only English. Actually, we only spoke Arabic, my siblings only spoke Arabic at home, but then when they went to school and started learning English, they were too excited about practicing over and over again, so they only spoke English.

C: But you, so you at home, would you speak Arabic and Somali, or?

H: I spoke Arabic and Somali. I spoke Arabic to my siblings, Somali to my parents
(Hannah, Interview 1)

Arabic became the language she and her siblings used in the home because they had become so familiar with using Arabic in Syria. Hannah considers her lack of participation in the community a factor shaping her English use; she had few opportunities to use, or try to use, English outside of her home in her first years in Minnesota. She articulates this in the following exchange:

C: How was the process of learning English for you?

H: Well, comparing, if I compare myself to my siblings, I thought it was easier for younger people because they're not afraid to make mistakes. Um, I didn't really learn-become fluent in English until I was 20.

C: Mmhmm

H: Like 8 years later after I moved here.

C: Mmhmm

H: Because I wasn't allowed to make any friends, I didn't watch much TV. So basically, it was a lot harder for me to learn English than my, you know younger siblings.

(Hannah, Interview 1)

Hannah's perception is that the language practices in her home, and the restrictions put on her social life hindered her English language socialization. She also indicates that she did not watch television, which she believes could have helped her to learn English. Hannah shares that her gender played a critical role in her ability to use English, as seen in the following excerpt:

H: at the beginning because my parents had this fear always about, you know, the female getting abducted. So I wasn't allowed to do much, I wasn't even allowed to take the trash out. (laughs)

C: Ok. (laughs)

H: yeah, but, after the- you know um, we adjusted to the culture, they become less controlling, they were more relaxed,

C: Yeah.

H: so I was allowed to do things, you know, walk to the gas station, or to, you know, nearby places.

(Hannah, Interview 1)

Though Hannah laughs when she reflects on her parents' restrictions, she acknowledges that irrational fear was a part of her family's cultural adjustment, and that affected her language socialization, her socialization to and through language (Schiefflin & Ochs, 1986). During the first few years of living in American, most of Hannah's opportunities to use English and make friends were in her English as a Second Language (ESL) classes.

C: And who were your friends- did you have a lot of friends in high school, I guess?

H: Um, no, because of the language barrier.

C: Ok.

H: My brother was in – you know, he was in still middle school. I was in high school. Somalis – Somali- yeah I mean, the refugees started coming in a few years later,

C: Mmhmm

H: like when I was in 11th grade or so.

C: Mm-hmm

H: But like from 9th or 10th and 11th, I only had friends as exchange students from China and you know people from Thailand.

C: People in your ESL class. And

H: Yeah, those were my friends.

(Hannah, Interview 1)

Hannah indicates that she was not given many opportunities to use English outside of her ESL class, the place where she used English the most and for three years, her only friends were other international students that she had met in ESL. Hannah would have liked to have participated more, and wanted to participate in more social and extracurricular activities. But her parents' ideologies influenced her participation. In her own words:

H: My parents couldn't understand like how we just fit in very quick (**C:** yeah) like you know there's a homecoming dance, and Sadie's dance, and things like that the prom and my parents were like 'What? What is that?' you know they didn't understand the fact that this was so important for you know (**C:** Socialization.) yeah. Exactly and they thought everything was really you know so I didn't participate but my siblings did. I only went to prom and it was actually secret. (**C:** Really?) Yeah, I went to my senior year prom I couldn't go to junior year prom but and it was secret... (**C:** How did you do it?) Yes I did it was another Somali older actually he was much older than me but he fit in so yeah he took

me to the prom and we had fun but I mean the- my parents perspective of um you know the prom was different than us- it was just like you know dancing, having fun, going to the dinner, and riding the limo, and things like that (laughter) but yeah... but my parents they stereotype and what they hear from the other Somali parents it was like, “Woah. Prom night is that when you go out and have sex and you know do all these bad things and you know.” That’s that was their negative idea of them going to the prom but for me it was just like having fun.

(Hannah, Interview 2)

Hannah’s experience with trying to ‘fit in’ and get involved in the youth culture did not come as surprising. It seems that she did probably fit in, and had the potential to have friends, she just wasn’t afforded many opportunities to interact with people other than in school and with her family because of her parents’ precautionary tendencies.

6.1.2 Strategies for successful language socialization

When observing Hannah, and speaking with her, it is evident that at some point she successfully learned English. I’ve observed her to be very proficient with the English language; she uses a diverse set of language practices in order to interpret for her clients. Hannah and her family created a space for her to learn English. She offered the following experiences to explain her perception of how she achieved her English language skills:

C: So how do you think you actually came to learn English then? What helped you?

H: Well, when I was 20, I have lived with this family that I met, one of my teachers um offered her sister Kathy really wants to know more about Somali culture. She’s- she fall in love with the Somalis because most of the women you know are or- anyone – men or women – they were very obedient,

C: Mmhmm

H: you know very nice. She wants to have her kids mingle with that culture. So I lived with her for one year.

(Hannah, Interview 1)

Hannah commented that the reason her parents were comfortable with her living with another family was in part because they had all daughters, and no boys, so this increased their trust in the situation. Also her father who at that time was a leader in the Somali community and doing work similar to what we do at the Center, trusted the host family deeply. Hannah greatly attributes her

experience living with an American, English speaking family to learning to use English. In the exchange below, Hannah discusses some of the activities she engaged in with her ‘foster’ family:

C: And what like rituals or habits do you remember that family having that-?

H: Yeah, I mean a lot of the things, like Somalis, both of my parents were working opposite shifts. So we didn’t have really time to all sit in the table and eat together, but you know this family ate breakfast together, dinner together,

C: Mmhmm

H: everyone packed their own lunch, things like that. So I’ve learned, you know, going on Saturdays and Sundays, they always had things planned to do, especially in the summer time. We would go to um the river

C: Mmhmm

H: And they had, you know, do different kinds of activities. They were always busy doing things. (laughs)

(Hannah, Interview 1)

Hannah’s time living with this family not only afforded her opportunities to use and practice her English but also opportunities to engage in activities and outings that may be typical of American families, things like sitting around a table, eating, and talking about their day and going on weekend excursions. She began to do things, and interact, using English. Until then, she hadn’t been able, or allowed, to get out of her house and socialize. It’s not that she was completely confined to her house – after living in the United States for several years she believes her parents adjusted to understand some of the social aspects of being a teenager in the United States. For example, in 11th grade she worked at Burger King, flipping burgers. This is also when she began to save money to go to college and get a car. She expressed that when she had the job and was earning money she began to feel like an ‘American girl’. Hannah recalls around the same time when she started to feel like an American girl, other Somalis were moving into Minnesota. She said she began to help out a lot, teaching newcomers about life in America. Not only had she experienced what it was like being new first hand, her father was a community leader and, in her own words:

H: Actually I was helping a lot, like walking kids through the school system, you know, parents, making phone calls, stuff like that. **(C):** Ok, so you were an interpreter at a young age. (laughs) (Hannah, Interview 1)

Hannah expressed that although she had aspirations to other careers, she always wanted to be a social worker. This is not surprising considering her father's work. In her own words:

I always wanted to be a social worker (C: okay.) or be involved in community I'm very open and um very friendly I like to you know I wanted to go to medical school but that was impossible for me because um I didn't have the e enough resources and at that time my parents were still like new so they didn't have much resource either but um after we you know my older sister came to join us and we get to know this American you know system of education very well you know and it gave it open doors for my younger siblings
(Hannah, Interview 2)

After her year with her foster family, Hannah returned to living with her parents. She said that at that time, staying home and attending college was her only choice:

Yeah, like going to school out of state or you know away from home oh that was like a no-no to them like my pa... my dad like was like 'No, you stay and live at home until you get married.' So...
(Hannah, Interview 2)

So, living at home, she attended college for her Associate's degree in Liberal Arts. She mentioned it took her more than the average amount of time to complete the degree, because, in her words:

And, I finished because of my language skills, actually took me longer to even get that Associate degree because I have to take ESL classes. Um, you know to complete all the requirements before you get. So I get the Associate's degree in 2004.
(Hannah, Interview 1)

From a language socialization perspective, language learning happens across the lifespan (Schiefflin & Ochs, 1986). To Hannah, language was still barrier because as she shares, even into her 20s while she was attending college, she felt that she was still learning English. Her perception is that having to take language classes delayed her graduation. She told me that in 2004, she could have transferred and continued on to obtain a Bachelor's degree, but, she decided to obtain employment as an interpreter for her home county. She told me:

H: Well, because my skills were needed, I mean, every time-everywhere I go, people would approach me because most of the Somalis started coming there, and you know, language, Somali was high demand (C): Yeah H: so that give me you know opportunity to jump in and take advantage of

(Hannah, Interview 1)

Hannah worked for the county helping administer the food stamp program to Somali families. After about one year working for the county, she joined a small interpretation firm. Her interpreting experience extended to many contexts including some legal and medical interactions. After working for a while as an interpreter, Hannah met her husband. She said that they were very compatible, and marriage would give her an opportunity to move out of her house, which she was eager to do. After her marriage, she moved to Atlanta. She worked for a short time outside of the interpretation field, and also began to do some interpretation independently for Language Line, a call-in interpretation service used by many institutions, and as an employee she is able to work from home. When she became pregnant with her first son, she was able to continue working from home as an interpreter for Language Line.

In reference to raising children and her family, Hannah shared that she and her husband practice Islam, though they are ‘not in the mosque’ all the time, nor does she care to cover her hair, except for when she comes to the Center in the Somali Plaza. She indicated that she and her husband chose to enroll their boys in an Islamic private school, so that they could be raised with the same values she and her husband were raised with, as well as the same languages. She wants them to be multilingual and makes it a point to speak Somali to them, and they try to speak it from time to time. We discussed:

C: And um, do, do they, your kids learn Arabic there?

H: Yes, they’re learning Arabic and they’re learning Islamic studies there as well.

C: Ok. Um, so what language do you speak with your children at home and to your husband?

H: Um, English and Somali. Um, They can follow directions in Somali but they won’t respond. (laughs)

C: When they’re in trouble, do you yell at them in Somali? (laughs)

H: Oh, yes, most of the time. It comes out naturally.

C: Yeah, aww. Um, so they’re not talking in Somali yet or?

H: No, Sometimes, my older son copies me when he's upset with his little brother. He will say a few words that I say to him in Somali. One of those like 'daanyeer' which is monkey. (laughs) That's my favorite, like, word to call them.
(Hannah, Interview 1)

Hannah is very active in her children's education and in particular their language learning. Not only does she help out as a homeroom mother at their school, but she has shown me multiple videos of her teaching her sons to read, using tools such as flashcards and small books. She and her husband place a high value on their language and literacy skills.

6.1.3 Experiences in the CoP

At the time of the study, aside from raising her family, a large part of Hannah's life involved working at the Center. She shared with me that often the clients can't place her accent because she has lived various places and has her own idiosyncratic Somali accent. From what I have observed, Hannah, is an 'old-timer' in the CoP, she is somewhat on the periphery. Hannah is open about the difficulties of working in the male dominated Somali community and experienced first-hand some of the unrest that it has caused her. She has always had the sense that she is not fully respected and that at times, the community didn't see her as competent or qualified, perhaps because she was a woman. Hannah's position in the CoP as a caseworker has been filled by several different women. The position itself is very political, and it is always a point of contention among the board of directors who will be hired, and from whose tribe, so when someone takes the position, all eyes are on that individual. Hannah has expressed this pressure coming from the community. She has also shared how that pressure influences the way she presents herself in the community. For example, she mentioned that she doesn't usually cover her hair (wear a hijab), but began to do so when she began working in the CoP.

Hannah reveals her own struggles as a woman in the CoP, and also sheds light on what it is like to be a newcomer refugee woman. She shares her observations:

Well, there's a lot of women who come here because they are single mothers and they wanted to work and make change. And I've noticed most of them are really hard working women, I couldn't do it myself, you know, without my husband, but for them [...] I admire that [they] come here with you know 5, 6 kids and [they] have to work and at the same time providing for her children, taking them to the mosque, you know, still want to maintain that Islamic value, but I noticed they don't get a lot of support from the male community members, because they considered women, like, you know, they expect them to stay at home. (Hanna, Interview 1)

Hannah indicates that many of the women who seek assistance at the Center want to make changes in their lives, but are not always supported by the men in the community who believe that they should stay at home and take care of their children, even if they are single mothers and need to provide for their children. Hannah shares her experiences with how women are treated when they seek services at the Center, and the perceptions that are held about the newcomer women in the CoP. She then indicates that she wishes that she could provide more support to the women who want to work and shares her own experiences as a working Somali woman.

When I see a man or a woman walk in there, ok? Usually we look at the man because we expecting them to go out and work instead of encouraging both of them as household members and look opportunities you know what's out there for both to do better. But Somalis, we don't look like that. Usually we give all the support to the men, because we think that they're the breadwinners. But in America it's different. Yeah, so I would love to give that support to the women that they can also make it. They can also make it because if a woman becomes independent, she becomes the provider, she has you know, in the Somali household, she has respect. I've notice that. I mean, I'm one of them. Yeah, I mean, I work. I've been working since I met my husband. And I see that you know. If anything, God forbid, happens to my husband, I can step in and take care of my kids. But, I hate to see a lot of the women get discouraged just because they're women.
(Hannah, Interview 1)

In this excerpt, Hannah is referencing women's participation in the CoP, they are eager to make better for themselves, and obtain employment, but their goal is not always easily attainable. In part, and from what Hannah has described, they are not seen as legitimate participants and are subjected to gender-based ideologies.

I have observed multiple times over the past years what happens when a single mother comes to the Center. In line with what Hannah is saying, some women want to find jobs, which is

not always easy due to their previous work experience or lack thereof, their changing role as head of the household, as well as the many other factors such as trauma and stress that they have experienced. Sometimes due to gender-based ideologies that Hannah has referenced among Somalis, as well as constraints on the Center such as time and grant specifications, the easiest thing to do is help a refugee woman seek out and obtain public assistance.

Hannah's perceptions of the struggles that Somali women face when they are resettled as single mothers aligns with my observations of women in the CoP, they are not always seen as agents of their own future, or given the opportunity to try to obtain something different that might support their household's wellbeing. Unfortunately, this is because of their gender. Hannah's expands her perception of what goes on with some of the women, and what they are told to do as women in the community.

