Georgia State University
ScholarWorks @ Georgia State University

Middle and Secondary Education Dissertations | Department of Middle and Secondary Education

5-13-2016

Transgressing the Borders: Text and Talk in a Refugee Women's Book Club

Amy E. Pelissero
Georgia State University

Follow this and additional works at: https://scholarworks.gsu.edu/mse_diss

Recommended Citation
Pelissero, Amy E., "Transgressing the Borders: Text and Talk in a Refugee Women's Book Club." Dissertation, Georgia State University, 2016.
https://scholarworks.gsu.edu/mse_diss/30

This Dissertation is brought to you for free and open access by the Department of Middle and Secondary Education at ScholarWorks @ Georgia State University. It has been accepted for inclusion in Middle and Secondary Education Dissertations by an authorized administrator of ScholarWorks @ Georgia State University. For more information, please contact scholarworks@gsu.edu.

ACCEPTANCE

This dissertation, “TRANSGRESSING THE BORDERS: TEXT AND TALK IN A REFUGEE WOMEN’S BOOK CLUB,” by AMY ELIZABETH PELISSERO, was prepared under the direction of the candidate’s Dissertation Advisory Committee. It is accepted by the committee members in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree, Doctor of Philosophy, in the College of Education and Human Development, Georgia State University.

The Dissertation Advisory Committee and the student’s Department Chairperson, as representatives of the faculty, certify that this dissertation has met all standards of excellence and scholarship as determined by the faculty.

____

Gertrude Tinker Sachs, Ph.D.
Committee Chair

____

Wing Yi Chan, Ph.D.
Committee Member

____

Michelle Zoss, Ph.D.
Committee Member

____

David Stinson, Ph.D.
Committee Member

____

Date

____

Gertrude Tinker Sachs, Ph.D.
Chairperson, Department of Middle and Secondary Education

____

Paul A. Alberto, Ph.D.
Dean, College of Education and Human Development

AUTHOR'S STATEMENT

By presenting this dissertation as a partial fulfillment of the requirements for the advanced degree from Georgia State University, I agree that the library of Georgia State University shall make it available for inspection and circulation in accordance with its regulations governing materials of this type. I agree that permission to quote, to copy from, or to publish this dissertation may be granted by the professor under whose direction it was written, by the College of Education and Human Development's Director of Graduate Studies, or by me. Such quoting, copying, or publishing must be solely for scholarly purposes and will not involve potential financial gain. It is understood that any copying from or publication of this dissertation which involves potential financial gain will not be allowed without my written permission.

____

Amy Elizabeth Pelissero

NOTICE TO BORROWERS

All dissertations deposited in the Georgia State University library must be used in accordance with the stipulations prescribed by the author in the preceding statement. The author of this dissertation is:

Amy Elizabeth Pelissero
Department of Middle and Secondary Education
College of Education and Human Development
Georgia State University

The director of this dissertation is:

Gertrude Tinker Sachs, Ph.D.
Department of Middle and Secondary Education
College of Education and Human Development
Georgia State University
Atlanta, GA 30303

CURRICULUM VITAE

Amy Elizabeth Pelissero

ADDRESS: 1184 North Carter Road
Decatur, Georgia 30030

EDUCATION:

Ph.D.	2016	Georgia State University Department of Middle and Secondary Education
M.Ed.	1998	Georgia State University English Education
B.A.	1994	Georgia State University English

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE:

2013 – present	Head of School Global Village Project
2010 – 2012	English Teacher Global Village Project
2009 – 2012	Family Literacy Teacher Refugee Family Services

PRESENTATIONS AND PUBLICATIONS (SELECTED):

Pelissero, A. E. (2016, January). Visibility at the intersections: Language in the lives of Filipina domestic workers in Hong Kong. *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development* (under review).

Pelissero, A. E. (2015, March). *Resources and resilience: Reimagining refugee education in dialogic spaces.* TESOL International Convention & English Language Expo, Toronto, Canada.

Pelissero, A. E. (2014, March). *Literate lives: Lessons from a refugee women's book club*.

TESOL International Convention & English Language Expo, Portland, OR.

Pelissero, A. E. (2013, October). *How do we address challenging grade-level standards with students with interrupted education?* GATESOL Annual Conference, Atlanta, GA.

Pelissero, A. E. (2013, April). *Perspectives on literacy and living from a refugee women's literacy club*. American Educational Research Association Annual Meeting (AERA), San Francisco, CA.

Pelissero, A. E. (2013, April). *Visibility at the intersections: Language in the lives of Filipina domestic workers in Hong Kong*. American Educational Research Association Annual Meeting (AERA), San Francisco, CA.

Pelissero, A. E. (2012, November). *Literate lives: Lessons from a refugee women's book club*. National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) Annual Convention, Las Vegas, NV, participant in the L. Ramon Veal Research Roundtable.

Pelissero, A. E. (2012, October). *Texts & talk: Conducting research with refugee women in a book club*. GATESOL Annual Conference, Atlanta, GA.

Pelissero, A. E. (2011, November). *Crafting our identities: Examining critical literacy practices in elementary, middle, secondary and college classrooms*. National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) Annual Convention, Chicago, IL.

Pelissero, A. E. (2010, November). *Re-imagined fairy tales*. National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) Annual Convention, Orlando, FL.

PROFESSIONAL SOCIETIES AND ORGANIZATIONS

1994 – present	National Council of Teachers of English
2013 – present	International Society for Language Studies
2011 – present	Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages
2013 – present	Georgia TESOL
2012 – present	American Educational Research Association
2014 – present	Kappa Delta Pi

TRANSGRESSING THE BORDERS:
TEXT AND TALK IN A REFUGEE WOMEN'S BOOK CLUB

by

AMY ELIZABETH PELISSERO

Under the Direction of Gertrude Tinker Sachs, Ph.D.

ABSTRACT

The prevailing discourses around refugees often serve to position them as ignorant, incapable, and needing to be assimilated into the dominant culture of receiving societies. The limited research devoted to refugees shows that they struggle in schools and on standardized tests of achievement, are underemployed, and live in poverty. Refugee women, in particular, often contend with multiple linguistic, gendered, and racialized forms of discrimination, as they navigate transnational spaces and lives in resettlement. However, this qualitative study sought to counter deficit discourses around refugee women in resettlement by critically investigating and illuminating their everyday lives and literacy practices. The participants were nine refugee women, aged 16 to 31, who engaged in an out-of-school book club over a six-month period.

Sociocultural, dialogic, poststructural, feminist, and transnational theories informed this study. Critical ethnographic approaches and New Literacy Studies perspectives influenced the research process and data gathering. Qualitative data were collected from audio and video re-

cordings of book club meetings, meeting transcripts, and researcher field notes. The data were analyzed using qualitative coding and narrative methods.

The themes identified from the analysis were that participants (1) shaped and used the book club as a dialogic, border practice and space; (2) navigated and negotiated shifting and changing subjectivities and took up multi/plural identities; (3) used multiple languages and literacies as practices and resources; and (4) were living here-and-there, transnational and dialogic lives. The findings suggest that educators can foster refugee women's English language learning and multiple literacies in three key ways: by creating learning spaces that are flexible, contingent, dialogic, and collaborative; by recognizing students' sociocultural contexts and funds of knowledge; and by affording opportunities for students to position themselves as knowers and teachers.

INDEX WORDS: Refugee Women, Book Club, Transnational, Ways Of Knowing, Dialogic Spaces, Literacy Practices, Refugee Women's Literacy Practices, Refugee Women's Book Club

TRANSGRESSING THE BORDERS:
TEXT AND TALK IN A REFUGEE WOMEN'S BOOK CLUB

by

AMY ELIZABETH PELISSERO

A Dissertation

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of Requirements for the

Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

in

Teaching and Learning, Language and Literacy Education

in

Department of Middle and Secondary Education

in

the College of Education and Human Development

Georgia State University

Atlanta, GA
2016

Copyright by
Amy E. Pelissero
2016

DEDICATION

I dedicate this dissertation to my daughters Jie Xia and Zi Ji.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Maintaining a personal and professional life while completing a doctoral dissertation is no easy task. When I took up this work, I could not conceive of the ways I would be stretched nor did I imagine the ways this would transform my life. The women who participated in this study have become a bigger part of my world, my memories, and my imaginings for the future. Their stories have taken hold of my heart and my mind. Their perspectives and practices have challenged and changed me and influence my work as Head of School and inform my interactions with family and community. I am deeply grateful for their participation in this research project and for all they taught me in the process. I am especially thankful to them for trusting me with their stories and expecting me to do some good with them.

Completing the dissertation process was much longer than I ever anticipated and would not have been possible without the help and support of many who sustained me along the journey. I am profoundly indebted to my family, friends, and colleagues for their care and constant belief in my work and in my ability to complete it. I am especially thankful to my mother for her love and care for my daughters during this time and to my husband for his inspiration, insights, unending encouragement, and edits. I am thankful for my daughters' reassuring hugs and attempts to understand my absences and weekend work. I am also deeply grateful for the support of my advisor, Dr. Gertrude Tinker Sachs, who modeled critical, engaged pedagogy, approved my dissertation topic, and stayed with me to the end. I would also like to thank all the faculty members at Georgia State University who generously helped me complete this work, including Dr. Wing Yi Chan, Dr. David Stinson, Dr. Youngjoo Yi, and Dr. Michelle Zoss.

I am grateful for having had the opportunity and privilege of this achievement, especially as I have an even greater understanding of how elusive and inaccessible education can be for so

many women around the world. Also, I am thankful for those who have before me dedicated time and effort to understanding and improving refugee education and lives. I could not have done this work alone; it was only made possible in and through communion with others, many more knowledgeable than me. Although I have had indispensible help throughout the research process and in the writing of this paper, I accept all flaws or inaccuracies as my own. It is my hope that even with its imperfections, this dissertation will add to the knowledge we have and need in order to better support refugee women in their learning and lives here and around the world.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES i

LIST OF FIGURES ii

1 THE PROBLEM 1

Background on Refugees 2

Research Questions 13

Purpose 13

Overview of Methodology 14

Conceptual Frames: Theories and Lenses 17

Scope and Limitations 29

Definitions of Terms 30

Overview of the Study 38

2 REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE 39

Literature Search 39

Theorizing Refugee Women's Everyday Lives 40

Refugee Schooling and Social Concerns 45

Refugee Education: Critiques and Recommendations 59

Possibilities for Book Clubs 72

Summary of Literature Review 83

3 METHODOLOGY 85

Framing the Study 86

Researcher Roles and Subjectivities 90

Constructing the Book Club 95

Refugees' Contexts 104

The Research Context 108

Procedures in the Club 112

Collecting Data: Studying Multiple Sources 115

Data Analysis 120

Ethical Considerations and Trustworthiness 137

4 FINDINGS 141

Book Club as Dialogic/Border Space and Practice (Theme 1) 145

Shifting Subjectivities (Theme 2) 163

Languages and Literacies are Multiple and Shifting and Are Taken Up as Practices and Resources For Particular Purposes in Everyday Lives (Theme 3) 190

Living Here and There: The Transnational (Theme 4) 214

Remarks on the Findings 242

5 NARRATIVES 244

Christy, Gul, and Pia: Sewing Stories Together 244

Christy 245

Gul 252

Pia 260

Conclusion 267

6 DISCUSSION 268

Introduction 268

Research Question 1. Engagement in Book Club 269

Research Question 2. Everyday Lives, Literacy, and Language Use 291

Research Question 3. Influence of Book Club on Literacy Practices and Lives . 303

Limitations, Recommendations, and Conclusions 311

REFERENCES.. 324

APPENDICES 349

Appendix A. Pilot Study 349

Appendix B. Narrative Episodes... 355

Appendix C. Keyword Frequencies... 359

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1. Selected Texts. 98

Table 2. Core Participant Data. 100

Table 3. Book Club Meetings. 103

Table 4. Core Group Participation. 145

Table 5. Pilot Study Participants (Pseudonyms). 349

Table 6. Narrative Episodes, Themes, and Related Codes. 355

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1. Coding Analysis and Codeweaving following Saldaña (2009)................................... 121

1 THE PROBLEM

For refugees, one of the greatest barriers to resettlement is language proficiency (Capps, Newland & Migration Policy Institute, 2015; Fong, 2004; McBrien, 2005). Having left their countries of nationality due to “well-founded” fears of persecution based on their “race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group, or political opinion” (UNHCR, 2011), refugees’ social and cultural capital, and what others believe they are capable of doing and contributing, depends largely on refugees’ proficiency in the majority language (Bigelow, 2010; Luke, 2003; Norton, 2000; Perry, 2009; Sarroub, 2008; Stagg-Peterson & Heywood, 2007; Warriner, 2004a, 2004b; Woods, 2009). Receiving societies tend to view refugees who have limited English or access to majority languages from a deficit perspective, assuming that refugees’ lack of print literacy and limited formal schooling are indicators of illiteracy and ignorance (Bartolomé, 2010; Bigelow, 2010; Binder & Tošić, 2005; Brown et al., 2006; Fong, 2004; Gunderson, 2000; McBrien, 2005; Sarroub, 2005; Warriner, 2007a). Limited English proficiency is consistently viewed as a barrier to employment, integration, independence, and social contribution, particularly in predominantly White, Westernized contexts in Australia, Canada, and the United States.

Of the thousands of refugees resettled annually, nearly 80% are women and their children (Binder & Tošić, 2005; Hajdukowski-Ahmed, 2009; Khanlou & Moussa, 2008; Martin, 2004). The largest number of refugees designated for permanent resettlement have been admitted to the United States, and in 2013 the United States accepted two-thirds of the 98,000 refugees who were resettled that year. Many of these women and children who came to the United States lack the educational resources to develop literacy, especially print literacy, in the majority language (Capps et al., 2015). A 2010 Global Education Report (GED) from the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) revealed that women still far outnumber

men in rates of illiteracy, especially in many Sub-Saharan and Southeast Asian countries. Resettlement can be especially challenging for this group (McBrien, 2005; Sarr & Mosselson, 2010), with a key reason being their lack or perceived lack of literacy.

Background on Refugees

Unlike many other immigrants, refugees are typically forcibly displaced and resettled after being persecuted in their homelands (Binder & Tošić, 2005). According to United Nations statistics, coordinating and participating countries have helped an estimated 60 million refugee people settle in new homes around the world. The Office of Refugee Resettlement under the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services recognizes that Georgia, the state in which this study was conducted, consistently took in larger numbers of refugees than most other states in the United States. In 2009, Georgia was among the top five states for number of refugee recipients, and the county where this study was conducted has consistently taken in more refugees than any other county in Georgia. Refugees in Georgia came from more than 20 countries, mostly war-torn, and reveal the largely non-White, “changing face” of refugees that Sarr and Mosselson (2010) describe. The majority came from Afghanistan, Bhutan, Burma, Burundi, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Iraq, Somalia, and Sudan (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2009). This local refugee community influenced my perspectives, informed my study, and provided the participants for this research.

Challenges in resettlement. After having faced persecution within their own countries, forced migration, separation from home and family, and confinement in camps and along border “safety” zones, many refugees contend with ambivalent receptions in local communities (Roxas, 2010; Roy & Roxas, 2011) and continue to face marginalization and isolation in resettlement, including restricted access to linguistic and cultural capital (Stagg-Peterson & Heywood, 2007;

Woods, 2009). They often have limited opportunities to learn in English-speaking communities of practice (Finn, 2010; Norton, 2000; Warriner, 2009a), and research conducted between 2009 and 2011 showed that 58% of refugees who had been in the United States 20 years or more were still considered “Limited English Proficient” (Capps, et al., 2015, p. 2). According to the Migration Policy Institute’s first longitudinal report focused solely on refugees (2015), the scale of the U.S. resettlement program, the increasing diversity among U.S. refugees, and the low English language and education levels of recent refugees pose increasing challenges (Capps, et al., 2015).

Many resettled refugees in the United States today are women and children from Sub-Saharan and Southeast Asian countries who have experienced interrupted formal education, no education, or otherwise limited print-literacy learning. Worldwide, women represent 64% of the world’s “illiterate” adults, and learning opportunities for girls and women are still “severely” limited, especially at the secondary level when girls reach adolescence (UNESCO, 2010). Studies have shown that recent refugees with low literacy levels and low education levels have lower incomes, and “a comparison of data from 2000 and 2009–2011 indicates that refugees resettled in recent years are at an economic disadvantage with those resettled earlier” (Capps et al., p. 28, 2015). Researchers contend that this disadvantage could be due to the changes in resettlement and to lower levels of education and literacy.

The limited literature focused on refugees as learners has shown that they are often failing in schools and on standardized tests of achievement, and that they are underemployed and often living in poverty (Brown et al., 2006; Gunderson, 2000; McBrien, 2005). McBrien (2005) contends, “teachers are frequently unaware that they have refugees in their classrooms” (p. 337), and “differences between refugees and other immigrants make this group the most vulnerable for school failure” (p. 332–333). Many refugees have had limited or interrupted educational experi-

ences due to war, violence, persecution, poverty, migration, and societal norms or expectations. Short and Boyson (2012) concluded, in their research among older newcomers in secondary schools, that “students who are newly arrived immigrants and who need to learn English are among the most vulnerable subgroups of English language learners, especially those with gaps in their educational backgrounds” (p. v).

Some educators and researchers have identified and included refugees in the subpopulation of English learners referred to as *students with limited or interrupted formal education* (SLIFE) (DeCapua & Marshall, 2010). Others refer to *low literacy refugee background* (LLRB) students (Windle & Miller, 2012). In either case, much of the research available reveals that this group of language learners faces particular challenges in schools and classrooms due to their limited experiences with formal academic discourses and the taken-for-granted linguistic, cultural, and social demands of secondary schooling.

Despite the great diversity and complex differences among displaced women, it is clear that they often contend with similar challenges in resettlement. New living arrangements, disrupted family patterns, isolation, separation from traditional systems of support, discrimination, limited or interrupted formal education, underemployment, “illiteracy,” and language barriers are all cited as challenging aspects of resettlement for many refugee women (Fong, 2004; Martin, 2004). However, even though migrant women and their children make up most of the world’s displaced people, representing the majority of the poor in every country (Hatoss & Huijer, 2010), this vast female movement (Benhabib & Resnik, 2009) has drawn little attention to the lives of resettled refugee women. According to Fong (2004), “Little is written about the process of transitions after they have arrived in the United States” (p. 12). Resettled refugee women remain largely invisible, and research into their lives is particularly lacking and needed.

Literacies among refugees. Despite the findings, cited above, that women refugees face particularly difficult challenges, "Education statistics on refugee or displaced populations are limited and often not disaggregated by sex" (UNESCO, 2011, pp. 50–51). For this reason, "more in-depth information…to contextualize and interpret educational statistics" (p. 84) is needed. As Binder and Tošić (2005) pointed out, "being a woman is not recognized as a category in national and international statistics on refugees and asylum seekers" (p. 613) despite the fact that many women flee for reasons related to their gender and status as women. The authors contend that women and children are usually combined into one category and are often marginalized in research and in legal refugee regulations. The inadequate research into refugee women, their literacy practices, and their learning experiences offer an opening and opportunity for this research to contribute much-needed knowledge.

In order to attend to the growing refugee population in schools and add to our limited knowledge about refugees as a distinct group of learners, especially women, further research is needed into their language, literacy, and learning (Bigelow, 2010; Brown, Miller, & Mitchell, 2006; Perry, 2007, 2009; Woods, 2009). More and different research is needed into the relationships among language, learning, literacy, and everyday lives in order to support refugees entering local communities and schools. Cummins (2003) calls for an examination of language and education that is not simply and narrowly focused on linguistic knowledge and academic ability but that also brings culture, identity, and imagination into the discussion in order to "challenge the historical pattern whereby differences are transformed into deficits" (p. 40).

Cummins (2003) contends that the role of educators is to create interactional and interpersonal spaces in which students can imaginatively negotiate identities and generate knowledge. Luke (2003) argues that literacy has "radical potential for altering life pathways and inequitable

access to discourse, knowledge, and power" (p. 139) and calls for "a research agenda that focuses on the relationships between language and other forms of capital" (p. 139). I argue that these approaches are particularly important for refugee women. In places where a majority language acts as a valuable form of capital, immigrant and minority women are often denied or restricted access to language learning and forms of linguistic capital (Norton, 2000; Pavlenko, 2004). Cultural perceptions and expectations, money and financial resources, familial obligations, and gender norms may all act to restrict or deny access to language learning for women (Pavlenko, 2004).

I define *literacy* as multiple, situated, and shifting social practices of meaning-making around texts (Purcell-Gates, 2006). Along similar lines, Barton and Hamilton (2000) conceptualize literacy as being best understood as a set of social practices that (a) encompass different literacies that are associated with different domains of life; (b) are patterned by social institutions and power relationships, with some literacies becoming more dominant, visible, and influential than others; (c) are purposeful and embedded in broader social goals and cultural practices; (d) are historically situated; and (e) frequently change and are acquired through processes of informal learning and sense-making (p. 8).

Many scholars contend that language, literacy, and learning are tightly tied to one's sense of self (e.g. Bigelow, 2010; Cummins, 2003, 2005; McCarthey & Moje, 2002; Menard-Warwick, 2005, 2008; Moje, Luke, Davies & Street, 2009; McKinney & Norton, 2008; Norton, 1997, 2000; Pavlenko & Norton, 2007; Warriner, 2007c; Yi, 2009). For refugees specifically, Hajdukowski-Ahmed (2009) draws upon Bakhtin and dialogic theory in pointing out that for "uprooted people, every new situation and location deeply reshapes their identities, their sense of self, their agency, and their well being. Uprooted women in particular face multiple, distinct challenges

that impact their identity" (p. 28–29). She contends that identity in this context can be understood in terms of dialogism, which "views identity as a continuous and relational process rather than a fixed construct and thus is well suited to the task of understanding those whose lives have been radically transformed by trauma, upheaval, and resettlement" (p. 29).

Even though literacy is now largely accepted as much more than the ability to read and write traditional printed texts (New London Group, 1996), still, educational policies, schools, and teachers often still do not reflect the multifaceted, hybrid literacies (Street, 1997, 2003; New London Group, 1996) that theory and research have offered. Fundamental arguments about what it means to "read and write" still persist (Luke, 2003; Luke & Woods, 2009; Street & Lefstein, 2007; Gee, 1999). Instead of focusing on real-world learning, situated in shifting social, cultural, political, and economic times, educational policies and pedagogy still tend to prioritize and privilege static, individualistic, and traditional ways of knowing. Literacy pedagogy in particular has been carefully "restricted to formalized, monolingual, monocultural, and rule-governed forms of language" (New London Group, 1996, p. 60).

Discourses of deficiency, or deficit discourses, that pathologize and "other" refugees and their experiences still circulate, leading to continued discrimination and displacement. Cummins (2003) argued that in many ways this construction of a problem of underachievement is focused on perceived individual and cultural deficiencies, and therefore excludes any critical considerations of socioeconomic disparities or racial discrimination. Grewal (1994) similarly suggested, "refugees and immigrants in the United States, especially the non-Europeans who bring 'traditional' and 'barbaric' customs with them, are represented as a collective impending crisis" and contended, "such a practice participates in a xenophobic, racialized American nationalism" (p. 516). Grewal argued, "the categories deployed by the state, such as legal, illegal, citizen, alien,

nation" are historically formed and must be deconstructed in order to counter the naturalizing effects of these constructs (p. 517). I contend that conceptions of literacy and categories of literate and illiterate work in similar ways and in conjunction with other constructs to reinforce the "crisis" discourses that often surround refugees.

Along these same lines, little research has been directed toward understanding the transnational literacies in which many immigrant, migrant, and refugee learners engage across contexts (Hornberger & Link, 2012; Lam & Warriner, 2012; Warriner, 2007c, 2009b; Yi, 2009). Street (2003) contended that in language education understandings are needed that take into account the whole spectrum of communicative practices and communicative competencies learners use and contends that limiting conceptions of literacy often taken up in schools deny the broad repertoires of practice taken up in everyday lives (p. 79) I noticed that many of the literacy practices refugees engaged in extended across cultures, languages, and national borders. Warriner (2007c) used the term *transnational literacies* to refer to literacy practices whose meanings and interconnections extend beyond and across national borders, spaces, and times. For many of the refugee women with whom I worked, transnational experiences that included complex transnational literacy practices were a common and mostly taken-for-granted aspect of everyday life.

Warriner (2007c) argued that it is important for researchers and educators to make sense of the ways in which transnational literacies are made visible, valued, used, and imagined in particular contexts and for particular purposes. She contended that more complex and nuanced ethnographic approaches and representations "of the situated and contested ways that local practices are influenced by global processes (economic, political, and cultural)" (p. 211) are required to understand this "new territory" (p. 210) and further theorize and conceptualize transnational lit-

eracy practices. In the field of New Literacy Studies (NLS), scholars explore how locally situated literacies connect to larger global processes (Luke, 2004a; Street, 2004, 2005).

Research within schools is already being done by a number of scholars interested in refugee and immigrant learning and English language and literacy acquisition (e.g. Brown, Miller & Mitchell, 2006; Hornberger & Link, 2012; Li, 2008, 2010; Mosselson, 2006; Rubinstein-Ávila, E. 2003, 2007; Sarr & Mosselson, 2010; Sarroub, 2005; Valdés, 2001; Valenzuela, 1999, 2008). Literature circles in language classrooms and school-sanctioned book clubs have been and remain a focus of study and interest, especially among educators engaged in literacy teaching and learning. Meanwhile, little has been done to study the significance of reading groups outside of schools. The majority of women's reading groups exists in the private domestic sphere, and therefore remains largely hidden and unexplored (Long, 1986). Long (2003) describes them as zones of "cultural invisibility" (p. ix). Her foundational study of women's reading groups in Texas is significant largely because it helps fill this gap and make visible the uses of reading in the everyday lives of women both historically and contemporarily. In a study by Poole (2003) of nearly 988 reading groups affiliated with the Council of Adult Education in Australia, it was found that community book clubs, which are almost exclusively made up of women, are undervalued and often ignored as unimportant feminine activities (p. 263). Flint (2006) pointed out that there are even fewer studies of reading groups among women of color within Anglophone countries (p. 529), and as far as I can see, there has not been any research conducted among refugee women of color involved in an out-of-school book club.

In this study, I explored how a book club outside of school in an informal setting might provide opportunities for different insights into the intersections in refugee women's lives, learning, and literacy practices. Following Warriner's (2007c) advice, this study of a refugee women's

book club attempted to add to understandings of transnational literacies, as part of the repertoires refugee women use as they navigate their daily lives.

In my work as a refugee family literacy teacher and English teacher at a local school for refugee young women and in the course of this research, I met and taught many competent and capable refugee women who readily and regularly engaged in literacy. They were expertly able to code-switch, and they used English among many other languages to engage in daily literacy practices such as reading and writing emails; reading web pages, school and faith texts, maps, signs, and newspapers in multiple languages; watching movies and television in multiple languages; filling out school and governmental forms; shopping; paying bills; and writing letters, stories, songs, and more. In light of these observations and the literature cited above, there is an evident need for more in-depth, dialogic, and critical examinations of literacy and learning among refugee women; and that moreover, the book club setting is an ideal setting for conducting this research.

Although a book club is offered as an alternative space for language and literacy learning, scant research among women of color engaged in book clubs is available, and none focused on refugee women in a book club has been found. In this study, a complex and critical framework reveals the limitations of the literature and points to the lack of and need for more focused study and research into the ways in which power and imagination intersect with language, literacies, and learning in everyday lives.

Context of the American South. A third relevant piece of background on refugees for this study, in addition to the challenges of resettlement and of literacies, has to do with the region in which the research was conducted, the American South. Historically, this part of the United States has been haunted by a legacy of ongoing racial tensions between Whites on the one hand,

and on the other hand, the Blacks whose ancestors had been brought in as slaves. Additionally, the South remained largely isolated and unchanged, so that between 1850 and 1970 it was home "to a smaller percentage of immigrants than any other region" of the country (Bankston, 2007, p. 24). During the 1990s, however, the region has seen a steep increase in immigration, and the foreign-born population rose more than 200% in the state (Hooker, Fix, McHugh & Migration Policy Institute, 2014). Women of color who resettle as refugees in this region face distinct challenges, in that the powerful racial, cultural, and linguistic norms that dominated for so long also served to keep traditional and often discriminatory roles and views in place. Recent and rapid changes in the South, including rising numbers of refugees, have had complex consequences.

For example, Winders (2007) examined the rise in immigration in the U.S. South in light of post-9/11 nativist and nationalist sentiments, and he explored the convergence of regional racial tensions with national border fears and anxieties. Winders shed light on the ways that "the South has historically been a border project within, and in relation to, the U.S. nation-state" (p. 924), with borders being defined in terms of North–South, Black–White, slave–free, urban–rural, and agricultural–industrial. Now, in the midst of new border imaginings, Winders notes that questions about "who is claiming a place in schools and other institutions" arise, and the linkages between public schools and immigration highlight issues of belonging, citizenship, and community in the changing South (p. 926). These issues are relevant to the discussions of refugee learners and deficit discourses that circulate in schools, classrooms, and communities. Winders (2007) concluded, "Southern locales have become strategic sites where borders and national security are enacted and performed with a growing tenacity" (p. 933). Such conclusions only seem to reinforce the need for better understandings of how social and political processes come to bear on

refugee women's everyday lives and for creating spaces where different discourses are permitted to circulate.

One need not look far to find instances of the deficit discourses surrounding refugees and immigrants. Much of this discourse seems to circulate around language and accent, which act as immediate markers of difference and are used to signify "otherness." Language difference in the user is often equated with ignorance, signaling that the user is an outsider and does not belong in this space. In 2014, in the state in which the study was conducted, an English as Official Language Amendment would have declared English as the official language and would have provided that all official state actions be conducted in English only, including all documents, meetings and presentations (Senate Resolution 1031, 2014). A local newspaper article talked about using the amendment and English language policies to limit immigrant drivers (Torres, 2014). The online posts following the article revealed the reality of racism and the ties between race and language in our state and elsewhere in the country.

The deficit discourses and negative biases at work in the local and larger communities are also at work in the schools, operating to diminish students and limit their opportunities. Locally, county schools were investigated and indicted by the Office of Civil Rights for noncompliance under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Issues cited were related to harassment, providing language assistance, meaningful access, and the identification of student needs and provision of ESL (English as a Second Language) services (U.S. Department of Justice, 2014). In March 2014, the Migration Policy Institute (MPI) report revealed that our state was not adequately educating immigrants and English Learners, and that these groups lagged considerably behind nonimmigrant peers in terms of graduation, college access, and degree completion (Hooker et al., 2014).

Indeed, in the United States, monolingual ideologies are tightly tied to nationalism and to education. As Lippi-Green (2012) noted, “It is crucial to remember that it is not all foreign accents, but only accent linked to skin that isn’t White, or which signals a third-world homeland, which evokes such negative reactions” (p. 253). Deficit discourses, when unrecognized, work to position refugees and their families as unwell, unable, unknowing, ignorant, or worse. This study was intended to challenge this deficit perspective, reveal the ways that schools are failing to meet the needs of refugees, and imagine possibilities for the future.

Research Questions

This research study investigated and contextualized the literacy practices, language use, and lived experiences of refugee women participating in a book club. The questions guiding this study were as follows:

1. How do refugee women engage in an out-of-school book club?
2. What can be learned about the everyday lived experiences, literacy practices, and language use of resettled refugee women through an exploration of the book club?
3. In what ways might a book club community influence refugee women’s literacy practices and everyday lives?

A book club study provided unexplored opportunities for new perspectives into the largely invisible literacy practices that refugee women possess and use as they negotiate new and often-contested spaces in their everyday lives.

Purpose

The purposes for the current research study were to critically examine the contested views of refugee literacy, as described above, and to more deeply examine the literacy practices, lives, and learning of refugee women engaged in a book club. The research also explored refugee

women's daily experiences of resettlement. Building upon a short pilot study (described in Appendix A) and previous scholarship, this study offered an opportunity for fuller and more critical insights into the experiences, perspectives, and practices of refugee women and the implications these may have on language and literacy education for refugee adult English learners in resettlement. The focus was on the ways in which refugee women used language and engaged in literacy practices as a means of imagining, resisting, and rewriting their lives and on the material consequences of these practices in everyday lives. I wished to challenge the deficit discourses surrounding refugee women, which characterize them as limited and deficient. In contrast to the prevailing deficit discourses about refugees, I worked with a number of refugee women who drew upon vast and varied resources in order to negotiate everyday lives in new spaces and gain access to English and to education.

Overview of Methodology

In order to investigate the language and literacy practices, perceptions, and everyday lives of refugee women in a book club, I employed a methodological framework that integrated both ethnographic and narrative approaches. I drew on critical ethnographic methods for my data collection, collecting data in the form of participant observations, field notes, audio and video recordings, transcripts of recordings, and digital data sources. I drew on both ethnographic and narrative methods for my data analysis. Drawing on a critical ethnographic approach, I was both an active participant in the book club and a critical, reflective researcher. My methods were informed by other qualitative critical ethnographic studies (Canagarajah, 1993; Conquergood, 1991; Creswell, 2009; Grbich, 2007; Li, 2008; Madison, 2005; Norton, 2000; Purcell-Gates, 2004; Street, 2004).

I used qualitative coding methods of analysis to locate themes across data sources (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007; Saldaña, 2009) and drew upon narrative methods of analysis to explore participants' understandings, perspectives, and experiences and to notice the ways in which power and imagination intersected their individual stories and social lives. I was interested in the sociocultural and dialogic dimensions of narrative, as narratives are capable of crossing geopolitical and cultural borders and may provide a means for straddling borders (Anzaldúa, 1987/2007; Zhou, 2001). Indeed, the book club itself centered on narrative, as we constructed and told stories connected to the books we read together. My hybrid approach, which was intended to allow for multiple ways of knowing, is detailed in chapter 3.