Yeah, and most of them tell their young girls, you know, ok, you're only good to not to have higher education, but as soon as she finishes high school just to be a wife and have kids. And I will love to change that, I wanted to make sure young girls go to school, have careers, at the same time also consider family. (Hannah, Interview 1)

Hannah mentions the tension between women's current situation's and traditional gender roles in the community. The ideological influences in the CoP create a tension. Some members of the community want women to stay in the home, out of the public eye, while at the same time they want to see women because self-sufficient. Despite such tension, Hannah has hope for future generations and wants to make a change.

6.1.3.1 Hannah's perception of women's FoK

Hannah has a positive outlook that future generation of Somali women will have different experiences. She also believes that women in the Somali community have untapped skills and resources or FoK. FoK tend to "be dismissed as low-status, or common-sense, possessed in some

form or other by everyone” (Houghton, 2010, p.69). In particular, she sees women’s creative use of language as an FoK. She explains:

Most of them [women in the community] know this, I know some women who earned money for doing their poets [poetry]. So when there’s a wedding, they’ll come, and I wish one of the weddings come soon and maybe I can take you, and you can see, they do special dances with their poems and they get paid each wedding about \$1000, just for saying those verses something complement about her tribe or background or things like that. (Hannah, Interview 1)

Hannah also shares other FoK of women that frequent the CoP, skills that they use daily for their own wellbeing and others that that used to be able to do in order to make a living. She shares:

Most of them have really sewing skills and housekeeping skills, you know, that’s why they hold onto those housekeeping jobs, you know, whenever we help them, because that’s what they were taught. You know? Most of them actually made a living as, you know, a tailor. So you would be amazed some of them, the work that they can do with their hands. (Hannah, Interview 1)

Hannah discusses spoken word and poetry skills among women in the community. This skill may not offer a full time job, though it seems that it has potential as a way to make money. Hannah mentioned that women also work with their hands and have the ability to do household related skills. I have met several women who are master seamstresses and one older woman who does a traditional Somali method of weaving with scraps of fabric. Hannah shared more about the tradition of spoken word and poetry as a popular literacy form in the Somali community. She told described her own wedding and the type of content that these poems sometimes have:

Yes, most things like a prayer, like, “I hope you have a son when you get married! A son! A son!” And it happened that I had two boys back to back (laughs) You know? So yeah, they value men, boys in yeah. So, still, it’s in my memory how constantly they were saying oh this poet- this poetry. Sorry, I’m still mispronouncing things, but yeah. (Hannah, Interview 1)

In this excerpt, Hannah revealed yet another ideology and discourse that favors men. She shared the poetry that was created for her very own wedding.

I asked Hannah, what she felt the women in the community felt about their status, and what it may mean to them in terms of their language learning, and if she saw a motivation for the women to learn and English and what she sees as their goals with language learning and otherwise. She said:

Yes, most of them really, um, because they realize that if you can't communicate, they cannot express their thoughts you know in the proper way. If sometimes some of them, I'll try to help interpret, but they want to speak at the same time. So that shows me the urge that they- or the desperate need to learn English, and most of them do really get excited, especially the women. They learn a few, you know, things, they'll come and tell me about it and I will correct them. I remember, I have a friend who is not a client of the community but she goes to the library all the time. And the other day, she asked me to call her and check if her voicemail, she recorded it in English. And I loved it! (laughs) Because she's like, she's very ashamed to practice or speak. So she started recording herself and will listen over and over again. And I said that's a good way. (C: That's a really good way) So, she started with her voicemail.
(Hannah, Interview 1)

Hannah indicates that she knows women that are eager to learn, but also have inhibitions.

From my observations as well as what Hannah has shared, it is apparent that there is a genuine interest among Somali women to learn English and begin to participate, but there are barriers, greater than the language barrier holding them back. I would like to conclude Hannah's section by offering her visions for the education of Somali refugee women and the CoP. Her ideas for education are as follows:

I think I would start with, you know, things that they could use in their basic daily needs. Like, first start with their address, telephone number, their name, the name of all their kids. You know, just like teaching Pre-K. Maybe have some interaction with their kids. Then you know they feel, not to feel that shame. You know when you're learning, it just like you're a kid who's just learning their first steps. So I would start with that, things like you know, their addresses, their name, their phone number, you know if they have health conditions, how they can, you know, at least get help, you know, safety issues, things like that. Then I would move into the you know, next chapter of, you know, and teaching them about, you know, the lifestyle here. You know, most of them, this is what's proper, you know, job skills, you know, how to do applications, you know, what is expected, you know? Things like that. (Hannah, Interview 1)

She indicates that education of Somali refugee women needs to be very practical and based on their

daily needs and also themes that help them to understand American culture and way of life.

Hannah expresses hope for the CoP, and the women that she works with at the Center. She also shares that the CoP has many complications and that some of the people in the CoP are not even qualified. In her own words:

I'm hoping that, you know, my experience here in the Somali community, things change from the leadership. You know, everyone cannot be a leader, but I've noticed there's a lot of ego and a lot of people on our board members are not even qualified to even give advice, because most of them I notice are really looking what's in their best interest, as looking for the community, or the vulnerable people we're helping. So I wanted to make sure we just select better leaders next time, um, I mean I would love to one day establish my own organization where I can help women and change that mind, of you know, it's all about having kids and getting married. I want to encourage them to go further and finish school and establish a career and give to their community, you know, back to the community. And at the same time, have lives just like, you know, just like any other American woman. (Hannah, Interview 1)

Hannah indicates her desire change in the CoP and among the women themselves.

6.2 Faith

Faith's case highlights her experiences with language and literacy growing up in Somalia, Kenya, and Clarkston. She shares experiences that have affected her educational paths and shares the gender-based ideologies that she has had to overcome, as well as her experiences in the CoP.

6.2.1 Faith's language and literacy practices

Faith did not attend school during her early childhood in Somalia, and when she moved to Kenya with her family from Somalia, she was not attending a traditional subject based school, but she recalled her mother doing some home schooling. Her mother had completed high school, while her father did not complete his education

Faith believes her own upbringing was not very orthodox. She shared with me that her father's family was from a lower status and her mother's family was more affluent. Her mother's approach and mentality was to educate her daughters and give them opportunity. Faith recalls particular language and literacy practices going on in her home when she was a young child. She

shares memories of her own language socialization, in her family, through storytelling, as she explained it:

Yeah, I remember in Kenya. I think a thing a lot of things Somalis do is tell fictional stories, so rather than reading a book; I remember our grandmother would talk to us. I remember it would be night time and she'd tell a story. So, it could be fiction at times. That's how I've been able to remember some of the stories and some of the stuff that has happened to Somalia because we used to sit around a lot and just talk and just listen. I think that's more of a bedtime story. And it could be as fiction as it gets, but it would be so interesting.
(Faith, Interview 1)

Faith recalls her grandmother having a rather large impact on her language use. She explained:

My grandma always used to talk about--there were poor people who could come by and knock on the house because we had a huge big door; that's why we didn't know when those robbers were coming; we weren't able to see. They'll come and they'll say a certain phrase to try to get your attention in order for you to give them food, so I remember the phrase, and once I heard the phrase I would tell them, "No, we don't have no food -- get away."
(laughs)
(Faith, Interview 1)

Her recollection of storytelling as a form of language socialization is not surprising given the richness of Somali oral tradition. I asked Faith what kind of exposure she had to other languages and she said that in Kenya she was exposed to Swahili, though she never really used it. She indicated that she would like to learn it. I asked her if her parents explicitly taught her how to read and write in Somali as seen below:

F: I don't really remember. I remember they were really strict about the Qur'an
C: And was that in Somali or Arabic?
F: Arabic
C: So you do know some Arabic.
F: Yeah, but reading it; I don't really know what I'm reading.
(Faith, Interview 1)

After learning about some of Faith's early language learning experience, she described her early exposure to the English language at an early age both in Kenya and the US:

Well, I think we learned there [Kenya] too, because a lot of the TV shows are in English, y'know, so I guess being a kid you just watch and try to make your own little imaginary things you think they're saying. But, yeah, it was mostly when we came here, we were able to go ahead and learn. And I'm definitely grateful that we came here a young age, because we were able to learn pretty quickly

(Faith, Interview 1)

Faith is aware that her resettlement at a young age may have been beneficial to her English language learning experience. Nonetheless, she experienced self-doubt in school and it took some time for her to 'pick up' English. She said:

F: I think learning in school was--I think there were times I had difficulties and I think that is because I have a huge doubt. Most likely it wasn't because the school system they were very helpful and there were teachers who were available to help -- like regular classes and then an hour with the ESOL classes which was very very helpful.

Faith shares that she believes she became comfortable with English, particularly reading and writing in English, during her middle school years. She also discusses her English classes and how they made her feel. In her words:

F: I think now, I know after elementary school. Cause I used to write, and always keep the notes that I wrote. When I look back at it --some of my sisters threw some of it away when I moved to Minnesota -- but, um, I'll have to say it'd have to be middle school. Cause I didn't understand why. I still felt like it was a negative thing

C: 'Cause they were pulling you out?

F: Yeah, like I wasn't smart as the other kids, so that's why I needed extra help. I think--once I reached seventh grade it took me that long to understand that they are there to help. Even now, my little sister, who's 8, she just told me they put her in an ESOL class or whatever, but she was born here. Her grades are very well. And last year she won the spelling bee contest. She doesn't understand and I don't either. I don't know why they did that.

(Faith, Interview 1)

Faith's comments indicate that her ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) classes made her have negative feelings and that she didn't understand as a child why she was being separated. She also indicates that she is still perplexed by this method of ESOL that her youngest sister is required to participate in.

Faith comments that she had a lot of doubt in herself as a young girl. Speaking with her today, I would never have guessed that, but I think some of that doubt may be attributed to the fact that she is a very serious student. She also indicates that she did not speak a lot of English at home.

She describes home language use as follows:

My brothers and sisters: mostly English; my Mom doesn't speak English, so I have to speak Somali to her. And I think that's the main reason I still kind of know Somali. My Mom always talks to us in Somali; my Dad does the same, but there will be times he talks to us in English (Faith, Interview 1)

Faith discussed the concern she had for doing well in school and also shared her literacy practices related to higher education. She revealed how much she had to work to achieve her degrees. She explain her practices as follows:

A typical day usually consisted of a lot of homework and a lot of reading. But, usually, when it comes to school, I'm pretty serious. Because I was the first to graduate. My sisters went to college, but they didn't [graduate]. She [Faith's sister] didn't finish because she gave birth when she was a senior in high school. And she got married, too. So she's always been off and on, off and on. I was the first to get my undergraduate degree, and I was the first to have my masters in my whole family in general (Faith, Interview 1)

Faith's graduation is a source of pride. She explains her success.

I like to keep going. In school I usually stay very focused, especially when I have the hold of what I need to do: go to class, you don't miss days, and you just get things done. So, I always went to class, I always did my homework. Throughout the semester I would go to class every day. 'Cause it was only an hour, you know; there was no purpose of missing it. (Faith, Interview 1)

6.2.2 Education, Independence, and Family attitudes

Faith's dedication to her education is apparent as well as her determination to succeed.

Though she found success, she also acknowledges that she faced gender-based ideologies along the way. She experienced some difficulty in convincing her father that she should or could do certain things. She explained:

In our own home, sometimes my dad will say "You're a woman you can't..." And I say "so what, I'm a woman, why can't I do as much as a man" In a way, I think his views have changed because I have siblings who have also gone off to school. It's just crazy in the Somali community -- and other cultures too-- for so long they made it seem like women can't do as much as men, but I think women are starting to realize, "yes, we can." And I think that's how I think feminism has come into existence in the Somali community. Because there's a lot of women who try to fight for women's right.

(Faith, Interview 2)

Faith mentions a ‘yes we can’ ideology that is present among the women in her life. Her mother has instilled this ideology in her. As she explains her mother does not have the typical mentality of a Somali woman when it comes to gender and participation:

...at home, my Mom she doesn't really go by--I know a lot of women have to listen to their husbands -- my mom isn't like that; she's open-minded, and I think she gets that from her father. I think it goes back to the kind of household you grew up in. I mean, my Mom cooks, but I know also that's not her only role. Of course, she got a high school diploma. In America, that's not much. But in Africa, in high school, they learn a lot; they know a lot. She's -- I think growing up at home; she didn't really listen to him. He doesn't really tell her what to do. I think that's where I get my own style of not listening to “the man” comes from

(Faith, Interview 1)

Faith suggests her experience of going to college was a huge accomplishment, and something that made her stand out from the rest of her family. Faith found inspiration from her mother to pursue education at a higher level, despite pressure to stay home. She describes her experience below:

Yeah. Even back to just at home--I was the first to move out of my parent's house. I was the first to be able to go out and be a woman. Now that I've done that my sisters are able to do that, too, because, they see that. My dad kind of put a fear in us saying, “You're a woman; you can't go away” My mom is not like that --I'd rather tell my Mom. When I left Minnesota my dad found out the day before, which my Mom already knew and told me she was okay with it. My Dad still has that mindset of “Oh, you're a woman and this and that” it just goes in one ear and out the other

(Faith, Interview 1)

Faith's move to go to college, out of the state of Georgia, to Minnesota, was a pronounced way of pursuing higher education, in her family. In order to live out her goals, she had to challenge her father's ideas, go against his wishes, and hide her intentions to move until the last moment possible. Her mother's and sisters' support encouraged her.

At the time of the study, Faith was living at her parents' home, seeking employment after graduating with her Master's degree. She was once again in a position to move out of her home,

and she was once again getting some disapproval from her father. She believes there are reasons she was working at the Center:

My Mom has been supportive; my Dad to this day he wants me to stay here, to stay home, but he knows that there's no way. Yeah, he even told [the director of the Center] that I have to stay here.
(Faith, Interview 2)

Faith shared that the reason she was working at the Center as a case manager for a few months was because of her father and his attempt to keep her at home after returning from university in Minnesota. He had personally talked to the director in order to try to secure a job for Faith. Faith discusses her father's attempts to keep her close to home:

C: Do you think he feels tension that you're working in the community now? Do you think that influences him?

F: Yeah he also told [the director] that I wanted to leave...so that's how I think [the director] came to try to get me to be here...but me being here doesn't change my views. He wants me to be home. Even when I was leaving on my trip to San Francisco; he didn't even know--I just left. I openly do that.
(Faith, Interview 2)

Faith was looking for other jobs the duration of her time working as a case manager at the Center.

She explains her career goals and her family's resistance to her goals below:

Yeah in terms of like having goals...like moving out after I find a job. I was talking to my sister and she was like "It's not right you are going to be moving out. I can't believe you are moving out!" But that's what I worked for. I am trying to leave a comfortable life, not trying to live under someone's rules. I'm, sorry that she said that because we have a lot of the same views, almost the same views. But when she said that I was like "Are you crazy? After I have worked so hard to live a comfortable life, to live on my own." I don't know where she got that from...I bet someone probably hit her on the head (laughs)
(Faith, Interview 1)

Faith was able to overcome some of the traditional gender based barriers. Her determination and negotiation of competing ideologies within her family played a role in her socialization.

6.2.3 Experiences in the CoP

6.2.3.1 Racialization

As a case manager at the Center, Faith, although only for a temporary time, was an integral member of the CoP. Even so, she was not always perceived to be a member of the CoP. This was in part because people, other Somalis, often did not perceive her to be Somali. I have observed multiple occasions in the Center when someone walks in to seek assistance and they will completely ignore Faith, at her desk, assuming she isn't Somali. They will sit down and look around, also assuming (correctly) that I speak only English. Faith usually has to initiate the conversation with the client. They then realize that she is in fact Somali.

I observed similar behavior one day when Faith was working with us at the after school program. She was sitting at a table helping a group of children with their homework. At that point, she had only been speaking English with the children. She overheard one of the boys at the table talking to his brother about a drawing he was completing. He said something along the lines of "who is that girl, you gave her a big old behind". Faith wasn't pleased with his discussion so she decided to intervene. In English, she told the boy that he better "watch his mouth". He told her that he didn't say anything bad. They then went back and forth discussing what he said until the boy said something along the lines of "you aren't Somali, so you don't know". Up until that point, Faith had been trying to conduct the conversation in English, and so she finally spoke to him in Somali. He was shocked and remained silent the remainder of the program period.

I've discussed these misidentifications with Faith, and she said that perhaps it is because she doesn't have "typical Somali features" and people think that she is "African-American" rather than "Somali-American". My own initial perception of Faith was that she wasn't Somali, in part because of her atypical features, and because when she first visited the Center she did not cover her hair, unlike most of the Somali women that visit. Faith's experience is yet another example of the

“racialization” that occurs (Bigelow, 2008)

6.2.3.2 Gender-based ideologies

Faith shares that the members of the CoP need to be educated about gender. Having experienced firsthand gender based ideologies in her home and in the community, she said:

I think I would try to educate them on the cultural components. Somalians have a hard time trying to separate culture and religion and I would try educate them on those differences. For example, when it comes to men and women, it doesn't say nowhere that men are supposed to have more freedom than women. They try to make it seem like it's the religion too, because like my Dad has done that before, but after I knew that's not true, I was like “No.”

(Faith, Interview 2)

Faith believes that members of the CoP need to understand that religion does not influence the freedom of women, but the culture and the ideas. She comments that her own father has this belief and that it influences his own thinking.

6.3 Mama Mouna

6.3.1 Mama Mouna's language and Literacy practices

Mama Mouna went to school for a short period of time while she was growing up in Somalia. She has the ability to read and write at a basic level in Somali and also speaks some Arabic. Her Somali oral skills still play a major role in her everyday interactions, and she has been in and out of various English classes over the past 5 years.

I was able to observe Mama Mouna during some of her English classes that were held on Saturdays at the Center. One of the times I observed her I was co-teaching the class, it was a small class with about 5 women, and the director of the Center came into the classroom to check on how the class was going. From my point of view the class was going well, everyone was interacting with the lesson content, talking, and it seemed they were enjoying it. When the director came in,

Mama Mouna's, and the other women's demeanors changed. They became more timid and the smiles left from their faces. I remember the director started talking about Mama Mouna to me and the other teacher in English, and I said, why you don't tell her, she will understand. The director replied something along the lines of, "no, they don't know English". I corrected him, and said, no, they do know enough. He told me they must just be 'shy' in front of him. (Field notes, April 19th, 2012). This experience and observation indicated several things to me. First, that the director had no sense of these women's English language skills. Either he didn't try to talk with them in English or they resisted talking with in English. In addition, this incident potentially points toward relations of gender and power in the CoP.

Mama Mouna's English language learning has always been critical throughout her time living in Clarkston. Her comfort level in her English classes are not very high, as she indicates in her discussion of her first ESL class below:

C: Tell me about you know, your English classes when you first came. How that journey has been.

M: It was very difficult because I'm used to Somali and Arabic, and when I came here, and, the teacher was speaking English and explaining the lessons in English. I was very frustrated. Very difficult. Very confused. So, I was just basically it there.

I: That's how she described. She just was it there.

C: Yeah, She just sat there (Mama Mouna, Interview 1)

Mama Mouna's statement "I was just basically it there" represents a critical incident in her English language learning experience. She felt like an 'it' in her classroom, not a person, but just a thing, or a nobody. Language socialization, socialization to and through languages, requires some element of engagement, and Mama Mouna was disengaged, in her ESL class. This is not because she doesn't want to learn English. She in fact does, and Mama Mouna sees learning English as her biggest challenge. She acknowledges that her lack of English increases her reliance on the CoP. In her own words:

That's my challenge, um, task, but it's always on my thoughts and my plan to...I mean it's very difficult when I have to come to the community for resources, you know, such as

getting a ride to the hospital or to the immigration or to places [...] I think without the community I can't imagine how my life or how my progress of establishing living here would have been like. The first good ESL class was provided by the Somali community. You know, Cassie. Cassie would, was helping me because I couldn't comprehend the English classes that I was attending.
(Mama Mouna, Interview 1)

Her gratitude for the community center is evident, and although she may have been trying to flatter me, I believe that she had some preference for the English classes offered by the community (not because I was teaching) but perhaps it was offered for her and her peers by the community, in her own apartment community. I also have seen her frustration in having to rely on others to get by and not be completely independent. In her own words:

I mean there are always forms. Forms to fill it out, whether for food stamps or for my child's security, social security forms. The community was there for me. Up until now, any time I need help, with paperwork, the community is here. From now on, we are trying to become self-sufficient, my kids are working on getting their own driver's license. (Mama Mouna, Interview 1)

Mama Mouna indicates that documents and forms are at the center of her daily experience and often the main reason for her need for assistance. Her everyday practices are mediated by texts, and that is why she is a member of the CoP. She also shares that she and her family are trying to become more self-sufficient. I have observed Mama Mouna in the Center, multiple times, when she requests assistance with a form. The case managers are familiar with her, so they know her information and are able to fill out these documents for her.

6.3.2 Absence of literacy practices for everyday needs

Often, when Mama Mouna comes into the office, she is upset, frustrated, and stressed out because of the many documents she has and the number of tasks she needs to complete. She normally visits the Center to get help with something involving her children or her family's benefits. I have observed her exasperated, in the office. My field notes, as seen below, document one occasion:

Mama Mouna was in the office on Monday. She had been in a few weeks ago- her son is having a lot of pain in his eyes, and her insurance doesn't cover him seeing a specialist. She has been noticeably stressed out about this. [The director] called as her case manager and was on hold for a while. I could hear the people at the other end of the line. They were getting frustrated with him. He had a voicemail from the office saying they were ready to set up an appointment, but the office wouldn't confirm that when he called back. He raised his voice in frustration after being on hold for some time, and he said, I am here with the mother, she is crying, and sick over this, and she can't speak English. I am the case manager.

(Field notes, November 15th, 2012)

This instance is just one of many that occur on a regular basis. Many clients come into the Center because they are expected to make phone calls and appointments and they do not have the language skills to do so. In this sense, the case managers become such an integral part of their livelihood. The instance I shared only represents one scenario, but I believe that it illustrates the difficulties that are faced due to language barrier and encountering new forms of social interaction and expectation and also how wearisome the work of the refugee serving community can be.

Some of the work I've done for Mama Mouna includes writing excuse letters for her children, looking at school lunch forms, and calling her children's school for her. On one occasion, I called her daughter's high school for her. At the beginning of the 2012 school year, her daughter was sent home from school with a letter indicating that she could not proceed or be registered in the 12th grade because she was 21, and by law, she was too old to attend public school. Mama Mouna was distressed over the situation, but her daughter was even worse. The fact was that her daughter was only 20, but her documents said she was older. She was born in the refugee camp, and although her certificate of birth, a small card with a handwritten name and date of birth, said she was younger than 21, her immigration and official documents did not. I read the letter and called the school to talk to the counselor who wrote the letter. I explained the situation to her and she told me that Mama Mouna's daughter, if she could prove her birthdate she could attend. Otherwise, she would have to attend a non-traditional high school for 10th-12th graders who had dropped out, had a family, or had circumstances like her daughter.

We made a plan to meet with her the next day. The Center's director, myself, Mama Mouna and her daughter went to the school. Her daughter would not walk into the building with us. The staff at the school treated us quite rudely, as if we were wasting their time, and said that the certificate of birth was not a recognized proof of birthdate. We eventually had to help Mama Mouna file for changes of her daughter's birthdate on official documents through United States Citizen and Immigration Services. The following excerpt from my field notes discusses this incident:

Yesterday I walked in the office and it was BUSY. Several people from Partnership for Community Action were there helping clients to sign up for the Energy Assistance program. I helped some of the clients fill out their Zero Income Declaration forms. My attention then turned to Mama Mouna and her 17 year old daughter. Her daughter was being kicked out of high school. Her documentation when she came as a refugee said that she was 21. It is a federal policy that you cannot attend a school if you are 21 or over. They showed Omar and me a letter stating that on that Thursday, the students that were too old (apparently there were hundreds, as I called Ms. Pugh whom the letter was from to address the issue) would be bussed to an alternative school. I am pretty sure it is a GED type of school. The woman, Ms. XXXX said that the students wouldn't have to take physical education and additional courses the other school. She told me that if the girl could bring alternate proof they could work with her. I said that a birth certificate from Kenya was en route, and even wrote a letter asking for the school's patience.

I ended riding with [the Director], Mama, and her daughter to Clarkston High. They had told her daughter to leave. The birth announcement came in the mail from Kenya and we were going to present them to the school. Unfortunately, we weren't greeted in a very nice manner, barely were attended to, and ended up not seeing anyone. We had to leave a copy of the birth announcements (probably not up to the US standard, as they are hand written on a card) and a note. And leave. Poor XXXX, the daughter, waited in the [director]'s taxi the whole time. She didn't want to go into the school. [The directors] said she felt demoralized...and I understand. I talked with [director] about it. This little girl WANTS to go to school...She WANTS to go to COLLEGE. She is devastated that she cannot. In fact, this little girl wants to be a doctor.

I recall when I called Ms. XXXX at the school...she was nice, but she was a bit overwhelmed. She understands that many refugees came and were assigned birthdays (1-1-xxxx). She mentioned that sometimes they have 28 year olds in high school that are actually documented as 17 year olds. This is another way the refugee system is failing, especially this little girl....who wants to succeed, complete school, and become a participating member of society.

(Field Notes, January 15th, 2013)

Mama Mouna often seeks assistance at the Center to help advocate for her children. Her need for assistance is deepened by the fact that she has a son with disabilities. She explained to me that he is hard of hearing, and so it has slowed his progress. Hannah, her case manager, told me that in fact, her son may be autistic. Hannah told me that there is a lot of cases of autism in the community and it is not a very well understood condition among Somalis. She is constantly taking him to medical appointments and has extra paperwork to fill out for him at school.

Another critical incident, when lack of language and literacy skills, and in this case culture and past experiences, left Mama Mouna deeply in need of assistance from the CoP was when her son fell very ill. On one occasion he was sick for many days with an extremely high fever. Once some of the male community members found out, and saw him, they decided he need to seek immediate medical attention. It turned out he had appendicitis and needed emergency surgery. Mama Mouna did not want to let him go through with the surgery. She did not trust that the condition required surgery, and when the doctors, through an interpreter, told her everything that could go wrong (like they must do before surgery) she refused to submit her son to the procedure. It took hours, and her son being in a near death state, for trusted community members to convince her to go through with the procedure (Field Notes, January, 2014). The surgery was successful and Mama Mouna's son survived.

6.3.3 Experiences in with ESL classes

Mama Mouna wants to learn English, to increase her ability to go about her daily activities and to help advocate for her children, so she continues to try out different ESL programs. She describes one of her most recent ESL programs below:

M: TANF is a program that is allowing single mother like me to get out of poverty, so you, will get pocket money. It's not much. She said, it's just a pocket money, and you have to go

and attend the ESL classes. It's a temporary for three years and after that, the program ends. You're expected to become self-sufficient, after three years.

C: And do you think it's useful? Is it helping you?

M: Yes, very helpful... So I just registered another program, an ESL program, but this one doesn't give you any benefits, but it's for my own good.

(Mama Mouna, Interview 1)

Mama Mouna mentions the cash incentive she receives for attending English class. TANF

(Temporary Assistance for Needy Families) provides assistance to families, primarily single parent homes with children on a temporary basis and focuses on providing parents with job preparation, work opportunities, enforcement of Child Support, and other support services that will enable them to become self-sufficient. It is a public assistance program that some single mothers are able to seek out after they are no longer attending classes through refugee resettlement agencies. Mama Mouna has been a resident of Clarkston for nearly 5 years, and all the time she has been trying to learn English and become self-sufficient, but for her, it is difficult her to maintain a job. She said:

I found a job, luckily even though I don't have any skills, but I need to start working provide for my family. So, you know the kids need some kind of guidance. They need a mother there, because there's no father. I need to wake them up in the morning. Coach them to eat, dress, take off to go to school. If I'm not there, they will neglect their duties. So I stopped. I couldn't continue doing the job so I had to stop working.

(Mama Mouna, Interview 1)

Mama Mouna's discussion of her skills implies that she may have low self-esteem for her lack of English skills. She does, in fact have many skills related to housekeeping, and she also was a proprietor of a successful business in Kenya at the refugee camp.

6.3.4 Perceptions of language and literacy

Mama Mouna frequents the Somali plaza and the Center when her children are in school. Her other daily activities include going to English class and doing things for her children. She describes her regular day.

M: I am in a ton of program, so I have to go to school. I was going to school until 2 or 3 o'clock. When I come home, I will prepare lunch for the kids, or do light cleaning in the

house. By the time the kids' home, we spend a little time, eating, talking, and it's already time to go to bed.

C: Oh, wow.

M: But now, August, that type of program end, so I'm no longer in the school, so I'm either took my son to a doctor's appointment, or stayed home, so but sometimes when I got bored, I'll come to the community and I'll come to shop at the plaza.