One reason for basing the study on a book club was that I wanted to explore what the participants and I might learn from one another by gathering regularly around narratives, talking and reading together. I also wanted to reimagine the book club, which has traditionally been a White, middle-class, homogenizing construction (Long, 2003), as a potentially open and more diverse space where women with different perspectives and experiences could meet, talk, read, and share their lives with one another. I chose to convene the book club outside of school in order to avoid institutional structure and surveillance (Foucault, 1995), as well as to avoid the school's emphasis on evaluation. Any of these factors could have impeded a free and open sharing of perspectives and experiences.

Qualitative research was appropriate for this study of refugee women in a book club because, as Creswell (2009) noted, qualitative research is "exploratory" and is suitable when "not much has been written about the topic or the population being studied" (p. 26). In the case of refugee literacy studies, numerous scholars and researchers have used qualitative inquiries to explore refugee literacy experiences in the new and rapidly changing landscape of schools in a

globalized world (Bigelow, 2010; Oikonomidoy, 2007; Perrry, 2006; Sarroub, 2008; Townsend & Fu, 2001; Walker-Dalhouse & Dalhouse, 2009; Warriner, 2004a, 2004b; Woods, 2009).

Binder and Tošić (2005) argued that more ethnographic and anthropological research is needed in refugee studies and may provide valuable insights and knowledge. They suggested that when refugees move, they "recompose" and "reconstruct" (p. 609) their histories, lives, and ethnic identities and contend this is worthy and valuable study within the growing globalized world. Purcell-Gates (2004) suggested that ethnography is particularly suited to the study of literacy because literacy is a cultural practice. She argued that ethnography offers a cultural lens through which to view literacy practices and the lives of learners, who are not considered part of the mainstream.

Researchers have identified the ethnographic method as being appropriate for studies concerning power structures. Street (2004) contends that ethnographic literacy studies are suited to the study of local and out-of-school literacy practices; he argues for ethnographic studies that can or will call into question social privilege and power, political power structures that "define and rank" (p. 327) some literacy practices as better or more valuable than others. Literacy and language are deeply connected to issues of culture, power, and agency and should be studied in ways that may offer insight into the complexity of literacy practices. Similarly, Grbich (2007) suggests that critical ethnography goes beyond describing the culture under study to reveal relations of power and ways power inequalities might be problematized and subverted—including the researcher's own roles and positions of power. Critical lenses allowed me to better examine concepts of literacy, language, power, and agency (Freire, 1968/1993; Foucault, 1978; hooks, 1994; Luke, 2003, 2004a, 2004b; Norton, 2000; Norton & Toohey, 2004; Pavlenko, 2004; Pennycook, 1999; Street, 2003) in the lives of refugee women. Thus, the research combined the

richness of qualitative study with critical perspectives and ethnographic approaches. The critical ethnographic approach to literacy that frames this study draws upon Street's (1997, 2003, 2005) ideological conception of literacy as multiple, situated, and shifting social practices.

The nine women who participated in this study were purposefully recruited based on previous relationships, reading levels, and availability. All were refugee women from Afghanistan, Burma, Burundi, and South Sudan. The women and I met regularly over a period of six months, conducting book club meetings in relatively private spaces including my home, participants' homes, a public park, and a restaurant. The methods and methodology are described in greater detail in chapter 3.

Conceptual Frames: Theories and Lenses

For refugee women whose lives and subjectivities are shifting and situated in multiple spaces, nuanced approaches and critical awareness were required to uncover and trace the histories of their practices as they are enmeshed in and highly influenced by a dynamic and complex social and political world. I envisioned this study of refugee women's literacies and lives in a book club as an opportunity to better understand and reimagine different conceptions of literacy and language use and the ways in which these intersect with learning and life in resettled spaces. I drew upon and wove together multiple theories and constructs in order to develop a more comprehensive and complex view of the stories and lives that participants shared with me in this study. These included (a) socio-cultural theories of learning and related concepts such as funds of knowledge; (b) dialogic theories of language and learning; (c) poststructural theories and feminist approaches; (d) theories of power and transnationalism; (e) a New Literacy Studies (NLS) perspective, which assumes a critical ethnographic orientation to research; and (f) narrative approaches to analysis. This integrative yet critical framework allowed me to see the ways in which

complex lives are lived across spaces, in multiple languages and with shifting literacies. The approach also rendered visible the refugee women's practices of resistance and reimagining and suggested how they may be influenced by a book club community. Stitched together, multiple theories provided a theoretical framework of support for the study. Figure ____ shows a visual representation of the framework I fashioned.

As a sociocultural study, I connect Vygotsky (1978, 1986) and Bakhtin (1981, 1984, 1986) to funds of knowledge (González, Moll, & Amanti, 2005) and community of practice (Lave & Wenger, 1991) approaches and to transactional theory (Rosenblatt, 1994, 1995) in order to reveal the complex relationships between language, literacy, and learning. Multiple poststructural and feminist critical perspectives (Anzaldúa, 1987/2007; Freire, 1968/1993; Foucault, 1978, 1995; Grewal & Kaplan, 1994; Hajdukowski-Ahmed, 2009; hooks, 1994; Lather, 1992, 2004; Minh-ha, 2010; Mohanty, 2003; Noddings, 1984; Pennycook, 1999; Weedon, 1991, 1999, 2004) brought social theories of language, literacy, and learning into particular focus as they illuminated aspects of refugee women's everyday lives in gendered, classed, and racialized spaces. Particular attention to relations of power and transnationalism (Binder & Tošić, 2005; Grewal & Kaplan, 1994; Lam & Warriner, 2012; Levitt & Schiller, 2006; Piller & Takahashi, 2010; Vertovec, 2001; Warriner, 2007c, 2009b) in refugee women's lives and literacy practices proved important in understanding their stories and the multiple ways in which they positioned themselves in the book club and felt they were positioned by others outside the club.

In line with New Literacy Studies (Baynham, 2002; Street, 1997, 2005; Purcell-Gates, 2006; Barton & Hamilton, 1998, 2000), I attempted to critique normalizing discourses and narrow understandings of what literacy is and how it is taken up. I used social cultural theories and critical conceptions of second language learning (Heller, 2010; Hirvela, 2004; Kubota, 2004;

Lantolf, 2011; Norton, 2000; Norton & Toohey, 2004; Pavlenko, 2004; Pavlenko & Norton, 2007; Swain & Deters, 2007) to give specific insights into refugees' experiences as multilingual English learners engaged in dialogic communities. Narrative approaches to research and analysis (Bamberg, 2006; Bamberg & Georgakopoulou, 2008; Bell, 2002, 2011; Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Frank, 2002, 2012; Georgakopoulou, 2006; Holstein & Gubrium, 2012; Norton & Early, 2011; Pavlenko, 2002; Riessman, 2008; Vitanova, 2013) afforded particular insights into the dialogic aspects and interactions in the book club and participants' negotiations and navigations in positioning and practices.

Taken together, these theories and approaches were tools for uncovering and understanding the complex ways in which refugee women engage in meaning-making in a book club and beyond. My intention was to tie together theory and practice in critical praxis, or "reflection and action upon the world in order to transform it" (Freire, 1968/1993).

Socio-cultural theories of language, learning, and literacy. Socially situated theories of language, learning, and literacy offered an overarching frame for this study of literacy practices in a women's book club. Vygotsky (1978, 1986) characterized language and learning as being constructed in social contexts. He contended that language and thought are inextricably linked and suggested that individuals learn through language in social interactions and with scaffolded support. In his view, "the true development of thinking is not from the individual to the social, but from the social to the individual" (Vygotsky, 1986, p. 36). Social constructivist work recognizes that "meaning is not discovered but is constituted or constructed in interaction" and is "always partial and perspectival" (Kamberelis & Dimitraidis, 2004, p. 14). A sociocultural frame focuses upon language in use, and it situates practices of learning and knowing within everyday social lives.

Also drawing on sociocultural theories of learning to broaden understandings of literacy, Street (1997, 2003, 2005) conceptualized literacy as a set of multiple, situated, social practices. His ideological model responds to, and contrasts with, autonomous models of literacy as a set of neutral, decontextualized technical skills and ties social literacy to communicative practices. For Barton and Hamilton (1998), the study of local literacies in Britain revealed what they call *vernacular literacy* practices, which are based in everyday experiences and used for everyday purposes (p. 251). The authors organized these practices into categories, including organizing life, personal communication, private leisure, documenting life, sense-making, and social participation. In contrast to dominant school-sanctioned literacies that are mostly controlled and structured by expert others, vernacular literacies are self-regulated, often self-motivated, and shifting. Thus, they challenge the privilege of particular literacy practices over others.

I see literacy practices and learning as being situated in the everyday interactions and intersections among people; they are socially, historically, and culturally embedded in *funds of knowledge*. According to González, Moll, and Amanti (2005), funds of knowledge are the accumulated and culturally situated knowledges and skills that people have acquired from and through their lives, and that are essential for functioning and well-being (pp. 71–72). A funds of knowledge approach connects learning and contexts in meaning-making. This approach is situated within everyday lives and real-world experiences, and it rejects deficit discourses. It is a strengths-based approach to learning that focuses upon the valuable resources learners have and use. Everyday literacy practices are tightly tied to refugee learners' funds of knowledge (Bigelow, 2010; Fong, 2004; Perry, 2009; Sarroub, 2002, 2008). I saw my exploration into refugee women's literacy practices in a book club as being tightly tied to funds of knowledge.

Social learning can be conceptualized as occurring in communities of practice. Eckert and McConnell-Ginet (1992), following Lave and Wenger (1991), described a *community of practice* as “an aggregate of people who come together around mutual engagement in an endeavor. Ways of doing things, ways of talking, beliefs, values, power relations—in short, practices—emerge in the course of this mutual endeavor” (p. 464). Lave and Wenger (1991) proposed that from a community of practice perspective of learning,

> The key to legitimate peripheral participation is access by newcomers to the community of practice and all that membership entails. But though this is essential to the reproduction of the community, it is always problematic at the same time. To become a full member of a community of practice requires access to a wide range of ongoing activity, old-timers, and other members of the community; and to information, resources and opportunities for participation. (p. 100)

Lave and Wenger (1991) based their conceptions of situated learning in communities of practice on sociocultural theory. In their view, “learning is configured through the process of becoming a full participant in a sociocultural practice” (p. 29) and is “an integral part of generative social practice in the lived-in world” (p. 35). I saw this focus on generative practices as being essential to understanding the possibilities in a book club, and as being connected to imagination.

A community of practice often has a strong imaginative component. Anderson (2006) conceptualized a nation as an *imagined community* because it is not and cannot be based on everyday, face-to-face interaction among its members. Instead, members in the community share perceived ideals, affinities, practices, and purposes. As Anderson suggested, a nation “is imagined because the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their

communion" (p. 6). The concept of an imagined community has been useful in second language studies and has been influential in theorizing investment and identity in learning (e.g. Norton, 2001; Pavlenko & Norton, 2007; Ryan, 2006).

Conceptions of actual and imagined communities of practice are important to understanding the ways in which refugee learners experience everyday lives in transnational spaces, or "multi-layered, multi-sited social fields" that span space and time (Levitt & Glick Schiller, 2006, p. 596), and engage in a women's book club. In this study, I imagined the refugee women's book club as a potential community of practice through which newcomers became more knowledgeable participants, able to support others through situated, reciprocal practices. I viewed this study and the book club community of practice as an opportunity for members to imagine themselves as legitimate members of a literate community and as potential future leaders, capable of supporting and spreading book clubs of their own should they so desire.

A final point about communities of practice is the potential for peripherality, or participation from the margins. Through apprentice-like, peripheral participation in communities, newcomers can learn and move toward full participation. Peripherality suggests "an opening, a way of gaining access" (Lave & Wenger, 1991, p. 37) and the multiple and varied, more or less engaged ways of being located in participation. Thus, legitimate peripherality always involves relations of power and requires access to communities. However, participation in communities does not imply "co-presence, a well-defined, identifiable group, or socially visible boundaries" (p. 98) and is therefore sometimes connected to imagined communities (Anderson, 2006). Communities of practice and imagined communities, as constructs, offer ways of conceptualizing the social practices of refugee women who imagine themselves as new and legitimate members of English-speaking communities in resettlement.

Dialogic theories of language and learning. Vygostsky's sociocultural theory connects to Bakhtin's (1981) dialogic perspectives, and together they offer powerful insights into the influence of interaction, context, and dialogue on language, learning, and lives. For Bakhtin, language and knowing are intertwined in and through a creative and imaginative *dialogic* process that occurs in the *utterance*, or speech act, which is language-in-use. He contends that every linguistic utterance, "having taken meaning and shape at a particular historical moment in a socially specific environment," cannot help but become "an active participant in social dialogue" (p. 276). He argues that dialogue, whether internal or external, is always part of and present in meaning-making; he further insists that each word uttered or encountered "tastes of the context and contexts in which it has lived its socially charged life" and is "populated by intentions" (p. 293). In this way, Bakhtin suggests that language "lies on the borderline between oneself and the other" (p. 293) and is therefore not "neutral" territory (p. 293) but a powerfully charged space—unstable, filled with meaning, and open to social conditioning and hybridization.

For Bakhtin, dialogue connects languages, discourses, and texts from the past, present, or even the imagined future, and shapes knowing. The process of *dialogization* recognizes the interaction of competing meanings, strips them of privilege, rejects absolute authority, and reveals the ways in which languages and meanings change (p. 411–412) and may be appropriated in multiple ways (p. 293–294). Bakhtin describes it as a dynamic and almost dangerous process, a "collision between differing points of view on the world" (p. 360).

Bakhtin's conceptions of language use differ from Vygotsky's more structured, hierarchical, and apprentice-like approach. Swain and Deters (2007) suggested that Bakhtin's dialogic perspective "creates a greater space for human agency" (p. 829) than other sociocultural approaches do. Bakhtin's conceptions of language and knowing as complex, contextualized dialog-

ic practices were explored in relation power and resistance, plurality, and the possibilities for imagination in a book club space. His conceptions taken together with Vygotskian approaches to language and learning helped shape my understandings of dialogue in contextualized communities of practice.

I saw Rosenblatt's (1994, 1995) transactional theory as related to Bahktin's dialogic in that a transaction is transformative and occurs in relationships between readers and texts. She rejected the monologic notion that texts had one inherent meaning and instead conceived of a transaction between reader and text in meaning making. Rosenblatt's theory is sociocultural and situates transactions in particular contexts wherein readers engage with texts and one another in the process of composing. I imagined the book club as a space for collaborative learning and transformation in and through the collision of multiple ways of knowing around texts.

Poststructural and feminist approaches. For the purposes of this study, I suggest that multiple feminist (Anzaldúa, 1987/2007; Grewal & Kaplan, 1994; Hajdukowski-Ahmed, 2009; hooks, 1994; Minh-ha, 2010; Mohanty, 2003; Noddings, 1984; Weedon, 1991, 1999, 2004) and critical perspectives (Bakhtin, 1981, 1984; Freire, 1968/1993; Foucault, 1978, 1995; hooks, 1994; Luke, 2004b; Pennycook, 1999; Street, 2003; Weedon, 1991, 2004) bring social theories of learning and literacy into particular focus as aspects of refugee women's everyday lives. These approaches often overlap and intersect in their efforts to expose inequity and affect change. They rest on the notion that it is not enough to reveal relations of power, and thus, require transformative action. Rendering the "scattered hegemonies" (Grewal & Kaplan, 1994) and "multiple discrimination against refugee women" (Pittaway & Bartolomei, 2001) visible through critical and feminist lenses exposes how these are socially produced and reproduced, especially through language and discourse. As Foucault (1978) claims, "Discourse transmits and produces

power; it reinforces it, but also undermines and exposes it, renders it fragile and makes it possible to thwart it" (p. 101).

Traditionally, scholarship and research has focused on the ways in which migration and displacement affects the lives of refugee men (Martin, 2004). Ezzy (2002) contended that "mainstream social science routinely silences and masks women and women's concerns" (p. 43). Thus, feminist methods of research that reveal rather than conceal gender and render visible the ways in which gender intersects with relations of power are necessary and needed. Feminist methods recognize the ways in which relations of power permeate life and research. In addition, feminist approaches are committed to political action and transformation. Feminist methodologies work to uncover inequity in research and in the lives of women, bringing ethics and responsibility to the fore.

In conducting this study, my understandings are also informed by a feminist approach that is closely tied to ethics of care, responsible relatedness, and reciprocity in teaching and research. Noddings (1984) argued that teachers must deeply and ethically care for their students—for their minds, their learning, their welfare, their lives, their histories, their families, and their languages. I believe this care is related to what González et al. (2005) described as "the nurturing of students' strengths and resources" (p. ix), in their funds of knowledge approach. Knowing students and participants, discovering their strengths, and validating their experiences come from an ethic of care. Although there are many distinct feminist epistemologies and approaches to research, they largely emphasize the situated and subjective experiences of women and work to resist homogeneity and hegemony.

According to Weedon (1991), *poststructural feminist practice* works to "denaturalize" (p. 49) taken-for-granted discourses, policies, and practices. Poststructuralist theory has greatly in-

fluenced approaches to literacy research and practice. Focused on destabilizing, decentering, and deconstructing, poststructuralism challenges universal claims to knowledge by revealing the discourses that reinforce them. Influenced by French thinkers such as Foucault (1972, 1970), poststructural theory deconstructs dominant discourses and creates spaces for resistance. Rapidly changing local and global contexts complicate simplified conceptions of language, learning, and literacy, and poststructural theories offer frameworks for investigating these in changing times (Norton, 2000).

This study affirmed the ways in which literacies vary across contexts, relate to refugee women's everyday experiences, and were used to rewrite and reimagine their real-world lives. It is also intended as an exploration of an approach to informal literacy learning in communities of practice and an examination of the relations of power that shape literacies and affect access to learning communities. It was my hope that these understandings might offer insights into different ways of learning and new possibilities for pedagogy in formal school settings. It is my belief that multiple theoretical and conceptual lenses can render visible the complexity of literacies and lives and potentially open up spaces to rewrite the dominant discourses of deficiency and disability that often surround displaced women.

Theories of power and transnationalism. I imagined this study of language and literacy practices among resettled refugee women as being related to the archeological and genealogical work of Foucault. For Foucault (1978, 1972, 1970), archeology is the unearthing of relations of power that work to control and monitor bodies and the boundaries of thought and action. Genealogy is historical work that closely examines dominant discursive formations, rejects unified, normalizing narratives, and reveals the complexity of the subject. In order to make sense of the ways in which refugee women engage in locally situated language, literacy, and learning practic-

es in a book club and navigate relations of power in their everyday lives, it is important to recognize and render visible the global and local discourses and systems of power that cross social, cultural, historical, and geopolitical spaces and times and work to influence their perceptions and practices. It is also important to illuminate the ways in which imagination works to colonize and liberate, particularly through dialogic texts and discourses.

I came to see imagination as intertwined with power and resistance. I realized the power that imagination holds to construct common discourses and to contest and critique them. I viewed this study of language, literacies, and everyday lives as situated within a context that holds power and imagination together in tension. This dialectic, when revealed for what it is, offers space for movement and change that can directly influence lives. This study of refugee women required close attention to power and imagination, as the women's lives reflected and were shaped by both the local and global. Appadurai's (2000) influential work exposes the ways in which globalization works with imagination to colonize and decolonize the mind:

> Imagination is no longer a matter of individual genius, escapism from ordinary life, or just a dimension of aesthetics. It is a faculty that informs the daily lives of ordinary people in myriad ways: It allows people to consider migration, resist state violence, seek social redress, and design new forms of civic association and collaboration, often across national boundaries. This view of the role of the imagination as a popular, social, collective fact in the era of globalization recognises its split character. On the one hand, it is in and through the imagination that modern citizens are disciplined and controlled—by states, markets, and other powerful interests. But it is also the faculty through which collective patterns of dissent and new designs for collective life emerge. (p. 6)

Drawing upon this conception of imagination, I located refugee women's lives and literacies transnationally, in spaces that permeate boundaries. This imagery of border thinking and border spaces where differences meet and collide and where "dissent and new designs" (p. 6) may emerge was explored in relation to refugee women's subjectivities, literacies, learning, and possibilities in dialogic communities such as book clubs. Literacy must always be understood in relation to the world, and thus must remain focused on socially situated practices enacted within relations of power. Indeed, Freire (1968/1993) claimed that literacy is always about power. Reading the word and the world requires connecting the word to the world in order to re-create or transform it.

New Literacy Studies and ethnography. As suggested above, sociocultural studies have challenged the conceptions of literacy as singular and skills-based and have informed language and literacy research across contexts. Scholars working in the related field of New Literacy Studies (NLS) extend sociocultural theories and have taken up critical ethnographic approaches in order to see, systematically study, and situate literacy events and practices (see Barton & Hamilton 2000; Gee, 1999; Hull & Schultz, 2001; Luke, 2003, 2004a; Purcell-Gates, 2006; Street, 1997, 2003, 2005). Street (2005) describes NLS as "the recognition of multiple literacies, varying according to time and space, but also contested in relations of power" (p. 77). New Literacy Studies asks questions about whose and what types of literacy are dominant and whose are marginalized. NLS troubles Western assumptions about autonomous forms of literacy being a means to improve economic prospects and build better citizens.

Perry (2007, 2009), drawing upon these perspectives, argued that literacy practices are shaped by and respond to political, cultural, social and historical forces. Perry (2008) found that storytelling, as a purposeful, sociocultural literacy practice, was changed in context for Sudanese

refugee men. In taking up transformed storytelling practices, the men drew upon traditional storytelling practices but enacted and used them differently in the context of resettlement to maintain connections and communicate with others. Connections and hybrid recreations are fundamental to New Literacy Studies, and I draw on them here because they may offer critical perspectives into the everyday literacies and storytelling practices of refugee women.

Narrative approaches to analysis. This study fits within the growing trend in education research, specifically in second-language teaching and learning, to employ narrative methods in order to reveal the ways in which learners and researchers negotiate languages, literacies, and cultures and make sense of their everyday lives (Bell, 2002, 2011; Pavlenko, 2002; Norton & Early, 2011; Simpson, 2011; Vitanova, 2013). The expanding landscape of narrative approaches to educational research (Alvermann, 2000; Bamberg, 2006; Bamberg & Georgakopoulou, 2008; Bell, 2002, 2011; Bruner, 1991; Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Frank, 2012; Grbich, 2007; Norton & Early, 2011; Ochs & Capps, 1996; Pavlenko, 2002; Polkinghorn, 1995; Riessman, 2008) offer particular perspectives and insights into the intersections of education and everyday experiences. Narrative approaches to immigrant and refugee research have opened spaces for diverse and often-contested versions of displacement and resettlement and shed light onto the complexity of negotiating everyday lives in new cultural spaces (Berman, Giron, & Marroquin, 2009; Oikonomidoy, 2010; Weedon, 2004). Narrative theories have expanded in order to account for multiple and plural ways of knowing that resist dominant and homogenizing metanarratives (Beverly, 2005; Weedon, 2004).

Scope and Limitations

This study was limited to six months and a small group of refugee women living in one city, Rockside (pseudonym), Georgia. The results are not broadly transferrable to refugee women

globally. Given the detailed descriptions and findings from this qualitative study, the reader must decide if and how this study may be transferrable to other refugee students and in other contexts. The participants were purposefully selected and invited to participate, and all but one had been my students at one time, a fact that may have influenced some participants' self-reports and my own understandings. Previous time spent with participants in school, in a shared local community, and in a pilot study all afforded me greater insight into and deeper understandings of participants' experiences and lives. I had been a participant in the local refugee community as a teacher and advocate for more than five years before beginning my research, and I had built trust and rapport with families and members of the book club. These experiences enabled me to conduct a meaningful study in a shorter time-frame. A fuller discussion of methodology is offered in chapter 3.

Definitions of Terms

This section defines the study's key terms in the context of this research. Although definitions imply stability of meaning, I view words and languages as dynamic and shifting. Thus, the definitions here are subject to change and open to challenges.

Refugee. According to the United Nations Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees (UNHCR) of 1951, a refugee is a person who, "owing to well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his [or her] nationality" (UNHCR, 2011). A refugee differs from other immigrants in that the departure from the country of origin is typically involuntary or forced.

Some suggest the *refugee* legal label is "arbitrary" (Sarr & Mosselson, 2010, p. 553), as political status is questionably conferred upon some displaced persons and not others. In addi-

tion, political labels may serve to reify particular political agendas, imposing a "uniform identity" (Binder & Tošić, 2005, p. 611) that hides and/or denies the identities of the subject. The term *refugee* can be essentializing and should be critically examined (Binder & Tošić, 2005; McBrien, 2005; Sarr & Mosselson, 2010) because refugees are as diverse as any other group of people. This concern is particularly important to attend to in this study, as the gender, cultural, ethnic, and personal identities of these refugee women are fundamental to understanding their lives, literacies, and stories. Although I use the term *refugee* to point to similarities and things shared (legal resettlement and status and histories of forced displacement) among a group worthy of particular research consideration, I also want to underscore the need to view the word *refugee*, and the women labeled as such here, as fluid, dynamic, and subjective. I see being *refugee* as something inherently political and therefore important to interrogate.

I use the terms *women*, *learners*, *transnationals*, and *refugees* variously to refer to my participants, but I acknowledge that these are my labels that carry my own subjectivities. I use the term *women* intentionally because the participants were all female adolescents or adults, ranging in age from 16 to 31, and their life experiences and everyday responsibilities suggested maturity and the exercise of agency beyond their years. I use the term transnational to point toward transgressive aspects of these women's lives and ways of being and knowing across borders; however, the participants still share specific backgrounds and are subject to specific discourses that circulate around their status as refugees.

Agency. Defined most simply as "the ability to act," agency remains a contested construct. From a poststructuralist perspective (e.g. Davies, 1990; Davies & Harré, 1990; Lather, 2004; Norton, 2000; Weedon, 1991, 1999), subjects exert agency through repeated practices such as positioning and through acts of resistance against authoritative discourses. Yet agency can be

constrained by relationships of power that limit available discourses and resources. Agency depends upon the possible discursive practices and positionings of the particular socially and historically situated person (Davies & Harré, 1990). Poststructuralist approaches to language learning focus on the dialogic relationship between speakers and their social world in which agency is entwined with their identities, positions, and possibilities for negotiating new ways of knowing, doing, and being. The extent to which one is able to exert agency is part of an ongoing and "intense struggle" (Bakhtin, 1981, p. 294) to use language and alter discourses in order to influence one's social world.

Davies (1990), drawing upon these approaches, argued that individual agency is possible when certain prerequisites are met (a) access to a community/collective as well as some measure of freedom and independence from it; (b) an understanding of oneself as active in meaning-making; (c) access to a range of practices and positionings and access to the resources to make these possible; (d) the desire to be agentic, and (e) access to interactive others to lend legitimacy to the agency and positionings. The book club afforded participants resources and opportunities for agency, including community, freedom, and access to a range of new possibilities, practices, and interactions.

Community of practice. According to Lave and Wenger (1991), "A person's intentions to learn are engaged and the meaning of learning is configured through the process of becoming a full participant in a sociocultural practice" (p. 29). Through apprentice-like, peripheral participation, newcomers learn and move toward full participation in the community. Eckert and McConnell-Ginet (1992), following Lave and Wenger, describe a *community of practice* as "an aggregate of people who come together around mutual engagement in an endeavor. Ways of do-

ing things, ways of talking, beliefs, values, power relations—in short, practices—emerge in the course of this mutual endeavor" (p. 464).

Dialogic. For Bakhtin (1981), language and knowing are fundamentally intertwined in and through an interactive, creative, and imaginative *dialogic* process that occurs in the *utterance*, or speech act, which is language-in-use. Every linguistic utterance, "having taken meaning and shape at a particular historical moment in a socially specific environment," cannot help but become "an active participant in social dialogue" (p. 276). *Dialogue* connects languages, discourses, and texts from the past, present, or even from the imagined future, and it shapes human knowing. The process of *dialogization* recognizes the interaction of competing meanings, strips them of privilege, and rejects absolute authority. This process also reveals the multiple ways in which languages and meanings change (p. 411–412) and may be appropriated (p. 293–294). Bakhtin describes dialogization as a dynamic and almost dangerous process, a "collision between differing points of view on the world" (p. 360).

Funds of knowledge. According to González, Moll, and Amanti (2005), *funds of knowledge* is a theory and approach to teaching and learning that is grounded in the lives of students' experiences, histories, beliefs, languages, and cultures. The approach arose from collaborative ethnographic study (a blend of education and anthropology) of the classroom and household practices of working-class Mexican families in Arizona. *Funds of knowledge* are the accumulated and culturally situated community knowledges and skills that people acquire from and through their lives that are essential for functioning and well-being (pp. 71–72). A *funds of knowledge* approach offers connections to learning and contexts for meaning-making. This approach is relevant and rejects deficit models of teaching and learning. It is a strengths-based approach to learning that grows from the valuable resources that refugee women have and use.

Heteroglossia. This term refers to the multiplicity of language and the way in which every instance of language use is embedded in a specific set of social circumstances and is shaped by context (Bakhtin, 1981, p. 411–412). Bakhtin describes *heteroglossia* as the stratifying, decentralizing forces that intersect the utterance or language-in-use (p. 272). Heteroglossia presumes context-dependency and precedes the dialogic process. Bakhtin states, "the authentic environment of an utterance, the environment in which it lives and takes shape, is dialogized heteroglossia" (272).

Imagined communities. Anderson (2006) conceptualizes a nation as an *imagined community* because it is not and cannot be based on everyday, face-to-face interaction among its members. Instead, members in the community share perceived ideals, affinities, practices, and purposes. As Anderson suggests, a nation "is imagined because the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion" (p. 6). Conceptions of actual and imagined communities of practice are important to understanding the ways in which refugee women experience everyday lives and to studies of second language learning (Norton, 2001; Pavlenko & Norton, 2007; Ryan, 2006).

Literacy/literacies/literary practices. A critical ethnographic approach to literacy informs this study and draws upon Street's (1997, 2003, 2005) ideological conception of literacy as multiple, situated, and shifting social practices. Barton and Hamilton (2000) describe *literacy practices* as "the general cultural ways of utilizing written language which people draw upon in their lives. In the simplest sense, literacy practices are what people do with literacy" (p. 8). New Literacy Studies (NLS) has recently informed a great deal of literacy research and expanded ideas about literacy. Street (2005) describes NLS as "the recognition of multiple literacies, varying

according to time and space, but also contested in relations of power" (p. 77). NLS proposes that definitions of literacy take into account multiple ideologies, discourses, texts, and social and interactional aspects. Street contends that NLS troubles the imposition of Western conceptions and assumptions about autonomous forms of literacy as means to improve economic prospects and make better citizens, and pays close attention to issues of text, power, and identity. In this study, close attention was paid to the ways in which refugee women take up and use multiple literacies and to the discourses and ideologies of literacy that are used to categorize and marginalize them and dismiss their literacy practices.

Positioning/position. Davies & Harré (1990) define positioning as "the discursive process whereby selves are located in conversations as observably and subjectively coherent participants in jointly produced story lines" (p. 48). They examined and theorized how "discursive practices constitute the speakers and hearers in certain ways and yet at the same time are a resource through which speakers and hearers can negotiate new positions" (p. 62). For Bakhtin and Vygotsky, language is always social, cultural, and historical. Dialogue, according to Bakhtin (1981, 1986), is always connected to one's positioning and participation in the world. Dialogue assumes a relationship between self and other. Language educators and researchers such as Pavlenko (2001), Wong (1996), Menard-Warwick (2008), and Norton (2000) draw upon concepts of positioning to explain how language learning is tied to power and to identity. They explore how social positioning affects learning and investment in learning and communities of learning. Social positioning is related to conceptions of investment and identity (Norton, 2000), subjectivity (Weedon, 1991), and communities of practice (Lave & Wenger, 1991). In this study, positioning was tied to my understandings of the book club community, the stories constructed, and the participants' ways of being and doing.

Subjectivity. Weedon (1991) argues that *poststructural feminist practice* in education works to “denaturalize” (p. 49), challenge, and contest dominant discourses, practices, values, meanings, and relations of power. Making gender, class, and race relations visible through critical and feminist lenses exposes taken-for-granted systems and structures and reveals how they are socially produced and reproduced, especially through language. Weedon (1991) contends that *subjectivity* and language are tightly tied together, and that subjectivities are constructed in language and through social, meaning-making practices (p. 51). Drawing upon this work, I see *subjectivity* as a discursively defined, multiply positioned, and often-contested sense of selves (Weedon, 1999, 2004). Identity, as explained by Norton (2000), is similarly a site of struggle and change, tied to relations of power. She uses the term *identity* “to reference how a person understands his or her relationship to the world, how that relationship is constructed across time and space, and how the person understands possibilities for the future” (p. 5). I primarily take up the subjectivities in this study because of my focus on stories and interactions in dialogue; however, I also use the terms identity/identities/identification to talk about the ways in which participants act and position themselves in relationship to the world.

Transaction. Rosenblatt (1994, 1995) refers to reading as *transaction* in order “to designate a relationship in which each element, instead of being fixed and predefined, conditions and is conditioned by the other” (p. 180). This dynamic relationship between reader and text is contextualized, “occurring at a particular time under particular social and cultural circumstances” (p. 181). Rosenblatt contends this is “ongoing” (p. 17), an “active process [that is] lived through” (p. 20) and that involves “not only past experiences but also the present state and present interests or preoccupations of the reader” (p. 20). Thus, Rosenblatt argues, texts are not autonomous and cannot be separated from the reader’s experiences. Reader response theories developed from this

conceptualization of the transaction. In reader response, the focus is no longer on finding the structures and meanings inherent in texts. Rather, readers are at the center of reading and writing, engaged in composing texts (Belcher & Hirvela, 2001; Hirvela, 2004; Rosenblatt, 1994, 1995; Tracey & Morrow, 2006). Rosenblatt conceived of a transaction between reader and text that integrates reading, writing, and real world. The term *transaction* is specifically applied to the book club here and used to describe both the individual experiences of refugee readers and the collective experiences of group members, as they transact with texts and with one another.