(Mama Mouna, Interview 1)

Mama Mouna describes her family's language practices in their household. She speaks Somali to her children, and they also use Arabic when studying Islam. She comments that her children speak English to each other more frequently than they use Somali.

I mean in our house we speak Somali. We practice Islamic religion and we use Arabic and I coach them in that way. In English, they do their homework and talk to each other in that way. But now they speak English while I'm sitting there. Now they have to print their homework from the internet in English. They speak to each other in English, so, they don't use much Somali at home. (Mama Mouna, Interview 1)

6.3.5 Refugee education

Mama Mouna always stresses how grateful she is for having the Center and other programs around Clarkston where she can seek assistance, nonetheless she has hopes for the future of refugee education in Clarkston. In her own words:

I wish the agencies that bring refugees here, they will change, their style better. Like educating woman, especially single mothers. When it comes to the living here, the cost, and nobody knows about the importance of taking care of children and the responsibility when they come to America. So I hope there is better education provided for the refugees while they're in the process of coming to America.

(Mama Mouna, Interview 1)

Mama Mouna hopes for change in the way refugees are currently educated.

6.4 Caaliyah

6.4.1 *Absence of literacy practices*

Of all of the participants in the study, Caaliyah's experiences with language and literacy are among the scarcest. I met Caaliyah during the times she visited the Center as a client. She often seeks assistance for herself and her four children. I have had multiple daily interactions with Caaliyah as an after school teacher to both of her sons, and I would personally pick them up to go to after school two or three days a week. Often she would come to my car as I was picking up her children and begin to speak to me somewhat emphatically in Somali. Usually, her sons or another one of the children in my car would interpret for me. Normally her message was to keep one of her sons away from another one of the students, or that they had been misbehaving, and sometimes she had messages for the other afterschool teachers. Part of what I was able to observe of Caaliyah were her interactions with her sons, as well as their performance in after school. Neither of her sons had ever had formal education, and as a single mother to her sons, she was not able to homeschool them in things such as reading, writing, or math. When I first visited her home, what struck me the most, and what accentuated her lack of literacy, was a piece of art, the only decoration, on the wall. The painting was one of the specialized name paintings that one might find at an art store. Her walls were bare, except for a framed, flowery rendition of the name 'Neil' behind her sofa. (Field Notes, November 14th, 2013)

This painting to me represented an extreme absence of literacy, and when I was able to talk with Caaliyah about her language and literacy experiences, she confirmed my observations. Caaliyah has never worked, and she does not read or write in Somali. She is strongly aware of how this affects her, in her words:

I feel like I'm a deaf person. My parents never put me to school. Somali culture, women are not, um, worth it anything. Um, they send boys to school, and girls are not educated. I can't even read my, my name. I feel very bad. Um, my parents were not educated as well,

so they didn't think it's worth it to invest in a girl, so they never sent me to school.
(Caaliyah, Interview 1)

In this excerpt, Caaliyah represents a major incident, or epiphany, that has touched every fabric of her life (Denzin, 1989). Her parents did not educate her and that has affected her throughout her life. She expresses the disconcerting feeling of feeling ‘deaf’. While her description may seem to mean she has one less sense or skill to work with it could also indicate something more. In Somalia, children that are described as ‘deaf’ are often mentally disabled or handicapped. Caaliyah does not know English, and she cannot read or write in Somali. She is aware that to some Somalis girls have no worth, and admits to being a product of that ideology.

While I was visiting her home and discussing her experiences with language and English, Caaliyah’s oldest son began shouting at her as he was cooking a meal from the kitchen. The interpreter told me he was saying to her that he has been teaching her English, and to say the phrases he had taught her ‘good morning’ and ‘good night’. This implies to me that her children are trying to, and have the ability to socialize Caaliyah, even just a small amount, to and through the English language.

6.4.2 *Textual Mediation as a barrier to language socialization*

One time during an afterschool session, Caaliyah’s oldest son was waving a paper around from his school and speaking in Somali to the other children. I asked him what he was waving around and he showed me a letter that was sent home to his mother, in Somali. We had been working with him during after school to learn to read, so he expressed to me that he couldn’t even try to read it in Somali, because he was just getting used to trying to read English. Although the school districts are trying to create materials in languages other than English, in this case the gesture fell short, because the boy’s parent is not literate in Somali. Even though the school district attempted to socialize Caaliyah by sending a letter home to her in Somali, her lack of literacy

formed a sort of barrier. The text is a method of communication between the school and parents.

I have observed in Caaliyah's case as well as with other families that children often take on many responsibilities in order to help maintain the household. Caaliyah acknowledges that she is often stressed out and preoccupied and so her oldest son will take on a lot of household responsibilities. She shared:

C(p): He bleached the walls, as you can see, he fixed all the bedrooms. He's both a girl and a boy in the house. He cleans, constantly cleaning.

C: Good boy

C(p): Now after he finished his chores he'll start cooking because I have to go to the doctor's appointment.

C: Ok, so he helps you cook, too? He's good. Sometimes whenever he doesn't come to afterschool, we'll say "Where were you?" and he says he wanted to stay at home and help his mom with the babies.

C(p): Yeah, sometimes he'll see me very distracted, and, um, he feels sorry for me, and he'll say "Mommy, I'll just stay home with you," then he, he doesn't have a homework that day so he'll come and tells you about it so that way he can help me.

(Caaliyah, Interview 1)

Stress, and for many refugees, past trauma, may create additional barriers to learning English.

Caaliyah's son will often say he doesn't have any homework, but in reality, he is concerned for his mother's wellbeing and wants to help her. Caaliyah suggested to me that she did need extra help and told me some of her priorities. One of her priorities at the time was finding a husband, but she also stressed how important it was for her to learn English. She said:

My first priority now is, someone visited me from IRC [International Rescue Committee, a refugee serving organization], I'm on a maternity leave now, because of my child, but, I'm hoping to learn English so that way I can adjust to the lifestyle here, and you know, I could be living with anyone because now the language barrier is my most, problems. So, the only thing I want to accomplish right now is to make that change and learn English first.

(Caaliyah, Interview 1)

Caaliyah stays home most days and sometimes she visits the Somali plaza. She expressed to me that she felt like she didn't have enough resources to go many places. She articulates her limitations below:

C(p): When I get my food stamps, this lady takes me to Sam's Club, and I go to Somali market. It depends how I find a ride.

C: OK, so do you use public transportation?

C(p): I don't have any food stamps this month. We're still waiting.

C: OK, do you ever use public transportation? MARTA?

C(p): I've lost a few times but I don't know how to take the train. I know how to take the bus, city bus, I know the one that goes to the Somali shopping area, the one that goes to the settlement agency, and the one that goes to the doctor's appointment.

(Caaliyah, Interview 1)

Although she conveys that she doesn't have many resources, I have observed that Caaliyah has identified people and places to help her seek out resources. This particular exchange also demonstrates her stress and preoccupation with making ends meet. She had been at the Center earlier in the week trying to resolve the issue with her food stamps, and since the interpreter for our interview was also her case manager, I felt it was a way of communicating to her that the issue was still relevant.

6.4.3 Experiences in the CoP

Caaliyah indicated to me that she was happy with the community support and was glad to visit the Center for assistance. She explains:

They're very helpful, I mean whenever I need anything they'll do it for me. If I want something filled out they'll fill it out for me. Whenever I go there they welcome me, they provide even sometimes if I get there early in the morning, they're very nurturing, I'm provided with breakfast if I get there early in the morning.

(Caaliyah, Interview 1)

Caaliyah talks about texts, once again, being the reason for needing assistance, and that the Center helps her by filling out her forms. Despite having found assistance and support for her family in Clarkston, Caaliyah is seeking more in order to have more security. In her own words:

When my lease is up, I have 2 months, I want to move, because here I'm not working, because there's no one to provide for me. I pay my rent now by donation, and I feel bad about it, you know, I don't want to abandon my small children. I don't want to take them away from where they started life, the teachers they know, but I have no choice. I want to go to a place when I can have security and things will be provided for me.

(Caaliyah, Interview 1)

What Caaliyah is referencing is that in the state of Georgia there are fewer educational and assistance programs for refugees than in other states. Caaliyah represents many single mothers who want to have a sense of security and create a strong foundation for their families, but find that Clarkston is not fulfilling all of their needs.

6.5 Mama Rita

6.5.1 *Mama Rita's language and literacy practices*

Mama Rita is the primary participant in my research and although I will share her experiences with language and literacy here, I have also devoted Chapter 7 to discussing her FoK. I have documented many of Mama Rita's language and literacy practices in my field notes because she allowed me to accompany and observe her as she went about her daily activities. Mama Rita was resettled in 2009, and though she does not have formal education, she is extremely proficient in English, and has high proficiency in Swahili, languages from Burundi where she lived for an extended period and knowledge of or proficiency in about 5 other languages, including, French, Arabic, Nepali.

Mama Rita doesn't recall exactly how she learned English; she says it is hard for her to remember those things. She remembers as a young girl in Somalia her family had neighbors from India with whom she would interact and play with, and she remembers that they spoke English. Mama Rita remembers being socialized to and through language (Schiefflin & Ochs, 1986) through storytelling. She recalls "Mama and grandmamma use to tell us good things about good people and good friends and living in a good way". Mama Rita often tells stories, and often when I visit with her when I first see her she will greet me and tell me "I have a good story for you"! Mama Rita and I discussed the Somali tradition of learning to recite one's family lineage and ancestry back for

hundreds of years. She said she didn't like that tradition because it made people care too much about the past instead of the present and the future (Mama Rita, Interview 2).

Mama Rita expresses difficulty when talking about language and literacy practices in the Somali community.

I tell you it is very hard for me to talk about Somali. They go to school and read, but they don't get. They don't catch because they are not interested.
(Mama Rita, interview 1)

6.5.2 Experiences in the CoP

Mama Rita has a diverse network of friends and acquaintances in the Clarkston community including some of the members of the CoP. She always tells me that she is here in America "to do good things in a good way" and that means loving every one and not just Somalis.

When discussing the Center and the CoP with Mama Rita she told me that she didn't really send people to the Center because first of all she had many non-Somali friends, and second, the Center likes to take care of its own people, not Christians, or Buddhists, or Hindus. She was indicating to me that she felt the Center was somewhat elitist. She told me that it was in part, because of the men on the board of the directors. She calls them "bush to town". When Mama Rita uses this phrase, she means men that had their traditional way of life in Somalia, and a Somali way of doing things, and then when they go to the city, even if they are educated, they still try to act like they are doing things in the bush. When she was initially resettled Mama Rita attempted to work and volunteer in the CoP as a refugee helper and advocate, and she felt ostracized. She expressed that the only help Somalis wanted from her, was for her to clean their house.

I witnessed the way Mama Rita is excluded from the CoP firsthand when I accompanied her to collect donations for a new family from Burma with 6 children. I viewed a prestigious member of the CoP tell her not to bother, and that she shouldn't be trying to help and that she is wasting her time. One of Mama Rita's fundamental daily practices is helping people find information and seek

out assistance. The incident of the man telling her ‘not to bother’ is not isolated, and members of the CoP know that she is attempting to help others on a daily basis. Mama Rita does not let the opinions from various members of the CoP concern her, instead, she acts as a “one woman agency”, and stays on the periphery of the CoP.

Mama Rita’s daily routine is to wake up and go to Thriftown. She sits outside of the store, on a chair, with cleaning supplies next to her so that she can clean the parking lot and pick up trash. She greets everyone as they enter the store. She is there in what she calls the “Rita Information Center”. She finds out who is new in town and who needs assistance. People from all different backgrounds, even Americans, go to her for directions, advice, and information. Sometimes she accompanies new families in the store to help them find the goods they are looking for. Her ability to communicate in so many languages, and English, is an essential part of her functioning.

On one occasion I observed Mama Rita socializing some individuals to and through language in Thriftown. She shared a functional practice that she sometimes shares with other refugees who need help shopping. She has become very proficient in determining how much sugar she consumes, by selectively looking for information about sugar on food items, and knowing where to locate the sugar content on nutrition labels. She told me she doesn’t know what everything means on nutrition labels, but she knows exactly how to locate the amount of sugar. She shares this practice because refugees from all backgrounds, experience health problem related to sugar consumption.

Other literacy practices that Mama Rita engages in daily and that I have observed her engage in include bible studies, interfaith groups, volunteer work, and the selling of and negotiation of prices at her friends’ store. She also likes to attend community meetings such as the local town hall meetings, council meetings, and community celebrations in the park. She is enthusiastic about

participating in politics and has helped in multiple campaigns local, and state, by handing out fliers and talking to be about candidates and their platforms.

Mama Rita's practices are remarkable considering she came to Clarkston as a refugee less than five years ago. She has learned to interact within the community and with many different members. She is well known in the community and for what she does and she is respected by many Clarkston residents and refugees, for her advocacy for refugees. Despite her reputation in the community, Mama Rita's practices remain unseen and under-appreciated by the CoP, and its leaders. Chapter 7 expands on Mama Rita's FoK.

6.6 Cross Case Discussion

In this section I will compare and cross the cases (Patton, 2002) and discuss a few themes that are relevant across cases and in the CoP. These themes include: gender, textually mediated social interaction, competing goals and ideologies in the CoP, and language as an FoK.

6.6.1 *Barriers to language socialization*

6.6.1.1 *Gender*

Ideologies have the ability to control many kinds of social practice (Van Dijk, 2011). Across all of the cases, gender-based ideologies contribute complexity to the women's language socialization pathways. For example, Hannah shared that she was restricted as a female in her family and was not allowed out of her home by herself during her adolescence. She shared her parents' fear for her safety going out alone as a young woman. At home, Hannah used Somali and Arabic to speak to her family members, and her chance to be socialized to English, through the use of English, was limited to her classroom interactions. She shares that she had few friends, and the ESL class was a primary place where she made her friends, and used English. She also shared her

parents' dislike of extracurricular activities such as dances being an inappropriate place for her to interact, for fear of immoral acts such as sex.

Faith also faced gender-based ideologies in her household. She discussed her father's resistance to her moving out to go to college, and to move out again as a single woman after she returned home from university. She referenced conversations with her father who would tell her explicitly that she could not do something, because she was a woman. Faith, recognizes her father's ideologies, but also shared her mother's beliefs that Faith, could in fact, attend college and become independent as a woman. Caaliyah also acknowledges gender based ideologies having a great effect on her life. She shared that her parents, whom were uneducated, saw her as worthless, in her case, having a long lasting effect on her life and also her language socialization. She was not socialized to read or write Somali, and now in her current situation, that may have effects on her English language learning (Tarone, Bigelow, & Hansen, 2009). Mama Mouna discussed the strain placed on her by shifting gender roles, and her difficult decision to be a full time mother and support her children rather than maintain a job and become more self-sufficient. Crosby (2008) discusses how gender roles and gender-based ideologies affect Somali refugees and asylees. Some gender roles shift after resettlement, yet gender-based ideologies may stay the same. For example, a Somali woman may become the sole supporter of her family, yet her husband may still have all of the power in the household (Crosby, 2008). Competing ideologies create a tension in the lives of women because they want to sustain themselves, but there is also pressure to stay in the home. At the Center, I have discussed with some of the men that the women in the community need to learn English, yet at the same time there is a tendency to want women to stay at home and out of the public.

Additionally, Mama Rita's practices are not accepted in the CoP. She is a community leader, multilingual, and has the ability to network, yet she is not a leader in the CoP. Some members of the CoP believe she should cease her efforts.

6.6.1.2 Social interactions are textually mediated

Another barrier to language socialization illuminated by the women's cases is the reality that most contemporary social interaction is textually mediated and shapes, structures, and constrains social interaction (Barton & Hamilton, 2005). For the clients coming to the Center, including Mama Mouna and Caaliyah, texts, documents, bills, and forms, are a dominant artifacts in their daily lives. A basic way of understanding written language is to examine the role of texts in specific observable events or "literacy events" (Barton & Hamilton, 2005). In Caaliyah's case, we observe an instance when her son's school tries to bridge language difference by providing documents translated in Somali. This is an example of how text plays a central role in institutional communication. Textual mediation plays a role in socializing these women to orient to documents, in English and Somali, but may also constrain their ability to be socialized.

Literacy events play a large role in the social interactions that occur at the Center. The way the CoP handles texts also shapes and constrains the everyday language socialization of the Somali refugee women that seek assistance there. One can observe gender patterns among literacy practices in CoPs (Barton & Hamilton, 2005). The CoP in this study aims to help women at the Center, providing services for them, translating forms and interpreting documents, and helping clients to fill them out. On the other hand, the situated practice of just filling out the forms for clients, may not promote language socialization in English. Unless clients are oriented to the document, and its context is discussed, learning may not occur. Simply filling out a form for someone, not with someone, may not help. Caseworkers must socialize clients to such forms through language. If the textually mediated interaction heightens the clients' awareness, and they

are educated in some manner about the context of the document, even if discussed in Somali, this provides some socialization to and through language. There are various constraints that may contribute to this method of assistance without socialization, including time, money, and institutional regulations such as grant requirements. These constraints are no doubt valid reasons for practicing assistance without socialization, but the CoP needs to be aware how this practice can shape and constrain the language socialization of Somali refugee women. I am in no way trying to lessen the services performed at the Center, but it is important to recognize how situated activities may affect participation in the CoP and may keep some clients on the periphery, constraining socialization to English. Understanding the role of text in social interaction for refugees and the CoP, has many implications for refugee education and thus pedagogy. It is important to remember that literacy events “serve both individual and social purposes” which can be “multiple and conflicting” (Barton & Hamilton, 2008, p.21). Text in social interactions can either reify or solidify power, and can either transform or reinforce certain social realities (Barton & Hamilton, 2008). The women in the studies demonstrate social gendered social realities may be reinforced by the practice of form filling. The texts in these social actions reify power in the CoP. Reification, or “process of giving form to our experience by producing objects that congeal this experience into thingness” (Wenger, 1998, p. 58) plays a role in participation because it helps one to understand how local situated practices and events are linked to broader social formations (Barton & Hamilton, 2005). To create better spaces for language socialization, the CoP must consider these reifications.

6.6.2 Successful Language socialization practices

The barriers to language socialization are complex, yet there are also positive accounts of successful language socialization among the women’s cases including strategies that may act to counter some of the barriers. Since language socialization is a process that occurs across the lifespan, the women’s cases only represent portions of their language socialization experience.

Nonetheless, I can highlight some of their positive experiences and some of their language socialization strategies. To begin, Hannah's parents may have had fears that affected her interactions, but they also confided in a family to help with their daughter's language socialization. She was able to live in a home where English was used regularly, and do more mainstream social activities that afforded her the chance to use English, thus being socialized to English through English (Schiefflin & Ochs, 1986). In Hannah's case, her parents acknowledged to some extent that language and social interaction are intricately linked, and that participation, in general, was affecting her language socialization.

I observed Caaliyah's children teaching her English words, and this illustrates the potential for children to socialize parents to English through language. Language socialization is often thought in terms of parents and adults in society socializing children (Schiefflin & Ochs, 1986). Caaliyah's interactions with her sons points to conceiving language socialization possibilities for women to be socialized to and through English by their children.

Although I discussed the textually mediated realities of clients at the Center as a barrier to language socialization, I also think that there is space for using the same texts to strategically socialize women. Potential exists for creating language education models that work with documents that are central in literacy events that are observed at the Center and in the CoP.

6.6.3 Competing goals and ideologies in the CoP

I have positioned the women in this study as members of a particular CoP. The idea of a CoP, traditionally, indicates common goals, shared repertoires and resources (Wenger, 1998). Barton & Hamilton (2005) note that in studying everyday literacy practices, we encounter CoPs that are:

not characterized by stable or well bounded shared purpose; they have diffuse and unclear membership without clear rights or direct channels of communication for negotiating

meaning; there is often ambivalent engagement [...]and incomplete repertoires of shared resources (2005, p. 25)

Both Faith and Hannah discussed that although they were working in the CoP, they had competing ideologies with some of the members; all members do not have a well-bounded shared purpose. For example, Hannah shares that many times the resources and support is focused on men, and finding jobs for them rather than the women. She also discussed her opposition toward the ideology that women are expected to stay at home, or, young women are expected to graduate high school, get married, and have kids. She also indicates that she wants to change these mentalities, though she still works in the CoP. Faith echoes similar ideas and the need to educate members of the CoP.

I also have some differing purposes as a member of the CoP. For example, it has been my goal to understand the language and literacy practices of Somali women in the CoP, in order to change the way they are perceived, and also so that their voices are heard in the creation of educational policies and curriculum. I have experienced resistance from other members of the CoP. For example, during an interview with Mama Mouna at the Center, Hannah, Mama Mouna and I were sitting and talking in the office privately. One of the men in the CoP burst through the doors and asked in Somali, what we were doing. Hannah explained to him that I was interviewing Mama Mouna for a school project. The man knows me very well, and so I also told him English what we were doing and that we would be finished soon. He asked me why I didn't interview him, or some of the other men, and indicated that they knew English. I told him I was only going to interview women.

I didn't think much of the interaction until the following week. I had scheduled a follow-up interview with Mama Mouna at the Center, but she didn't show up. Hannah called her, and she said she was busy and would come in the next day. The following day when Mama Mouna came

in, I asked her if she was ready for the interview, with Hannah interpreting. Mama Mouna asked me why I needed to interview her again, what more was there to ask her? I could sense some tension. I told Hannah that I absolutely did not want Mama Mouna to participate if she had any worries or apprehension. I made the decision and told her thanks and that there was no need for the interview. I then left the office for a little while. Later that day, Hannah told me what happened. The man that had interrupted our first interview told Mouna not to trust me, and not to talk to me anymore. This came as a surprise to me because I had worked alongside this man on several occasions to improve programs at Center. The following week the situation was still bothering me, so I discussed it with Hannah once again. She told me the complexity of the situation; that man was paying Mama Mouna's rent and also bought many things for her children and Mama Mouna did not want to jeopardize her situation. I completely understood Mama Mouna's concern, and was glad that nothing negative happened to her. What still remained to be understood was why he told Mouna to stop helping me.

Although the CoP has some relationships that are “supporting and some that are competing”, the Center and CoP are not to be viewed negatively (Barton & Hamilton, 2005, p.25). The CoP is complex and is an example of a type of CoP that can be “the creative lifeblood of social challenge and change” (Barton & Hamilton, 2005, p. 25).

6.6.4 *Language as an FoK*

Across cases, I have observed that language is a FoK among many of the women. FoK are resources, practices that may be seen as commonplace or dismissed due to the belief that they are possessed by everyone. They are often seen as having high-use and little exchange value (Oughton, 2010). Across cases, speaking Somali may be seen as commonplace, but what the women do with the language deserves some discussion. For example, Mama Mouna and Caaliyah use Somali language effectively to seek assistance. This practice of assistance seeking should not be taken for

granted, and looking more closely at the language of assistance seeking may be fruitful and provide greater insight into how women can be socialized to English through observing their assistance seeking language practices in Somali. Hannah shared that many women who seek assistance in the CoP are actually poets and have the ability to recite poetry, and this is a practice that can possibly inform educational practices and curricula. From my observations, language is an integral part of “Somaliness” (Hopkins, 2010), and the ways women use the Somali language should be more deeply investigated.

The language and literacy practices and language socialization practices of the women in this study are varied and complex. There are dynamics of power and gender that are illuminated but there is much that also remains unseen. Now that I have discussed the five cases and highlighted the diverse language and literacy practices and language socialization pathways I will proceed to Chapter 7 to discuss the case of one exceptional Somali refugee woman, in order to uncover some of the FoK that are being overlooked by the CoP.

6.7 Summary of Findings

The case studies in this chapter illuminate the participants’ experiences with and perceptions of their language and literacy practices. Each woman has experienced critical incidents that have affected their process of language socialization. Findings from the chapter include:

- Language and literacy practices of Somali refugee women are varied and complex
- Somali refugee women face multifaceted issues related to gender that may be seen as barriers to their language socialization
- Interaction is textually mediated in the CoP and attention to how we are orienting women to texts plays an important role in their language socialization
- Members of the CoP must understand the potential consequences of assistance without socialization and strategies must be found to navigate textual mediation

- Heightened awareness of the role participation plays in language socialization is key in finding successful strategies for socialization
- Despite competing goals in the CoP, the CoP serves a functional role with a potential for change

7 FoK: THE CASE OF MAMA RITA

This chapter will highlight Mama Rita's FoK that I have observed over the past several months as well practices I have discussed with her in interviews and conversations. I have chosen to highlight Mama Rita's practices as FoK because I have observed that many of her practices are overlooked by the CoP that I have been referencing throughout this study. There are several FoK, or daily practices, that I have noted and that I feel the refugee serving CoP has either overlooked or disagreed with. It seems the CoP does not accept these FoK because of Mama Rita's gender and her methods of participating in the community. The FoK are observed practices that are integral to Mama Rita's wellbeing and I believe these FoK have not only helped her with language socialization and community integration, but I believe they have helped her help other newcomer refugees. The FoK I describe include Mama Rita's abilities to gather and disseminate information, participate in politics, and participate in various religious activities.

7.1 Mama Rita as a Purveyor of Information

One of Mama Rita's most significant FoK includes her ability to access, evaluate, and share information. This type of information literacy is often overlooked in the discussion of refugee resettlement. As noted by Lloyd, Kennan, Thompson, and Qayyum (2013), there is often discussion about access to services in refugee literature rather than information literacy practices. In their study on refugee information literacy practices Lloyd et al. (2013) indicate that three phases of resettlement exist. The first stage, the transitioning phase, begins before refugees arrive

and includes refugees seeking information about their new country. During this phase case managers and service providers are primary information sources. The primary type of information during this phase includes information on compliance, rules, and regulations of society in general and the community in particular as well as immediate information needs related to food, clothing, shelter, and medical care.

The second phase, the settling phase, is characterized by less reliance on case managers and the development of networks and skills. This phase generally occurs after the first six months. In this phase, refugees are aware of their personal information needs and have been able to select and identify aids that help them to meet their needs.

The final stage, the settled stage, is characterized by the refugee's understanding of the information landscape and their ability to see that they have progressed through the previous stages. Refugees in this stage are ready and able to share what they have learned with others. Lloyd et al. (2013) suggest that new refugees need to "identify and establish relationships that support their transitioning into a new community by connecting them with people who can mediate and interpret the new information landscape for or with them" (p. 130).

Mama Rita falls into the third stage. She is settled in the sense that she has identified and established networks and relationships with people that are able to mediate the information landscape. More importantly, she shares information and networks with other refugees and has become a navigator of information for refugees in the first and second settlement phases.

Mama Rita is a very good communicator. She speaks, reads, and writes Somali and English. She also is very proficient in Swahili and various languages spoken in Burundi. I have observed her speaking with Ethiopians, Burmese, and Nepalese in their mother tongues and she also knows some Arabic and French. In a diverse community like Clarkston, her ability to communicate in various languages is especially useful when it comes to the gathering and dissemination of

information. I categorize her ability as a FoK because it has a high use-value, and less of an exchange value (Coben, 2002; Oughton, 2011). One would suspect that multilingualism would be cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1986) in a diverse community like Clarkston, at least in the refugee serving community. This is not the case, as many of the refugee-serving organizations do not utilize refugees that have this sort of linguistic capital.

When I had my first interview with Mama Rita, I asked her how she finds her information. She mentioned watching the local news reports, Al Jazeera, CNN, and attending local community meetings, and she also replied:

I get from, I get information let me tell you, I have my own office there in front of Thriftown, Rita information center, (laughs) That is the place I get all information. Talking to people, because people they love me they have to tell me everything, what happened here... I sit there outside, I sit, I smoke there, my cigarette, everybody come and give me information. They give me resume, to look job for them. There, outside.
(Mama Rita, Interview 1)

Mama Rita has her own business card she hands out to people and that shares her telephone number and the profession of community outreach. She has recognized that having a business card is a type of cultural capital (legitimized and privileged by dominant groups) and helps facilitate the exchange of personal information. It offers her an expedited method of sharing her information and a way to participate in the dominant class. She has a collection of hundreds of business cards that she keeps in order to assist people in finding the services they need. This is another example of a practice that has an extremely high use value but a lesser exchange value (Coben, 2002). In addition to her business cards, Mama Rita has an email address, a Facebook account, and she uses her telephone frequently to get in contact with people. If she can't text message or email you, she will have someone else do it for her. In terms of language socialization, this is an example of "the learning of the use of language in such a way as to maintain and appropriately and progressively change one's position in society (Fischer, 1970, p. 107)".