Transnational. In this study, the term *transnational* is used to complicate conceptions of space and time in the lives of refugees and point toward intersectionality and simultaneity—being here and there, in the past and present, multiply located and positioned. Levitt and Glick Schiller's (2006) conception of "multi-layered, multi-sited transnational social fields" is useful in understanding the ways in which lived experiences span across space and time and challenges "assumptions about social institutions such as the family, citizenship, and nation-states" (p. 596). Grewal and Kaplan (1994) use the term *transnational* to problematize dualities such as local–global and center–periphery. They view the transnational as a cutting across, an intersection. For me, transnationalism emphasizes processes of boundary-breaking and crossing while pointing to connections, linkages, and networks. It acknowledges the constant circulation of ideas, people, symbols, and capital and the ways in which these influence everyday lives. A transnational perspective provides a broader lens for analysis, works to decenter, and privileges multiple voices and multiple sites of knowledge. The experiences gathered in these transnational social spaces accumulate to comprise people's cultural repertoires (Vertovec, 2001), and offer potentially powerful resources for refugees in resettlement if recognized and valued (Fong, 2004).

Overview of the Study

Refugee women face many challenges in resettlement, including communicating in the majority language, navigating the educational system, and overcoming the prevailing discourses of deficit surrounding their literacies and lives. Chapter 1 contextualized this problem and articulated the three research questions that guided my study: "How do refugee women engage in an out-of-school book club? What can be learned about the everyday lived experiences, literacy practices, and language use of resettled refugee women through an exploration of the book club? Finally, in what ways might a book club community influence refugee women's literacy practices and everyday lives?" The problems under investigation and the purposes for the study were then situated within theoretical and methodological frames for the study. Overarching sociocultural theories of language, learning, and literacy are focused by feminist and critical lenses and provide theoretical support and tie theories to research practice. Chapter 1 provided a backdrop and some background for beginning this refugee research.

In chapter 2, I situate the study within a larger scholarly conversation by theorizing refugee women's everyday experiences and by reviewing the literature related to refugee women's lives; refugee schooling and social concerns; refugee literacy practices; and book clubs and informal learning spaces. In chapter 3, I discuss methodological choices and ethical concerns. In chapter 4, I present my thematic findings. In chapter 5, three participant stories illuminate the ways in which themes are woven through individual lives. Finally, in chapter 6, I discuss the findings as they relate to existing research, recommendations, and future possibilities.

2 REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

I take up Dewey's (1929/1988) argument that the power of knowledge lies in what we do with it. Dewey contended that "ideas are worthless except as they pass into actions which rearrange and reconstruct in some way, be it little or by large, the world in which we live" (p. 111). This review of literature offers perspectives on the lives, languages, and literacies of refugee women in order to "rearrange and reconstruct" dominant conceptions about language and literacy in their lives. This study, as outlined in chapter 1, investigated three research questions: How do refugee women engage in an out-of-school book club? What can be learned about the everyday lived experiences, literacy practices, and language use of resettled refugee women through an exploration of the book club? In what ways might a book club community influence refugee women's literacy practices and everyday lives?

To provide context and justification for this study, this literature review (1) discusses relevant theoretical literature in order to theorize refugee women's everyday lives and build on the conceptual framework outlined in chapter 1; (2) surveys empirical literature on refugee women in U.S. schools, the education of refugees, and associated social concerns; (3) reviews researchers' recommendations to improve approaches to refugee education; and (4) considers research that supports book clubs as out-of-school, informal learning spaces, as well as sites for critical practices. Before turning to the literature, I will briefly describe my literature search procedure.

Literature Search

Despite the growing numbers of refugees around the world, when I used the term *refugee* to begin a broad search of some of my university's online research databases, the results were as follows (Retrieved March 1, 2011): Linguistics and Language Behavior Abstracts, 174 citations; MLA International Bibliography, 178 citations; and ERIC, 1,478 citations. The limited findings

surprised me. As I explored the research, I did find a few interdisciplinary journals devoted entirely to refugee studies, immigration, and forced migration. Black's study (2001) is worth mentioning here because he reviewed fifty years of refugee studies and found that in the decade preceding his review only six papers in the *Journal of Refugee Studies* were published on education, four on gender, and only one on linguistics. Most refugee research has focused on law, policies and geopolitics, psychology, health, and other trauma-related concerns. Given the rising numbers of refugees (Capps et al., 2015; Chappell, 2014) and the limited research available, this study aims to provide insight into refugee women's lives, language and literacy practices, and learning in resettled spaces.

Theorizing Refugee Women's Everyday Lives

This section theorizes the everyday lives of refugee women as they navigate transitions and intersections in unsettled spaces. By *unsettled* I mean unknown, uneven, and unstable. For the refugee women I have come to know, resettlement life is replete with change and challenges and takes place in the unsettling, and often unsanctioned, spaces along and across borderlands. I focus this discussion on literature related to refugee women of color who, like the participants in my study, resettle in Western cultural contexts and mostly monolingual, English-speaking communities. These refugee women experience multiple forms of oppression and discrimination in transnational spaces (Bigelow, 2010; Binder & Tošić, 2005; Hopkins, 2010; Pittaway & Bartolomei, 2001). Grewal and Kaplan (1994) associated these spaces with "scattered hegemonies," that is, multiple patriarchies operating on overlapping local and global levels. To undertake transnational feminist practices is to do work that is fundamentally comparative, "to compare multiple, overlapping, and discrete oppressions rather than to construct a theory of hegemonic oppression under a unified category of gender" (Grewal & Kaplan, 1994, p. 17–18).

Different women experience diverse oppressions, and it is important to focus on the multiple and intersecting relations of power in their lives, recognizing that the discourses surrounding women "do not circulate in isolation from each other" (Piller & Takahashi, 2010, p. 549). Some scholars view intersectionality as the multiple forms of oppression, or intersecting systems of power that create layers of inequity in the lives of refugee women (Pittaway & Bartolomei, 2001). Although it is important to uncover the scattered hegemonies that refugee women experience, Fong (2004) differently draws upon interdisciplinary conceptions of intersectionality in order to understand the complexity of multiple social group memberships and identities that are interconnected in refugee and immigrant everyday lives. She suggests that intersectionality can connect individuals, families, and groups and focuses on the impact of ethnicity, sexuality, gender, race, class, religion, legal statuses, and national origins on one's memberships and identities. Fong (2004) contends that perspectives of intersectionality are important to culturally competent, strengths-based practices.

Fong (2004) views intersectionality as part of an ecological perspective of person-in-environment that does not necessarily limit agency or possibilities but rather can support additive approaches such as biculturalization. In fact, Fong (2004) views intersectionality as key to seeing the resources and strengths refugees possess as well as the challenges they face. The intersections of oppression in the lives of refugee women are important to explore, yet as Fong (2004) suggests, these intersections may also reveal resiliency, resources, strengths, and spaces for resistance and agency (p. 311).

My understanding of these overlapping intersections in women's lives was influenced by Anzaldúa (1987/2007), and I offer her notion of *mestiza* consciousness as one perspective of integration for refugee women of color. This conceptualization contradicts binaries and dualities

and creates space for multiple, negotiated ways of knowing that are particularly powerful in the context of refugee lives:

> The work of mestiza consciousness is to break down the subject–object duality that keeps her a prisoner and to show in the flesh and through the images in her work how duality is transcended. The answer to the problem between the white race and the colored, between males and females, lies in healing the split that originates in the very foundation of our lives, our culture, our languages, our thoughts. A massive uprooting of dualistic thinking in the individual and collective consciousness is the beginning of a long struggle, but one that could, in our best hopes, bring us to the end of rape, of violence, of war. (Anzaldúa, 1987/2007, p. 102)

The new mestiza adapts to her environment by developing a tolerance for hybridity, ambiguity, and plurality and by learning to "juggle cultures" (Anzaldúa, 1987/2007, p. 101). This stands in stark contrast to processes of forced and subtractive assimilation (Cummins, 1986; Fong, 2004; Valenzuela, 1999), proposing instead a more flexible sense of lives and selves and the possibility of freedom from oppression.

From a sociocultural perspective, all facets of life intersect and overlap in language and literacy practices and learning. Immigrant and refugee women of color are constantly learning as they adapt and negotiate transnational spaces and as they take up and transform literacy practices (Warriner, 2009b). From a transnational perspective, their lives exist across, over, and between boundaries—transgressing national, racial, linguistic, political, and cultural borders. I argue that for most refugee women, actual and imagined transnational spaces are influential aspects of their

everyday worlds (Faltis & Valdés, 2010). These spaces inform their subjectivities, defined as discursive, multiply positioned, and often contested (Weedon, 1999, 2004).

Based upon Anderson's (2006) concept of *imagined communities*, these imagined trans-national spaces refer to the intersections of past, present, and future geopolitical and cultural spaces in memory and in imaginings. I contend that the influences of histories, cultures, values, and languages from past geopolitical and cultural spaces are a part of everyday lives—lived out in relationships, religions, texts, and discourses that intersect with the histories, cultures, values, and languages in newly settled spaces. In order to understand the lives of refugee women, then, it is important to view the intersections in the literal and figurative borders they cross and the transnational and sometimes hybrid spaces they inhabit (Anzaldúa, 1987/2007). In research, it is important to recognize the multiple and hybrid identities and cultural forms that emerge from engagement in multiple worlds and unsettle dominant assumptions and hegemonic practices (Weedon, 2004).

From a poststructural perspective, it is also important to recognize the ways in which identities and subjectivities are tied to relations of power and to positioning. Some argue that language learning and positioning are always occurring simultaneously, as one's language use is intricately tied to one's identifications and shifting positions (Menard-Warwick, 2008; Norton, 2000). Relations of power can work to position people in particular ways, yet people can also take up positions of resistance. However, some discourses and structures are so powerful that they limit positioning, negotiations, and opportunities for resistance. For many refugees, the def-icit discourses that circulate and the institutional structures that categorize and sort can work to limit access to new positions, communities, cultures, and languages.

This notion of plurality and the push and pull among languages, cultures, and ways of being and knowing in new spaces connects back to Bakthin's (1981) conceptions of heteroglossia and hybridization in "contact zones" (p. 345), which were discussed in chapter 1. Heteroglossia is the condition of meaning-making that conjures a "multiplicity of social voices and a wide variety of their links and interrelationships" (p. 263) and focuses upon their context, contact, and collision as forces that act upon the utterance in meaning-making. In these spaces of contact where dialogue occurs, *hybridization*, or the co-existence of languages within the boundaries of an utterance, is always a possibility (p. 358). For Bakhtin, these zones of contact may be separated by space and time but may still serve as sites for mixing and multiplicity. This conception of hybridization resonates in relation to refugee women, whose lives are often lived in spaces widely separated by physical geography, national borders, and distant and often discordant histories. Hybridization allows for multiple languages and ways to mean to be held together in tension and rejects static and homogenous notions of language and social knowing.

Pratt (1991) also, but somewhat differently, uses the concept of a contact zone to describe the unstable, social spaces where cultures clash and are forced to grapple with each other. These spaces are always social and are most likely to occur in highly asymmetrical relations of power. Pratt is particularly concerned with the kinds of contact zones where slavery and colonialism occur. However, much like Bakhtin's work, Pratt opens the imagination to the complexities and possibilities in the contact zone. Her work can be taken up and linked to language and literacy practices, as spaces where give and take occurs and new ways of meaning are possible. However, her work clearly points to the challenges in such spaces, where particular languages and literacies are sanctioned and legitimized and others are not, and where some voices are heard and others are silenced. I suggest that for many refugee women navigating new lives and languages in

resettlement, the spaces they occupy are unstable and unsettled contact zones, inhabited by opposition and opportunity.

Refugee Schooling and Social Concerns

Current research into refugee education is still limited, despite the fact that schools are largely unable to meet the particular needs of refugee students (Bigelow, 2010; Gunderson, 2000; Miller, 2009; Sarroub, Pernicek, & Sweeney, 2007). McBrien (2005) concluded that the literature focusing specifically on refugees, rather than immigrants in general, is insufficient and that more research on refugees is required. Sarroub, Pernicek, and Sweeney (2007) contended, “The United States has agreed to accept refugees . . . and schools must be better prepared to teach refugee students” (p. 678). This section surveys the empirical literature that does exist on refugees (especially women) in U.S. schools, the education of refugees, associated social concerns, and researchers’ recommendations to improve approaches to refugee education. The theories articulated above, including critical, sociocultural, feminist, and transnational theories, frame and inform discussions of empirical research into refugee schooling, literacy practices, and possibilities in a book club.

Negotiating roles and positions in private and public spaces. A significant finding in several studies is that refugees’ domestic roles overlap and often complicate the roles they take up at school and in other public spaces. Sarroub (2002) suggests, “home and school spaces often overlap one another and are inherently related” (p. 130). Yet, despite these acknowledged connections and efforts to bridge home and school practices (Hull & Schultz, 2001, 2002), a disparity continues between the two, especially for refugee learners. In schools and out, English, American culture, and school-related literacies are privileged over diverse linguistic and cultural knowledges and everyday literacy practices. Thus far, little educational research has focused on

the out-of-school lives of resettled refugees or on the potential for connecting refugees' funds of knowledge (González et al., 2005) to new learning.

Refugee women and their daughters must sometimes negotiate new roles and relations of power that conflict with traditional family hierarchies and cultural and gender expectations. Piller and Takahashi (2010) state that for migrant women, their work and future employment options are constrained by "globalized beliefs as to what constitutes women's work" and by "their linguistic identities, national backgrounds, and citizenship status" (p. 549). In Li's (2008) study, all four women in immigrant and refugee families were responsible for the family and home while also maintaining "multiple low-wage occupations such as sale technician or factory worker" (p. 168). This is a change that often contradicts the roles many refugee women had in their countries of origin or in refugee camps (Fong, 2004; Pipher, 2002). In addition to acquiring and maintaining outside work, many refugee women must maintain domestic and familial responsibilities (Binder, & Tošić, 2005; Li, 2008; Martin, 2004), negotiating new roles and subjectivities across domestic and vocational spaces.

Heath's (1983) landmark qualitative study *Ways with Words* was among the first to tie the study of language and literacy practices in schools to everyday lives. She investigated what she termed the *literacy event*, defined as a speech event with a text in it (p. 236), in overlapping social spaces within three communities in the southern United States in the 1970s. Using an ethnographic framework to study local and daily literacy practices, she found that students' patterns of interaction at home with family and in their communities heavily influenced their school-based literacy learning. The children, whose language patterns differed from dominant norms and focused on talk, had a difficult time with school language and its heavy emphasis on print literacy. Heath's (1983) work was among the first to reveal the relationships between home and

school practices and between oracy and literacy. In her epilogue, she suggests that participants' agency "in articulating how their own home communities used language, and comparing those with they ways of the school, weakened the boundary between the two systems" (p. 356).

In Li's (2008) research, immigrant and refugee girls took on multiple roles at school and at home. They were tutors, translators, and mediators, and they acted as "surrogate parents" for parents who worked away from home. They were expected to do very well in school while maintaining familial responsibilities. Similarly, in Norton's (2000) study, a young woman named Mai came to Canada for a "life in the future" (p. 77), but after her Vietnamese and Chinese family's traditional structure broke down, she struggled to gain independence, schooling, and freedoms such as a driver's license. Living with a brother who disregarded and devalued their parents, she became subject to his patriarchal authority as head of house. Again, family roles can impact how refugee women behave and position themselves within the school setting.

Substantial familial obligations and strict parental expectations can create stressors that lead to a sense of isolation in school. For Layla, a Yemeni Muslim high school student in Sarroub's (2001) study, a good reputation depended on staying close to family and home and reinforcing her family's status both in the local community and in Yemen. Layla's early marriage was also important to the family's reputation, and although she wanted a divorce, she did not want to disappoint her family (Sarroub, 2001, p. 402). Layla's family expected her to excel at home and school. She had to complete many chores at home after school and on weekends, learn how to cook, and keep house for her husband. In addition, her family and brothers expressed high expectations for her at school. Layla was expected be a "good" student, not be too loud or playful so as to avoid attracting attention from boys (Sarroub, 2001, p. 403).

High expectations associated with being a “girl” also contributed to Paw’s isolation in Townsend and Fu’s (2001) refugee study. In Paw’s family and according to cultural expectations, females were required to be quiet, and in doing so, show that they were well-raised. Girls who spoke too much were considered to be troublesome and badly behaved. For Paw, her cultural identity, devotion to family, and desire to meet parental expectations were strong. She positioned her self as a “good girl” for her family but missed out on making friends at school. Li (2008) suggests that the double standards for women and girls have great implications related to psychosocial well-being.

In some cases, families can prevent refugee females from attending school. Three of the primary challenges reported by 12 African refugee women in Fargo, North Dakota, were domestic violence, changing family roles, and the lack of support network (Semlak, Pearson, Amundson, & Kudak, 2008, p. 46). Studies show that family roles and expectations, childrearing responsibilities, limited access to childcare, the need to work, and lack of spousal support often keep refugee women from going to school (Hatoss & Huijer, 2010; Martin, 2004). In her study, Li (2008) found that “women not only have to follow the domestic code from their countries of origin but also take on part of the men’s responsibilities of financial support and decision-making to help the family make it in America” (p. 168). This unequal distribution of responsibilities can be a source of contention and conflict within households (Frye, 1999; Martin, 2004) and can influence refugee women’s enrollment in classes. Women enroll at much lower rates than men, and older women are the least likely of all refugees to receive language instruction (Martin 2004, p. 134).

Along similar lines, in her study of 17 working-class Latina women from Central and South America and the Caribbean, Frye (1999) also found that women rarely attended Saturday

ESL meetings at the community center. She concluded that ESL classes were predominantly focused on men and their work preparation, so she created a class just for women focused on their needs and lives. Although the women were eager to participate, several considerations complicated their attendance, including childcare, transportation, and male resistance. Frye (1999) found that women in the group often saw societal power differently from their own local power. Inside the home, they were heads of households, responsible for children and extended families, and provided stability for families. Outside the home, they expressed feelings of powerlessness, of having experienced discrimination, and of being "limited in their participation in the English-speaking community" (p. 507). Studies widely show that refugee and immigrant women often feel excluded from participation or are denied opportunities to participate in English communities of practice (Bigelow, 2010; Gunderson, 2000; Martin, 2004; Norton, 2000; Warriner, 2009a, 2009b). These studies reveal the shifting roles and positions that refugee women take as they negotiate relations of power, cultures, and gender in private and public spaces.

Religion. For many refugee women, religion is intertwined in these negotiations and situates them in transnational spaces. Following forced migration, faith can become an important focus. For Muslim women specifically, traditional clothing such as "the hijab [Muslim headscarf] serves as an identifier that distinguishes them," and connects them to community and often excludes them, especially "in contexts in which Islamophobia is commonplace" (Bigelow, 2010, p. 154–155). Dress in accordance with religious tradition is another visible marker of difference, and thus, as McBrien (2005) contended, it may serve to reinforce rejection, isolation, and discrimination for Muslim girls in schools and make dropping out more likely. However, Hopkins (2010) argued that in her study of Somali women, dressing in adherence to Islam and wearing hijab was an act of agency in identification. It was a direct connection to home and family near

and far and, as such, shows the intersections of culture and gender in a transnational space. Similarly, Oikonomidoy (2007) also found that African refugees exerted agency in creatively negotiating and adapting to the diverse urban high school context in North Dakota. They dressed in hybrid and creative ways, combining American styles of dress, such as jeans and short sleeve t-shirts, with traditional Muslim hijab. These young women also used creative methods to deal with discrimination and actively resist Muslim stereotypes by, for instance, directly confronting teachers who spoke negatively about Islam, ignoring critical comments, and making jokes out of conflict situations. They had internal and external ways of responding to religious discrimination and showed their creativity, resilience, and resourcefulness in navigating school and enacting their subjectivities.

Fong (2004) emphasized the importance of refugees maintaining their religious beliefs and practices from their countries of origins. She argued from a sociological perspective that cultural values, such as religious and family traditions, are strengths that have allowed refugees and immigrants to survive. Forced assimilation, she argued, takes away the strengths and resources so many refugee women possess. Refugees are generally expected and encouraged to assimilate and, in this space, “Americanize” rapidly in order to achieve social and economic mobility (Warriner, 2007a, 2007b), and little space is given to the possibilities of “in-betweenness” and plurality (Sarroub, 2002, 2005).

Despite the importance of religion to many refugees, it can also be associated with gender-based challenges. Sarroub (2005) pointed out that the young women in her study were sometimes constrained by the expectations in the local community and by expectations from Yemen, revealing the complex transnational influences on their lives. For some, navigating these spaces brought challenges and even feelings of desperation regarding their futures after high school.

Sarroub noted that the *hijabat*, Arabic feminine plural for girls who wear headscarves, "expressed their desperation about the future in different ways" (p. 116) and contended that in contrast to the young women, the two boys who allowed her to interview them had more optimistic and "markedly different views about their futures" (p. 116). These findings reveal the specific intersections of gender and religion in transnational spaces and the importance of religion in negotiating everyday lives.

Sarroub (2005) theorized the negotiations of Yemeni hijabat in these spaces as "in-betweeness" (p. 62). Sarroub conceptualized it in this way: "In-betweenness, or the locality of culture, signifies the immediate adaptation of one's performance or identity to one's textual, social, cultural, and physical surroundings" (p. 62). In her ethnographic study in Michigan, Sarroub (2005) found that young Yemeni Muslim women navigated multiple literacies, identities, and texts in between spaces, across borders, and in multiple worlds as they managed the demands of school, home, family, and religious responsibilities.

Racial discrimination. In addition to domestic roles and religion, refugees' everyday lives and educational experiences can also be shaped by racial discrimination. Li (2008) argued that the "promise of education" is largely unrealized as urban minority students struggle to access education, language, resources, and new cultural knowledge. These students are often underserved and overlooked, and students and families report that schools often do not care or do enough to help. Li (2008) contended that schools and education broadly have important roles in helping minority families and children "become successful cultural translators who are able to move across diverse physical and social borders and rewrite the hegemonic domination of certain discourses, instead of just reproducing them" (p. 25).

Discrimination can lead to a sense of isolation and silencing among refugees. Goldstein's

(1988) ethnographic study reveals how Hmong adolescent girls in two U.S. schools were tracked into low-level classes, isolated, and segregated from their peers. Other students did not find any reasons to be friends with the girls. The dominant, mainstream students in the school placed no value on cultural diversity or on the lives of their refugee peers. Only students who assimilated into the norms of school and the dominant social cultures were considered valuable or worthy of attention, relationships, and respect. These findings reflect the conclusions of Semlak et al. (2008), who studied African refugees in North Dakota schools and reported, "Perhaps the fundamental issue surrounding refugee culture is that refugees are silenced by the majority of American culture, marginalizing the refugee culture" (p. 61). These studies on refugee women of color reveal the ways in which schools, institutions, and society at large act to dismiss and disregard these women and thereby reinforce racism and inequitable access to education and the broader community.

However, discrimination does not always lead to failure to or a lack of success in school for refugee women. McBrien's (2005) research with 18 adolescent girls from eight countries showed that even though refugee students avoided school, pretended to be sick, and threatened to drop out because they faced consistent discrimination from teacher and peers, these young women ultimately stayed in school despite adversity and received high grades. Four entered college, and two others were offered scholarships. The girls' success was attributed to supportive and caring bicultural relationships. Similarly, Oikonomidoy's (2007) study with seven Somali Muslim females revealed that despite discrimination, particularly racial and religious discrimination, these young women desired further education and seemed to have success in school. All seven agreed that having help from another Somali speaker helped with language barriers as a newcomer. They drew upon resources in their communities, asking more knowledgeable and capable

others to translate for them in school and outside and were actively and creatively negotiating school through relationships.

Suarez-Orozco et al. (2009a, 2009b) argue along similar lines that strong relationships are the highest predictor of engagement and achievement for immigrant girls. Hayward, Hajdukow-ski-Ahmed, Ploeg, and Trollope-Kumar (2009) found in their study of Sudanese refugee families that for many women, trusted friends helped them recreate or rebuild family in resettlement. They felt other refugee women understood their past and current position. The researchers also found that friends were particularly important for teenage girls who did not want to trouble or worry their parents with problems. The girls reported that they often tried to solve problems with friends instead of going to parents (p. 206). In Oikonomidoy's (2007) study, parents, other refu-gee friends and community members, local refugee agencies, and helpful teachers all assisted young refugee women in persisting and achieving. In the process, these young women in Oikonomidoy's (2007) study imagined and practiced crossing cultural borders, learning about and adapting to new cultures while drawing on their home and family cultures. Perhaps they gained what Anzaldúa (1987/2007) describes as a *mestiza* consciousness.

Providing further support to the finding that discrimination does not always prevent per-sistence, Bigelow (2010) conducted a longitudinal study that included data on four Somali high school females identified as Muslim in an intensely racialized environment in Minnesota. The study is among the first to explicitly explore the complexity of race and race relations in refugee lives and research. For these Somali refugees in Minnesota, the imposition of racialized and mi-noritized identities threatened their learning and lives; however, Bigelow (2010) insists that de-spite prevailing ideologies of deficit and discrimination, these young women "persisted through many demoralizing failures" (p. 90) at least in part due to their ability to navigate and move

among nationalities, cultures, and languages, resisting dominant discourses and imposed identities. Bigelow contends, “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). Bigelow’s emphasis on learning and transformations in transnational lives, recalling Anzaldúa’s (1987/2007) conceptions of plurality in the borderlands, explores “in-between” spaces to trouble simplistic notions of identity, culture, race, and language in the lives of refugee women.

Women refugees in particular can be resilient. Warriner (2007b) found that two refugee women, Ayak from Sudan and Sheida from Iran, negotiated their identities and circumstances in ways that were creative and flexible, finding work on their own while maintaining families and taking English classes. Although the goals for the English language program did not explicitly encourage it, these two women positioned themselves as ambitious, knowledgeable, and capable of achieving social and economic mobility.

Languages and literacies in refugee women’s everyday lives. As the literature points out, for many refugee women, access to meaningful English-learning experiences and opportunities for legitimate participation English-speaking communities are often limited (Capps et al., 2015; Hajdukowski-Ahmed, 2009; Warriner, 2007b, 2009a). As suggested by a number of scholars, language is one of the leading and most complex challenges for refugees in resettlement (Fong, 2004; Martin, 2004; McBrien, 2005; Pipher, 2002; Watkins, Razee & Richters, 2012), perhaps because language is entangled in one’s sense of self and in almost every aspect of life. In her study with Somali refugee women in Toronto and London, Hopkins (2010) notes, “language is one of the most important aspects of Somali culture for many Somali women and is important in creating Somaliness” (p. 529).

Language, at least to some extent, defines who and what we are and who and what we believe we might be. Language produces meaning and creates social reality (Richardson, 2001). Language shapes actual and imagined communities (Anderson, 2006), and language use is often an indicator of membership, integration, and inclusion. Yet, for Somalis in Denmark, the enactment of a Danish identity through language and the almost exclusive use of Danish inside and outside the home still resulted in "significant experiences of discrimination and harassment in everyday life" (Valentine et al., 2009, p. 242). These results suggest that it is critical to explore the discourses that circulate and powerfully connect language, literacy, community, and citizenship and the ways in which gender, race, and being refugee intersect with these discourses

In the context of this review and study, particular critical attention was focused upon the "power of English" (Pennycook, 1999, p. 333) in the everyday lives of refugee women. Many refugees, who may already be multilingual, often arrive in English-speaking countries with little to no English (Capps et al., 2015; Hatoss & Huijer, 2010) and limited educational and print literacy experiences (Bigelow, 2010; Capps et al., 2015; Martin, 2004; McBrien, 2005). Gunderson (2000) argued that the use of "standard" English in schools is highly valued and equated with intelligence. He contended that teachers largely view using non-standard forms as "inferior" (p. 694). McBrien (2005) similarly found that refugee students with heavy accents were ridiculed; students who used their native languages were punished; there was a demand for English-only instruction; and refugee students often did not understand or have past experiences with academic English.

Language barriers can lead to rejection and isolation in school and at work. They may even lead to problems at home between parents and children. The isolation felt by immigrant and refugee women is well documented. Piller and Takahashi (2010) concluded that "the linguistic

factor has increasingly been acknowledged as one of the most crippling obstacles to the social inclusion of migrants" (p. 550). Immigrant and refugee women may even feel intimidated and afraid to go out because they cannot communicate (Berman & Marroquin, 2009; Norton, 2000; Townsend & Fu, 2001).

Lack of confidence and a sense of competence in the new language limits refugees' access to work, other people, and community resources. English-only programs and low-level classes that focus on basic proficiency deny the language, knowledge, and literacies that learners already possess. These types of language programs and transmission models foster feelings of incompetence, isolation, and frustration (Townsend & Fu, 2001). However, these models dominate adult ESL programs (Auerbach, 1993; Auerbach & Burgess, 1985; Schalge & Soga, 2008; Warriner, 2007a, 2009a; Wickens & Sandlin, 2007), perhaps because there is a prevailing belief that "immigrants and refugees arrive in the new country as tabula rasa, having left all their knowledge and beliefs behind" (Fong, 2004, p. 12).

Research focused on refugees' language learning, language use, and literacy practices is scarce despite the vital importance of these subjects to resettlement efforts. In Western contexts particularly, literacy and language are associated with ideological ways to categorize, include, or exclude, and access to literacy has material consequences (Luke, 2004a, 2004b; New London Group, 1996; Street, 2005). Print literacy is highly valued and expected and shapes conceptions of community and nation (Anderson, 2006). The literature presented here is mostly qualitative and generally sociocultural in perspective. The scholarship reveals the tight ties among language, literacy, and power and the associated challenges that refugee women face in navigating new spaces.

Noticeably, almost all of the research showed that learning English is important for refugee women resettling in English-speaking countries. Many refugee women stated that they value school and opportunities to learn English despite difficulties and discrimination (McBrien, 2005; Sarroub, 2005; Oikonomidoy, 2007; Perrry, 2006; Semlak et al., 2008; Townsend & Fu, 2001). Many have come to believe that future opportunities are tied to language and literacies and are largely dedicated and persistent students (Bigelow, 2010; Sarroub et al., 2007; Warriner, 2007b). However, many refugees, especially older newcomers, also recognize the challenges facing them as English language learners (Bigelow, 2010; Goodkind, 2006; Gunderson, 2000; Sarroub et al., 2007; Townsend & Fu, 2001). Despite interest and investment in language learning, access and opportunities to learn are sometimes constrained, and opportunities to interact and practice English are often limited (Capps et al., 2015; Finn, 2010)

Pressures to learn and become literate in English, along with insufficient resources for developing English or for maintaining primary languages in the community, may have detrimental effects and dire consequences for displaced adults (McKay & Weinstein-Shr, 1993, p. 399). Culturally and linguistically diverse learners face daunting challenges in schools that isolate rather than integrate, and statistics show they often drop out or are kept out by inadequate tests and teaching practices (Bartolomé, 2010; Faltis & Valdés, 2010; McBrien, 2005; Suarez-Orozco et al., 2009a, 2009b; Valdés, 2001). Dominant monolingual language ideologies directly influence educational policies, pedagogy, and practices, and assessments inadequately reflect refugee English Language Learners' (ELLs) abilities (Auerbach, 1993; Cook, 2001; Valdés, 2001).

According to Sarroub (2002), "visions of literacy often conflict" (p. 134), are not easily categorized, and are often negotiated in practice. Forms of literacy that schools and society value

may be quite different from the literacy students actually use. Sarroub (2002) rejected the notion that one form of literacy is better than another. Rather, as other scholars suggest, literacies are dynamic, strategic, situated, and sometimes hybrid (Bigelow, 2010; Luke, 2003; New London Group, 1996; Street, 2003, 2005; Warriner, 2004a, 2004b). As Street (2003) argued, "local–global encounters around literacy, then, are always a new hybrid rather than a single essential-ized version of the other" (p. 80). Recognizing this hybridity is fundamental to New Literacy Studies approaches and to understanding the relationships between local, everyday literacy practices and the autonomous, official literacies valued by schools.

Although refugees do often struggle in school, broader analyses and more inclusive understandings of students' experiences and literacy practices do not always reflect the same difficulties. In everyday life, students are often flexible, creative, successful, capable, and engaged in negotiating multiple literacies at home, in their communities, and at work (Bigelow, 2010; Goodkind, 2006: Perry, 2009; Sarroub, 2002, 2005; Warriner, 2004a, 2004b). As Perry's (2009) research showed, even refugee children in kindergarten and first grade engaged in complex literacy brokering practices at home. In Norton's (2000) foundational work on the English language learning of immigrant and refugee women in Canada, she used a language diary study to examine women's learning. As the study progressed, it became about more than language; it was "about the complexities of living as a woman in a new and sometimes threatening society, coping with the daily demands of family, work, schooling, housing, unemployment" (p. 146).

Along similar lines, Sarroub's (2002) case studies of six Yemeni, female high school students in Michigan showed that these young women's identities shifted as they interacted with and interpreted texts. They adapted to shifting situations by drawing upon their funds of knowledge and by "adopting an in-between text" (p. 145) that helped them bridge cultures.

These students adopted “in-between” texts as they merged literacies and identities and managed a range of responsibilities and texts between home and school. The dynamic and multiple literacy practices of these refugee students reflect their resourcefulness and resiliency.

In a study of refugee women enrolled in an adult ESL program in the United States, Warriner (2004) found that the women often identified and presented themselves in complex ways, maintaining “hybrid identities and literacies” (p. 188) to connect school and home, past and present. Yet, research also shows that even though refugees engage in complex literacy practices every day, they still struggle in schools (McBrien, 2005) and often fail to gain English language proficiency (Capps et al., 2015). As discussed above, these challenges in school and in language learning can be interwoven with challenges surrounding shifting roles and expectations, religion, and racial discrimination. Recognizing the refugee woman as a situated subject illuminates the conflicting and complementary ways in which her life and learning intersect in diverse spaces. In the following section, I consider specific critiques that researchers have made of refugee education and related social concerns and consider researchers’ recommendations to improve approaches to refugee education.