It is in her “office space” that Mama Rita informally and effectively shares knowledge. Her strategy of “setting up office” and informally discussing everyday obstacles with her peers is a FoK. She knows where to get information for people. If you need a job, she knows there is a small internet café that on Thursdays helps refugees find jobs with local companies. If you need help reading a traffic citation or other type of ticket, she knows that she can go to the police station and ask directly. Everyone in the city government and city council know her very well, and she isn’t afraid to take them up on their open-door policies. If you can’t pay rent one month, Mama Rita has the number of several foundation and agency leaders that will make a donation.

Although Mama Rita wants the refugee community to be informed, she wants the flow of information to be two way. She knows that refugees need to know about Americans and the American way of life just as much as Americans need to understand the refugee situation. This knowledge practice exemplifies what Lloyd et al. (2013) suggest as the highest level of information literacy- the ability to “identify and establish relationships that support their transitioning into a new community by connecting them with people who can mediate and interpret the new information landscape for or with them” (p. 130). Her ability to connect with people to gain and provide information exemplifies language socialization as a two way street (Ochs, 2000).

7.2 Mama Rita as a Political Participant

Aside from her information center, Mama Rita uses her “office” as a site for political participation. She has campaigned for two different city council members (one in her first year of residency and one in her fourth), both of whom had successful elections. She passes out fliers (one candidate told me she passed out over 2,000 for him). She also helped campaign for the local sheriff election in 2014 as well as for a congressman. In these instances, Mama Rita’s literacy includes the discussion of important issues with the candidates and their teams. She then compares candidates stances and decides which platform seems the best for the refugee community. I have

observed her meeting with these politicians in her “office” and asking them their stance on issues affecting the refugee community. If she supports the candidate she will take fliers and informational materials and then discuss them with and distribute them to new American citizens whom were previously refugees. These acts of campaigning enable Mama Rita to participate despite the fact that she is not yet a citizen. Her ability to navigate and compare the various political discourses surrounding refugees is a literacy practice that is overlooked.

Mama Rita participates in every single community meeting that she is welcomed at. She attends all of the city council meetings, town hall sessions, and other community dialogues. It is in these venues where Mama is able to advocate for her refugee community and influence the local government officials and community members and in turn the misconceptions about refugees in Clarkston. The meetings are forms of cultural and social capital and give Mama Rita the opportunity to participate in the dominant class (Bourdieu, 1986). They are also one way that through language use and participation she is able to “challenge and transcend the existing social categories” (Garrett& Badaqueno-Lopez, 2002, p. 349). The times I have observed Mama Rita at these meetings, she has been the only refugee woman present. I have observed a handful of people from the Clarkston community who I know are refugees, and usually they are male. Mama Rita’s participation in these various community meetings are also a reason why she is shunned in the CoP.

At the beginning of 2014 I observed Mama Rita’s political engagement when I joined her at the Capitol in Atlanta. She signed up to participate in New American day which, in part, was aimed at informing state representatives and asking them to support the resettlement of refugees in Georgia. Although the state of Georgia does not directly contribute funding to refugee programming (all of the funding is from Federal sources) the governor of Georgia is openly against the resettlement of refugees in his state, and so is the general political discourse about refugees. On this day Mama Rita, other refugee advocates, and myself met and distributed information to the

state representatives' offices. Mama Rita and I even called a representative out of a session in order to discuss the economic benefits that refugees bring to Georgia. This event is significant because refugees' voices are rarely heard in politics, rather it is often others talking about them or for them. In this way, they become *dis-citizens*; they are not allowed to participate fully (Ramanathan, 2013). Generally citizenship is viewed as the holding of a passport and the right to vote rather than the capacity to participate fully in various realms of society (Devlin & Pothier, 2006). Citizenship is not just status but practice that locates individuals in the larger community. Thus any context that does not allow for full participation creates *(dis)citizenship* (Devlin & Pothier, 2006). Mama Rita's case is significant because she is participating in politics as a refugee though she is technically not yet a citizen. Dominant discourses and ideologies would not consider her to be a citizen; her acts of participation can help to expand the idea of *citizenship as practice* rather than *status* (Devlin & Pothier, 2006) and help refugee political participation become a form of capital that is observed by the wider community. Although Mama Rita is not yet a citizen, her participation in politics and FoK as it pushes the envelope on the meaning of citizenship.

7.3 Mama Rita as a Participant of Multiple Religions

For Mama Rita, worship, is a valued practice and proven resource because it brings her peace but also friends and social networks. Mama Rita is a Muslim and she goes to Masjid (mosque). She has a few different Masjids that she attends from time to time, one near her home in Clarkston, and a larger one in Atlanta that her friends take her to. She networks with the leaders of her faith community to help her refugee friends that need rental assistance and other forms of aid. Mama Rita has friends who she helps connect from many different backgrounds, and from what I have observed and what she has told me, the Islamic faith based community leaders do not offer charity or donations to people outside of their religion. Mama Rita knows that to help her friends she has to go to other sources. More often she reaches out to other communities to find assistance

for the community. Mama Rita has built many strong relationships because she attends church, bible study, and frequents a local interfaith group meeting. Mama Rita's faith brings her tranquility, but she has also found that religious organizations are a good source for networking and gathering resources. She has created a close relationship with a pastor and congregation of a rather large church. This church's leaders call her on a weekly basis to offer volunteers and various donations. She calls them when she finds a family in need and she also helps the various organizations to identify the newest and neediest families. Her participation in this church community is also a source for growing and maintaining friendships.

In addition to church Mama Rita attends local bible study sessions and frequents an interfaith meeting with Clarkston elected officials and community leaders. It is in these more intimate group exchanges Mama Rita is able to once again become a messenger, or a bridge, between the various communities in Clarkston. Considering that Mama Rita is Muslim, and wears hijab in the predominantly conservative, Christian, South, her social network of faith and inter-faith organizations is a very successful FoK. Her practices can help us to revise the notion of 'integration' (Blommaert, 2012). If we expand the notion of 'integration' to include the ability to make oneself understood in a vast variety of social environments (not just the dominant culture, but various subcultures) then Mama Rita's ability to integrate into the various religious groups that are fundamental to the dominant and subcultures of Clarkston is remarkable. It is especially remarkable if we consider the conservative discourses and sentiments in Clarkston and the South. Religious involvement may help Mama Rita integrate because it is a type of involvement associated with having influential friends (Wuthnow, 2002). Membership in religious congregations is consistently associated with friendships with elected public officials, corporation executives, scientists, and persons of wealth and act as a method of "status-bridging" (Wuthnow, 2002). Her participation in religious activities is yet another way she combats existing social

categories created for refugees and Muslims in the community through participation and language use (Garrett & Baquedano-López, 2002) and is an example of language socialization in the way she creates and maintains “a sense of shared understanding, drawing on those assumptions members share and negotiating others” (Schiefflin & Ochs, 1986, p. 168).

Mama Rita’s FoK include her organic and informal collection and dissemination of information, her political participation as a form of citizenship, and her ability to transcend religious contexts in order to integrate into her new community. These practices are FoK that have helped her to engage in the community and educate others, yet the CoP overlooks her practices.

7.4 Summary of Findings

The case of Mama Rita highlights her FoK including her ability to collect and disseminate information, participate in politics despite having status-based citizenship, and participate in multiple religious activities. Findings from the chapter include:

- The FoK of Mama Rita illustrate practices that can enhance participation and citizenship, if citizenship conceived as practice based rather than status based.
- Mama Rita illustrates a refugee that has agency and ability to navigate information landscapes.
- Discitizenship may be created among refugees like Mama Rita and may affect language socialization.

8 CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

The aim of this dissertation is to gain an in depth understanding of Somali refugee women’s context and language and literacy practices in order to strengthen and challenge the existing ways they are being socialized, including the discourses and ideologies that affect them. My initial motivation and interest in the Somali population in Clarkston stemmed from both personal and

academic interests. I wanted to better understand the historical, political, and social processes that displace people and force them to migrate. I saw media representing Somalis as vicious criminals and warlords and I saw Somalis in Clarkston attempting to live graciously in their new community but facing difficulties related to discourses, ideologies, and language socialization. From an academic perspective I observed that research on refugees focused on language issues faced in education among adolescents, and on other facets of learning related to identity, but there was little information about everyday literacies of refugees, in particular adult refugees. From a professional and personal perspective, I saw Somali refugee women facing challenges integrating into their local communities. When I first pursued this project, I knew very little about Clarkston, and very little about the Somali community and the CoP. Then, I somewhat naively imagined a homogenous community of Somalis working together to help newcomers in their community. When I began working in the community I observed the Somalis in the CoP and realized I had preconceived a united Somali community. Instead I saw a community with complex and fragile social relations based on things such as tribe, clan, gender, and other dynamics. When I made the decision to try to better understand women in the community, I had many apprehensions. I was concerned that doing research in the community might affect the way I was perceived or the high level of rapport that I had gained. Although the research process was challenging and demanding, with the help of the CoP, and Hannah, Faith, Mama Mouna, Caaliyah, and Mama Rita, I have gained knowledge about the dynamics within language socialization processes that will contribute to shaping ideas, research, and aspects of education, practically, academically, and socially,

I begin this concluding chapter by discussing the research questions and how the findings address them.

8.1 Discussion of Major Findings

8.1.1 RQ1

1. What characterizes the linguistic landscape of Clarkston? How might the linguistic landscape impede and/or aid in language socialization and participation?

By posing RQ1 I sought to gain in depth understanding of the language context in Clarkston. Clarkston is a superdiverse space (Vertovec, 2007), known as the “Ellis Island of the South” and the “most diverse square mile in America” (Rosenwasser, 2012, p.1). I was able to document the linguistic diversity in Clarkston. I documented 14 different languages representing Clarkston’s residences’ use of language. Findings related to RQ1 provide insight into the use of language for solidarity. I found that Amharic was used most frequently, which may indicate solidarity among speakers of Amharic in Clarkston. In addition, the languages that are were not present in the LL may provide insight about literacy practices and the role of texts in individuals lives. For example, very little Somali was present in the Somali Plaza and there was a general English dominance. This composition seems to reflect the literacy preferences among Somalis in the public. It also demonstrates that Somali is not regularly textually mediated in this particular location which may provide implications for language socialization and participation. Somali women whom are not used to social interaction being textually mediated, for example that are not used to reading signs on a daily basis throughout social interaction, must be socialized into have texts drive social interaction. Returning to the motivation of the study to understand refugee backgrounds in a way that can contribute to more community partnership rather than one-size-fits-all methods to refugee education, the LL data provides insight into various populations language use on public signage, helping gain knowledge about literacy backgrounds that can guide pedagogy.

8.1.2 RQ2

2. How do Somali refugee women perceive their language and literacy practices? What are their observed language and literacy practices? What factors do they attribute their success and/or struggles? How might these factors affect to the process of language socialization in the refugee serving CoP?

In regards to RQ2, the participants' language and literacy practices represent a range of language and literacy skills. Participants represented multiple literacy backgrounds including pre-literate backgrounds highly educated post-secondary backgrounds.

The motivation of this study was in part to challenge local and national discourses about Somali refugees and also offer insight into policies affecting refugee education. The illuminating case studies, taken individually or as a whole, serve to combat some of the local, national, and media discourses that view Somali refugees as “cunning crooks” or “vulnerable victims”. Their life stories and the discussion of their practices show their varied backgrounds and the various factors that affect them in their current context. Additionally, their cases show the agency they have, that they seek out assistance, and that they want change in the community; they are not vulnerable victims. In addition, the women's complex backgrounds and diverse pathways offer insight and show that not all Somali women are the same, and further problematizes one-size-fits all curricula. Refugees' individual histories and background should be considered as well as the social practices that demand their time and focus when creating curriculum. This finding is directly in line with Fridland and Dalle's (2002) argument that community partnership curriculums must be flexible and meet daily needs of students.

Across cases, we can see how gender ideologies and textual mediation affect the language socialization pathways of the women. The way textual mediation is handled may reify power in the

CoP. While some of the women may lack literacy in a traditional sense, their Somali language practices are FoK. They are able to use language to seek assistance. Their ability to connect and network to find assistance is a FoK in its own right, and is in some ways demonstrated by the fact that they are in the United States, having successfully applied for refugee status and resettlement. Within the CoP members should be aware ‘service without socialization’ and must consider the potential effects of doing things *for* refugee clients instead of *with* them and the effects this may have on participation in the greater community. Members of the CoP, including myself must consider strategies for orienting newcomers to the relevant texts in their lives.

Despite barriers, the women in the study possess agency, and have found some ways to overcome barriers to their language socialization. The illuminating case studies of the women demonstrate that language socialization as a process is affected by the way communities perceive those being socialized (Schiefflin & Ochs, 1986).

I commenced this dissertation project with a traditional notion of language socialization, and although looking at language socialization has provided insight, I would assert that it is not adequate to capture all of the dynamic influences that affect the women of the study, and their integration and participation in the community. Perhaps an alternative lens should be utilized when working with populations that are considered ‘vulnerable’. Gee (2005) suggests looking at ‘semiotic social space’ instead of CoPs in order to avoid the inherent difficulty of looking at a group of people, rather than a space for activity. He suggests looking through a semiotic lens of making meaning in a space quickly raises questions related to participation, membership, and boundaries (Gee, 2005, p.14).

8.1.3 RQ3

3. What are the funds of knowledge among the participants that could be utilized in the language socialization of Somali refugee women in the CoP?

I chose to present the case of Mama Rita to represent her FoK in order to tell a story of a Somali refugee woman whose practices and story can counter the discourses affecting Somali refugees as well as to gain insight for language socialization, pedagogy, and policy. Again, FoK are practices that tend to be dismissed as commonplace, common-sense, low status, or possessed by everyone (Oughton, 2010).

Mama Rita's FoK, may be perceived as common and possessed by everyone, though her practices demonstrate that she is far from a 'vulnerable victim' p (Horst, 2006). While some may perceive her practices as commonplace, in fact her participation is fuller than some native-born American citizens. She demonstrates that citizenship is practice and not status. Mama Rita's ability to gather and disseminate information, participate politically without citizenship (the status based concept of citizenship), and participate among multiple religious groups are may help to combat negative discourses about refugees.