Refugee Education: Critiques and Recommendations

Scholars have noted many problems with the existing refugee education in the United States and other refugee receiving nations (specifically Australia and Canada), including students’ isolation and alienation, teachers’ practices, and prevailing discourses of deficit. This section reviews the literature on each of these critiques and summarizes researchers’ recommendations for improving refugee education.

Critiques.

Students' isolation and alienation. As McBrien (2005) noted, nearly all of the refugees represented in her literature review reported feelings and experiences of isolation and alienation in schools (Brown et al., 2006; McBrien, 2005; Sarr & Mosselson, 2010; Townsend & Fu, 2001). For example, Townsend and Fu (2001), using qualitative methods and data from interviews, observations, and written texts, shared the story of one Laotian refugee's experiences of adjusting to a new language, culture, and friends in an American high school. Paw expressed deep sadness and feelings of alienation in school. The researchers described their understandings in this way: "Paw's literacy struggles came not from problems in decoding the English alphabet but rather from her cultural and social isolation" (p. 105). Scholars suggest that the lack of an inclusive learning community and the rejection experienced by many refugees like Paw have direct effects on learning (Bigelow, 2010; McBrien, 2005; & Townsend & Fu, 2001). McBrien (2005) and others maintain that schools and educators are key to refugee students' acculturation, socialization, and adjustment, and that prevailing prejudices and discrimination can also greatly affect these outcomes.

Teachers' practices. Scholars widely agree that teachers' roles, approaches, and attitudes towards refugee learners influence outcomes (e.g. McBrien, 2005; Roxas, 2010; Sarr & Mosselson, 2010; Short & Boyson, 2012; Townsend & Fu, 2001). McBrien (2005) conducted a foundational review of 25 years' worth of literature on refugee resettlement in the United States, which was organized around four questions: What do refugee students need to succeed in U.S. schools? What are the obstacles to their success? What can be done to help refugees overcome the obstacles? McBrien's (2005) findings showed that obstacles to refugee students' success included not just limited English proficiency, but also teacher attitudes and school environments.

She argued that teachers must critically assess their attitudes toward refugee students and foster a respectful community of learners in order to overcome obstacles and support change. In addition, schools and teachers need to recognize relations of power, privilege, and discrimination that exist in schools and classrooms.

In U.S. public schools, the majority of teachers are White, middle-class, monolingual English-speakers who have little in common with newcomer students in terms of background, culture, or language. These differences complicate communication, education, and expectations, and thus call for culturally relevant and responsive pedagogy and practices that recognize the political and ideological aspects of language education, especially with refugee English learners (Bartolomé, 2010; Gay, 2000; Ladson-Billings, 1995; Lee, 2010). Parents of Sudanese refugees have stated that teachers did not understand the challenges they faced as they tried to navigate work and home lives with limited English (Walker-Dalhouse & Dalhouse, 2009). Sarroub's (2002) study of female Yemeni students similarly found that "most teachers remained ignorant" (p. 146) of the students' lives, religion, and literacy and identity negotiations. Sarroub concluded that "schools and teachers would do well to become familiar" (p. 146) with students' funds of knowledge in order to understand "how individuals learn, produce knowledge, and sustain cultural or social identities in multiple worlds" (p. 146).

Discourses of deficit. Because refugees have often experienced interruptions in their formal education, may come from orally based learning communities, and may not speak "standard" forms of English, they are often perceived as deficient and unintelligent (Gunderson, 2000; McBrien, 2005; Walker-Dalhouse & Dalhouse, 2009). Most researchers report that teachers tend to take a deficit and subtractive view of refugee students and their language and literacy practices (Bigelow, 2010; Goodkind, 2006; McBrien, 2005; Sarroub, 2002; Walker-Dalhouse & Dalhouse,

2009). Parents, too, were often viewed as deficient and therefore unable to contribute to their child's learning and education. These deficit discourses are often accepted as "commonsense" and are repeated as "unconscious discursive practices" (Roy & Roxas, 2011, pp. 521–522) with potentially detrimental effects.

The research on refugee schooling clearly reveals the prevalence of deficit perceptions and inequitable relations of power around most refugees in schools. For many refugees, lack of exposure to printed texts leads them to be categorized as "illiterate" (Sarroub, 2008) and incapable. Walker-Dalhouse and Dalhouse (2009) found that Sudanese refugee families thought of teachers as at-school parents and were disappointed when students felt rejected or ignored by teachers. Some reported that teachers and others believe that Blacks and refugees of color are not intelligent, and concluded that teachers did not see students' abilities or potential and focused on their deficiencies instead.

The problems with the deficit model are evident from the literature. Taking a critical ethnographic approach, Li (2008) investigated the struggles of economically disadvantaged urban students, immigrants, refugees, and their parents as they contended with deficit models of teaching and learning. Li found that home and school lives were disconnected and contended, "urban schooling is a culturally contested terrain in which the power struggle between school and home is in a constant flux" (p. 25). She argued that in schools, students struggle between conformity and resistance. Li situated literacy as a powerful part of these struggles, saying, "literacy is a process of cultural translation and transformation" that is crucial in everyday lives (p. 164).

The deficit model is associated with a pedagogical approach that has been termed "subtractive schooling" (Valenzuela, 1999). Studies of refugee students in both national and international contexts reveal the prevalence of this approach (Bigelow, 2010; Brown et al., 2006;

Gunderson, 2000; Sarr & Mosselson, 2010; Townsend & Fu, 2001; Woods, 2009). Subtractive schooling implies a process of separating students from their families, histories, languages, cultures, and knowledges in order to erase what exists and inscribe dominant cultural discourses. These will purportedly prepare students for self-sufficiency and full participation in society. However, the literature shows that these types of school policies and practices further division and discrimination and decrease students' success.

Subtractive attempts by teachers and programs to teach English and/or literacy disregard students' abilities and experiences. Disconnected, subtractive models of education de-emphasize experiences and relationships, alienate students, and decrease access to language and learning. Finn (2010) argued that these approaches specifically fail to meet the needs of refugee trauma survivors, and more research is needed to explore language learning in their everyday lives. Bigelow (2010) agreed that often "literacy activities in English were not linked to their parents' literacy use in direct ways" (p. 68).

Cummins (2001) described additive and subtractive approaches to second-language teaching. In contrast to additive approaches that seek to add to students' cultural and linguistic repertoires (p. 664), a subtractive approach is exclusionary: a non-neutral, homogenizing process that works to subtract cultural resources and language knowledge and replaces them with those of the dominant culture. The term *subtractive* is often used to explain the negative impacts of assimilation on students in schools (Valenzuela, 1999). Roxas (2010) found that for refugee teachers in a midwestern high school, assimilation and Americanization were the presumptive goals of education. McBrien (2005) noted that refugee youth in schools sometimes assimilate and accept a subtractive model, rejecting family and cultural ties, in order to fit in with peers and diminish loneliness and isolation. However, a number of studies show that this is not always the

case; often, complex and hybrid forms of integration occur as refugee women navigate the intersections between home and school.

Schalge and Soga's (2008) ethnographic study of adult refugee and migrant students in ESL classes reveals students' frustrations and schools' inability to address their needs. Even schooling for adults was based on prescriptive programs that discounted the adults' experiences and knowledges as well as their personal desires and goals. Adult students in Schalge and Soga's study were regularly absent, and others dropped out, reflecting their similar struggles to succeed in classes that are disconnected from and do not represent their lives or experiences. Warriner (2004) similarly found in her ethnographic study of two refugee women in an adult ESL program in the United States that the program stressed finding entry-level work quickly and acquiring basic literacy. The program and teachers embraced and enacted "ideologies that devalue new immigrants and the languages they speak, confining the students . . . to dead-end jobs with little potential for advancement or social mobility" (p. 193).

In the case of adult education, refugee adult learners also struggle in schools that situate them as illegitimate and/or illiterate. Dominant monolingual and prescriptive approaches to adult education often focus on immediate interventions and "survival English" (Auerbach, 1993; Auerbach & Burgess, 1985). Programs are too often prescriptive, prioritizing immediate employment over students' participation and personal goals (Warriner, 2004a, 2004b, 2009a). In addition, adult refugee programs often overlook psychosocial aspects of well-being that can impact language and literacy learning, such as trauma related to war, violence, and displacement, or they pathologize refugees by focusing solely on learners' "disabilities" rather than their abilities (Finn, 2010; Goodkind, 2006).

Overall, research suggests that subtractive schooling practices, which lead to refugee stu-

dents' isolation and lack of success in school, can be resisted and reimagined. Overly simplistic views of languages and literacies ignore aspects of power and the resources of learners, whereas hybrid and more complex and critical conceptions of languages and literacies can enable researchers and educators to address the needs of diverse learners. Ways of knowing and conceptualizing language-learning have been altered, perhaps permanently, by the world's changing landscape and increasing movement of populations. Yet these changes seem to have effected few political, pedagogical, and practical changes at the local level thus far.

Recommendations. While the literature documents the challenges and problems in refugee education, it also suggests which practices are effective and can be emulated. For example, in their study of eight Sudanese students in Victorian secondary schools, Brown et al. (2006) found that despite difficulties and high dropout rates, refugee students wanted to be in school. They also recognized that change was needed, and they suggested having more teachers, more help with English in content-area classes, support from peers with similar cultural backgrounds, and time to "learn more" before coming to high school (p. 160). This study showed that the social aspects of school were highly important to refugee students' success, as social acceptance, friendships, and connectedness were all related to students' willingness to participate and engage in learning and school.

Along similar lines, other researchers suggest that teachers can also play an important role in improving refugee education (Roxas, 2010). As noted above, many refugees have experienced interruptions and gaps in their formal schooling (Bigelow, 2010; Brown et al., 2006; Miller, 2009; Woods, 2009). Movement across borders and national boundaries in search of safety has often resulted in limited access to formal academic experiences. This means that educators need to recognize and re-evaluate "taken for granted" (Perry, 2009) notions of literacy and cu-

mulative education policies in relation to the education of refugees (Gunderson, 2000; Luke, 2003; Roxas, 2010; Woods, 2009). This shift calls for changes in policy and pedagogy for language and literacy education, such as flexibility in testing conditions, class sizes, and class times, and a rejection of superficial "hallway multiculturalism" (Li, 2008, p. 90) in favor of more critical multiculturalism (Kubota, 2004). Goodkind's (2006) suggestion is for an alternative approach that exposes relationships of power and imagines new spaces for teaching and learning.

The literature presented some extraordinary teachers who understood the importance and value of refugee students' histories, languages, beliefs, and literacy practices. Woods (2009) found that some teachers understood the importance of connecting to students and recognizing their resources and histories. Informed by the interview responses of one ESL teacher in Australia, Woods (2009) presented "preliminary thoughts on a socially just approach" (p. 89) to refugee education. The participating ESL teacher became the focus of this qualitative study because she was able "to shift beyond deficit explanations of the students and their engagement with the school" (p. 89). She recognized refugees' needs for emotional and social support from teachers and classmates, and she argued that community and trust-building were important to students' success. She pointed out the strengths, resources, and resiliency of her refugee students.

In another study that considered the role of teachers in refugee education, Townsend and Fu (2001) made important recommendations about how schools might "better" teach this population. The authors suggested that "what may be most helpful [for teachers] is to attend to our language newcomers' stories, in talking and in writing, gleaning from them their diverse ways of learning and their family backgrounds and values" (p. 112). Referring to the female refugee at the heart of their study, they noted that if she had been invited into a more open and flexible learning community, "Paw's extraordinary life experiences and background would have been an

asset rather than a hindrance during classroom discussions" (p. 113). The authors contended that for refugees, "establishing an inclusive classroom community requires balancing the experiences students have in common with their unique predilections" (p. 112). "We can't expect our language newcomers to be the only ones open to new cultural perspectives" (p. 113).

Like teachers, parents too have been found to play a significant role in successful refugee education. Bigelow (2010) found that parents supported their children's language and literacy development in multiple "concrete" (p. 69) ways. They relieved girls from household chores and responsibilities, allowed them to travel by bus to tutoring sessions, expressed interest in their schooling and achievement, and were even willing to move students to other schools if needed.

Many of the educational practices that have been found to be effective with refugees have to do with relationships, social networks, and communities of practice. For example, Finn's (2010) study focused on UHPSOT, an ESL program specifically designed using a community of practice lens to support refugee trauma survivors (Lave & Wenger, 1991). She found that learners' shared histories and experiences of war, trauma, survival, and displacement were resources that contributed to building communities of practice. A learner-centered approach, focused on trust, collaboration, and participation, destabilized and diminished power differentials and provided necessary social and emotional support for learners. Finn concludes that refugee language education programs need to focus on authentic learning and materials that are meaningful and important in everyday lives. In addition, teachers need more training and better understandings of refugee learners' specific needs. Finn calls this a "unique community of practice" and suggests there is still much work to be done to understand the relationship between trauma and second language learning. In this study, a community of practice lens focused attention on legitimate lives, literacy, and learning in a refugee women's book club.

As another example of research on effective practices, Prins et al.'s (2009) study found that refugee women experienced "multiple psychosocial and material benefits" through programs that helped them "construct supportive social networks" (p. 337). Interestingly, the authors note that women "accomplish important, yet often discounted, social purposes in nonformal education and community projects" (p. 335). For women with limited social supports or who seldom left the house, adult education spaces became opportunities for informal counseling, building relationships, and connecting to resources. The researchers found that in these programs, women made connections to *resource brokers*, or people who could help them access resources. These women practiced agency in actively seeking assistance, support, and access to needed resources. This research points to the often-ignored aspects of kinship that serve important purposes in women' lives. It draws attention to the need for new ways of thinking of education, challenging educational policymakers to rethink narrow goals and recognize the value of participation, support, interaction, and mentoring in informal learning spaces.

More support for the importance of communities and relationships in refugee education is found in the work of Goodkind (2006). Based on the qualitative aspects of a mixed-method study, this article describes the impact and importance of the Refugee Well-Being Project (RWBP) in Michigan. The project focused on collaboration between local undergraduate students and Hmong refugee women, who met in learning circles and engaged in advocacy work together. Data from qualitative interviews showed the importance of mutual relationships and learning for all participants. Goodkind (2006) viewed the RWBP and her study from an empowerment and ecological perspective, focused upon the strengths of individuals and communities. She argued that an emphasis on resiliency is needed for understanding refugees, and that it is im-

portant to create “opportunities [for them] to regain their self-efficacy, have their experiences collectively validated, and develop new knowledge and skills” (p. 5).

In learning circles, refugees and undergraduate students focused on cultural exchange and one-on-one learning. The refugee women initiated and decided upon the learning. The dominant themes from the data were the genuine reciprocity and mutual learning; the valued role of Hmong participants as teachers with important knowledge, experiences, and skills; the recognition of strength and resiliency among refugees; society’s responsibilities to refugees; and inequalities in relationships. By providing multiple excerpts and examples from transcripts, the researcher validates the often “unrecognized and invisible” voices of Hmong refugees (p. 10). Goodkind (2006) thus troubles fixed notions of helper–helped and challenges assumptions that view refugees as vulnerable. Her study also encouraged open discussions of power and inequity among the Hmong women, who were active in these discussions. The study of Hmong refugee women focused on their strengths, resiliency, and contributions, and on the larger aspects of power in discourse, teaching, and community.

Significantly for the present study, many of the literature’s recommendations for improving education for refugees and other English learners center on language and literacy learning. Bigelow (2010), working with several self-identified Somali Muslim young women in a Saturday program, found powerful connections between language and learning when participants engaged with texts that were closely related to their lives and familiar cultural practices. Poetry, folktales, and a novel about a Somali woman were found to be integral to students’ identities as readers. Despite persistent discourses of deficiency in educational spaces, parents and students often showed agency in adapting to and navigating these unfamiliar and often unsupportive spaces (Sarr & Mosselson, 2010). A focus on women’s abilities and funds of knowledge, rather

than on their deficiencies, opens spaces for learning. Unfortunately, access to learning and interactions with English speakers is often restricted for refugee women. There is a need for well-planned programs that recognize refugee women's particular lives and needs. Critical approaches are essential to countering deficit discourses and providing space for collaborative work in communities of practice.

In a Canadian study involving immigrant parents, Stagg-Peterson and Heywood (2007) interviewed the parents, teachers, and principals, and found that although teachers and principals perceived some limitations and inadequacies in students' and parents' cultural and social capital, they largely expressed appreciation for the cultural capital students brought to the classrooms and schools. These teachers and principals made suggestions for teaching immigrant language students that show an appreciation for the linguistic, cultural, and social capital they and their families already possess. Their recommendations were to (a) make dual-language books available and/or invite parents in to help create such books, (b) learn the languages of students in the school, and (c) encourage minority-language parents to read and write to their children in their first languages (L1s) (p. 535). The researchers contended, "with one voice, participants supported an additive approach to literacy learning" (p. 531) and a respect for ESL students' L1 and culture. These teachers and principals clearly embraced an additive rather than subtractive approach to language acquisition.

Various researchers have worked to counter the deficit discourses discussed above and in chapter 1. Gonzalez et al. (2005) first theorized "funds of knowledge" to counter and contest subtractive schooling and to challenge "deficit interpretations" (p. 278) of students and families. Through research with teachers, students, and families, the researchers understood *funds of knowledge* to be "those historically developed and accumulated strategies (skills, abilities, ideas,

practices) or bodies of knowledge that are essential to a household's functioning and well-being" (p. 91–92). Teaching and learning in local community book clubs with immigrant mothers became opportunities to reject subtractive discourses in favor of reciprocity, relationship-building, reflection, reading for meaning, and reading beyond the text to their lives (Moll, 2005, p. 281). The participants "turned the study of literature into a critical examination of their families, communities, and society at large" (p. 282).

Also applying a *funds of knowledge* approach, Martinez, Orellana, Pacheco, and Carbone (2008) helped students recognize the richness of their own everyday language practices and develop academic skills through translating work. Through collaborative "work circles," the researchers showed students how the knowledge and skills they already possessed and used everyday could connect to more formal school literacies. The authors contend that many bilingual skills, like those involved in translation, are largely unrecognized and unvalued. Students in this study gained awareness of their abilities and came to see the legitimate value in their languages and skills. A number of studies similarly draw upon additive and funds of knowledge frameworks to explore diverse contexts for learning, offering alternatives to basic proficiency transmission models (Baynham, 2002; Finn, 2010; Norton, 2000; Warriner, 2004a, 2004b; Goodkind; 2006).

Student-centered approaches that allow for flexibility and a focus on refugee learners' needs and desires have proven to be promising as well. Baynham (2002) found in his study drawn from narrative and classroom data in adult ESOL classrooms in the UK that when a strictly outlined curriculum, strict structures, and a teacher-dominated class was replaced by a more contingent space, openings occurred for adults to bring what was important in their lives into

learning. Baynham (2002) noted that in “interruptive” moments, students took the lead and directed the class according to their needs.

Using a New Literacy Studies (NLS) framework for research, Baynham (2002) suggested that open, student-centered classes allow space for “multiple literacies and contested relationships of power” (Street, 2005, p. 77) to occur. Students can intervene, taking positions as knowers on real-life subjects and helping each other solve authentic problems. The challenges immigrant and refugee women face in their everyday lives can become productive learning catalysts if teachers are critically aware and open to contingency.

The research discussed above shows the need for a strengths-based, critical approach to teaching refugees. In addition, more research into teacher education and teacher professional development is needed in order to uncover the inconsistencies between research and practice. Finally, it is also apparent that an action agenda is needed to address the discourses, ideologies, and systems of power that work to maintain inadequate educational opportunities for refugees. The study offers possibilities for reimagining learning spaces to focus on learners’ strengths and funds of knowledge, challenging the prevalent subtractive models of learning that reinforce isolation, separation, discrimination, and intimidation in many schools and classrooms (Gonzalez et al., 2005; Tinker Sachs, Hendley, Klosterman, Muga, Roberson, Soons, Wingo & Yeo, 2008).

Possibilities for Book Clubs

The literature suggests that a book club can function as an out-of-school, informal learning space, and a site for critical practices. Following Finn (2010), a communities of practice lens provides unique perspectives onto refugee women’s membership and participation in literate spaces. For women too often described as illiterate and treated as incapable, book club spaces may offer opportunities for transactions (Rosenblatt, 1994) and legitimate participation in shared,

situated learning (Heller, 1996; Lave & Wenger, 1991) and in larger imagined communities (Anderson, 2006). Taken together, these approaches provide intersectional (Fong, 2004) perspectives into the lives of refugee women in order to make visible the resources, languages, and literacies they draw upon in everyday life to read and rewrite their worlds.

In studying the literature related to book clubs, a few fundamental features related to the proposed study surfaced. First, book clubs are predominantly social spaces occupied by women, where women read and talk about "what matters to them" (Poole, 2003, p. 278–280). Second, book clubs offer potential opportunities to resist and reimagine through the social practice of literary engagement (Twomey, 2007); they may provide spaces for reflective, critical, and transformative practices of reading and writing the world and the word (Freire, 1968/1993). Finally, further research into outside-of-school book clubs seemed warranted given the limited literature and their long history and increasing popularity (Long, 2003; Poole, 2003). Participation in book clubs has the potential to shape the literacy practices, learning, and lives of refugee women, and an exploration of this participation may in turn shape understandings of refugee women's lives and literacy education.

Although school book clubs and class literature circles do offer the potential for learning, they tend to lack the intimacy, authenticity, freedom, and safety of less public, informal spaces. In schools, administrators, teachers, and students are surveilled, and classrooms are controlled (Foucault, 1995). Teachers must remain focused on curriculum coverage and assessment outcomes, allowing little space or time for the "interruptive moments" described by Baynham (2002), or for the "family" feelings of support observed among the women in Prins et al.'s (2009) study. Unstructured, informal discussions about lives outside of school are likely to be discouraged within school settings (Walker-Dalhouse & Dalhouse, 2009).

The research shows that in many formal educational settings, aspects of refugees' everyday lives—including transnational community and cultural ties, underemployment, and familial responsibilities—are conspicuously dismissed or denied. The highly visible and public nature of schools and classrooms and the prevailing discourses that circulate within them make participants feel reluctant to share significant and substantial aspects of their lives and learning (Canagarajah, 2004). By contrast, reading groups in informal spaces can be guided and governed by group members and can move in directions that problematize notions of legitimacy, authority, and value by privileging refugee women's perspectives and lives. These spaces may serve as contingent "contact zones" where authority can be questioned. Bakhtin (1981) suggested that authority, political powers, and institutions offer little flexibility, space for creativity, or contingency in context (p. 345). Unlike informal and unsanctioned spaces, authoritative and institutional spaces are limiting and often limited to "official" languages, literacies, and forms of knowledge. Here I consider three key possibilities for book clubs that are relevant to this study: meaning-making; countering hegemony; and safety, belonging, and visibility.

Meaning-making. The literature offers ample support for the use of book clubs as sites of meaningful learning. Rosenblatt's (1994, 1995) transactional theory of reader response, suggests that texts are not autonomous and cannot be separated from the reader's experiences. In reader response, textual authority is no longer privileged, and the focus is no longer on finding the structures and meanings inherent in texts. Rather, readers are part of a transaction, actively engaged in composing texts (Belcher & Hirvela, 2001; Hirvela, 2004; Rosenblatt, 1994, 1995; Tracey & Morrow, 2006). Rosenblatt's (1994, 1995) conception of this transaction between reader and text integrates reading and real world. In my study, the term *transaction* as applied to the book club describes both the individual experiences of refugee readers and the collective ex-

periences of group members as they actively composed texts with one another in a community engaged in reading as meaning-making.

Rosenblatt's (1994, 1995) transactional and reader response theories have been criticized by some for focusing too heavily on the individual in relation to text, but taken together with a social constructivist view, largely based on Vygotsky's (1978, 1986) work, the relationships among individual learner, text, and social context become clearer. Vygotsky (1986) theorized that individuals learn through socially mediated interactions. He proposed that interaction, language, and collaboration were essential aspects of learning and described how learning occurs through supportive relationships with more knowledgeable others in the *zone of proximal development* (ZPD). He defined the ZPD as "the distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance, or in collaboration with more capable peers" (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 86).

Vygotsky's theories of language and learning offer powerful alternatives to the "banking" model of education often imposed on learners, especially those from nondominant groups (Freire, 1968/1993). Social constructivist approaches, informed by Vygotsky's work, have informed innumerable studies of literacy across contexts, and his theories continue to expand concepts of literacy, especially for English learners (Lantolf, 2011; Swain & Deters, 2007). Funds of knowledge (González et al., 2005), culturally relevant perspectives (Gay, 2000; Ladson-Billings, 1995), and critical approaches to literacy (Freire, (1968/1993); Freire & Macedo, 1987) are often tied to social constructivist theories of learning.

Wells (2000) related Vygotsky's theories of mind and knowing to communities of practice (Lave & Wenger, 1991) in his discussion of dialogic inquiry. Wells argued that a key feature

of Vygotsky's theory was the "mutually constitutive relationship between individuals and the society of which they are members" (p. 54). He went on to suggest that, related to Vygostsky's zone of proximal development (ZPD), learning is dependent upon support and assistance from members of the community and occurs as an integral aspect of participation. Wells pointed out that that learning occurs even among relative newcomers with little expertise, and even when no expert is present (p. 57). This learning is often mediated by language and discourse. Wells thus tied together learning and dialogic inquiry. He contended that dialogue does not occur exclusively through talk but also through more "permanent representations of meaning" such as writing. To Wells, writing may act as a means of learning and "knowledge transformation" (p. 77), especially when shared, responded to, critically reviewed and revised, and imagined as something dialogic.

Kim's (2004) exploration of literature circles with adult English learners offers a glimpse into the possibilities, albeit in a classroom environment, for learning and language development through literature and discussions. Using a close analysis of classroom interaction and discourse, Kim found that in an adult ESL class where nine learners read fictional texts and discussed readings, students actively engaged in dialogic social interactions in the target language, English. These interactions helped students connect emotionally and intellectually to literary texts and promoted enjoyment and communicative competence. Five themes encapsulated the ways in which students engaged texts: literal comprehension, personal connections, cross-cultural themes, interpretation, and evaluation.

Drawing upon Rosenblatt's (1994, 1995) conceptualization of reader response theory, Kim emphasized the process of evoking and exchanging responses in meaning-making. She noted that this type of dialogic interaction "can be best realized when readers are encouraged to de-

velop personal responses to the reading from multiple aspects and to share them in discussions"; and further suggested that teachers "should play a significant role in orchestrating and supporting both student interaction with the text and interaction with other students" (p. 163). Although Kim did not directly refer to Bakhtin, her work speaks to the power of dialogic exchange in the learning and language development of adult learners. However, she also reinscribes the role of teachers, even among adult learners, as the designers and orchestrators of legitimate learning. My study counters this view and suggests that a community of practice approach to learning may offer an alternative to teacher–leader approaches, especially for adults who approach learning with complex histories and desires and with multiple languages and literacies.

Countering Hegemony. Reading clubs have historically been and still tend to be insulated and largely segregated, homogenous communities. Indeed, Long (2003), as a White woman and researcher, studied mostly White reading groups in Houston in order to adhere to this generally accepted practice and cause as little disruption to the group as possible. Research shows that book clubs can focus on and foster feelings of solidarity and commonality and avoid difficult discussions of diversity and difference (Barstow, 2003). As Burwell (2007) suggested, the homogeneity and affinity often found in reading groups may lead to the reproduction of colonizing, imperialist discourses and reinforcement of cultural authority. However, research has also suggested that reading groups can work to counter hegemonic metanarratives.

The scant research into reading groups or book clubs outside of schools reveals the power of political and ideological discourses that influence research practices and marginalize the place of women in the world. Making visible the largely invisible and seemingly illegitimate worlds of women in book groups may offer different insights into the ways in which women learn and en-

gage in literacy outside of schools, and book clubs may act as potentially counter hegemonic spaces. Long (2003) described book clubs as

> deliberative spaces [for women] to voice their concerns, to narrate the particularities of their lives, to expand their cultural repertoires in dialogue with narratives in books or from other women's lives, to name what delights or troubles them, to explore the dissociations between what matters to them and the social strictures or ideological frameworks that fail in important ways to address them. (p. 219)

Poole (2003) similarly suggested, based on her Australian study, that reading groups are "a highly successful form of affiliation" among women and a "uniquely female means of acquiring cultural capital" (p. 280). Historically, book clubs have served as political spaces for women's organization, planning, and activism (Long, 2003). They have sheltered spaces for learning when schools were not open to women and have offered safe spaces for kinship and caring (Long, 2003; Poole, 2003). Book clubs offer potential opportunities to resist and reimagine new alternatives through the social practice of literary engagement (Twomey, 2007) and provide spaces for reflective, critical, and transformative practices of reading and writing the world and the word (Freire, 1968/1993). However, the limited literature available revealed that book clubs do not always act as spaces for women to disrupt notions of authority and acceptability (Flint, 2006; Long, 2003; Twomey, 2007).

Specifically related to reading and the book club, Weedon (1991) suggested that the reading process is both potentially naturalizing and radically transformative. She suggested that post-structural modes of reading denaturalize the reading process, revealing that it is varied and socially produced. She argues that fiction, particularly realistic fiction, may help reveal the multiple positions and subjectivities individuals assume, how these are socially defined, and their political

implications. Anzaldúa (1987/2007) pointed to the power of texts for her personally in the preface to her book: "Books saved my sanity, knowledge opened locked places in me and taught me first how to survive and then how to soar" (n.p.). Poststructural and critical approaches to reading may reveal differences and make multiple subjectivities accessible to refugee women, who are largely defined by the discourses surrounding them and confined to the private sphere and/or domestic world.

Looking to Bakhtin's (1981) conception of dialogism as "the characteristic epistemological mode of a world dominated by heteroglossia" where "there is a constant interaction between meanings, all of which have the potential of conditioning others" (p. 426), the connections between Vygostky's notions of socially supported learning and dialogic inquiry become clear. For Bakhtin and Vygotsky, language is essential to learning in that it allows for interaction, exchange, and change. However, it is also clear, based on the research into refugee schooling presented in the review of literature, that patterns of classroom discourse remain largely monologic (and monolingual). Dialogue and interaction are discouraged and talk is still reserved mainly for the teacher. Monologic talk focuses power on the teacher and the authority of text, whereas dialogic talk creates space for multiple voices and openings for resistance. Bakhtin's conception of the dialogic is based, at least in part, on the power of response:

> The word in living conversation is directly, blatantly, oriented toward a future answer-word: it provokes an answer, anticipates it and structures itself in the answers direction. Forming itself in an atmosphere of the already spoken, the word is at the same time determined by that which has not yet been said but which is needed and in fact anticipated by the answering word. Such is the situation in any living dialogue. (p. 280)

In a book club space, dialogic inquiry and engagement is encouraged, as readers come together in response to the texts and discourses they encounter Reader response theories (Rosenblatt, 1994, 1995) developed from this conceptualization of the transaction and relate particularly to the kind of internal, intertextual, dialogic approach to meaning-making that Bakhtin describes. Bakhtin suggests that even internal dialogue connects texts to each other and to discourses past, present, and future. Thus, all interactions around texts are opportunities for engaging with others real, imagined, or remembered.

In this book club, women shared a common history of violence, displacement, and resettlement as refugees, but they differed widely in nationalities, languages, histories, ethnicities, and cultures. In this way, this book club helped to fill another gap by providing perspectives into a diverse reading group and offered opportunities for more critical reflections and re-imaginings. For refugee women of color, who are too often excluded from research and referred to as illiterate and uneducated, a book club offers a potentially safe space to resist and transform dominant discourses.

Safety, belonging, and visibility. Research suggests that most book club members report that the most important aspects of the book club are relational. They take great comfort in the connections, intimacies, and shared experiences they find there (Barstow, 2003; Dail, McGee, & Edwards, 2009; Long, 2003; Poole, 2003). As opposed to scholarly settings for the study of literature, "people's interpretations are windows both into the text, and into personal histories and inner dynamics of the interpreter" (Long, 1986, p. 603) in book clubs. They are spaces where members share lives, histories, and feelings. Although multiple perspectives are accepted and valued, interpretations and discussions often remain mostly uncritical in homogenous groups.

Within the literature on refugee women, the concept of belonging proved to be a recurring theme, and the complexity of belonging became clear. For refugees, racism and discrimination are additional forms of displacement that lead to isolation and continue the conditions of unbelonging (Weedon, 2004). For women, already uprooted, belonging is a powerful notion, but one not readily realized. For many African refugees, the journey to belonging is complicated by highly visible, racialized bodies (Hopkins, 2010; Oikonomidoy, 2007; Warriner, 2007b). Thus, it is beneficial to consider Canagarajah's (2004) exploration of Pratt's (1991) concept of "safe houses" in relation to a refugee women's out-of-school book club. Pratt describes "safe houses" as spaces where shared understandings, trust, and "temporary protection from legacies of oppression" (p. 40) may be found.

Canagarajah (2004) argues that students in schools seek in-between spaces as sites "that are relatively free from surveillance" (p. 121) for more complex, critical, and creative forms of participation. Safe houses are unofficial, interstitial spaces in which learners may take on hybrid and imagined identities and heterogeneous discourses. Movement between safe houses and public sites may develop "competencies necessary for crossing discourses and community boundaries" (p. 132) and provide practice in multilingual communicative strategies.

In safe houses, learners may try on identities, discourses, and practices and incorporate values and things that matter to them outside of school. In these often hidden spaces, learners may confront, contest, or contradict without risking failure or condemnation. Thus, in a book club dedicated to shared literacy practices, it may be possible for refugee young women to confront and contest these discourses, construct new subjectivities, and imagine themselves as legitimate participants in a literate community, living literate lives.

Moll (2000) also emphasizes this notion of creative imagination and imaginary worlds as

an important and underexplored aspect of literacy. Pavlenko and Norton (2007) similarly suggest that recent second language research supports the notion that membership in imagined communities affects learning trajectories, agency, motivation, investment, and resistance to the learning of English (p. 589). Using an overarching poststructural framework and drawing upon views of imagination in second-language learning in relation to recent L2 research, they find that language learning and use is mediated by memberships in various imagined communities. They contend that language learners and multilingual speakers are at times positioned as deficient, disadvantaged, and disabled and are often dismissed and denied access to particular communities of practice. Gender, race, and class play important roles in imagined communities and in questions of language ownership and legitimation.

Warrriner's (2009a) research, using a communities of practice frame, complicates simplistic notions of imagined and actual community participation. She takes a political perspective in relation to refugee women. In her examination of participation, practices, and access to membership for three refugee women enrolled in an ESL/workplace program in the United States, Warriner found that all three women achieved a degree of access, engaged participation, and legitimacy in particular communities of practice. However, she argues that these communities and trajectories were not the ones they had imagined.

Warriner suggested that "in learning to do and be expert food server, book shelver, and cashier, there hasn't been an opportunity to do and be other kinds of workers, or to participate in the practices required to access participation in other communities of practice" (p. 28). Therefore, the women's engagement, learning, and practice limited rather than expanded their possibilities. Warriner's analysis highlights the connections between situated learning practices and transnational processes, recognizing that certain types of participation are increasingly demanded

in the global economy. For many refugees, this means participation in “unskilled,” low-level, low-paying positions with few benefits. It is essential to explore more fully the ways in which refugee women gain access to different communities of practice in order to learn English, new literacies, and new practices.

Warriner’s analysis harkens back to Luke’s (2004a) focus on the material consequences of literacy research and education and the need to interrogate the unsettled and uneven spaces refugee women straddle in everyday lives. It is essential to extend an exploration of a book club out across the boundaries of the group into the everyday, multiple, and contested spaces in which refugee women live. A focus on language and literacies is central to exposing “scattered hegemonies” (Grewal & Kaplan, 1994) and rendering visible practices of resistance and agency in refugee women’s lives. Resistance and agency exist in the everyday practices of reading, remembering, and writing, and in openings and opportunities to imagine.

Summary of Literature Review

This review of theoretical and empirical literature has focused on the lives, languages, and literacies of refugee women. Theoretical literature illuminates refugee women’s everyday lives in unsettled spaces, and empirical literature reveals their complex experiences inside schools and out. Given the many critiques of refugee education, researchers have made recommendations to improve approaches to refugee education. In particular, there is a need to counter prevailing deficit discourses and acknowledge refugee women’s multiple experiences, desires, strengths, and literacies. In the final section of the literature review, I considered research that supports book clubs as safe learning spaces and critical sites for countering hegemony.

Thus far, little empirical work has been done to explore and interrogate the ways in which deficit discourses and subtractive approaches to language and literacy education influence the

lives and learning of refugee women of color in resettlement. In addition, little has been offered in the way of promising pedagogical approaches to teaching language and literacy to older multilingual newcomers learning English and/or literacy for the first time in largely White, monolingual, and hegemonic spaces. Although a book club is offered as an alternative space for language and literacy learning, scant research among women of color engaged in book clubs is available, and none focused on refugee women in a book club has been found. A complex and critical framework reveals the limitations of the literature and points to the lack of and need for more focused study and research into the ways in which power and imagination intersect with language, literacies, and learning in everyday lives. In chapter 3, a critical focus extends into discussions of methodology, revealing relations of power in research, roles, and representation.

3 METHODOLOGY

The aim of this study was to investigate and contextualize (a) refugee women's language use and literacies, as well as (b) the everyday lives of refugee women participating in an out-of-school book club. Through this study, my hope was to create an opening and a safe space in which refugee women could engage each other and imagine themselves as legitimate participants in a book-reading community, living literate lives. The previous chapter showed how this study is situated within theoretical and empirical literature related to refugee women's educational and social concerns and to their language and literacy practices. The chapter also explored how book clubs serve as informal learning spaces. An overview of the study's methodology was offered in chapter 1, but this chapter provides a fuller account of the methodology, as well as data collection and analysis methods. Data were gathered and analyzed to answer the following research questions: How do refugee women engage in an out-of-school book club? What can be learned about the everyday lived experiences, literacy practices, and language use of resettled refugee women through an exploration of the book club? And, in what ways might a book club community influence refugee women's literacy practices and everyday lives?

This chapter begins with a discussion of the methodological framework for the study, which integrates critical ethnographic and narrative approaches. The proceeding sections describe the roles and subjectivities of the researcher, the design of the book club study, the participants and their contexts, the research contexts on both national and local scales, methods for data collection and analysis, and ethical considerations and trustworthiness of the study.

Framing the Study

This qualitative study integrates ethnographic and narrative methods. I draw on critical ethnographic methods for my research and data collection, and on both ethnographic and narrative methods for my analysis. This hybrid approach is intended to allow for multiple ways of knowing and to resist the reinforcement of hegemonic metanarratives. In the section below, I discuss my engagement with each of these methodological approaches.

Engaging a critical ethnographic approach. Ethnography, which fits within the qualitative research tradition and derives from the field of anthropology, attempts to offer insights into everyday lives and unknown cultures. Historically, ethnography was used in studying natives and the "Other" from an "objective" point of view (Conquergood, 1991; Madison, 2005; Said, 1978). The goal was for researchers to remain at a distance, observe closely and carefully, and provide thick descriptions of their discoveries. Ethnography is in some ways a rejection of dominant, historically positivist claims to science and truth. Over time, critical scholars began to question ethnography's claims to realistic representation and objectivism.

Although ethnography endeavored to give voice to the voiceless and position to the powerless, critical theories and postmodern challenges problematized the qualitative researcher's claim to know and be able to represent others. Issues of power came to the fore, and "the crisis of representation" raised serious questions about the role and value of ethnography in its traditional forms (deMarrais & Lapan, 2004, p. 191). Critical ethnographic methods offered new ways of conceptualizing this type of qualitative research. In these forms, relations of power within and beyond research cannot be ignored, subjectivity supersedes objectivity, and representations of reality are realized as forms of power.

Drawing on a critical ethnographic approach in this study of refugee women in a book club, I had to be an active participant involved in the book club community while also acting as a critical and reflective researcher, questioning my purposes, positions, and perspectives in relation to the participants. Throughout each section of the study, I attempted to address issues of power and representation by making them explicit. This research was informed by sociocultural notions of knowledge as co-created through interaction and language (Bakhtin, 1981; Vygotsky, 1986), but is also informed by my own subjectivities (Ellis, 1991; Peshkin, 1988; Richardson, 1990, 2000; Weedon, 1999). Therefore, I assume and acknowledge that within the study, in book club meetings, discussions, and texts, participants and researcher co-constructed narratives and meaning. However, the study itself, the data collected, the analysis and interpretation, and the writing and representation of the results are all framed by my own subjectivities as researcher. Indeed, as Lather (1992) noted, most feminist research is “openly ideological” and “assumes that ways of knowing are inherently culture-bound and that researcher values permeate inquiry” (p. 91). Neither research nor the researcher can be separated from cultural contexts, and therefore both must be critically examined.

I recognize that research, literacy, and learning are social, situated, and deeply sedimented in history, culture, emotions, language, and politics. Like Hostetler (2005), I see “good” research as relational, ethical, and deeply concerned with human well-being. Hostetler urged researchers to “think beyond our taken-for-granted ideas of well-being and good and make those ideas the objects of serious, communal inquiry” (p. 21). He argued, “It is in the power of every researcher and educator to improve the lives of people . . . . It is also our greatest calling” (p. 21). This study is just such an attempt at advocacy in research (Creswell, 2009). I have taken up critical approaches and perspectives and an explicit agenda for reform, as will be explored in chapter

6. I went into this study seeking an opportunity to rupture deficit narratives and discourses and create counter-narratives with transformative potential to change the lives of participants, researcher, communities, and schools. My desire is to change perceptions and influence perspectives regarding refugee women and to present alternative pedagogical possibilities.

Drawing upon critical ethnographic methods of data gathering and analysis, I also viewed this as a study of refugee women's literacy practices. New Literacy Studies (NLS) is an approach to literacy research that is both ethnographic and critical and requires researchers to locate literacies in social and cultural contexts and attend to how literacies are taken up in relations of power and used (see Barton & Hamilton 2000; Gee, 1999; Hull & Schultz, 2001; Luke, 2003, 2004a; Purcell-Gates, 2006; Street, 1997, 2003, 2005). This combined approach allowed me to look at the complex and sometimes contested connections and intersections between literacies and participants' everyday lives. A New Literacy Studies lens allowed me to see the practices these refugee women took up and how they were transformed for particular purposes. In the book club, literacy practices crossed borders between oral and literate, print and digital, local and global, and they extended across languages. The texts created in the club through readings, interactions, and narrative tellings provided rich data for understanding these refugee women's situated lives and literacy practices.

Engaging narrative approaches. The methodology of this book club study also draws on narrative approaches. Riessman (2008) delimited *narrative* as "the consequential linking of events or ideas" (p. 5). She wrote that, in narratives, we see sequence, specific characters, particular settings, and meaningful patterns. Narratives are "temporally and spatially" (p. 7) structured but are also able to "traverse temporal and geographic space" (p. 23). Narratives, therefore, are

capable of crossing geopolitical and cultural borders and may provide a means for straddling borders (Anzaldúa, 1987/2007; Zhou, 2001) in diverse contexts.

Narratives are useful in research precisely because storytellers interpret the past rather than reproducing it as it was. Narratives do not mirror the past, but refract it, offering storytellers a way to re-imagine lives (Riessman, 2008, p. 6). Toni Morrison (1993), in her Nobel Prize acceptance speech, argued that a story is "radical, creating us at the very moment it is being created" (p. 27). Riessman (2008) emphasized the ways in which narratives connect past, present, and future in everyday and imagined lives. Bruner (1991), from a cognitive constructivist perspective, similarly suggested that narratives are accounts of events occurring over time and are subjective and situated "versions" of reality (p. 4). As Bruner argued, "narrative discourse in everyday life [is] a viable instrument for cultural negotiation" (p. 18). For this reason, narrative is especially useful to understanding transnational aspects of refugee women's everyday lives and literary experiences. In Bakhtin's (1981) work, the novel functions as a space for dialogic, creative, co-constructed meaning-making. In this research, taking a narrative approach to the data enabled me to focus on the understandings, perspectives, and experiences of participants and to notice the ways in which power and imagination intersected with their stories, the stories we read, and their social lives.

Another motivation for drawing on narrative approaches in this study is the sociocultural dimensions of narrative. Whereas Bruner (1991) focused on the individual cognitive aspects of narrative, Riessman (2008) theorized a sociocultural approach to narrative research and methods. She suggested that narratives cannot be viewed as windows onto truth or essentialized identities because they are embedded within, and shaped by, larger social, cultural, and political discours-

es. Grbich (2007) takes a similar sociocultural perspective of narrative, contending that narrative approaches offer insight into how participants "construct meaning from their life experiences" (p. 125) in socially situated ways. Grbich stated, "Stories not only reflect culture, ideology, and socialization, but also provide insights into the political and historical climates impacting the storytellers' lives" (p. 130). Baynham (2002) noted that narratives have come to function "as vital clues to thinking . . . in accounts of linguistic and anthropological fieldwork" (p. 101). For these reasons, this study's combination of critical ethnographic methods of research and data collection with narrative methods of analysis may offer spaces for both researched and researcher to share their stories. The specific methods of narrative analysis will be described later in the chapter.

Researcher Roles and Subjectivities

As a volunteer, advocate, and English language teacher in the local refugee community for more than five years before beginning this project, I found it important to reflect on and negotiate my positions while conducting research, and to find ways to "give back" to my research participants and the refugee community I studied (Purcell-Gates, 2004, p. 99). In addition to critical ethnographic and narrative approaches, I drew upon feminist methodologies because of their focus on relationship-building and reciprocity.

At the time of this study, I was an English teacher at a small, independent school whose mission was to educate refugee young women, help them achieve their educational and occupational goals, and provide them with the tools and life skills they would need to become educated and informed citizens. Importantly, students in this school most often came unsolicited. They heard about the school through others in the community and actively sought admission in order to improve their own schooling options and educational opportunities. They were their own

agents and advocates. I continued refugee family literacy work with refugee families in Rockside, met other refugee families in my daughters' school, and taught English at the refugee school for more than two years when I started the study.

When I initially started volunteering and teaching in the local refugee community, I had no idea how entwined my life would become with theirs. Ultimately, advocacy and support became even more important than teaching English language and literacy. Lives became more important than learning. Thus, as I began to think about my dissertation and research agenda, I realized that there was much more beyond the classroom to be learned, especially among the refugee women with whom I worked. I wanted to gain a more holistic understanding of these women, their literacy, learning, and lives. This study offered me the opportunity to continue building relationships within the refugee community and connections with women I had already come to know.

I admit that my multiple roles may not have always been easily separated or distinguished inside or outside of the club. I was positioned variously as teacher, researcher, literacy broker, financial advisor, academic advisor, mother, advocate, and more throughout our time together. I was a full participant in the book club while continuing to participate in the lives of these women and the refugee community outside of the club. I tried diligently to keep my teacher-self contained during book club meetings. In that space, I attempted to act less as teacher and more as facilitator and friend.

At times, I did take on a teacher role, but that occurred mostly in our talk around difficult or confusing texts, and sometimes in our talks around school. In fact, I was surprised by how quickly and easily the participants themselves took up roles as teachers and leaders. They often acted as knowledgeable others and as authorities on a multitude of subjects, including the texts

we were reading. They negotiated multiple and shifting positions and roles throughout our time together and allowed me to do the same. I acted as club member, reader, translator, Internet browser, email organizer, and more. Yet, I was not required to be leader, director, or final authority on books or their subjects. I found that we all took on multiple and shifting roles, and our club more closely resembled the more conventional book clubs I had previously attended in more ways than I had first imagined.

As a long-time book club participant, my conception of a book club was that all members would take turns facilitating discussion and contributing to the meaning-making. In the clubs I had joined in the past, members tried to take turns at talk, allow space for others to agree and disagree, and share our understandings and ideas about the texts in relation to our lives. In my experience, book club was always about more than the book we had been reading that month; it was about relationship-building and making connections. The women who shared book clubs with me enjoyed reading and books and wanted to share reading experiences together. But, we wanted to share our lives more. Discussions about our lives always held a place of privilege above the texts we shared and came together to discuss. In the book clubs I knew, friendship and food were fundamental. We formed monthly book clubs in order to maintain connections and relationships with one another in the midst of our hurried and hectic lives.

Similarly, in this book group, I discovered that the women who attended also valued reading and books. As much as they valued reading, they also valued the time to talk about their everyday lives and build connections and relationships. Most of us already shared relationships, but these were previously bounded by school structures and classroom expectations. In an out-of-school book club, we found new ways of relating and grew to know each other in new ways. Our discussions gave no real privilege to book talk, which was often difficult to do in the classroom.

Participants and I did redirect conversations back to the books at times, but more often we used ties to the text to share stories and make personal connections. Our discussions were free-flowing and dialogic, rarely directed. The club had no leader, and participants seemed to like it that way. No one regularly embraced the facilitator role. I felt free from the pressures I felt as classroom teacher to control, direct, and constantly guide learning. The book club space offered other members the same freedom—to speak or be silent, to read or not read, to share or not share, to discuss the text or their lives, and to ask and learn and grow in the ways they wished.

Yet, it seems to me that the allure of reading and book clubs goes beyond the desire to connect with one another. In book clubs and shared texts, readers also find spaces for considering completely different ways of knowing and being in the world. Books can challenge readers to see differently, imagine new lives, and contest what they believe they know about the world. In book clubs and through shared texts, readers may experience “the emotional tension and conflicting attitudes” out of which questions arise and “critically minded” individuals grow (Rosenblatt, 1995, p. 262). Book clubs can cultivate relationships and learning, but they may also create spaces for questioning and contesting taken-for-granted ideas.

I maintained several roles during the course of this six-month book club study. I was a participant, careful observer, and researcher—studying the lives, language, literacy practices, and stories of my participants. I was a reader, sharing my personal responses to the books and my strategies from my educator’s perspective. I was also a writer—writing field notes after meetings, in a reading journal as part of the book club membership, memos regarding data collection and analysis, and the stories participants shared. I was a mother, friend, advocate, wife, and woman, too, while we read and shared our stories in the club. Yet, it is important to note that

while I was a woman within a group of women, I was the only White, native English speaker, middle-class, middle-aged woman among younger, refugee women of color.

We shared past histories and connections from the school where I taught and they attended, from the local community, and we shared some common experiences as women, but in so many ways, we were vastly different women, especially within the larger sociocultural and sociopolitical context. For that reason, I felt that I was "neither wholly insider nor outsider" in the book club community and that my stance and position was always be subject to change (Preissle & Grant, 2004, p. 175). Thus, donning critical lenses both inside and outside of the bounds of the study was essential to reflecting upon and understanding my roles and positions and the influence these had on our club, the participants, the broader study, and my understandings and interpretations. I have tried to keep my selves and subjectivities in plain view. I am reminded of Peshkin's (1998) contention that "one's subjectivity is like a garment that cannot be removed" (p. 17). I am hopeful that I have donned my subjectivities in such a way as to reveal my own attachments to and entanglements in the study, but hope to make them even more clear here.

Through this study, I desired to learn more about transnationalism and lives lived across borders. My daughters are international adoptees from China, and my research interests are influenced by my experiences raising girls with lives and histories that reach outside of our nation's boundaries. My family is biracial, and my daughters are minority women of color surrounded by gendered and raced discourses that circulate to normalize, homogenize, erase, or ignore their "otherness." I want to learn more about the multiple spaces and subjectivities women inhabit and the ways in which these may serve to disrupt dominant discourses and relations of power.

I see my daughters as part of the changing cultural landscape of our families, schools, communities, and nations. They are part of the vast movement of women around and across the globe. When I think about the challenges that many refugee women know and face, it is an emotional reminder of my daughters' similar struggles as they straddle borders and subjectivities, attempting to remain tied to what is near and far in the past and present. Like many refugees, they have been involuntarily moved, displaced and resettled in a space where they are often viewed as other. They are not White but have White parents. They are Chinese but cannot yet speak the language and have no family ties there. They are still learning about what the loss of homeland, family, language, culture, and history means to them. I see their stories and mine as tied to the stories of the refugee women I seek to study. I hope that what I have learned through and from the refugee women in this study may provide insights into transnational lives and open spaces for resistance, recognition, and regard for plurality and difference.

Constructing the Book Club

In the sections that follow, I outline my thinking around the book club and the specific steps I took to create a club that would suit both the needs and desires of the refugee women I hoped would participate and my purposes in the study.

Theorizing and delimiting the club. Frank Smith (1998) suggested that we "abolish the words *learning* and *teaching* altogether, and talk instead about *doing* . . . . People always learn from what they are doing" (p. 94). As I set out to design this study through which to better understand the literacies and lives of refugee women, I did as Smith suggested and invited these refugee women to join me in "the literacy club." I wanted to explore what they and I might learn from one another in "doing" a book club and in talking, reading, and writing together. I wanted to question and reimagine current middle-class conceptions of a book club. Rather than seeing

this as an exclusive activity reserved for a privileged few—largely White and middle-class (Long, 2003)—I wanted to create a space where women from different places and perspectives could come together to share their books and lives.

The idea of an out-of-school book club was particularly appealing because of the structure and surveillance prevalent in schools and classrooms (Foucault, 1995). In those spaces, the policing of time and talk predominates. Students must be on-task, and teachers and administrators must constantly monitor and direct. Output and assessment are often emphasized above all else. In stark contrast to the prescriptive and often restrictive methods used in many public schools and adult ESL classes, a book club that was untethered from formal schooling offered opportunities for empowered learning and for exploring what lives and learning look like outside of schools and classrooms. As in Goodkind's (2006) learning circles, members in a book club may more easily form a community based on reciprocity, mutual learning, and shared experiences. Members choose texts together and participate in open discussions that provide opportunities for them to share important knowledge and to gain new knowledge. A book club is a space in which traditional classroom structures of power can be challenged.

Having been a teacher in many different English classrooms, including among these women, I am well aware of the restraints on time, talk, and tasks that teachers and students face in schools, and I sought the freedom and comfort of a space outside of the formal, official school domain. The search for an informal space where we could find comfort and feel freer to share and linger over stories without regulation or imposition guided my decisions. I had hoped for this during the initial pilot study, but at that time, I did not succeed in creating the feeling of informality and intimacy that I had intended. Our space within a community center was still too public. We had to deal with noise, interruptions, time limitations, uncomfortable furniture, and more.

Having learned from the pilot study, I acquired permission from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) and from participants to meet in my home.

Emulating Norton's (2000) foundational study with refugee and immigrant language learners, I offered my home as the site for book club meetings. Norton noted that in her study, meetings were "located in the private sphere of a home, where the domestic position of a woman as homemaker is more foregrounded than her professional position as teacher/researcher" (p. 147) and thus helped reduce the power differential that is inherent in classrooms. Importantly, Norton contended that the in-home diary study "reframed the women's expectations of whose knowledge was considered more legitimate and valid" and opened spaces where "each woman was an expert on her own life" (p. 147).

Understanding the ways in which language, learning, and life overlap was fundamental to this study, and a site that invited women to engage and explore all of these through the study of literature was essential. It was my hope that we may, as Moll (2005) described, turn "the study of literature into a critical examination of their families, communities, and society at large" (p. 282). Although we did have meetings in my home, several participants (four sisters) also invited us to have book club meetings in their home. In addition, we also held three of our meetings in a local park and restaurant.

I interpreted the group's selection of these meeting locations as an indicator of participants' investment, ownership, and authority in the club. This was not just my study of a book club; it had truly become (at least to some extent) their club. They were leading us in creating the spaces they wanted for our club meetings. Participants in the book club worked together to choose the two texts we read over six months. In choosing books, we shared possibilities, read online reviews, discussed, and ultimately agreed to read first *The Good Daughter: A Memoir of*

My Mother's Hidden Life (2011) by Jasmin Darznik and later *The Joy Luck Club* (2006) by Amy Tan (see Table 1).

Table 1. Selected Texts.

Book & Author	Genre/Book Type	Book summary/Theme
The Good Daughter: A Memoir of My Mother's Hidden Life (2011) Jasmin Darznik	Memoir	Raised in California, Jasmin never knew that her mother Lili lived another life in Iran before marrying her German father. Taken from tapes her mother sent Jasmin after she found a photograph from her mother's first wedding, this memoir tells the story of three generations of women, beginning in Iran nearly a century ago.
The Joy Luck Club (2006) Amy Tan	Novel (16 connected vignettes, divided into 4 sections)	In 1949, four Chinese immigrant mothers meet at a church in San Francisco and agree to continue to meet to play *mah jong* and call their group the Joy Luck Club. Two sections of the book focus on the stories of the mothers (in China and in the US) and two sections focus on the stories of their four American-born daughters.

My home, situated in a town just outside a major metropolitan area, borders a small town, Rockside (pseudonym) that has been home to these participants and thousands of other refugees in the last two decades. Resettled refugees representing more than 150 different ethnic groups are now part of the diverse local fabric of the growing metropolitan area and our local community. The school where I worked and taught for two years prior to this study was created to meet the needs of some of these new community members and is located only one mile from my home. All of the participants in the club had attended this school in the past, except for one younger sister, Par. Our connections to that school were woven throughout our time together in the club.

Recruiting participants. The participants for this study were purposefully recruited based on previous relationships, reading levels, and availability. Because I had taught and built relationships with these women through my classes, I had knowledge about their life experiences, English language experience, and literacies, and I imagined that I could convene a reading

group whose members would enjoy sharing books together. I did not invite beginning readers and writers to the club. Although the decision was difficult and not one I can defend with enthusiasm, I felt that I had to choose participants with sufficient and similar levels of English and literacy proficiency to create a cohesive group.

My university's Institutional Review Board (IRB) for the Office of Research Integrity approved the Protocol for my dissertation research study on March 19, 2013. On March 20, 2013, I prepared and mailed out informed consent forms, recruitment letters, and self-addressed return envelopes to 15 refugee women, all over 18 years old. For non-English speaking parents with minor participants, consent forms had to be translated into parents' primary languages. I waited one additional month for approval of an amendment containing my certified and translated consent forms, so potential participants under age 18 were sent their letters and packets the following month. The amendment with translated parental consent form was approved by IRB on April 4, 2013. On April 5, I sent letters in the mail to four potential participants under 18 and included certified Burmese translations of the parental consent forms. This brought the total number of recruitment letters and consent form packets mailed up to 19. The 19 refugee women I invited ranged in age from 16 to 30. They were all multilingual, were currently studying English, and were resettled refugee women living in Georgia.

Although I had initially intended on inviting only 12 participants, I could not predict how many would be willing or able to participate, and I feared getting too few participants to form a book group. I had heard that several women were working and going to school even in the summer and decided to invite more participants. In the end, my fears were warranted. In talking with potential participants and others in the local community during recruitment, I discovered some of the reasons potential participants could not join. One woman had very recently announced that

she was pregnant, two women were preparing for weddings and moving, and three other women had all taken full-time work and were unable to get away on weekends. One was working nights, six nights per week at the chicken factory; one was working for a local grocery store, and one had two jobs—at a restaurant and on the college campus where she had started taking classes. Two other women had taken summer jobs at a restaurant and were needed on weekends. I had initially invited 19 women to participate, and wound up with a core group of nine. I had aimed to have a group of eight to ten women so was satisfied with the size of the group.

The group of participants fluctuated over the summer, but a core group of nine refugee women attended consistently: Sana, Gul, Farah, Par, Pia, Lucy, Mai, Nan, and Christy. Interestingly, four had been in my initial pilot study group two years before. The refugee women in this group self-identified as non-White women of color and had resettled from Asia and Africa. Each of the participants in my study, except Par, had left local public schools, at least for a time, in order to attend the small independent school where I previously taught English. Information about the nine refugee women participants is located in Table 2.

Table 2. Core Participant Data.

Participant ID #	Name (pseudonym)	Country of Origin	Second Country	Age at Entry	Age during study	Primary Home Language	Number of languages spoken	Participant in Pilot
1.95	Christy	Burundi	Congo/Kenya	13	18	Kirundi	3	No
2.91	Farah	Afghanistan	India	16	22	Pashto	4	No
3.96	Lucy	Burma	Malaysia	14	16	Matu Chin	3	No
4.95	Mai	Burma	Thailand	12	18	Karen	3	Yes
5.83	Gul	Afghanistan	India	25	30	Pashto	4	Yes
6.94	Nan	Sudan		12	18	Mabaan, Arabic	3	No
7.96	Pia	Burma	Thailand, born in Thai refugee camp	11	17	Karen	3	Yes
8.96	Par	Afghanistan	India	12	17	Pashto	3	No
9.82	Sana	Afghanistan	India	26	31	Pashto	4	Yes

TABLE 1. *Core Participant Data Table*

For those of us forming the core book club group, finding a day and time to meet regularly was always a challenge. There were many times when I wondered if we might not be able to continue the book club. All of our lives were so full. Family commitments, faith-based commitments, and work commitments were the main competitors for time. Ramadan lasted from early July through early August and kept four sisters from participating for several weeks. Sana missed two meetings because she was traveling back and forth to Afghanistan for her wedding and to visit her new husband. Christy was completing her Certified Nurse's Assistant Training during the summer and had to plan around study and tests. In addition, she was fasting Saturdays with her church congregation and could not meet then. Her entire family also moved out of state that summer, and she had to travel back and forth to help them. There were many more things that happened in all of our lives that made scheduling time together more challenging than I had imagined. I include myself in this, as I had my own obstacles and obligations with family that sometimes made meeting difficult.

Because the refugee English learners I have worked with are all refugee women from Asia and Africa, participants in this study were similarly refugee women from Asia and Africa. All were able to read at or above an eighth-grade level, which made finding and sharing books easier. The group had commonalities but was not homogenous. Participants came from different countries and ethnic groups, had diverse cultural histories, and spoke many different languages. Their differences offered opportunities for rich cross-cultural and dialogic experiences. They were also literate, by the terms set forth by Barton and Hamilton (2000), who asserted that "literacy practices are what people do with literacy" (p. 7). Using this broad definition, it was clear that the refugees in my study regularly engaged in literacy practices that afforded them multiple and varied opportunities and were, therefore, literate. In contrast to the deficit discourses that cir-

culate and seek to reinforce representations of refugee women as limited and lacking, the women I knew drew upon multiple linguistic and cultural resources in order to navigate lives in new spaces.

As evidence of their abilities to navigate multiple literacies and languages, many of my students often acted as literacy brokers for me. Perry (2009) described a *literacy broker* as an individual who acts as a resource, providing knowledge and assistance in order to help another person make sense of and engage with texts (p. 257). They offered me knowledge about cultures, national and ethnic histories, and religions. They translated for me, explained the processes of resettlement, and shared family histories, traditions, songs, stories, and more. They also invited me to share in larger community and cultural events where they helped me make sense of dances, songs, speeches, clothes, foods, and symbols. They gave me the resources necessary to make sense of the texts we shared. In turn, my family and I shared our resources with them, as they engaged with new and/or undecipherable texts. I acted as a literacy broker for them in their everyday interactions with businesses, schools, state agencies, and community.

Information about our meetings, including location, meeting length, attendance, location, and books, can be found in Table 3. The proceeding table, Table 2, shows the total number of sessions attended by each participant.

Table 3. Book Club Meetings.

Meeting & Date	Book	Attendees	Location	Notes
S1 04-13-13		Christy, Gul, Nan, Mai, Par, Sana and Amy	Amy's house	• Group discussion • Group research on-line • Selected book: *The Good Daughter: A Memoir of My Mother's Hidden Life* • Audio and video recording
S2 05-04-13	*The Good Daughter*	Gul, Lucy, Nan, Par, Pia and Amy	Amy's house	• Delayed reading and next meeting due to school obligations • Rainy weather good for reading and talking about books! • Audio and video recording
S3 06-08-13	*The Good Daughter*	Christy, Pia and Amy	Stone Mountain Park club meeting; Asian Buffet lunch	• Researcher audio memo • Many cancellations • Audio recording
S4 06-14-13	*The Good Daughter*	Christy, Farah, Gul, Mother of sisters, Nasha (friend of Par), Par, Pia, Sana and Amy	Sisters' House	• 4 sisters wanted group to visit their new home and host book club • Mother was happy to have us and joined our group • Selected next book: The *Joy Luck Club* • Audio recording • Meeting lasted more than 4 hours
S5 07-12-13	*The Joy Luck Club*	Christy, Mai, Nan and Amy	Amy's house	• Ramadan holiday • Audio and video recording
S6 07-26-13	*The Joy Luck Club*	Christy, Mai, Pia and Amy	Stone Mountain Park club meeting; Asian Buffet lunch	• Ramadan holiday • Audio recording
S7 08-02-13	*The Joy Luck Club*	Christy, Mai, Nan, Pia and Amy	Amy's house	• Ramadan holiday • Audio and video recording
S8 09-02-13	*The Joy Luck Club*	Christy, Farah, Gul, Mai, Mother of sisters, Par, Pia [Sana in Afghanistan with new husband] and Amy	Sisters' house	• Ate Afghan food • Watched "The Joy Luck Club" movie • Celebration for the end of summer and time together • No real goodbyes were said or official end to the club. Left open • Audio recording
S9 10-11-13		Christy, Farah, Gul, Lucy, Mai, Mother & Father of sisters, Nan, Par, Pia, Amy and family	Stone Mountain Park	• Mountain hike • Potluck picnic lunch • Talked about meeting again and possible books • Field notes and some audio recording • All morning event; more than 4 hours

Refugees' Contexts

The nine women who participated in this study are part of much larger patterns of displacement around the globe. More than 17 million refugees are currently displaced around the world, according to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR, 2015).). The largest number of refugees designated for permanent resettlement have been admitted to the United States (Capps et al., 2015). It is estimated that nearly 80% of the world's refugees are women and their children (Binder & Tošić, 2005; Hajdukowski-Ahmed, 2009; Khanlou & Moussa, 2008; Martin, 2004). In the 2014 Migration and Policy Institute Report, the median age for refugees entering the United States was 25, and more than 30% were between the ages of five and eighteen (Capps et al., 2015).

The nine participants in this study were all political refugees resettled in the southeastern United States by the UNHCR in the past five to seven years, and they were all women. Otherwise, the participants varied greatly in their histories and experiences. These women ranged in age from 16 to 31 during the six-month study period. One woman's country of origin (according to personal statements and refugee documentation) was Burundi, four sisters were from Afghanistan, three women were from Burma, and one was from South Sudan. Although these women referred to these countries as their home countries of origin, some had never lived in these places. The three women from Burma were born in refugee camps in Thailand, and the youngest of the Afghan sisters was born in India.

Refugee resettlement stories can be quite complex and differ widely. Most often, refugees are displaced internally or in countries bordering their homelands during conflicts. Some refugees wait in camps for recognition from the UNHCR and resettlement assignments, while others

are sent to urban areas. Some refugees, a smaller portion, move from their country of origin to a second country, and then seek placement in a third country for resettlement. Some spend decades in refugee camps, while others only spend a few years before being moved again. Despite the differences, all refugees share in common the experience of displacement from their countries of origin due to fears of or actual persecution. Unsafe in their homelands, they are forced to seek safety elsewhere. Unfortunately, the safety and security they seek is not always easy to attain, and recognition and assistance from the UNHCR takes time and perseverance. Those seeking refugee status are forced to prove their need by reliving and testifying to the persecution and danger they endured. In order to better situate the everyday lived experiences of these participants in the current context, it is important to understand their origins and contexts.