8.2 Outcomes of Participant Action Research

PAR research emphasizes building community partnerships and utilizing knowledge from immigrant and refugee communities in order to accomplish more for the common good (Auerbach, 2002). Utilizing the data from my project, I worked alongside two colleagues at the Center to write a grant proposal for the Office of Refugee Resettlement's Ethnic Self-Help Grant. I helped in the grant-writing process over the summer of 2014 (delaying the progress of my dissertation writing). The grant is a capacity building grant for organizations' whose composition is made up of at least 80% refugees. The data from this research project was used to create a program model for extended cultural orientation and language socialization base on CoPs. The proposal outlined a plan for established refugees to assist with the work at the Center by mentoring newcomer refugees. These individuals will act as socializing mentors to clients 'in the field'. Often, the work

of the case managers is needed beyond the Center, and case managers take clients places. Also, according to my findings, we know that multiple constraints lead old-timers to simply do things for newcomers. The mentorship program will provide a space for service with socialization, rather than service without socialization. This is a practice that I will train mentors on. I am currently looking toward ESP and genre studies to create strategies for orienting clients to important texts. The program will alleviate some of the work of the case managers and help to raise awareness about consciously helping people, while employing refugees part-time and allow them to use their FoK.

As of October 2, 2014, the Center was awarded 175,000 dollars yearly over three years. A portion of these funds will go to casework, and community outreach, and a portion will go to hiring 8 established refugees to become community mentors. In addition to the grant, the findings from my dissertation will be used to raise awareness within the CoP on issues related to how to promote socialization among clients, and how to better orient them to textually-mediated worlds. I will also train the CoP to understand the difference between citizenship as status and citizenship as practice in order to help promote engagement in the community and to try to avoid creating discitizenship among the CoP (Ramanathan, 2013).

8.3 Implications for Research

Working among and with Somali refugees to carry out this research project has been no simple feat. Several implications for research are evident based on my experiences. Refugees are considered a ‘vulnerable’ population, and while we mustn’t categorize them as vulnerable in every situation (Horst, 2006), we should acknowledge that research must be attuned to and sensitive to refugee contexts. To begin, the concept of ‘research’ was not understood by all of my participants. Explaining research becomes a task in doing research in the community. Given that the field of applied linguistics often works towards understanding ways to enhance pedagogy, I would often

explain to the research participants that I was doing a school project to try to enhance educational programming.

In addition to understanding that the concept of research is privileged, researchers doing work with refugees must also be flexible and open to the structure of research interviews. Many of the participants in the study wanted to share their knowledge, but to some, the idea of being recorded was not ideal. For example, Mama Rita was a very open and engaged participant throughout the course of my dissertation project. During our interviews, she would often ask me to stop recording, not because she didn't want to share the knowledge, but because she didn't want to be recorded. On another occasion she wanted to discuss something going on in the CoP, and she asked me to turn off the recorder, which I did. She shared with me that simply, she did not want to be recorded, and preferred to just talk to me. We negotiated what I needed and what she was comfortable with, and in this way we were both comfortable and content with the research process.

I chose to use Participant Action Research to approach this research project. While the PAR orientation was sufficient and useful, I think that as a refugee advocate I must consider alternative possibilities for framing the research. Kemmis and Wilkinson (1998) describe participatory action research as “focused on helping individuals free themselves from constraints found in the media, in language, in work procedures, and in the relationships of power in educational settings” (p.26). Such studies are prefaced with a stance or important issues about societal problems that aim to investigate domination, oppression, and/or equity. While this orientation to the research served me sufficiently, I think future research on refugee populations, especially when carried out by an active member in the refugee serving community, should also consider using a Research as Practice (RAP) (Lather, 1986) approach because it emphasizes negotiation, reciprocity, empowerment throughout the research process. RAP is “a philosophy of life and work, as well as a methodology”

(Torres & Reyes, 2011, p.53), and in this sense it goes beyond PAR. I plan framing my research as RAP during future development and publication endeavors.

There are several defining characteristics of RAP which go hand in hand with doing research with marginalized populations, thus it has the ability to inform research concerning refugees. First of all, RAP acknowledges the shift in having a subject-subject (our research) dynamic between researcher and participant instead of a subject-object (my research) dynamic (Torres & Reyes 2011). Participants have active participation in entire research process. Three major principles that shape the basis of RAP work. They include the idea of radical participatory democracy, the notion of collective action for transformation toward a better world, and a commitment to work towards social justice alongside of marginalized communities. In addition, “RAP work embraces and promotes the convergence between academic knowledge and popular underprivileged knowledge, thereby producing knowledge and theories as interplay between academic science and popular science.” (p.75). One of the most valuable aspects of RAP, especially when doing research with refugees, is the idea that results from research should be presented in a manner and language that is accessible to all that were involved in the research process. I believe that this presents a worthy challenge for my own research project. RAP is a vehicle for creating ethically and socially responsive work. I find RAP valuable as a framework because many times throughout the research process, I was unsure about exactly when I was collecting data and when I was not. In other words, my research is directly discussing my lived experience, and a great part of my daily activity and agendas for refugee advocacy. I never stopped collecting data, because my research became about what I was doing daily. My research was my work and my social life. Members of the CoP became like members of my family, and Mama Rita became my adopted mother. In addition, I am still considering how to communicate my findings to the CoP.

I must revisit the incident that occurred after my interview with Mama Mouna. To this day, Mama Mouna and I have a good rapport. I often see her at the Center and I cannot help but reflect on what happened during our interview. Fortunately, Mama Mouna's participation in the research project had no long-lasting repercussions that I know of but I often think of the potentially harmful affect her participation in my research could have had on her wellbeing. Worse-case scenario, she would have been stripped of her rent, and perhaps, other services. Considering the potential, and the role her gender played, I would entertain feminist research approaches that are hyper aware of the role gender may play on research participants' and that may offer strategies that can help safeguard participants in a study, and strategies that can proactively deal with coercive forces.

Further implications for research on refugees has to do with interpretation. Hannah was my interpreter during the interviews with Mama Mouna and Caaliyah, and I believe that her rapport with the participants, combined with my rapport with the participants, helped the research context. In other words, I am not sure if I would have had the same participation if she had not been the interpreter in the study. I assert that there are benefits to having someone familiar with the participant (more disclosure and comfort) but also perhaps changes dynamics, and while it worked in my case, it could also negatively affect the dynamics because of Hannah's role of caseworker in the participants' lives.

8.4 Implications for Pedagogy

There are numerous implications that I can discuss related to the findings of my study and pedagogy. First, I would suggest that awareness must be raised among ESL practitioners concerning the drastic shift for some refugees from a social world that is not mediated by texts, to a textually mediated social context. The contexts of students' lives must be explored in order to teach newcomers about the role text plays in social interaction before trying to orient them to texts. Pedagogical strategies need to be explored that help orient students to texts that are relevant to their

daily lives in order to promote a contextualized pedagogy. Understanding daily practices of students, and tailoring curriculum to the needs of students is a must for refugee populations, in particular Somali refugee women with little public participation (Fridland & Dalle, 2006); this understanding helps facilitate learning that enables them to become fuller participants in society. Considering the role of texts in assistance seeking, and that assistance seeking was emphasized in this study, I believe that classroom texts should be influenced by the texts that play an integral role in interactions when refugees seek assistance. In other words, I see potential for curriculum based on forms, bills, and the artifacts refugees encounter daily. Students should bring in artifacts from home, and genre-based pedagogies for refugees should be explored. In addition, in order to facilitate such a curriculum building, learner corpora of the texts central to refugees daily activities could provide insight into what language forms might be useful in the language classroom. We must not stop at teaching assistance seeking skills, but, it is a good starting point. Beyond assistance seeking, which occurs in the earlier stages of resettlement, we must promote pedagogies that empower women to make their own choices while seeking assistance. One way to empower students is to conduct a “rights analysis” (Benesch, 1999) in order to understand how power is exercised and resisted in assistance seeking situations. The analysis of students rights include asking questions about what are students permitted to do in particular settings, how they respond to rules and regulations, and how decisions about control and resistance made (Benesch, 1999). By asking these questions both instructors and student can recognize opportunities for participation and resistance.

Gathering inspiration from Mama Rita’s case, I would suggest that curriculum’s for more advanced language learners’ should include topics related to community participation, politics, and citizenship from a practice perspective (Devlin & Pothier, 2006). Current civics related language courses geared towards refugees still promote citizenship as a status to be obtained rather than

practices to be accumulated. These English classes that are civics-based are among the most popular types of courses in the Clarkston refugee context, and usually teach to the citizenship exam (rote memorization of the 100 potential questions on the citizenship exam) instead of focusing on everyday participation strategies for language socialization and community engagement.

While the implications for K-12 education are beyond the scope of the present study, insights can be gleaned from the cases of the participants in this study that can contribute to and enhance educational curricula for refugee students. FoK research was originally championed in order to understand how to better serve minority children in the classroom based on their backgrounds and households. Understanding Somali refugee women's diverse experiences with language socialization have implications for the K-12 setting.

In line with the enhancing K-12 pedagogy, I think that more parent/child teaching and learning experiences should be provided for refugee mothers. My findings suggest that language socialization is two-way and that children can help socialize their parents at home. This is an area that needs to be explored in greater detail.

8.5 Implications for Refugee Education and Policies (The CoP)

Refugee education should not just be the CoP educating refugees, but a two-way flow of information. Refugees must also educate the community. Most of the policies focusing on refugee focus on refugee education, rather than education on the refugee situation. It is this lack of education about refugees that creates the subtractive local and national discourses, and leaves people with the perception that Somalis are “cunning crooks and vulnerable victims” (Horst, 2006). If it is a national decision to allow up to 80,000 refugees a year into the United States, then there needs to be an emphasis on educating residents of the resettlement communities to understand refugee backgrounds, so that they don't feel like refugees are burdening the community. Early in

my research, Mama Rita and I were discussing refugee education, and she is the one that acknowledged that Americans need to be educated, too. In her own words:

What we can do better here. We have to move and teach them how to, like a new refugee, how they can live in better life... They need, you, people of America to teach a lot of things in refugee community. Because we are, we can't say we know everything. We don't know anything. We need to know. We need to open our eyes. And we need people to help us, to get knowledge here... We have to educate American, too. (Mama Rita, Interview 1)

Returning to the Senate report to the Committee on Foreign relations (S. Rep. No. 111-52, 2010), I would like to reexamine the suggestions made regarding refugee education policy. The report suggests the need to increase access to English as Second Language (ESL) courses which includes finding ways to “incentivize proficiency” through some conditional public assistance programs (S. Rep. No. 111-52, 2010, p.4). The other major suggestions include investing in education (K-12), discarding the one-size-fits-all approach, improving accountability, exploring innovative models, and promoting community engagement. “Incentivizing proficiency” by providing public assistance for taking ESL programs, from my experience, contradicts the goal to improve and promote community engagement. Returning to the idea of citizenship, incentivizing programs through public assistance, creates a sort of discitizenship (Devlin & Pothier, 2006) by promoting ESL in order to receive public assistance rather than to build relationships and engage in the community at large. I understand that assistance (which usually comes in the form of cash, as indicated by Mama Mouna and the TANF program) may get people to ESL class but it does not necessarily get them engaged in the community or in English. I would advocate for CoP based language socialization models for refugees that utilize established refugees that can build trust and relationships among newcomers and teach them through action and practice rather than in the classroom.

Additionally, there are basic flaws in the general U.S. refugee resettlement and education policies. Refugee language education focuses on achieving basic literacy, rather than a higher

proficiency, and in that sense only prepares refugees for very basic participation in society. If we look toward Canadian resettlement policies the focus is on the development of model citizenship and building a ready workforce, but it also value ethnolinguistic rights (Duguay, 2012). Canada has specific programming for newcomers evidenced by Language Instruction for Newcomers in Canada (LINC) and the Immigration Settlement Adaption Program (ISAP) which includes funding for heritage language maintenance programs. In the U.S., unlike Canada, the focus of resettlement policy is on work training or basic literacy and not on “linguistic proficiency outcomes necessary for jobs that require high levels of language and literacy” (Duguay, 2012, p.311). Duguay notes that, in line with the Constitution immigrants do not have specific programs targeting them when they come to the States, instead they are treated as individuals with the same needs as U.S. citizens i.e., access to work and literacy training and housing. The current refugee resettlement program created discitizenship by only having basic literacy and workforce goals, underdevelops refugees, rather than teaching them how to engage in society. The Canadian refugee education system has also received significant criticism for having hidden curriculums which aim to normalize a passive engagement for citizenship thus limiting practitioners (Morgan & Fleming, 2009) In the cases of some of the Somali women in my study, and according to Hopkins (2010) we know that the Somali language plays such a large role in the lives of Somalis, and perhaps, heritage language education programs, especially for low and pre-literate populations could provide a basis for understanding literacy in a language they are familiar with in order to create schema for language learning and in order to help promote English language and literacy. Language proficiency, in English and other languages, is an integral component to participation. The implications of English language proficiency for community participation cannot be overlooked, and often is.

In many ways the current policies that govern refugee education do not acknowledge that language socialization is a process, a process of relationship building. Language socialization is an

interactive process (Schiefflin & Ochs, 1986). Refugees are not passive recipients of sociocultural knowledge in their language interactions, but rather active contributors. Educational programs are needed that acknowledge language socialization as an interactive process that relies on informal relationships among refugees, more established refugees, and longtime American residents. Building intercultural understanding, understanding different faiths, and identifying the shared values among members of Clarkston, a resettlement community, are synonymous with the language socialization of refugees, the building of community and the combatting of negative dominant discourses about refugees. Educational programs are needed that do not separate language learning and cultural/social adjustment services but instead combine the two.

8.6 Limitations of the Study

This study has several limitations. During the design stages of the study I chose to use several lenses including the concepts of linguistic landscape, communities of practice, and participant action research. While these lenses were productive during the dissertation process, each has its own constraints that I am now aware of and that I will consider when seeking to further develop the contents of my dissertation for publication and presentation.

First, the new approach to studying multilingualism, linguistic landscape presents both affordances and constraints. As a rather new approach, LL techniques are still under development and discussion. While the use of LL afforded me the opportunity to document the language environments in Clarkston and provide rich descriptions, the data collection method though systematic, was objectively decided upon. Data collection of LL items is one of the most frequently discussed issues among LL scholars. I believe that I could potentially strengthen this method of collection by asking refugees and community residents' perceptions of the LL items and the public spaces in which they are located.

Second, I would like to acknowledge the constraint of the communities of practice model. While I mentioned that the CoP model has been criticized and needs further development when discussed in light of issues of language and power (Barton & Hamilton, 2005) there are other notable criticisms of the model. For example, Canagarajah (2005) notes its shortcomings in certain translingual communities.