Refugees from Afghanistan. The family from Afghanistan had fled the country in the mid to late 1990s due to the civil war conflict in the country and the rise and conquest of the Taliban. The internationally recognized Islamic Sate of Afghanistan retreated from Kabul to Northern Afghanistan in September 1996, while the Taliban entered and took control of Kabul at the same time and set up a new, largely unrecognized state. Although conflict had existed in Afghanistan since the time of Russian occupation and war, the civil war during the 1990s saw unspeakable violence and civilian massacres as the Taliban fought for control of the country. These atrocities were focused on particular ethnic and religious groups. For many, there was no choice but to leave. Like the Afghan sisters in this study, many refugees fleeing Afghanistan found a new home in India. It is estimated that nearly 25,000 refugees and asylum seekers in India have registered with the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR). Current estimates suggest that there are 9,000 Afghans living in Delhi alone (Gohshal, 2013). However, India is not a signatory to the 1951 UN Convention on Refugees, which provides refugees with a legal

and political status. In addition, despite its general willingness to accept refugees and UNHCR refugee programs for support, India does not allow refugees to seek citizenship or even long-term employment.

Often, refugee cards are not sufficient to attend schools. This is not an unusual or unique situation for refugees and is often what pushes them to seek permanent resettlement in the United States, Canada, or Australia. Of the four Afghan sisters, only the youngest, Par, who was born in India, was permitted to attend school. Par's three older sisters, Sana, Gul, and Farah, never attended formal school in India. In fact, Sana and Gul worked long days at home making carpets and sewing to help support the family. They never attended school until they reached the United States in their mid to late 20s, and then were too old to register for public school in Georgia.

Refugees from Burma. It has been estimated that more than half a million refugees have come from the military-ruled nation of Burma, located in Southeast Asia. Three of the women in the club stated that Burma was their country of origin. It has been noted that Burma is "the source of one of the world's most protracted refugee crises" (COR, 2007). Although the legally and politically recognized name for the country is Myanmar, the women in this study and other refugees from the country strongly rejected the name and consistently referred to their homeland as Burma. Thus, the name Burma will be used here. Burma is an incredibly diverse nation, with more than 130 distinct ethnic groups, many of which have struggled for land, political rights, and power since World War II. Since the military-imposed rule began in 1988, fighting has continued and intensified, and human rights abuses have abounded. Many people have been forced to seek refuge in bordering nations.

Mai and Pia were refugees from Burma and shared Karen ethnic backgrounds and language. Both were born and raised in Thai refugee camps. At least 150,000 Karen and Karenni

refugees are estimated to be currently living in camps in Thailand. Like India, Thailand is not a party to the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees. The Thai government has permitted the set-up of camps and asylum claims with UNHCR, but refugees still have to deal with uncertain legal statuses and restrictions imposed by the Thai government. Lucy is from a smaller ethnic group in Burma, the Chins. She lived in Thailand before moving to Malaysia. Her family's story is complicated and included years of separation and a great deal of struggle. She and her immediate family were reunited and resettled in the United States from Malaysia.

Refugees from Burundi. Christy and her family were refugees from Burundi, a small African nation located between the Democratic Republic of Congo and Tanzania and directly south of Rwanda. Christy and her family went through a great deal of movement on their journey to resettlement. After being forced to leave Burundi, they went to Congo and then on to Tanzania before being settled in the United States. Burundi has endured civil strife since gaining independence from Belgium in 1962. Widespread genocide in 1972 saw some 200,000 Burundians killed and led more than 150,000 refugees to seek safety in neighboring nations. In 1993, 20 years later, the assassination of Burundi's first Hutu president triggered ethnic fighting and the flight of another half-million refugees (COR, 2007). Christy's family was among them. They were in Congo for some time before being forced once again to flee. From Congo, they went to Tanzania and then were finally resettled in the United States. Christy used multiple languages, having had opportunities to learn from the people in the multiple spaces where she has lived. She spoke Kirundi, Kiswahili, Swahili, some French, and English.

Refugees from South Sudan. Nan was a refugee from South Sudan. She came to the United States with her family directly from the major city of Khartoum. Her family had originally lived in a much smaller village but moved to the urban area and applied for refugee status. Su-

dan has been involved in prolonged civil conflict and has endured environmental issues that have created food shortages. The civil war between North and South Sudan has been devastating and destructive. Estimates are that as many as two million people, mostly South Sudanese, have died from violence, famine, disease, and war. Estimates suggest that more than four million South Sudanese have been displaced. The first civil conflict began in the 1950s as a result of efforts by the Arab- and Muslim-dominated government in Khartoum to increase religious and political control over the culturally distinct South, which was populated by communities adhering to indigenous and Christian beliefs. The Second Sudanese Civil War lasted for more than 20 years as Southerners resisted continued attempts to impose Islamic culture and religion. Nan's family was displaced during this time.

Diversity of participants. The diversity among this group of study participants makes this study unique. Rather than focusing solely on one group of refugees coming from one place, which is common in refugee scholarship and research, I have had the privilege of working with women with widely different experiences and backgrounds in my research. They come from different worlds and carry with them different worldviews. They carry knowledge from geographic spaces I may never have the opportunity to see and know. They lent this study a wider worldview and an incredible diversity of experience, knowledge, and practice.

The Research Context

In the subsequent sections, I situate the study locally. I describe the local research context and site and report on the discourses surrounding refugees in the local receiving community.

The Southern United States. Most refugees who cannot be repatriated resettle in a third country, usually Australia, Canada, or the United States. This study and story are set in the southern United States near a major refugee resettlement city, Rockside. About 40 years ago,

refugees from Southeast Asia, mostly Vietnam and Cambodia, were among the first to be resettled in Rockside, located about 10 miles outside a major urban area in the South. Rockside (about one square mile) grew up along the railroad line in the early 20th century but was shrinking in population due to what many called "White flight." In 1980, 90% of the small city's population was White, but according to the 2010 census, that figure had decreased to 14%. This decrease occurred when African Americans and refugees came to live in affordable housing in and around Rockside.

The small city's public transportation lines provided citizens with relatively easy access to the urban center and its amenities, including legal aid, social services, refugee resettlement organizations, health care facilities, houses of worship, shopping, and employment opportunities. Due to the small size, the dramatic change in demographics, and the incredible diversity among its new citizens from more than 40 countries, the small city experienced tensions that reflect the larger tensions of the region and country. Concerns over joblessness, intolerance, lack of communication, and cultural differences all contribute to the tension and at times the violence in this small suburban space.

Before refugee resettlement, White and Black Americans predominantly populated this area and the larger surrounding region. For hundreds of years, this part of the United States was haunted by a history of ongoing racial tensions between Whites and the Blacks whose ancestors had been brought in as slaves. This region was not considered culturally diverse, and in fact, was home "to a smaller percentage of immigrants than any other region" of the country between 1850 and 1970 (Bankston, 2007, p. 24). These demographics began to change in the 1970s, as immigration increased to the South. The refugees from Southeast Asia were a part of this new wave of

immigration, and between 1990 and 2000, the population around the metropolitan area in Georgia doubled.

The influx of immigrants and the newly resettled refugees came in large part for economic reasons. The South became a place of economic opportunity, and for refugee resettlement agencies, employment was an absolute essential. Refugee resettlement is most often considered successful when refugees are financially self-sufficient; this is a key indicator for refugee settlement agencies and their federal funding agencies. Interestingly, just as the rise in immigration came to this area of the Southern United States, so did the rise in poultry processing. One rural area near the urban center became known as the poultry "capitol" and began processing meat for national and international markets (Bankston, 2007). The need for new workers increased.

Available work meant refugee resettlement into the area would continue, and between 2003 and 2008, the state took in more than 12,000 refugees from over 20 different countries. In 2009, the state was among the top six in the United States for number of refugees received. The research was conducted in the county that was, for a number of years, the state's largest refugee resettlement destination, and Rockside, situated in this county, saw a large influx of refugees from more than 40 different nations over a period of 30 years. Most of these were poultry workers at one time.

For many local refugees, work in the chicken factories is a shared experience, one that they do not expect in advance but that they largely accept. These factories employ eager workers with limited English language abilities and literacy, paying low-end wages. Most refugee workers in the poultry plants earn at or slightly above minimum wage, yet they endure long shifts, often at night, of the tedious and repetitive work of slaughtering, de-feathering, deboning, and packing chickens for sale. Most only endure the work in order to provide a better future for their

families. All of the participants in this study had one or more family members working at poultry plants at one time or another. Some had moved on to other work in construction, food preparation, and paper plants.

As the local region increased in cultural and linguistic diversity, it also faced many challenges from local citizens and politicians. The chief complaint among critics of the resettlement program is the "drain" on an already overstretched system of services and the possible dangers they pose (Refugee Resettlement Relief, 2016). Here again, the story reflects the larger national story that positions refugees among the many other legal and illegal immigrants who need to be carefully controlled, selected, and surveilled.

Deficit discourses and negative rhetoric. The rhetoric around refugee immigration in the United States is often hostile and cruel (CBS News, 2014, June 23). The discourse is evidently aimed at othering, inciting fear, imposing factions, and reinforcing a clear us–them division. The constant talk about borders, security, safety, contamination, and insufficiency works to maintain difference and create a space of instability for immigrants and refugees. Although refugees have been granted legal status and therefore differ from undocumented immigrants in their opportunities and legal rights, they are often lumped together with all "others" and positioned in very similar ways.

Research site. The school district where this study was set, and where the participants and I lived, has had difficulties in accommodating students who are English language learners (ELLs). In the 2013–2014 school year, the Office of Civil Rights opened an investigation into the County Schools for noncompliance under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Issues cited related to providing language assistance, meaningful access to curriculum, materials, and resources, and the identification of student needs and provision of ESL services. In March 2014,

the Migration Policy Institute (MPI) report from Washington was released to the Press. The reports showed that Georgia was failing to adequately educate immigrants, children of immigrants, and ELLs.

Procedures in the Club

In planning for the study and the book club, my intention was to encourage the women to direct the club, readings, and discussions as active participants. I did not want to control the club or shape it according to my own preconceived ideas. I readily admit that my own experiences in various book clubs are particularly American, middle class, and gendered, and they influence my ideas about what book clubs are or do. I wanted to remain open to alternative approaches and attentive to the needs of participants in this process.

Once participants consented to take part in the book club study and returned all signed IRB-endorsed forms to me, we planned via phone and email for the first meeting at my home. Much of what happened throughout our time together in the book club was established in our first meeting. None of the participants had ever participated in what they called a "book club," but some did have some experience in what they called reading groups, and despite their lack of experience or first-hand knowledge, most had strong ideas and opinions about what we should do in the club. We spent nearly three hours together in that first meeting, catching up with each other; talking about our families and old friends, work, and school; eating; talking about book club business (the when, what, and how); and talking about books. We used the computer to read book reviews and search for our first selection. I had planned in my research proposal to bring an annotated book list to guide our discussion around book selection, but instead only brought two books to share, as I had encouraged them to do in an email before our meeting. I decided not to use the list I had created because I wanted to step back from leading and acting as teacher.

Rather than influence their choices and ideas around books, I decided to act as a book club member and not a teacher or knower of “good” books. I waited to see what they brought with them. Only one participant, Christy, actually brought two books to share, but others came with ideas. One participant brought a summer reading list from school. Our discussion around book selection was long and continued over into emails even after our meeting, as we worked collectively to choose our book.

Although our future meetings were in different spaces, each one (except for the last picnic and hike) seemed to follow a similar pattern. We talked about our lives, book club business, and books; ate; and often read aloud. We usually spent at least three hours together. We read two books in our six months together. Both were chosen collectively after much discussion and deliberation in person and online. Books were ordered online, paid for by me, and delivered directly to participants’ homes.

Our book club never really had a leader; members were active and collective in deciding where to meet, what to read, and what to talk about. During the first meeting, I asked members to talk about what they wanted to do in the club and what they thought a “good” book club would be like. I also suggested that we might want a meeting or discussion leader to keep talk going around the book. Although they seemed to agree at first, and even nominated Christy to be our first meeting leader, ultimately no one person ever took on the role of leader for the club or of individual meetings.

My main role in the club was as meeting coordinator and administrator. I was largely responsible for starting email threads to decide on meeting dates and places, and I was often asked by participants to follow up with someone who had not come. On several occasions, participants asked me to call missing group members to find out where they were or whether they were com-

ing. I was charged with facilitating and coordinating meeting dates and times, keeping up with attendance, and ordering books. Although I served an administrative role in the book club, it was directed by the participant–members.

Our conversations during meetings were fluid. Participants directed and re-directed conversation as they desired and found opportunities to do so. The overall feeling in the club was friendly, intimate, open, and unstructured. Almost all of my attempts to plan out dates and times for meetings in advance failed. We made many of our decisions about our next meeting only a few days or even a few hours before. Participants read at vastly different paces, and completing a certain amount of reading or number of pages seemed to be of little importance. Although reading was valued and an important part of the book club, finishing the book, chapters, or certain numbers of pages at particular times or before a meeting date were not. There were times when particular members suggested we try to finish a book so that we could read another, but that was about the extent of discussion around reading deadlines.

Data collection was completed in November 2013 after our last book club meeting at the park in October. See Table 3 for a complete list of book club meetings, attendees, and major topics of discussion. During data collection and later during analysis, I kept both digital and printed copies of all documents. Digital folders housed and sorted Word documents and Excel spreadsheets with data and analysis on my computer. Three large binders were used to separate the printouts of three types of documents: (1) transcripts and field notes about meetings and participants, (2) coding documents and memos, and (3) narrative excerpts and analysis documents. The various data sources are described in the next section.

Collecting Data: Studying Multiple Sources

Throughout the study, I acted as a participant observer in both the club and community, engaged fully in all meetings and discussions with book club members, and remained in contact with participants inside and outside the club over a six-month study period. Data collected for analysis included the following: audio-recorded and written field notes created after meetings; audio and video recordings of book club meetings; transcriptions created from audio and video recordings; Facebook posts in a private group for book club members; emails; and text messages. Recordings and transcripts were the primary sources of data. Field notes, posts, emails, and text messages were secondary sources. Although I did not ultimately use interviews or reading journals as data sources for this study, I discuss both data types and explain why they were not used.

Participant observation and field notes. Fieldwork is, in essence, the study of human behavior in everyday, natural contexts; Preissle and Grant (2004) argued that fieldwork may be among the oldest forms of inquiry. An ethnographic researcher enters the context to be studied in an effort to learn more about the people, their lives, and their culture. In order to observe and understand these, the researcher participates in the events that occur and records all of her observations as field notes. In this study, I did not seek out refugee women in their everyday contexts and lives; instead, I created a book club to serve as the context for the study. Having spent more than five years within the local refugee community, I brought knowledge and experience from everyday lives in the community to this work and continued to take part in that community life during the research period. I worked to manage both a participatory and investigatory stance during the meetings in order to write reflective and thoughtful field notes after the meetings ended. Field notes were analyzed narratively, as I sought to understand participants' stories in context and with complexity, drawing comparisons across data sources and stories.

Audio and video recordings of book club meetings. Audio recordings are particularly helpful in group research situations (Purcell-Gates, 2004) such as a book club. The complexity and richness of discussion would have been lost if I had not relied on recordings. Video recordings captured paralinguistic features not easily identified in field notes or audio recordings. Although I had planned to video record all sessions, this was not possible as book club meetings moved to participants' homes, out into the park, and even into the Asian Buffet restaurant. Feeling that video recording in these spaces would be intrusive, I only used audio recordings to capture these meetings. Both audio and video recordings helped me to remember and notice salient narratives during which participants became more animated, used gestures, showed more emotion, or alternatively became silent or withdrawn. Silence is sometimes difficult to recognize during group audio recordings, with multiple speakers interrupting or speaking over one another; it may be more easily seen in video recordings.

At times during the pilot study, I had difficulty hearing who in a chorus of voices was speaking and who was silent. In large groups, turn-taking and silence are complex activities that require sophisticated and nuanced methods of analyses that take into consideration participation, positioning, and power. These considerations are addressed in this study through close sociocultural and critical examinations of multiple data sources across multiple spaces and times, as well as through dialogic approaches to oral discourse. Narrative approaches that focus on dialogic processes will be explored further in the analysis section.

Transcriptions of recordings. During book club meetings, I collected more than 26 hours of audio-recorded data. I found it difficult while listening to choose one segment for transcription over another. In the early stages, I did not want to discount any possible sources of data that might be important to my meaning-making. Thus, I attempted to transcribe all of the audio

recordings. After a few weeks of attempting this on my own, I sent off all remaining audio recordings to a referred and refereed online transcriptionist so that I could “see” as well as “hear” the data while going through it. In all, more than 750 pages of transcription were created from audio recordings. All transcripts were printed upon receipt and placed in a large binder sorted by date. Cover sheets with dates, attendees, and major topics of discussion were also created to differentiate the transcriptions from each other. Using written texts enabled me to better identify the spaces I wanted to explore, re-listen, and transcribe more closely.

All audio hours were transcribed, but some pieces were transcribed especially closely and then edited for accuracy by me. Sections of transcript that included striking quotes, stories, or storied moments were reviewed and revised for faithfulness. Given that all of the participants in the study were non-native English speakers, and we were always in a group, the transcriptionist had difficulties transcribing as accurately as I had hoped. However, in reading the transcripts she created and listening to the audio later, I carefully noted salient sections and confusing or unclear sections in the margins. I noted any obvious errors in the transcripts that I might need to go back to later. These written, printed, and revised transcriptions of book club meetings served as the major source of data for analysis.

Digital data sources. In planning the study and book club, I did not foresee the ways in which our face-to-face meetings would spill out into digital spaces. We conducted much of our book club business online (scheduling meetings, choosing books, arranging book orders and deliveries, etc.) and also used online spaces to ask occasional questions about stories in books and to catch up and check in with each other. Once I realized how integral these spaces were becoming to the group, I began to save and store all texts and emails in an online folder. We also created a closed group on Facebook to share and store postings. In addition to the original sources of

data in texts, emails, and posts, I also created an analysis document called Email Excerpts. I went through all the collected emails and pulled out excerpts that were striking or salient to the codes and categories that were developing in analysis. These email excerpts also served as secondary data sources for analysis and were including in the coding process.

Interviews. In planning and proposing the study, I had hoped to elicit narrative responses during in-depth interviews. Kvale and Brinkmann (2009) suggest that the “qualitative interview is a research method that gives privileged access to people’s basic experience of the lived world” (p. 29). I knew that a focus on the subjective lived experiences and the stories created around these were important to developing my understandings. Paget (1983) suggested that stories are a feature “of the production of knowledge in in-depth interviews” (p. 67). However, as the study progressed, I became increasingly convinced that the narratives created within the group, as co-constructed stories, were also important productions of knowledge and meaning (Pavlenko, 2002). Reissman (2008) suggested that in dialogic narrative analysis the focus is on group stories, as they “emerge in fragments, with each speaker adding a thread that expands (or corrects) what another member contributed” (p. 123). She contended that these stories typically lack neat the boundaries more likely to occur in research interviews.

Rather than seeking to elicit a unified life story constructed for and with me as interviewer, I wanted to investigate the “small stories” (Bamberg, 2006; Bamberg & Georgakopoulou, 2008; Georgakopoulou, 2006) they chose to tell around books and everyday experiences in the club. I wanted to learn more about the ways they narrated their day-to-day lives in relation to the group and how they used stories for multiple purposes. My focus turned towards stories-as-interaction (Norton & Early, 2011) and the dialogic (Frank, 2002, 2012) towards positioning and power, and towards an investigation of the book club space itself.

Salient or striking aspects of book club discussions sometimes required clarification or further elaboration, and I was able to do this through brief interviews before or after the club, by email or by phone. These exchanges served as opportunities to engage in member-checking and question my understandings and interpretations. Kvale and Brinkmann (2009) refer to member checks as a type of member validation in which the "researcher's interpretations [are] presented to the subjects of an inquiry for discussion of their validity" (p. 325). These add to the trustworthiness of the data, interpretations, and representations. In short, although I had originally intended to use in-depth interviews to collect data, I found that data collected in the club also provided rich insights into participants' lived experiences as they performed and presented them. Furthermore, in an exploration and analysis of data collected from within the group, I could attend to the sociocultural and dialogic construction of meaning. Using multiple other sources of data collected in real and virtual social spaces, I was able to learn more about participants' practices—the ways in which they used language and literacy to construct meaning, navigate lived experiences, and position themselves.

Reading journals. Participants were asked to voluntarily keep a reading journal while reading at home and during book club discussions. The journals were suggested as places to jot down important quotes, responses to or connections to the readings, points of confusion, unknown words, or questions to ask the group. I provided members with colorful journals and pens, and in our first meeting, they were open to the idea of journaling. However, I found that as we went along, no one used the journals for the book club. Instead, participants wrote in their books (albeit infrequently) and also wrote emails, posts, and texts related to the texts. Otherwise, there was no written data collected from participants. I was initially disappointed that no one had been willing to journal-write, yet I quickly realized that thinking about the ways and reasons why they

did not write in journals was also important to understanding their experiences and engagement in the book club and their literacy practices. I intend to explore this finding further in light of other data and other lenses in chapters 4, 5, and 6.

Data Analysis

In my research proposal, I planned to draw upon narrative approaches for analysis, and I planned to focus on the stories participants told. However, in reading and reflecting upon the data collected, I decided to use both coding and multiple methods of narrative analysis. Drawing upon more than one method of analysis offered me multiple perspectives and more nuanced insights into the complexity of the club and the lives of participants. I hoped that by drawing upon multiple interpretive practices, I could "get a better understanding of the subject matter at hand" and know "that each practice makes the world visible in a different way" (Denzin & Lincoln, 2008, p. 4–5). I found that I could test my thinking and interpretations in looking across analyses. Multiple methods of analysis also enabled me to investigate the book club itself as well as the individual members, stories, and lives. I gradually came to see that understanding the club as a particularly bounded space and a case under investigation was critical to my understandings of participants' practices and experiences in the club as they related to literacy, language, and everyday lives. My multivalent process for data analysis is pictured in Figure 1.

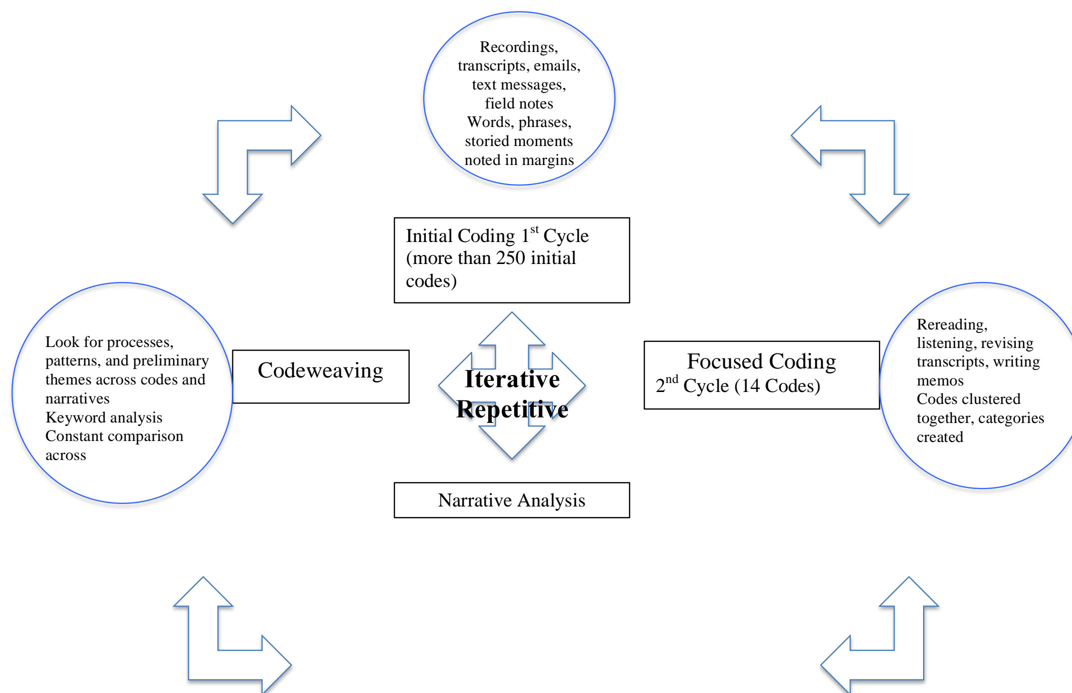

Figure 1. Coding Analysis and Codeweaving following Saldaña (2009).

I used inductive coding to see what themes could be generated across experiences in the club, and I also studied narratives for a more complex and critical look at these themes. Coding can be seen as contradictory to narrative methods because it requires the researcher to break data apart for the purposes of analysis. In coding, the context, purposes, and positioning can be lost, and stories and their meanings can be misconstrued. However, working with data in multiple ways strengthened my analysis and added trustworthiness to my interpretations. In an iterative process, moving back and forth between coding and narrative analysis, I crafted themes and developed my interpretations. Drawing upon both, I saw how themes found in coding were woven through stories and could see how stories corroborated or contested the themes generated in coding. I used multiple methods of finding what was significant in the data, checking my thinking,

and testing my interpretations.

Once I had written transcripts from book club meetings, I started analysis by reading and searching for two things: (a) salient words, phrases, or lines that resonated with me, drew my attention, or reminded me of my questions, theoretical frames, pilot study, or purposes; and (b) stories, including narrative moments, big and small stories told by participants, and dialogic spaces where speakers co-constructed meaning. I paid attention to narratives that had characters, action or plot, sequence, and setting (Reissman, 2008), and I looked for words such as *when* or *once* that signaled imagination and storytelling. I noted all of these findings in the margins and within the transcript texts by highlighting and underlining. Meanwhile, I listened to audio recordings and watched video recordings to revise transcripts and check them for accuracy. In doing so, I recorded observer comments (O.C.) within the transcripts and alongside stories and composed memos of various kinds in the digital document (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007).

My observer comments were placed in separate transcripts, recording my own thoughts and feelings about what happened or was said (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007). These were always noted in bold font. I also wrote personal memos, methodological memos, and analytic memos to connect data to my understandings and experiences, to think about what was emerging, and to summarize what I was doing and what was happening in the club (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007; Saldaña, 2009).

Coding. I drew upon Saldaña's (2009) conceptions of qualitative coding throughout the coding process. The first cycle of coding, initial coding, occurred over a period of months. I started coding the transcription of the first book club meeting in December 2013 and continued coding through March 2014. As I read each transcript, I looked for striking words, phrases, and stories, and noted them in the paper document. I also began an Initial Coding List as a Microsoft

Word document where I simply listed what and where I noted salient aspects. As the coding continued and the list grew, I created divisions for different codes. I created space for and delineated *in vivo* codes and quotes, researcher codes, researcher codes related to dialogue and discursive moves, and storied moments. In the storied moments section, I was able to note where the stories were and code them for a general topic or theme. Later, I used this list to find and further investigate stories using narrative methods.

I recorded all the notations previously recorded by hand in the transcription documents in a digital document called the Initial Coding List. In this digital document, I clustered similar codes together and noted when a code could be used again to sort another piece of data. Beside already-created codes, I noted page number and transcript number in parentheses, using the format (PN.TN) to show that the code fit for another piece of data. For example, one such note from the Initial Coding List read, "Cooking (2.2) (34.2) (11.3) (16.3) (68.3) (47.4)." Here, I created a researcher code "cooking," and beside the code, I made note of where and when cooking was discussed. I used this clustering method to detect frequencies and make plain the most significant codes.

Although researcher-generated codes were important to my understanding, I started with *in vivo* codes first. I had done this before in other projects. Looking for salient words, phrases, and quotes helped me to hear the voices of participants and find spaces of interest for further investigation. For me, researcher codes often grow out of *in vivo* codes. For example, in the transcript I read the sentence, "We all know this in Afghanistan" (1.2). This quote struck me and I both captured it as an *in vivo* code and created a researcher code from it, "knowing connected to place" (Initial Coding List).

In capturing and creating codes related to dialogue and discursive moves, I was able to pay attention to the ways in which participants and researcher used language and stories in multiple and shifting ways. I could see how participants used literacies and language, and for what purposes. Here in this section of the Initial Coding List, I was able to focus and reflect on issues of power and positioning throughout the club and across meetings. Examples of codes during initial coding included Change of Subject, Asking Questions, Authoritative/More Knowledgeable Other, Agreement, Disagreement, Inserting/Interrupting, and Making Personal Connections, among others. This initial list of codes helped me to see the data in a dialogic and discursive way and helped me find places to return to in my reading and listening. Later, these codes and pieces of data were considered in coding, and they were analyzed using narrative methods. The Initial Coding List grew to more than 32 pages and contained more than 250 distinct researcher-generated codes. The Initial Coding list, along with all other coding documents and analysis memos in digital and printed versions, were housed in files on my computer and in a coding binder.

With the first cycle of initial coding completed, I began a second cycle of focused coding. Saldaña (2009), drawing upon Charmaz (2006), stated that focused coding “follows Initial Coding” and “searches for the most frequent or significant Initial Codes” to develop salient categories (p. 155). Data are “clustered together and reviewed to create tentative category names” (p. 156). A category is a word or phrase describing a segment of data. I had started this process in my Initial Coding List by clustering similar codes and occurrences together. In the second cycle, I revised and refined this, using an iterative process of reading, reviewing, writing, and reflecting to generate focused codes (or categories).

I intended for the initial categories that I developed in the second cycle to be rather large and loose. I wanted the boundaries to be blurry and allow for fluidity so that I could see how aspects of the club and lives overlapped and worked in multidirectional ways. However, I also realized that these categories lent structure and shape to codes. So, I imposed order by creating particular categories and clustering particular codes around them. The inductive coding process I used was influenced by scholarship, my own worldview, my research questions, and my theoretical frames for research. I grouped almost all of the more than 250 initial codes into 14 major categories while recognizing that that the codes "belonged" to these categories in different ways. Saldaña suggested that once categories have been created, they can be listed for review. I created the following list of focused codes (or categories), in no particular order.

1. Book Club [BC]
2. Literacy Practices [LP] combined codes from Reading [RD] and Writing [WR]; also includes Technology/Digital
3. Here and There [HT] /Transnational Ties, also includes aspects of time and space
4. Othering [OR]; includes aspects of discrimination and difference
5. Hardships and Difficulties [HD], a theme that ran through other codes
6. Girls and Women [GW], which includes and incorporates codes around Girl Talk and Men and Women
7. Friends and Boyfriends [FB], relating to social supports and relationships outside of family
8. Work and Money [WM], which includes all codes around money, jobs, work
9. Faith and Religion [FR]
10. Family and Home [FH]

11. Language [LN]
12. School/Schooling [SC], which includes testing and teachers
13. Teaching and Learning [TL], which includes aspects of teaching and learning outside of school
14. Agency and Authority [AA], which includes discursive moves, storytelling, and aspects of language use and literacy practices

In addition to these 14 focused codes (categories), I also created a list of 12 codes that did not seem to fit into any of the categories. I called the digital document with this list "Uncategorized Codes: In the Margins," and used it to store codes and pieces of data that did not seem at first to fall under one of the 14 categories. Throughout the process of analysis, I continued to go back to this list. In most cases, I found that these could be clustered under a category or categories, and in other cases I just used them to question and think critically. Examples of codes that were not initially subsumed in focused coding were Staying Up Late and Cars. However, with more time and reflection, I found that these codes were related to multiple focused codes or categories. Both had to do with Family and Home [FH], and both had to do with Agency [AA]. Cars could also be clustered around Work and Money [WM] and even School [SC] because that is what the talk around cars was related to most often—being able to afford one, and getting to work or school.

Saldaña (2009) suggested that in thinking through the codes and categories developed, memo-writing serves a generative function. "The deliberate linking or weaving of codes and categories within the narrative is a heuristic to integrate them semantically and systematically" (p. 157). Throughout the coding process, I created analytic, methodological, and personal memos to reflect and generate interpretations and understandings. In the memo-writing process, I recog-

nized that the 14 categories I developed were all around nouns. Thus, they acted more static than dynamic and did not seem capable of allowing for the overlap and boundary-crossing that I desired, nor did they seem capable of representing the bigger processes at work in the book club and in everyday lives. I wanted to capture the subtle and sometimes hidden processes that might be emerging as patterns or themes, so I went through the categories and clustered codes from second cycle analysis and began to generate verbs and verb phrases that could be related to bigger processes and perhaps fit into patterns and emerging themes.

Through a process of codeweaving and an iterative process of rereading and reflecting, I looked for patterns, and in a new digital document, I aggregated process-oriented words and phrases to represent codes and categories, as well as important aspects of the club and participants' lives. I called this memo "Codeweaving 2—Thinking about Processes and Patterns." Saldaña (2009) suggested that researchers might use analytic memos to reflect, generate, shape, and refine codes, categories, patterns, and themes. Saldaña described codeweaving as a process of integration through analytic memo-writing and suggested that diagrams of networks and relationships can reveal possible hierarchies, flows, influences, affects, etc. As an example of my own codeweaving processes, around the category Book Club [BC] I generated and aggregated these codes: Understanding is important, Making sense, Reading and not reading, Writing and not writing, Connecting and contradicting, Struggling and supporting, Talking and telling, Acting with authority and agency, Learning and forgetting, Remembering and imagining, Storytelling, Knowing and not knowing, Negotiating, Navigating, Using technology, Being here and there, and Transnational practices. As I did this around other categories, I began to see overlap and emerging patterns. For instance, *Changing, Knowing, Imagining, Learning, Navigating, Ne-*

gotiating, and others were prominent across categories, and they influenced my understanding of emerging themes.

I also created some tables and figures through codeweaving to help me sort and see connections between codes and emerging themes. While I continued codeweaving, I also did some work around keyword analysis in the transcripts. This quantitative analysis of keyword frequencies also offered insights into the significance of particular words and phrases and helped me to focus on the most salient ones. My assumption was that frequently used words in the transcripts had some significance in connection to the book club study. (See Appendix C for the Keyword Analysis.)

Based on the initial codes and the focused codes developed from the 750-plus pages of transcript, I generated a list of 45 keywords that I wanted to test. My thinking was that I could use the keyword totals to help corroborate or contradict my thinking and perhaps give some clarity to the topics and words that were most prevalent throughout our nine meeting sessions. I found that, not surprisingly, *read* showed up 522 times and *book* 520 times. *Mother* turned up 418 times, and *mom* 223 times. Given that both of our chosen books were about mothers and daughters, these totals were not surprising. These numbers showed me that although we talked about a wide range of topics in our meetings, our talk and thinking were influenced by our space—a book club—and by the books or texts we read.

The keyword *know* was the most frequently used word in my list and showed up an astounding 2,263 times; the word *understand* came up another 196 times. These usage rates matched with my noticing. I believe that, very often, *know* was used as a term of agreement, but in agreeing it seems that one is also confirming or affirming that she does in fact know about things being discussed. This term was used in consensus-building, and also, I believe, to affirm

the power in knowing and to position oneself as a knowledgeable other, one who knows. After *know* and *understand*, the word *work* showed up 394 times and *school* 389 times. Interestingly, these two were very similar in usage rates and also were tightly tied together in my understandings of the themes and stories. Both words foregrounded agency, futures, and imaginings. Another note of interest was that in this study, participants were much more focused on work and jobs as compared to the participants in the pilot study two years prior. Several of these participants were in both studies, so they had grown older and work had taken on a bigger role in their lives. The keyword *money* showed up 418 times and also seemed tied to work and school.

The word *hard* showed up 298 times, making it the seventh most frequently used among my 45 words, which struck me as important and interesting. *Hard* was used more than the words *home, friend,* or *family*. It caused me to think about how we (as citizens, educators, Westerners) make it harder or easier for people, how our beliefs about people can make it harder for them, how the gates and boundaries we build up purposefully make things hard, and how the deficit discourses that circulate can operate to make things harder for these young women and their families.

The word *language* showed up 170 times in our discussions during the nine meetings, and *English* showed up 139 times. This was not surprising to me given the value that is placed on English and the understanding that these young women had about the power of English. *Woman* showed up 97 times, *girl* showed up 198 times, and *women* 121 times. In contrast to *read* or *reading*, the word *write* showed up 131 times, and *writing* 67 times. This supported what I had observed in the club meetings. For a discussion of the participants' writing activities in and about the book club, see the above section on reading journals.

The club's dialogue around writing made it clear that traditional school-type writing was something these women did not feel capable or confident in doing. Often when they talked about writing, it was in terms of a challenge, difficulty, or a sense of insufficiency. On the other hand, they readily took up alternative 21st century writing practices (i.e. texting, emails, diary entries, and Facebook posts). This seems important to consider given that our system of schooling requires intense amounts of writing, and that the tests required for high school graduation and college entrance demand increasingly higher levels of English writing proficiency. In the county where this study was conducted, high school students are required to pass a writing exam for graduation. The word *test* came up 69 times and *exam* 23 times, revealing how prevalent tests were in these women's lives. Given that this was an out of school context, it is interesting how often talk about tests arose. For those who come to this country with limited English and/or literacy and who seek higher formal education, a drivers' license, or citizenship, tests can become formidable boundaries.

Home came up 157 times, *house* 266 times, *parent* 130 times, *family* 170 times, and *friend* 137 times. All of these represented important aspects of these women's everyday lives and were regularly part of our conversations. Relationships and the relational were important to participants and important in the club. We spent time talking about all the things that were important to us, not just books, and that was part of what makes the book club an important and powerful space. We shared relationships and our lives, not just our books.

The word *learn* came up 138 times during our sessions. This showed that learning is not restricted only to formal or school spaces. Learning happened for these women in a book club, on the job, with friends, at home, etc. Learning was something these women valued and talked

about. Learning was tied to the book club and to the value of this social space. This keyword analysis was influential in codeweaving and as themes began to develop.

A theme can be a pattern, trend, or concept emerging from data and coding analysis. According to Saldaña (2009) “a theme is an outcome of coding” (p. 13). A theme is a phrase or sentence describing a more subtle process, a more nuanced understanding of the categories and codes a researcher generates in the process of analysis. Although I generated a list of 12 preliminary and emerging themes based on the coding cycles described above, I did not attempt to distinguish major themes or set decisions about themes based on coding alone. I also wanted to include narrative analysis in the process of theme-generating.

Saldaña stated, “One of the most critical outcomes of qualitative data analysis is to interpret how the individual components of the study weave together” (p. 36). Thus, the processes of memo-writing and codeweaving continued, and they became integral and important to my ongoing analysis. I wanted to weave together both what I learned through coding and what I could learn through the narratives generated in the club. I went back to the 65 storied moments I had located in initial coding and listened again, more closely, to revise the transcripts. I could then hear for myself how the stories were created and begin to understand more about what the narratives revealed, how they were told, and for what purposes.

In the final stages of analysis and during the initial writing up, I continued to draw upon codeweaving techniques (Saldaña, 2009) and writing as I looked for processes and patterns that moved across codes, cases, keyword frequencies, and narratives. I saw emerging themes and wanted to see how these themes intersected and overlapped. Thus, key aspects of emerging themes were color-coded in order to see and reflect upon connections to the research questions and to individual participants’ everyday lives. Green was used to signify transnational or Here

and There [HT] aspects in the data. Pink was used to signify subjectivities and data related to positioning (e.g., Agency and Authority [AA]). Yellow/orange signified Language [LN] and Literacy practices [LI]. I moved back and forth between coding and narrative data analysis in order to see how my data and research stories might "hang together" (Frank, 2012) to answer my research questions.

Narrative data analysis. Other researchers have suggested that narrative methods used in conjunction with ethnographic methods offer possibilities for richer and more meaningful analyses and understandings of data (Baynhan, 2000; Ellis, 1991; Gubrium & Holstein, 2008; Richardson, 1990; Riessman, 2008). For this study, I combined narrative and coding methods of analysis to make meaning of complex data and enrich my interpretations. Written and recorded field notes; audio and video recordings of sessions; transcripts of sessions; and online emails, posts, and texts served as textual data for analysis. However, transcripts from book club meetings served as the primary source for narrative analysis. Following a slightly modified version of Bell's (1995) model, I attended to cultural, linguistic, and interactional contexts and processes of storytelling in the texts (p. 101). Bell (1995) suggested the following steps for researchers conducting narrative analysis:

1. Identify narrative segments in texts.
2. Examine word choice, phrasing, imagery, and structure of language.
3. Focus on the telling. How does the participant explain what she did or what happened?
4. How do the stories relate to one another?
5. Look for connections between the personal accounts and broader cultural and political processes.
6. Locate oneself as researcher in the analysis and construction of the stories. (p. 101)

In addition to the narrative analysis process described above, I also used thematic and dialogic approaches to narrative analysis. Before doing so, I went through the long process of re-reading and listening to the narratives that were located in the transcripts and noted in the Initial Coding List. Following Frank (2012), I defined narratives as segments of talk or text that included characters or a subject, some event/plot, and imagination. For Frank, “what a story is should remain fuzzy at the boundaries,” but it should definitely engage the imagination (p. 42). I also drew upon “small story” work in defining and locating narratives in the transcripts. Small stories are spontaneous and typically lack neat boundaries.

Georgakopoulou (2006) contended that often, too much attention in interviews is focused on longer narratives, such as autobiographic tellings. Meanwhile, researchers often ignore “small stories” that happen within sites of engagement. These small stories, or “snippets of talk” (p. 123), are underrepresented and underutilized in narrative research. Referred to as “narrative-in-context” (p. 123), this type of small-story analysis clearly connects to Bakhtin’s notions of multiplicity, contingency, and conditionality in dialogue. Explaining small stories further, Bamberg and Georgakopoulou (2006) noted,

> We have been employing ‘small stories’ as an umbrella term that captures a gamut of underrepresented narrative activities, such as tellings of ongoing events, future or hypothetical events, and shared (known) events, but it also captures allusions to (previous) tellings, deferrals of tellings, and refusals to tell. These tellings are typically small when compared to the pages and pages of transcript of interview narratives. (p. 381)

The authors take a “functional perspective on narrative and language use in general” and “are interested in the social actions/functions that narratives perform in the lives of people: how people actually use stories in everyday, mundane situations in order to create (and perpetuate) a

sense of who they are" (p. 378–79). This view seems to be totally in line with my theoretical frames and understandings, which are aligned with sociocultural, dialogical, and New Literacy Studies approaches that consider language, literacy, and narrative practices to be sites of engagement and action.

In defining narrative segments, rereading, and reflecting, I was able to narrow down the number of focus narratives from 65 to fewer than 45. Upon reflection, I realized that some of the stories were not substantive enough to offer any meaningful insights or interpretations. Once the 40-plus narratives were identified, I went through another process of revision and reflection and created a Word document, Narrative Episodes, to bring together all excerpts. I created a separate document with excerpt/episode titles and major themes and ideas. The document with excerpts or episodes and major themes was later turned into a table. (See Appendix B). All of the narrative analysis documents were placed in a separate folder on the computer and in a separate physical binder.

Reissman (2008) suggested that thematic narrative analysis generally focuses on *what* is told, with minimal focus on how or why, on the aspects of the telling or ways of telling. Thematic analysis's focus on the "point" of the narrative can tend to obscure context and participants. Thus, in this study, it was only a starting place for considering possibilities and connecting narratives to emerging themes in coding. Incorporating dialogic narrative analysis provided for deeper and different insights into the narratives, the particular participants, and the book club case.

The dialogic approach makes use of aspects of the previously described methods, but "folds them into broad interpretive research inquiries" (p. 136) that take into account the complex dialogic environment. The main purpose in using the dialogic narrative analysis method is to "interrogate how talk among speakers is interactively (dialogically) produced and performed

as narrative" (Riessman, 2008, p. 105). Grbich (2007) offered two main types of narrative analysis, sociolinguistic and sociocultural: "Socio-linguistic analysis focuses on 'plots' or the structure of narratives and how they convey meaning. Socio-cultural analysis looks at the broader interpretive frameworks that people use to make sense of particular incidents in individual's lives" (p. 124).

More than the sociolinguistic or sociocultural methods, dialogic analysis "requires close readings of contexts, including the influence of the investigator, setting, and social circumstances on the production and interpretation of narrative" (p. 105). Drawing upon Bakhtin's (1981) conception of the utterance in interaction, Riessman (2008), taking a dialogic approach, asked how stories are coproduced "in spaces between teller and listener, speaker and setting, text and reader, and history and culture?" (p. 105). There is a focus on the interstitial, the in-between spaces, and the contact zones, where multiple voices mix and mingle in order to make meaning. This approach seemed particularly appropriate given the group dynamics and my research focus on what participants "do" with language and literacy.

Drawing upon Frank's (2012) work in Holstein and Gubrium's (2012) *Varieties of Narrative Analysis*, I began to practice dialogic narrative analysis by looking at the 40-plus stories as heteroglossic dialogues and intersections of multiple speech communities and people. I also began to attend to stories as creative social acts that serve to "reshape the past and imaginatively project the future" (p. 33). In this way, I was able to notice the resources and assets that participants used and drew upon. In my writing about the narratives, I tried to use what Frank describes as an "iterative process of hearing stories speak to the original research interest, then representing those stories in writing" (p. 44). He contended, "The analysis of the selected stories takes place in attempts to write," and research reports emerge "in multiple drafts that progressively

discover what is to be included and how stories hang together" (p. 44). In reading and reflecting, I looked for ways that stories fit, connected, and clung together and for the potential importance and impact of the stories on participants, researcher, and wider educational community.

In writing and reflecting, I used some of the questions Frank (2012) posed to open up analysis. The questions fall into five categories: resource, circulation, affiliation, identity, and "what is at stake?" questions. Examples are as follows:

1. What multiple voices can be heard in any single speaker's voice? How do these voices merge, and when do they contest each other?
2. What makes stories distinct? What counts as story? What does not?
3. Why is someone choosing to tell a story, among other expressive possibilities? What particular capacities of stories does the storyteller seek to utilize?
4. What stakes does the storyteller have riding on telling this story, at this time, to these listeners? How is the storyteller holding his or her own in the act of storytelling?
5. What resources are available to tell particular kinds of stories? What resources are not?
6. What affinities does the storyteller have with those who will listen and understand such stories?
7. What vulnerabilities exist, including not being able to tell an adequate story?
8. What contests stories or what versions trump other versions?

Time spent reading, writing, and reflecting on the questions led me to focus on 44 episodes "that call[ed] out as needing to be written about" (Frank, 2012, p. 43). These episodes connected to my research questions and to the emerging themes in coding. This dialogic narrative analysis process helped me to refine and revise major themes and findings to increase the possibilities and see the openings for transformation and change beyond the dialogue or study (Frank,

2012, p. 37). Ezzy (2002) contended, “Narrative analysis does not attempt to identify the one true interpretation of participants’ stories” (p. 100); rather, the analysis reveals “the ‘in-process’ nature of interpretations” (p. 95). Analysis is an ongoing, creative process, a transaction, a push-and-pull toward transformation. Narrative analysis allows researchers to draw upon the creative and generative power of stories and storytelling and focus attention on the critical responsibilities required in telling them.

Frank (2012) argued, “Narrative research can enter into dialogue with people’s stories only if the researcher has sufficient proximate experience of the everyday circumstances in which people learn and tell their stories” (p. 38). Dialogic narrative analysis requires engaged and embodied fieldwork and must be “grounded in specific ethical commitments, principally the unfinalizability of storytellers” (p. 38). Frank’s work challenged me to keep dialogic contingency and continuing dialogue in mind and in tension as I searched for meaningful interpretations and possibilities in this study. Although different methods of analysis were deployed, the aim was to locate powerful narratives and themes, illuminated through critical lenses, that enhance understandings of literacies, language, and learning in refugee women’s everyday lives and draw attention to agency, assets, imagination, and possibilities for transformation.

Ethical Considerations and Trustworthiness

Working within a critical frame requires intentionality and commitment from the researcher. Maintaining responsible, reciprocal relationships with participants is expected from researchers taking a feminist and critical approach (Lather, 1991). A constant and consistent questioning stance is necessary. The critical researcher must always critically examine and check her positionality, perspective, power, analysis, interpretation, and representation. Peshkin (1988) argued that the “goodness” of qualitative research lies in its promise and its potential for under-

standing human complexity, as it "brings us very close to the phenomena we seek to illuminate" (p. 28). Such close relationships are fundamental to the research, but the issues of power inherent within them must be constantly explored and examined (Ellis, 2007).

Good researchers carefully consider their human subjects, the powerful discourses surrounding the subject, and their researcher roles in relation to that subject. In the particular case of this study, long-term relationships with my participants and a desire to continue the relationships long after the book club ended motivated me to carefully consider these and other ethical issues. Reciprocity was fundamental to my own understandings of and intentions in research (Harrison, MacGibbon & Morton, 2001; Huisman, 2008; Lather, 1991). Give and take in our talk around texts and time together in the book club was foremost in my mind. The flexibility and freedom of the club and my purposeful attention to my own positionings allowed for reciprocal relationships, transactions around texts, and mutual learning. Working closely with participants and in the community for a prolonged period, triangulating data, asking for member checks, making research methods transparent, using rich and thick description, clarifying researcher roles and subjectivities, and peer debriefing or examination were all strategies used to lend trustworthiness to this study and enhance the accuracy and authenticity of the account reported here (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007; Creswell, 2009; Merriam, 1988).

Within this study, data from audio and video recordings; researcher field notes; transcripts; and participant emails, posts, and texts were used for triangulation. Data collected in multiple ways and from multiple participants also lent trustworthiness to the findings. I made a deliberate effort to look across transcripts, times, and participants when searching for codes, categories, and themes. Qualitative researchers often use triangulation to gather data from different sources to corroborate, support, and strengthen their observations and interpretations (Bogdan &

Biklen, 2007; Purcell-Gates, 2004). However, it is important to note that methods of triangulation do not guarantee good research. In fact, if a researcher focuses too heavily on convergent categories and corroboration, the divergent data may be ignored, and important information may be missed. As Talburt (2004) contended, "Triangulation asks researchers to be attuned to the multiple ways participants construct and act in the world" (p. 89). She explained triangulation as a process of paying close attention to puzzles, contradictions, and "what does not fit" (p. 89). This was something I had to spend time doing during coding and during narrative analysis. Using multiple methods of analysis with data also provided opportunities to test and check my thinking and interpretations.

I explored texts that seemed to "fit" within participants' narratives, but I also carefully explored those pieces of text that did not seem to fit. I asked critical questions about how and why a particular piece of text or participant's account contradicted or contested another, how it might offer a counter-narrative, or how it might be part of an untold story. When I had questions about particular stories, I used member checking to clarify my understanding. These are a few of the steps I took when presented with contradictory or seemingly divergent or difficult data. As long as space for alternatives, questions, and challenges exists and an ethical relationship of reciprocity between researched and researcher remains, then it is possible to produce strong and sensitive research.

As a check for trustworthiness and credibility, I consulted with a local peer debriefer to examine and enrich my interpretations of data and also to call them into question as needed (Creswell, 2009; Merriam, 1988). Codes, categories, and preliminary findings were typed and shared with a peer debriefer in August 2014. This peer had several years of experience working in the refugee community as an ESL teacher and a doctoral student. I asked her to identify any areas of

inconsistency or concern in the documents I shared via email, and she did so in a face-to-face meeting. This conversation also provided me an opportunity to talk through my own questions and concerns. I took notes during the session and asked the debriefer if I could also share chapters with her for review. I called upon her to share concerns and questions about any inconsistencies or biases that she could see in what I shared. She helped me clarify my thinking and writing, as well as my themes.

On a final note, it seems that in critical research practices, trustworthiness can be understood, at least in part, as the promotion of participatory social action and an extension of research beyond the study itself. Therefore, I contend that I will be better able to evaluate the trustworthiness of my work when I see the ways in which it influences the everyday lives of refugee women, the local community, and the broader circle of educators working with refugee women near and far. My hope is that it will at least work to open spaces for reimagining. Thus far, I have found that two of the women engaged in this book club have gone on to join other book clubs. Two local teachers in the refugee community created a summer book club this past year, as I could not continue in the group. I also found that our book club group continued to stay in touch online and through Facebook. Our group served as an ongoing source of support and friendship that will hopefully continue. I look forward to learning about the ways this study may impact lives outside of our club and local community, as it adds to larger educational discussions. In chapter 4, I present major findings from data analysis and share the stories created in and through this study of a refugee women's book club.

4 FINDINGS

In chapter 3, I described the methodologies and methods I employed in this study of a refugee women's book club. This chapter reports on the findings I fashioned from the data gathering, analysis, and interpretation, which were considered in relation to the overarching research questions: How do refugee women engage in an out-of-school book club? What can be learned about the everyday lived experiences, literacy practices, and language use of resettled refugee women through an exploration of the book club? And, in what ways might a book club community influence refugee women's literacy practices and everyday lives?

As others have stated (Bigelow, 2010; Fong, 2004; Hajdukoski-Ahmed, Khanlou & Moussa, 2009; McBrien, 2005), too little is known and has been written about the lives of resettled refugees, especially women, and their experiences with language and literacy. I set out with the purpose of exploring and gaining insights into (a) the everyday lives of refugee women in resettled spaces, specifically in the southeastern United States, (b) the connections among literacies, language, and the women's everyday lives, (c) the book club space and refugee women's book club practices, and (d) the ways in which education intersects with refugee women's lives, language, and literacies and the role that education plays in resettlement. I also sought to contest deficit discourses tied to knowledge, literacy, and language that often circulate around refugee women and their communities.

The overarching question and purposes for the study are based on the assumption that women's experiences as refugees are different from the experiences of refugee men and that refugees' experiences are different from the experiences of other immigrants. Theoretical perspectives and previous research discussed in chapters 2 and 3 laid the foundation for this study's focus on refugee women. My questions, data gathering, analysis, and interpretations were influ-

enced by New Literacy Studies, as well as transnational, narrative, and feminist studies. My work was strengthened by the ways in which sociocultural and critical approaches often overlapped and provided multiple lenses for exploration and interpretation.

In the process of analysis and codeweaving, I looked at the 14 focused codes (categories): Book Club [BC], Literacy Practices [LP], Here and There [HT], Others and Othering [OR], Hardships and Difficulties [HD], Girls and Women [GW], Friends and Boyfriends [FB], Work and Money [WM], Faith and Religion [FR], Family and Home [FH], Language [LN], School/Schooling [SC], Teaching and Learning [TL], and Authority and Agency [AA]. To each of the focused codes, I attached relevant verbs and verb phrases in order to look at larger structural processes and individual practices that might be related to emerging themes.

During analysis and in codeweaving, I took up and attached multiple theoretical and methodological approaches. I found myself searching for an image to represent this work and to help me develop and deepen my interpretations and understandings. The metaphor of sewing provided a way to see the dialogic tensions and threads in the stories we shared and co-created in the book club. I realized that my research was situated in a dialogic, heteroglossic, and polyphonic space. As discussed in previous chapters, I drew upon the voices of scholars and educators to contextualize my work and frame my methodologies.

From Bakhtin (1981, 1986) and Vygotsky (1978, 1986), I tied together sociocultural and dialogic understandings of language and thought to interactions in the book club and the world. From Freire (1968/1993), Street (2003, 2005), Luke (2003, 2004a), and others (e.g. Barton & Hamilton, 1998, 2000; Heath, 1983; Hull & Schultz, 2002; Long, 2003; Purcell-Gates, 2004, 2006), I connected critical understandings of literacy as situated practice to ways of knowing and doing inside the book club and without. I drew upon other poststructural, feminist, and transna-

tional voices (e.g. Foucault, 1972, 1978, 1995; Grewal & Kaplan, 1994; Minh-ha, 1989, 2010; Norton, 2000; Warriner, 2004a, 2007c, 2009b; Weedon, 1999, 2004) to understand the entanglements of identity, gender, and geography in book club practices and everyday lives. I stitched together the utterances of the theorists and scholars I read with the stories of the participants I spent time with in the study and with my own multiple subjectivities (woman, mom, daughter, researcher, educator, advocate, etc.) in this creative, meaning-making process.

As I worked toward sense-making, I imagined myself sewing—a skill I have practiced since I was a young girl. I learned to sew from my mother and my Nana. After Nana's parents died and left behind six children, Nana, whose family had emigrated from Russia when she was around age five, quit school after eighth grade. She provided for her siblings by working as a nanny, housekeeper, and seamstress. The images of sewing and threads drew me in, secondarily, because sewing was woven through the two books we read in the group, and through our storytelling. Sewing is also a highly gendered and feminized activity, often considered "women's work." Many refugee women in our area sew to make money and provide for their families. The skill provides women some amount of respect, as well as social and material capital. One important aspect of sewing and stitching is tension, and this quality was evident in my dialogic understandings as well. In sewing, you need just enough tension (give, stretch, and pull) for proper stitching, and creative transformations cannot take place without it.

In this chapter, I focus on the thematic findings that offer answers to my question and address my purposes. I crafted the findings through recursive and iterative processes of data collection, coding, keyword frequency analysis, memo-writing, narrative analysis, and codeweaving. I present the findings as four major themes, which connected and crossed over coding and narratives to offer insight into refugee women's everyday lives in resettlement. These themes were as

follows: (1) Participants shaped and used the book club as a dialogic space and border practice; (2) Participants navigated and negotiated shifting and changing subjectivities and took up multi/plural identities; (3) Participants used multiple languages and literacies as practices and resources; and (4) Participants were living what I called "here and there," transnational lives. All four themes have to do with the *dialogic:* the book club space is dialogic in that its very substance exists in dialogue among the members; shifting subjectivities and multi/plural identities are dialogic in that they represent a positioning or becoming of selves in dialogue with others; the use of multiple languages and literacies is another, more literal form of dialogism; and finally, a transnational life is dialogic because it consists in a constant negotiation of spaces, identities, and languages.

The findings from this study connect in multiple and overlapping ways. They can be teased apart like threads, but also sewn together in a dialogical tension: this is what I witnessed in the participants' stories, practices, and everyday lives. The transnational, as a dialogic tension between here and there, was apparent in my participants' practices and positionings in terms of subjectivities; language use and literacy practices; and book club practices. The women's shifting subjectivities, practices, and performances reflected dialogic negotiations and navigations across multiple spaces and times. The book club seemed to serve as both a type of dialogic practice and as a dialogic space for practices, performances, and positionings.

Here I describe my findings using data excerpts from primary sources, including quotations from the texts that we read and from meeting transcripts, along with my analysis and interpretations of them. Participants' words will be presented along with analysis as they pertain to the overarching and overlapping themes. Speech and stories have been slightly modified here for presentation and readability, while still maintaining the substance of what was recorded. Names

will be printed in full the first time they appear in an excerpt, and afterward will be noted using the first letter of the participant's pseudonym. To note when I speak, I use my first name, Amy. The major themes, which I continued to develop during data collection and analysis, will serve as the major headings for each section in this chapter. For clarity, Table 4 below shows the names, ages, and participation of each member of the core group.

Table 4. Core Group Participation.

Participant name (pseudonym)	Participant age at study	Number of meetings attended
Christy	18	8
Pia	17	7
Mai	18	6
Gul	30	5
Nan	18	5
Par	17	5
Sana	31	2
Farah	22	3
Lucy	16	2

Book Club as Dialogic/Border Space and Practice (Theme 1)

The book club was a space in which participants took up and used their language and literacy practices, but it also stood out as another, different type of practice. I conceptualize participation in the book club as a type of border practice in which members perform, create, and transform subjectivities and imagine new ways of thinking, being, and doing. It is a dialogic practice that stretches across borders and boundaries.

Scene 1

All of the women took their shoes off upon entering my home. Mai, Christy, Nan, Gul, Sana, and Par were the six who showed up. Everyone seemed happy, smiling, lively. They looked great. They were dressed casually but nicely. It seemed that they had taken time to choose their outfits and do their hair, and some wore

makeup. Christy had a bow in her hair. Mai's long dark hair was combed straight and shiny. Nan had long braids. Sana and Gul had on lip-gloss and wore colorful hijab scarves. They seemed genuinely excited to see each other and be together. All were friendly and warm towards one another.
After brief hugs and hellos with my family, my husband and daughters left the house so that we could meet without distraction. My book club guests moved into the great room. I brought out some snacks for the coffee table and placed them on the big square table in the middle of the room--a plate of ginger cookies, two bowls of seeds and nuts, a bowl of clementines, and a bowl of cut pineapple and strawberries. Four sat together on the couch and one sat in a chair beside us. Only Par sat on the floor on the fluffy rug between the chair and couch. I pulled my things onto the floor and sat near Par, facing the group on the couch (Field Note I: Saturday, April 13, 2013; first book club meeting).

Scene 2

Today, Nan, Gul, Par, Lucy, and Pia were here for the meeting at my house. Pia and Lucy had not been able to come for the first meeting, but joined in today. Christy was out for a prayer and fasting day at church. She emailed me late on Friday night and said that she had already finished the whole book and had some discussion questions for us if wanted. I told her to hold onto the questions until the next meeting. I felt pretty sure that the rest of us had not yet finished the book. This was the case. Most had gotten through 30+ pages. Gul read the most, to page 244. Sana was out sick with fever and sneezing, and Mai was not with us because she was at Saturday School studying and preparing for exams.
It was raining when they arrived. They all took their shoes off at the door, as they had last time, this time leaving them outside the house. I assume because it was so wet. In fact, it rained the entire day. It was chilly, very chilly for Atlanta in May. Most of my guests dressed in jeans or pants. Nan had on a skirt and a pretty scarf. No one brought snacks, although they had mentioned wanting to do so last time. But, I had hummus, pretzels, cookies, fruit, and juice for us. Gul asked me to start water for tea after a few minutes. The tea was a comfort on a cold, chilly spring day.
It was dark in my house because of the rain and cloud cover, so we turned on all the lamps in my great room. My husband took my girls to the High Museum of Art for a few hours so that we could have our meeting. We sat similarly to the time before, around the coffee table and snacks, some on the floor, some on chairs and couch. I sat on the floor again. I think that somehow it helped me feel less commanding, less like a leader. I want them to see me as a

member of the group but not as the leader and authority on all things. That physical positioning on the floor seemed, at least in my mind, to create a sense of openness around positions and status. Again, everyone seemed to get along well and talk openly. At one point, Pia was on the floor and put her head in Gul's lap. They talked a lot about school and lives again. There was a real feeling of closeness and intimacy in the room. As I look back at the recording, I can see the easiness and openness (Field Note II: Saturday, May 4, 2013; second book club meeting).

Scene 3

Today, we met at the sisters' home out in Hilldale (pseudonym). Everyone was excited to go see their new house and share some delicious Afghan food. It was a long drive from my house, at least 45 minutes, but everyone agreed that we should go. Gul, Sana, Par, and Farah were all excited to host the book club in their new home. They sent me several emails confirming the date and time. When we arrived at the large two-story brick home in the planned neighborhood, they met us at the front door with smiles. Even mom and dad came to welcome us. It was clear from the fragrant smells that they were already preparing food for our meeting. The entryway into their home was grand, with a very high ceiling, staircase, and chandelier. We all took our shoes off there, and they offered house slippers if we wanted them. I brought Pia and Christy with me, so we had all four sisters and the three of us for a total of seven at the meeting. We started with a tour of their home first. Then, we ended up in the open-concept kitchen and living room for our meeting. As it turned out, their mother came to sit with us, while their father returned to his own space on the other side of the house. Although their mom was hesitant to speak English, she was able to understand English, at least to some extent and seemed to enjoy being included and decided to stay with us for our meeting.
Again, the openness of the book club group and the level of comfort we shared with each other struck me. I was also very aware of the way in which the sisters moved between languages. Their facility and ease back and forth between English and Pashto as they talked to each other and translated for mom amazed me. As we talked about the book and our lives, the house filled with the aromas of spices from the kitchen beside us. I could see and smell and hear the transnational in that space. Clothes, food, language, décor, and practices all conjured and connected here and there. The modern American home with high vaulted ceilings, lots of big bedrooms, wall to wall carpeting, an enormous flat screen TV, our English books and language, and a big back yard with a newly planted herb and vegetable garden reminded me that we were here

> in the U.S., but so many other things reminded me that for this family daily life extended across borders and nations and across cultures. We laughed together, talked together sometimes through translations, and sat on the floor with plates piled high and ate together. For those hours, I was part of the transnational life they lived (taken from Field Note IV: June 14, 2013; fourth book club meeting).

Book club as space and practice. The above excerpts from field notes shed some light on the physical book club space and the social activities that can be seen, at least from my perspective as researcher and participant, insider and outsider. As the only non-refugee, mother, monolingual speaker, and "official" teacher in the club, my positionings and perspectives were clearly influenced by difference. I preface the evidence presented here by setting the scene and reminding readers that I am situated within the space and am positioned in particular ways just as the other book club members were.

In the subsections that follow, I present evidence to show the ways in which the book club acted within this study as a dialogic and border space as well as a dialogic and border practice. The club spaces and practices were shaped and influenced by the members. When I refer to space I refer to the physicality, the meetings in times and places and with particular people. The book club space was situated in time and in a physical location. This book club was made up of physical meetings, although these crossed over into virtual spaces online. The book club was also made up of practices that were shaped by participants' transnational experiences and lives. Although traditional book club practices have been historically and culturally shaped—largely by White, middle- and upper-middle class women—in this club, participants differently shaped the practices.

These women took up multi/plural identities and negotiated shifting subjectivities by positioning themselves in particular spaces and times for particular purposes. Their transnational

ways of thinking and living—stretched across spaces and times—are evidenced in the book club space and practice as well. And, just as their transnational ways of thinking and living and their subjectivities were opportunities for negotiations, stretching, learning, changing, risk-taking, positioning, and imagining, the book club as a space and practice also allowed for this. I provide data, analysis, and interpretations here that support these claims, and I will discuss the implications further in the final chapter.

In the recursive process of coding and codeweaving, I sought to better understand the processes that supported and circulated around focused codes or categories. Around the focused code [BC] Book Club, I noted a number of recurring patterns and processes. Some that I saw were as follows: understanding is important; reading and not reading; writing and not writing; connecting and contradicting; struggling and supporting; storytelling; acting with authority; learning and forgetting; remembering and imagining; enjoying; knowing and not knowing; negotiating; taking up technology; taking up transnational practices; and taking up dialogic practices.

In reflecting on these and all the other codes and categories around Book Club [BC], such as Authority and Agency [AA] and Literacy Practices [LP], I saw how the book club, as space and practice, provided participants room, opportunity, support, and resources for movement and negotiations. They could take up multiple ways, selves, and positions in this space and through this practice. Keyword frequencies showed that we used the words *change* and *changing* at least 84 times and the word *learn* at least 138. For me, these data taken together signified openness toward negotiations, movements, and shifts in the club, as well as an open-mindedness toward ambiguity.

Shaping the club: Dialogic ways of thinking and practices. From the first meeting, it was clear that although these women had not actually experienced a book club before, they were

bringing multiple experiences to bear upon the club, and these formed and shaped our book club. In the first meeting, after we were settled and comfortable in my great room, I asked participants what they thought a book club was or should be. This excerpt from Episode BB entitled "What is a book club?" is an example of the dialogic construction of meaning that occurred in the club from the start and an example of the power of the dialogic construction of meaning from multiple experiences and utterances. Christy spoke first and told us that she had experiences reading with a friend at church. This is what followed:

Excerpt from session 1, episode BB: What is a book club?