Finally, I briefly discussed the differences between PAR and RAP and believe the PAR approach may have limited the discussion of my research. I fully intend to more thoroughly discuss my research in a manner more in line with RAP approaches that emphasize consequential validity and critical impact of the research project.

8.7 Contributions and Future Research

This dissertation contributes to the academic conversation in applied linguistics, sociology, anthropology, Africana studies, and refugee studies. Generally speaking, as a qualitative case study, the findings cannot be generalized and are inherently context bound, but they provide insight how research can be carried within in refugee diaspora communities in order to enhance programming and pedagogy. I believe that the findings of this study provide a greater depth of understanding about Somali women from various literacy backgrounds, and they can enhance the understanding of context for research on the effects of literacy on language acquisition (e.g., Tarone, Bigelow, and Hansen's work). I believe that this study provides insight for community partnership approaches to English language learning as well as ESP and genre based pedagogies and opens context specific opportunities for collecting and creating genre-based curriculum. Considering the use of the concepts of FoK, and cultural capital, this project offers insight into how the concepts of FoK can be combined with theories of language and literacy to understand dynamics of practice and implications for language socialization. Further, linguistic landscape is a growing area of research and this dissertation offers how it can be used to contextualize learner

environments and observe how they use texts. The focus on practice in this research study and on the reproduction of culture and ideology also have potential to contribute to anthropological and sociological theories. I believe that the data from this project can be analyzed from different frameworks, including a critical discourse analysis perspective. I would also like to pursue further discussion of my data through a more thorough analysis from the lens of Superdiversity (Vertovec, 2010). In addition, data from Mama Rita's case, given her age, will be useful in exploring language and aging issues, including how 'aging out of place' affects language. I have maintained contact with all of the participants in the study, and so, if need be the study can be open and ongoing.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A

Georgia State University
Department of Applied Linguistics & ESL

Informed Consent

Title: Immigrants' knowledge and literacy practices

Principal Investigator: Eric Friginal
Student P-I: Cassie Leymarie

I. Purpose:

You are invited to be in a research study. The purpose of the study is to find out immigrants' daily activities and experiences with language. You are invited to participate because you are an immigrant. A total of 7 people will take part in this study. Participation will require 2-5 hours of your time over a few months.

II. Procedures:

If you decide to be in the study, you will be interviewed by one of the researchers up to 5 times over the next few months. You will be asked about your immigration experience and your family history. You will also be asked about your language use. Each interview will last one hour or less and happen at a place that you will choose. The first interview will be today and last for about an hour. Any future interviews will happen at a time and place you choose. You will receive 10 dollars for each hour of your time.

III. Risks:

In this study, you will not have any more risks than you would in a normal day of life.

IV. Benefits:

Participation in this study may benefit you personally. You will have a chance to think about your immigration experience and language practices. We hope to gain information about your life and how the experiences may be improved.

V. Voluntary Participation and Withdrawal:

Taking part in this research is your choice. You do not have to be in this study. No one can force you to participate in this research or answer any questions. If you decide to be in the study and

change your mind, you have the right to stop at any time. You may skip interview questions and/or stop participating at any time. Whatever you decide, you will not lose any benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.

VI. Confidentiality:

We will keep your records private as allowed by law. All recordings of our talks will be locked in Cassie Leymarie's office, one of the researchers. The recordings will not be saved using your name. A fake name will be used. After the recordings are put in writing they will be destroyed. Only Gayle Nelson and Cassie Leymarie can see the information you provide. Information may also be shared with those who make sure the study is done correctly (GSU Institutional Review Board, the Office for Human Research Protection (OHRP)). Your name and other facts that might show your identity will not appear when we present this study or publish its results. You will not be identified personally.

VII. Contact Persons:

Call or email the researchers if you have questions about this study: Cassie Leymarie, 404-413-5197, cleymarie1@gsu.edu. If you have questions or concerns about your rights as a participant in this research study, you may contact Susan Vogtner in the Office of Research Integrity at 404-413-3513 or svogtner1@gsu.edu.

VIII. Copy of Consent Form to Subject:

We will give you a copy of this consent form to keep.

If you are willing to take part in this research and be audio recorded, please sign below.

Participant

Date

Principal Investigator or Researcher Obtaining Consent

Date

Appendix B

Questionnaire 1

Life and Immigration History/Family Structure

Participant name

Family Name

Person Interviewed

Interviewer(s)

Interpreter

Date:

Start time and end time of interview:

Interview recorded?

INTERVIEWER: Before we begin the interview, we would like to thank you for permitting us this opportunity to enter your household. The purpose of this research study is to obtain basic information about your household which will help us to enhance educational activities within the classroom and in the community. This questionnaire deals with your life, family, and immigration history, where your family is from and what occupations they have held. We would like to emphasize that all responses to the questions are strictly confidential. At no time will your name or the information you have given us be divulged to anyone outside of the research study. In order to safeguard your privacy, we would ask that you read the following consent form so that you may be aware of the confidentiality of the study.

(GIVE PARTICIPANT THE FORM AND ALLOW THEM TO READ IT. IF PREFERRED YOU MAY READ IT TO THEM OR IT MAY BE INTERPRETED TO THEM. ANSWER ANY QUESTIONS OR CONCERNS THAT THEY MAY HAVE. HAVE THE PARTICIPANT SIGN THE FORM.

INTERVIEWER: In order to help with the note taking, would you mind if I recorded the interview?

Thank you.

Questionnaire 1

LIFE STORY INTERVIEW

Where are you from? Where

were you born? What was

your family like?

What did your family do for a living?

Did you work as a child?

What are some of your favorite childhood memories?

What are some of your least favorite childhood memories?

What did you do for amusement as a child?

If you have been married, when?

What was your first job?

What types of things did you do for pleasure as an adult?

What other places have you lived?

What was life like in those places?

What life changing events have you experienced?

IMMIGRATION HISTORY

What events brought you to the United States? Can you tell us as much as possible if you feel comfortable?

What was the process of immigration like?

What could have made the immigration process easier for you and your family?

What expectations did you have about the United States before arriving?

Were those expectations met?

What were you surprised about when you arrived in the U.S.?

What do you think could help you adjust to life in the United States?

FAMILY STRUCTURE

We would like to know a little about your household. For instance, how many people live in your home? Which are relatives, friends, visitors, or tenants?

(FOR EACH PERSON IN THE HOUSEHOLD, OBTAIN NAME, RELATIONSHIP, PLACE OF BIRTH, YEAR OF BIRTH, AND OCCUPATION. ASK FRIENDLY CONVERSATIONAL QUESTIONS ABOUT MEMBERS OF THE HOUSEHOLD, MAKE NOTES IN THE SPACE BELOW.)

How long have you lived in Clarkston?

How long has your spouse lived in Clarkston? (if applicable)

How long have you lived in your present home?

Where did you live before this home? (get as much detail as possible for all previous residences, including hometowns, camps, and other apartments in Clarkston)

Where has your spouse lived previous to this home? (if applicable)

Where were your parents born? Where were they raised?

Where were your spouse's parents born/raised? (if applicable)

How many years of schooling did your parents have? What type of education did they have?

Your spouse's parents? (If applicable)

What languages do you parents speak?

Your spouse's parents (if applicable)?

Where do your parents currently reside? (if applicable)

Do you see them often (if applicable)

How many brothers and sisters do you have?

How many brothers and sisters does your spouse have?

Do you see them often?

Do you have relatives in Clarkston? (Get specific details on number of relatives, residences, occupations.)

Where do other relatives reside? Do you see them often? Do you speak with them?

Appendix C

Questionnaire 2

LABOR HISTORY

We would like to ask you a few questions concerning your employment and previous work experience that you may have had.

What kind of work do you do now?

Where do you work?

Do you work full-time?

Could you describe the duties and responsibilities of your job?

How did you find this job?

How long have you worked at this job?

How did you learn the skills necessary for your job?

What type of training and/or experience is necessary for your type of job?

Are you a supervisor?

If yes, what are your responsibilities?

How many persons do you supervise?

What kind of reading and writing do you have to do on your job?

What languages do you use in your job?

Do other members of your family work with you?

Do your children help you in your job?

Do you like your job or would prefer a different line of work?

We would also like to ask you a few questions about your previous employment.

Please tell us about your previous work experience.

How did you learn the skills for these jobs?

Were you ever a supervisor?

What were your responsibilities?

Was it necessary to read and write a great deal in your previous jobs?

Have you ever worked with someone in your family?

Have your children ever worked with you?

Aside from your main employment, do you have any side jobs that bring in income?

Do you work as a volunteer or participate in any kind of organization, religious group, school organization?

If yes what do you do?

Do you need to read and write to function in this organization?

Do you go to any organization, religious group, or school organization for help/assistance?

Does anyone in your household volunteer or participate in anything?

What other types of activities do you engage in? For example, do you sell goods?

Why do you choose to engage in these activities?

How long have you engaged in them?

How often do you engage in this activity/these activities?

Do children or any relatives accompany you when you go to sell your products?

If your children do not accompany you, who watches them?

Appendix D

Questionnaire 3

Household activities

Participant name

Family Name

Person Interviewed

Interviewer(s)

Interpreter

Date:

Start time and end time of interview:

Interview recorded?

Questionnaire 3

DAILY AND WEEKLY ACTIVITIES

There are many sources for learning. We would like to ask a few questions about your day yesterday. This will help us understand what activities are important to you.

LEAVE WHITE SPACE

Could you tell me the schedule you follow on a typical day? (probe for specific activity, time allotment, location, and persons present)

Do you have any activities that you engage in on a week rather than daily basis, for example, sports activities, religious activities, English lessons, shopping, etc.?

DISTRIBUTION OF HOUSEHOLD TASKS

We would also like to ask about the activities that occur on a regular basis within your home.

Who takes care of the children (if applicable)

Do any of your children help in taking care of their brothers and sisters?

Does the responsibility of child care change? Has it changed during the last year? Why?

Do you have a garden or animals? If so, who takes care of the garden? Animals? Do the children or other family members help with these activities?

Have these activities changed in the past year? Why?

Who cleans the house?

Do the children help to clean the house?

During the last year, has this changed? Why?

Who is in charge of maintenance and repair work in the household?

Does anyone consult books, instructions, or other people to carry out the repairs?

Do the children help with these activities?

Who does the shopping for the household?

Do the children help in the shopping?

Do you make a shopping list?

Do you look for sales and coupons in the newspaper or elsewhere?

Do you read the labels on the products you buy?

When do you read them?

Who does the cooking in the household?

Do the children help in cooking?

Has this changed during the past year? Why?

Do you use recipes to cook?

Can you tell us how many electric or motor tools you use?

Does any member of your family make clothes?

Does the child participate?

SUPPORT

We are trying to investigate the types of exchanges that take place between households in Clarkston. Have you ever had the occasion to help a friend or relative when he/she needed help? For example? (CHILD CARE, TRANSPORTATION, CAR REPAIRS, CLOTHING, COOKING etc.)

Does your child help?

Does a friend or relative help you when you need help? (Probe for answers. If they talk about an organization that helps them, probe further)

Appendix E

Questionnaire 4

Knowledge Sharing and Basic Language

Participant name

Family Name

Person Interviewed

Interviewer(s)

Interpreter

Date:

Start time and end time of interview:

Interview recorded?

Questionnaire 4

EDUCATION AND BASIC LANGUAGE

In this section of the questionnaire we would like to focus on the use of language and the reading and writing skills in the home and the topics you discuss in the home.

At home, what language do you speak to your child? (if applicable)

And your child, in what language does he/she speak to you he majority of the time?

We would like to know your opinion with regard to the reading and writing skills of your child. How well do your children read and write in Somali? Other languages they speak (Arabic, Italian)? English?

Does your child have books at home?

What types of books and in what language(s)?

Do you go to the library with your child?

Do you tell your child stories? (Probe about what type of stories, if they are traditional etc.)

Did you attend school?

Until what age did you attend school?

What subjects were you taught?

What were your favorite subjects?

What were your least favorite subjects?

Do you feel comfortable speaking English?

Which language do you feel most comfortable speaking?

What about your spouse?

Do you ever mix languages?

Do you think it is appropriate to do so?

Are there times when you only speak Somali? Only English?

During your childhood how did you learn Somali? (written?)

What other languages did you learn?

When were you first introduced to/ exposed to English?

What language do you think in?

When you argue, or are angry, are you more likely to use Somali or English?

Do you reprimand your children in Somali or English?

Do you praise your child in Somali or English?

What Songs in Somali do your children know?

What were your children's first words in Somali? English? Other languages?

To whom does your child speak Somali? English?

Do you want your child to speak Somali well? Why?

English? Why?

DO you tell your child stories in Somali? English?

Do you tell your child proverbs in Somali? In English?

Does your child translate for anyone in the family?

Do you have nicknames for your children?

Are there any other languages spoken in the home?

Do you want your child to learn Somali?

Do you read? If so, what do you enjoy reading? Do you have a subscription to magazines or newspapers? Which ones? What languages are they in?

Appendix F

Questionnaire 5 (adapted from Barton & Hamilton, 1998)

Literacy Practices and Access

Participant name

Family Name

Person Interviewed

Interviewer(s)

Interpreter

Date:

Start time and end time of interview:

Interview recorded?

Questionnaire 5

LITERACY PRACTICES

Do you read in Somali?

What do you read?

When do you read?

Do you read in English?

What do you read?

When do you read?

Do you write in Somali?

What do you write?

When do you write?

What types of reading materials do you have in your home?

What types of writing materials do you have in your home?

What other languages do you read and write, if any?

Do you use a library? If so, when, where, and how often?

If you don't use the library, how do you get reading materials?

LITERACY VALUES

How do you feel about reading and writing in
your first language?

What types of things do you read in L1?

What types of things do you write in L1?

How do you feel about the English language?

How do you feel about reading in English?

How do you feel about writing in English? What
types of things do you read in English? What
types of things do you write in English?

MORALITY AND CENSORSHIP

RELIGION AND LITERACY

Is reading important for your religious practices?

Is writing important for your religious practices?

NETWORKS OF SUPPORT

What do you do if you cannot read something you need to read?

What do you do if you cannot write something that you need write?

CONTEXTS/FORMS OF EXCHANGE

How do you normally contact friends and family?

How often do you exchange information with friends and family?

How often do you contact strangers?

How often do you exchange information with strangers?

HISTORICAL BASIS OF READING AND WRITING

When did you learn to read?

When did you learn to write?

Who taught you?

How old were you?

What memories do you have of reading and writing?

When, in your country, was reading and writing important?