Christy: Just, like, regular books to read. I read it and they read it. I don't know if that's called a book club, but? [rising intonation, small laugh]
Amy: Why do you think you're not sure if that's a book club?
C: I don't know. Cause I never been in a book club. I don't know how a book club's supposed to go, but we discuss it.
A: So that's a question for you today. How is a book club supposed to go? You discuss and what else do you think you do?
C: We read it, we discuss it, and that's it. [laughs]
A: I guess that's basically a book club. [pause] So you [Christy] are already having a book club, but maybe you're just not calling it a book club. So, again that is the question. What do you think a book club is?
Par: Like when everyone participates in discussions, and it's not only one person is talking, and you're just listening.
A: Yeah.
C: Like, so, everyone will enjoy. Not just, like, one person picking a book, but people coming together to decide on a book to read.
A: Ok, everyone deciding together? How do you think that will work out? I know most of us here are easy-going, but so what if we all like different books? How can we make a decision?
C: Well, if we're, like, choosing from books, and there's people that like these certain books and other people like that, then one time we can read this and the next time we can read the book that other people want to read.
A: Ok.
Sana: And also easy for them to read, to understand.
A: Yeah, that's more difficult sometimes because we're all, you know. [pause]
S: different

> **Gul:** Like for me, I read every page like three times to understand. [small laugh]
> **A:** Yeah.
> **G:** So that makes me clear about the story.
> **A:** And we can make time to read together if there are parts that are really hard or that seem important.
> **S:** We can discuss with someone, "How can I understand this?"

In this episode, past experiences, multiple understandings, and imaginings imbue and influence the dialogue and the shared story. Christy began by drawing upon experiences she had outside of school with friends from her church. She questioned whether that experience was "really" a book club. Perhaps she questioned the legitimacy of the group because it met informally outside of school space. Perhaps she did not want to claim authority as someone who knew about book clubs because she was still unsure about what that meant. Nonetheless, four turns of talk later, Christy was more assertive when she said, "We read it, we discuss it, and that's it. [laughs]"

Christy moved very quickly from an unsure space into a position of authority. The dialogic space seemed to open possibilities that allowed her to position herself as knowledgeable and someone who knows what a book club is. This pointed to differences between this space, where we were all seated and there was no authority figure or teacher at the front, standing up and exerting an authoritative role of control, and the traditional school space. The type of space—my living room, couches, chairs, and beanbags on the floor, outside of school—opened up and disrupted the typical structures of order and power one might see in schools and other more formal spaces.

Par joined the conversation, adding her voice and perspective. She said that in a book club "everyone participates" and "not only one person is talking, and you're just listening." Par pointed to the collaborative and collective nature of a book club and described it as active and

not passive. Her statement reinforced the idea that this space stands in contrast to school, where teachers often control and dominate class time and talk. She resisted the typical authoritative structures in school, work, and faith institutions where one with more knowledge and authority talks and others listen. Par described book club as a practice, or social action, an opportunity to do, talk, and be heard.

Christy confirmed Par's collaborative and active perspective, adding that in the book club, we should have "people coming together to decide on a book to read" and "not just one person picking." The two of them together established a foundation for the club as a space where all have the power to participate and perhaps even an obligation to do so. They imagined a space where no one person should be in control, a space where "everyone" would participate and enjoy.

Sana and Gul added to these conceptions of the club. They described the importance of understanding and meaning-making around books in a book club. They use the word "understand" three times here. About 13 lines later, Gul also told us, as members in the book club, "Don't be shy. Just enjoy" (session 4, p.1). She pointed out that if a member was too shy or quiet, she might not enjoy the meetings. Gul reaffirmed that the book club was collaborative and required engagement, was something to be enjoyed, and was tied to meaning-making. Knowing and understanding continued as threads woven throughout our discussions and stories in the club.

Together in this one dialogic episode, these women gave shape to the book club space and practices. For more than two hours that day, we continued to discuss what the club was and might be, and we returned to this subject throughout our time together. Agency, authority, and engagement were key elements in our discussions around the book club. In our third meeting, Christy pointed back to this after I told her and Pia that I was having a difficult time getting some

people to email me back about the next book. I said, “I don’t want to be the one person choosing the book.” Christy replied, “Yeah. That’s not what a book club is for.” Christy positioned herself as an authority, one who knows what a book club is for and what it is.

Authority and agency in the club. In coding the transcripts from our book club meetings, I noticed the ways in which we took up positions of authority, acted as more knowledgeable others, and used discursive moves to direct dialogue and positions ourselves and others in particular ways. Authority and Agency [AA] became a focused code or category around which I clustered more than 150 pieces of the texts related to power, positioning, discursive moves, etc. Under Authority and Agency, I noted things such as change of subject, pointing to text, disagreement with text, asking questions, asking for help, agreement and consensus-building, advising, interrupting, storytelling, and more.

In seeking keyword frequencies and in analysis, I found the word *know* showed up more than any other word I searched—at least 2,260 times in transcripts—and the word *understand* another 196 times. These totals confirmed what I noticed and thought regarding the importance and power of knowing in these women’s lives and in our book club. Often, *know* was used as a term of agreement, but in agreeing, it seems that the speaker was also confirming or affirming that she did in fact know about that thing being discussed. This term was used in consensus-building, but it was also used to affirm a position of authority and power. Participants took up knowing and positioned themselves as knowledgeable, and sometimes as more knowledgeable others.

Participants took opportunities in the book club to share knowledge and experiences gathered from multiple spaces and places. They were agentive in positioning themselves as knowledgeable authorities in multiple ways and on many topics. They taught each other about

test-taking, faith, passing driving exams, cooking, reading strategies, doing hair, and more. When they were confused about texts, they looked to me as teacher and knowledgeable other, but even then I was not considered the only authority. Other members also often answered the questions posed. Participants did not seem to defer to me as they did when I was their teacher at school. For instance, they did not comply with my request for journal-writing and did not seem to feel any particular obligation to do so.

Although I had suggested that we have a conversation leader during meetings, members were not particularly interested in this idea either. At that first meeting, they pointed to Christy as a possible leader, and she did prepare some questions for the next meeting. However, after that and as the club developed, no one mentioned a group or meeting leader again. Leadership seemed to be collective and collaborative, and they were all seemingly empowered to lead, direct, and redirect the club and meeting discussions in the club in different ways. Initially, I thought we would conduct all meetings in my home because I was centrally located and wanted ease in setting up recording equipment. But Christy and Pia were vocal about wanting to spend time outside when the weather was nice. The sisters, Gul, Sana, Par, and Farah, were invested in having meetings in their new house, so the meeting space changed as participants took up positions as invested and active members with the power to make decisions and choices. They were also active and agentive in lobbying for books. Sana and Gul wanted to read books about adult women, and Pia asked for *The Joy Luck Club* so that she could have help with her summer school assignments.

Participants in the club chose two texts about transnational women, both of which were challenging reads because of their dialogic nature. In both books, stories were tied to other stories, moving back and forth in time as they were told by different narrators in different spaces

and places. Participants also chose to read large pieces of both books together in meetings. This was due in part to the difficulties they faced in reading the books, but it also seemed to be part of the collaborative and collective ideas around the club and reading. Everyone in the group enjoyed shared readings out loud. This seemed to reflect their experiences with oral literature and the oral tradition of storytelling. During readings, they worked together to make sense of the texts—sometimes interrupting, asking questions, connecting to their personal lives, restating, summarizing, etc.

This way of reading together was different from most book clubs where participants are required or feel obliged to have books finished before coming for discussion. These women fashioned a book club in which the very act of reading was entangled in social meaning-making and understanding. For this reason, among others, we only read two books over six months. Understanding and connecting to texts was important. Social aspects of the club, including catching up on events in everyday lives and listening to personal stories, were also important. Opportunities to interact, engage, share, and learn from and with one another were more important than finishing books or reading more books. Like most book clubs, these women were as focused, if not more focused, on socializing and relationships as they were on the texts.

I had attached writing to my own ideas about agency and resistance in my proposal for this study. I wrote about how writing was transformative and powerful and could be used to position oneself in particular ways without imagining participants might take up power in different ways. I privileged writing as the way that participants would make their ideas, beliefs, questions, concerns, lives, and stories known. However, these women did not write in the reading journals provided; they instead took up multiple complex practices inside and outside the club to accomplish these things. They used their oral stories, memories, and imaginings in the club to position

themselves as knowing, powerful, and creative. They used their transnational knowledge and experiences, their multiple languages, their multi/plural identities, and their literacies to take up new subjectivities and practices, and to negotiate and navigate complicated lives as refugee women.

In addition to their stories and dialogues, participants took up technologies and used digital literacy practices to stay connected between meetings, share, care, learn, ask questions, plan, decide on books, and position themselves as readers, hosts, workers, women, wives, and more. We used the computer and Internet to read reviews, order books, look up definitions for words, translate words, look up historical references, look for jobs, look for recipes, look at pictures of refugee camps in Thailand, and more. The members were active and agentive in calling, texting, and emailing me about when and where we would meet. They hosted, opened their homes, cooked, and helped plan meetings in new places. They challenged and expanded my own ideas and understandings around the book club.

Taking up border practices in safe spaces. The practices that participants took up in the book club (such as reading aloud, storytelling, translating, and using technology) were shaped by and emerged from multiple places, languages, histories, and cultures. I describe border practices as those that are multi/plural and transgressive, crossing over boundaries. The practices taken up in this book club were performed in less visible, more supportive spaces outside of official or formal spaces, allowing for movement, negotiations, and risk-taking.

In my findings, I describe the book club as a border practice or set of practices. For these women, doing a book club was a new practice, one being explored and developed for particular purposes. This was not a predetermined practice for them, as it might have been for me. They shaped the club and used it as a safe, dialogic space to question dichotomous positionings and

ways of thinking. As they positioned themselves as multi/plural, they created a club and incorporated practices that resisted the dichotomous in favor of the dialogic. They negotiated spaces between and across home/school, literate/illiterate, formal/informal, oral/print, educated/uneducated, here/there, man/woman, legitimate/illegitimate, knowledgeable/ignorant, and good/bad.

All of the women in the club were refugees except for me, so they shared experiences of movement and forced displacement. The group was small and intimate. We met mostly in private spaces in homes, and even when we met in the park we hid away amid the trees. The structure was flexible. There were opportunities for leadership and ownership, and no preset time limits, club rules, or reading requirements. There was no pressure or guilt around missed meetings, readings, or journal-writing. The most important shared understandings or agreements around the club were that all would actively engage and enjoy. There was an emphasis on community, collaboration, and connections.

In the storied episodes that follow, I offer evidence of participants' movements and negotiations across borders in the book club. In the first narrative, we talked about all the options these women have in America and the challenges in having too many options. Then, the women shared what they might have been doing if they still lived in their homelands. After that, the dialogue turned to a disagreement around pregnancy, children, and birth control.

Excerpt from session 7, episodes W and X: "Please explain to me"

Pia: In America I don't know what I'm going to do because there are many kind of things, and I really don't know which kind I'm going to choose. But when I was in Thailand, I knew I could do then. I already knew.
Amy: What about you, Nan?
Nan: Yeah. I mean, I didn't know what I was going to be when I was in Sudan. I would probably be married, having children.

> **Christy:** I would probably be thinking about marrying right now. I wouldn't go to school right now, I don't think.
> **P**: No, in Thailand I don't think about that. Too young.
> **Mai:** We would be too young.
> **P**: Because everything was hard for you to get in Thailand; when you live in the camp, it's hard for you. If you have a family, it's hard for you to find a job, to get money, everything's hard.
> **C:** But still in Burundi, that's not a problem [finding a job]. Especially not in the city.
> **P**: [interrupting] It's not a problem for others, but for me. [challenging, even antagonistic tone]
> **C:** But the people that live in the city, they got more like the Americans; they don't want to have children because they want to have money. Then, when they're financially stable. But the people that live in the village, like, they don't really care. They don't even go far and then, they just finish primary school, and then they're done.
> **A**: There would just be a few paths, just a few things to do instead of all these possibilities to do here. Tell me, in Burma what might they do?
> **M:** They have, some of them, they have more than 10 children, you know?
> **P:** Some 12.
> **M:** Yeah, I don't get it. Why they do it? How can they take care of them when there's no doctor?
>
> *There is some cross talk and eating, and then we come back together and Christy ties the next story to the string Mai left.*
>
> **Christy:** That's what I say too sometimes, that everything about that—see in Africa there's all these kids that are starving and all that.
> **A**: We have them here, too.
> **C:** I mean that, they, like, keep having them and they don't stop. Then I think about it and I'm so [pause], they tell me that I "be taking God." So if they would use birth control, you say that they will take God and go to hell for that. But when there's all these kids that [pause], I mean sometimes the rules that they have, they don't make sense. Then I think about them, I'm just, I'm like, "Please, explain to me this so that I can understand it."

Christy, Mai, Pia, and Nan moved back and forth in this narrative between their homelands and here. They were thinking about their pasts and imagining what their futures might have been if they stayed in their home countries. Each of them was able to participate in the dialogue

because they had shared experiences of movement and displacement, albeit experienced and described in different ways. The narrative pointed to some ambivalence and tension around these choices. Perhaps it was good to have new opportunities and choices other than marriage and child rearing; however, it also seemed to make lives unstable and unsure, as Pia pointed out. Nan suggested that if she were still in Sudan, she would be married and having children. Christy agreed, and also acknowledged, “I wouldn’t go to school right now, I don’t think.” Pia and Mai diverged and disagreed here, arguing that in Thailand, they would be too young for marriage and children. Christy then took another turn at talk and shared that in her country things would be different depending on if you were in the city or in a village.

Christy had lived in a village herself and knew that most people “don’t even go far, and then, they just finish primary school and then they’re done.” Her statement seemed negative, even judgmental. Perhaps she contemplated the ways in which her choices and future possibilities would have been limited as a woman in her village. Mai then turned the conversation and added to the complexity of the story. Tying to Christy’s comments, Mai questioned the choices and options women had in her own country. When Christy restarted the story where Mai left off, she showed us that even in the break, she was thinking about mothers and babies. She questioned aloud the sense around having so many children when babies were starving. She openly and honestly described the way her church and family viewed birth control and the rules they had around this. She asked with emotion, “Please, explain to me this so that I can understand it.” She reached out and called to us as listeners to help her understand these rules and make sense of these ways of thinking and acting.

This narrative was contextually grounded in a previous discussion about having many babies and about birth control in which Pia and Christy pointed out that birth control was consid-

ered a sinful thing in their churches or religions. Now, Christy made the connections between being a woman, childbearing, and religion. Women are the ones who can carry babies, and who are required to bring those babies safely into the world, and women are the ones ultimately held responsible for not following this sometimes overt and sometimes unspoken rule.

It was clear that some rules, expectations, and norms traveled across borders and existed here in this space and worked to influence these women's ways of thinking and everyday lives. However, in the book club and in dialogue and storytelling, they found room to speak, question, challenge, and ask for help in making sense and understanding. Together their stories intertwined and allowed them to question the options afforded to women in their countries, cultures, and faiths. They may not have considered saying these things openly to parents, at school, or in their faith groups; the book club gave an opportunity to take a risk.

In the final episode here, we talked about a project that Pia was doing as part of her summer school work on women in Burma and Thailand. I was looking online at websites that might have information to help her complete the assignment together. As we were talking about the topic, Gul began a story.

> **Excerpt from session 2, episode PP:** "Very hard lives for being a woman"
>
> **Gul**: Like she [a friend at school originally from Burma] said, "My mother worked so hard in the chicken factory, and when she comes home, she doesn't ask us to cook or clean, she does by herself everything. And when she makes money, she sends most of the money to my father's family. And she don't send to her own family." Like, I say, "Why?" She said, "Because my mother's side, people are more stronger, they can make money. But my father's side, people are older, like this, so they need more money." And I was so impressed and like, "She's so good." Like there's so many good people around us.
> **Nan**: My mom, too.
> **Amy**: Yes, your mom, too.
> **Lucy**: Most of the old people want to go back to Thailand.
> **Pia**: But now they can't.

> **G**: They have very hard lives for being a woman.
> **A**: They do.
> **G**: I think Afghani women are the most lazy women. They don't work.
> **Par**: I don't think they're lazy. It's just, I think they don't have the freedom to do anything.
> **N**: Yeah.
> **Par**: That's true.
> **A**: I do think that it's part of it, Gul. So I think it's a different way. It's funny because I'm looking at this thing on Myanmar, Burma, right now. The women outnumber the men. It says, women are entering the workforce at significant rates, and women, professional women outnumber men in the fields of education and nursing, and 50% of doctors are women. That's a lot.
> **Pia**: That's true.
> **L**: Yeah, most of the men, they don't want to do anything.
> **A**: Wow. That's interesting.
> **G**: Yeah. In India, like the Asian people from the mountain, there's one place where women has all of the rights. Like when their elder died, their property go[es] to the women, it doesn't go to the son. And the women are protected in their family like a man. Like all the rights that man has, like, women have those rights.

In the first part of the divided narrative, Gul shared a conversation she had with a Burmese Chin friend from school. Gul said she was "impressed" by her mother's willingness to work and support her family here and back home in their country. Gul described this mother as "good" because she was both breadwinner and caretaker of the home. This good mother in Gul's story essentially takes up both the traditional male/father role and the traditional female/mother role. She is a provider for many, both here and there. Nan created space in the dialogue to point out that her own mother did this, too.

Lucy then changed the direction of the dialogue somewhat, pointing out that many older people resettled in the United States would like to go back to their homes in Thailand. Pia authoritatively responded, "They can't." After that, Gul turned the conversation back to the story she was telling before, on the topic of women and work. She described how she thinks life is hard for these women from Burma. She made a strong statement comparing Burmese women

here and Afghani women there and said, “I think Afghani women are the most lazy women. They don’t work.” Gul did not get a chance to clarify this here, as her sister, Par, quickly stepped in and resisted Gul’s statement. Par took an opposing stance and related women’s work in Afghanistan with freedom. Par argued that Afghani women do not work because they are not free to work. I agreed with Par.

I had my laptop up during this time, and at this point I turned the conversation to share what I learned about the number of Burmese women working. Pia corroborated my findings and authoritatively told us that this was “true.” Lucy then went on to say that Burmese men “don’t want to do anything.” Lucy seemed to reinforce Gul’s ideas that Burmese women are good and suggested that Burmese men are not. Gul ended the episode with another story she heard about some Asian mountain people in India who grant women rights to property over men. Interestingly, she said that women in that place are “protected” like men.

In this dialogic episode, there were several turns and redirections in the talk, but one overarching theme in the story was what it is to be a “good” woman. From her experiences, Gul took up the role as main narrator, beginning, redirecting, and ending the episode. She is an Afghan woman who had never been lazy. She worked her entire life. She was not permitted to attend school, instead staying home and working, tying carpets and rugs and doing sewing and embroidery. Here in the United States as an adult, Gul worked for herself in a small home sewing business with her sister Sana and in a local sewing factory. She worked and managed to attend ESL classes. It seemed as if Gul more closely positioned herself with the Burmese and Asian women in her stories than with the Afghan women she knew. In doing so, she positioned herself as good woman, and as a woman free to work. I imagined that she also equated her own

work with a desire to be protected and afforded equal rights under the law, as the Asian mountain women were in her story.

Through this dialogic co-construction, Lucy and Pia, as women of Burmese descent, also aligned themselves with active, agentive women. Together, their narrative provided space for Gul to move across places and times among the United States, Burma, and India and (re)consider what it might mean to be a refugee woman "here" in the resettled space of the United States.

Summary. The book club moved across dimensions of time and space materially and virtually, and participants' stories and the dialogues moved among what was read, remembered, and imagined. Dialogic connections were made, and the texts were constructed to span geopolitical, linguistic, and cultural borders. Gul told us that in the book club, "I learned that when I read that kind of book, it changed my mind not to be prejudiced about people because many things that we have are similar, and many things are different" (38.3). She was challenged in a safe space to risk changing her mind.

The book club was safe, supportive, shared, shifting, and creative. It was private and also public, in that some of the private dialogues and utterances that participants carried with them were voiced and made public and known to us in the group. The book club crossed borders and allowed us to sew our utterances, subjectivities, and practices together in polyphonic and heteroglossic texts. Participants shaped the club and were shaped by the club; there was reciprocity in the dialogic. The book club, as both dialogic space and practice, was transactional and transformative.

Shifting Subjectivities (Theme 2)

The findings presented here in relation to the theme of shifting subjectivities were considered in relation to the three research questions: How do refugee women engage in an out-of-

school book club? What can be learned about the everyday lived experiences, literacy practices, and language use of resettled refugee women through an exploration of the book club? And, in what ways might a book club community influence refugee women's literacy practices and everyday lives? In analysis and interpretation, I found that all nine of the participants in the study were agentive in positioning themselves in deliberate ways in particular spaces for specific reasons. They navigated and negotiated shifting subjectivities in everyday lives, and took up multi/plural identities through their positionings, stories, language, and practices. The feminist and dialogic frameworks I used to make sense of data provided space for difference, movement, negotiation, and multiplicity. In our book club, the two texts we chose and read influenced the positions, stories, language, and practices we took up. Themes within the texts of being a "good girl," being a "good daughter," and becoming a woman in multiple worlds and across cultures, all manifested in what we said and did.

All 14 of the focused codes (categories) that I developed in analysis related to shifting subjectivities, and at least 35 of the 44 episodes that I pulled out from the transcripts for narrative analysis dealt directly with the theme of shifting subjectivities and changing identities. Evidence of participants' shifting subjectivities in codes and narratives was important as I reflected on the processes that influenced everyday lives. Even the keyword frequencies I studied revealed the prevalence of shifting subjectivities in our book club meeting transcripts. The word *woman* showed up 97 times and *women* 121 times, for a total of 218 times. The word *girl* showed up 198 times. This finding pointed to the ways in which participants, still in their late teens and twenties, moved between positioning and naming themselves and others as girls and as women. They navigated responsibilities and expectations and negotiated differing roles between the two. Keyword analysis also showed that, in our book club meetings, the word *sister* was used at least 125 times,

the word *White* 65 times, and the word *refugee* 46 times. These also pointed to other influences on participants' subjectivities such as refugee status and displacement, race, and familial ties.

I came to see that for these women, "in-betweenness," a concept used by some scholars, might have been too restrictive and limiting. When I thought of being in-between, I imagined being trapped or stuck, limited in movement. Instead, what I saw enacted and told in stories was something transgressive. These women were crossing borders and boundaries in their ways of thinking and being, especially as transnational women. There were contradictions and questions, and their subjectivities stretched across what they knew and had experienced both here and there. Sometimes still uncomfortable and even unsure, they were not stuck in between worlds or cultures, but imagining and navigating multiple ways of knowing, being, and doing. They spoke openly about and were open to change.

Keyword frequencies and analysis showed that the word *change* occurred 71 times and the word *changing* 13 times. Change was part of our talk, something they noticed and were able to express and navigate. Although change was part of different aspects of everyday lives, it was an integral part of what participants experienced and expressed around subjectivities. They created space in the ways they positioned themselves and in the stories they told in order to imagine change and new possibilities of being and doing in this resettled space.

This finding seems contrary to what many believe about women or expect from them. Women are generally assumed to be the carriers of culture, bound to home and tradition, and it is also assumed that the homes, cultures, and traditions that women anchor are somehow stable, fixed, and unchangeable (Anzaldúa, 1987/2007; Minh-ha, 1989; Minh-ha, 2010). For refugee women, though, there is little hope that they can ever truly recreate the home they left behind, here in this place. It is also unlikely that they will be able to protect and keep their cultural prac-

tices and their children from changing in this new space. The young women in my study moved among cultural contexts and navigated dialogical tensions between homes (here and there). They opened to newly imagined and inclusive ways of living in a transnational space. Their everyday lives were changing, and their subjectivities reflected the ability to shift among and hold in tension multiple selves. These women resisted limiting borders and ways of being and took up plural positions that were transgressive and transnational.

The women in this study noticed and noted that some of the men in their lives were quick to pick up new languages, cultures, and practices in new spaces. However, they did not see this as entirely positive. They valued their abilities to possess both new and old, past and present, here and there, and interestingly, they tied this to gender. For example, Nan talked about her older brother who moved out of the house and no longer helped her parents financially. She said, "They see this typified American way, and they want to do the same way" (session 10, p.21). It was clear at the time that Nan saw this "way" as negative. In contrast to her way of being both/and, she perceived that her brother (perhaps all of her brothers) was content to give up traditional family norms and do things in the typical American way.

These young women did not seem to be content with being only American; they wanted to be more, to be multiple. Par also noted elsewhere that her brothers had picked up Indian language and culture very quickly in order to fit in and make friends, and in doing so, they had begun to lose their home language. Lucy agreed, suggesting, "Maybe it's because they [men] are blending into other cultures" (session 2, episode OO). The women in this study valued their abilities to use multiple languages, and this was more evidence of their shifting subjectivities and negotiations. Their multilingual abilities will be discussed in more detail in the following section,

in which I look at the data related to languages and literacies as practices, resources, and tools for their navigations and negotiations in everyday lives.

Languages and literacies may also be viewed as embodiments and performances in shifting subjectivities and changing identities. However, in the subsections that follow, I present evidence of participants' shifting subjectivities, as well as my interpretations of the data gathered related to multi/plural/transnational identities, gender, and imagined futures. I begin with a story I have titled "Wedding Dresses" to exemplify the ways in which these refugee women as a group performed, practiced, and embodied multi/plural identities and imagined futures as women.

Multi/plural/transnational identities.

Excerpt from session 1, episode CC: Wedding Dresses

Christy: What is that? Look at this picture. Can you believe this? I'm sorry. I just can't believe.
Par: I like this one. [pointing to another picture on the iPhone] This one's nice, right?
Amy: Oh, let me see that. Wow!
C: See, that's not you. It looks like those Internet people, those people on the Internet and stuff. [lots of giggling]
Sana: She says did you get pictures from Internet computer? No, this is not…
A: Now, why did you take a picture in this [dress] and then in this [dress]?
Par: She wore both of them.
A: You wore both?
S: Yeah. They gave me the white one.
A: You look, you look amazing in this!
C: She look like a model, like a Saudi Arabian model.
A: Nan, you have to see these. Wow!
Gul: I like her Afghani dress, not the Indian dress. The Afghani dress looks good.
A: Oh, she looks good in all of them. Her makeup is blowin' me away.
C: I know, right?
S: You know the white dress, my teacher, she gave me a gift.
A: Who?
S: She come only for Wednesday, and she teach me tutoring. Her name is Suzie.

A: She gave you that?
S: It was a shoulder cut like this. [demonstrates low-cut and strap-less]
A: You fixed it.
S: Yes. I decorated. Here it was a little simple, so I bought the lace and put little lace.
A: You are awesome, so you did that all? Did you show her what it looked like?
S: Yes. I show her [the tutor/teacher who gave the dress]. This is my brother here. This is traditional dress, Afghani.
A: Beautiful.
S: This is my brother here.
C: Is he here?
S: No, he's in Pakistan now.

In this excerpt, Sana has just come back from her wedding in Afghanistan and is showing us photos on her iPhone at the beginning of our meeting. The literal ties between here and there and the physical movement between here and there was real for Sana. Her wedding photos told a visual story of her transnational life lived in multiple spaces, and the way she positioned herself as a multi/plural woman capable of crossing cultural borders and living in multiple worlds. Sana was born in Afghanistan, grew up in India, and had lived in the United States for about five years at this time. Sana proudly showed our book club group the wedding pictures, in which she was adorned in dresses from all three places in turn. The reality of her multiple subjectivities was there in full-color photographs on her iPhone. The wedding dresses here served as outward signs of her ties to multiple places and people and served to show the ways in which she openly embodied all three cultures.

It is clear in this narrative that the pictures surprised Christy. She teased Sana and suggested that she had stolen photos of someone else from the Internet. Sana had a great deal of makeup on in the photos, which was not the norm for her. She was almost unrecognizable. Later, I also showed my surprise that she had on a traditionally Western white gown in her wedding photos—something I would not have expected. Sana typically presented herself as very con-

servative and took up a traditionally modest Muslim female role and appearance. As the oldest girl in the family, she was very close to her parents and often served as a role model for her younger sisters. I had never seen Sana without *hijab* or with makeup before these pictures and had not imagined her openness to such a different look. Sana did show me in the pictures how she sewed and fixed the white wedding gown that her tutor had given her, making it more modest and appropriate by adding lace to the neck area and straps on the shoulders. This alteration showed the boundaries Sana may have set up in her negotiations and shifts in subjectivity, at least in this time and place. She was willing to pose for pictures in a Western wedding gown, but the dress had to meet her Muslim value of modesty in particular ways.

Sana's parents traveled back to Afghanistan with her for the wedding celebration along with her brother, who had recently moved from the United States back to Pakistan. For their family, transnational movement was part of their lives in resettlement. Sana's parents matched her with a young man from the village where her father had grown up decades before. In fact, the groom was the son of one of her father's best friends. Sana's arranged marriage might stand as a sign of Sana's typically traditional positioning; she presented herself as a good daughter throughout our time together and never questioned her parents' marital arrangement for her. Nonetheless, these wedding dresses also showed her multiplicity, agency, and plurality in positioning.

Sana was the main character in a different narrative, in which she also transgressed the boundaries of what one might consider typical behavior for a traditional Muslim woman. She told us how she went back and forth to Afghanistan for the wedding and then again to prepare her new husband for the interviews that would come to decide his possible resettlement in the United States. Interestingly, she took the lead in that documentation and interview process. She

filled out all the paperwork and decided on all the particulars of their stories. She was a woman in a very traditional Muslim family with a new husband, but in that particular space and time, she held the privilege of English and political status as a legal refugee. Thus, she positioned herself as one who knows and understands this system and as the leader for her husband. She told us that she "did it all first," and her husband must do well and follow her lead in the interviews (session 3, episode C, Pass the interview and American belief in papers).

Participants' shifting subjectivities and multiple identities were often tied to their outward appearances, as they were for Sana in "Wedding Dresses." There were at least 50 codes that clustered together under Girls and Women [GW], Others and Othering [OO], and Friends and Boyfriends [FB] that had to do specifically with participants' appearances. These codes were related to weight, makeup, clothes, shoes, skin color, and hair. These visible aspects of participants' subjectivities often served both as markers and as tools for positioning and negotiating multiple identities.

I titled the following co-constructed story "Here in America." Earlier in the discussion of the transnational in everyday lives, I shared a different excerpt from a longer narrative. Here, I want to point to spaces where the transnational overlaps with visibility and subjectivities, as Nan, Christy, and Mai talk about school.

Excerpt from session 5, episode L: "Here in America"

Christy: But as for me, it's not me. [pause] I just, people, people make me feel that way. Yes, they, like right now, I would not want my mom to, like, go to that school.
Amy: Why?
C: I know people there are so different, and I know they're so judgmental and criticizing and [pause]
A: What would they criticize about your mother?
C: I don't know.
Nan: They will say something bad. Like look at this, you know, African woman walking here.

> **A:** But that’s what she is.
> **N:** They would like make it, you know, make it bad.
> **C:** They would just like make it negative, and they’re like always they see this, and they always get back on you because of this. Like at the school, I’m always careful.
> **A:** Is it like that you think that people think that they’re not smart because they don’t know English?
> **C:** They just think that your parents are like this so they’re ignorant.
> **A:** Ignorant?
> **Mai:** Yeah.
> **C:** They’re our peers.
> **A:** Your friends, like, your age. So you think that people your age, like youth, believe that if people don’t know English, that they’re just kind of stupid?
> **C:** Yeah.
> **M:** Yeah, well when they had the parent conference, I didn’t want to bring my mother to school, so I never told my mom when is the parent conference.

This exchange points to the tensions that participants experienced in negotiating subjectivities and navigating multiplicity. For Christy, she described the people at her school as “so different” from herself and her parents. She also described how this difference created space for them to be “so judgmental and criticizing.” When I asked why they would be critical, Nan recognized that this had to do with the fact that Christy’s mom was African, different from African Americans, and could be marked as such by the way that she dressed and spoke.

Christy’s mom had limited English and typically wore traditional, brightly colored African dresses and head wraps. Nan seemed to understand how others at school would recognize this difference and say “something bad,” like “look at this African woman here.” Christy went on to explain how her mother would be seen as “negative” and as “ignorant.” Mai supported them and added that she would not want her mom at school either. These women similarly understood the ways in which appearance and language act as markers and work to position people.

In the previous episode, being marked as "African" was construed in a negative way, and Christy and Nan distanced themselves from this construction. However, in another narrative, Christy and Nan talked about hair and African scarves and positioned themselves differently (session 5, episode Y). Christy began by explaining the difficulties and work required to straighten and color her hair. She suggested that it was much easier to go "natural." She went on to say that this had not been an easy decision for her here because "they act like you're ignorant or something, especially in a professional place. They're going to look at you differently. It's very hard for me. Not a lot of people do it, but I don't care." (NEED CITATION HERE)

Christy pointed out the discrimination she perceived among people in regards to being noticeably African. She told us, " I don't want them not to give me a job when I go for an interview" (session 5, episode Y). Again, Christy suggested that people try to position someone they identify as African as ignorant or incapable, but in this case despite her real concerns, she resisted. Later in this discussion, Nan asked if Christy had an African scarf. She said, "You can fold it like that (showing her with a napkin) and make a bow with it. I need to buy more. I don't have too many African scarves." In this instance, Nan found it acceptable to wear something African and to be marked as African. She encouraged Christy to continue to wear her hair naturally and consider wearing an African scarf. These women remained open to multiplicity and identities that crossed over cultures and borders, and their stories revealed the movement and shifts in their subjectivities and positionings in particular spaces and times.

Gender expectations.

> "But just as there were two kinds of women, there were also two kinds of girls: Iranian daughters and American daughters. Iranian daughters, like The Good Daughter of my mother's stories, were shy, quiet, polite, and modest. Some, but not all, of her friends' daughters were Iranian daughters. They addressed their elders with the formal *shoma*, never *toh*. They knew how to serve a proper tea.

> And when they laughed, they hid their sweet smiles behind their hands."
>
> — Darznik, *The Good Daughter*, p. 295

Conversations about being a good girl, a good woman, and a good daughter abounded in our book club meetings. The fact that we chose two books focused on mother–daughter relationships in transnational and transcultural worlds certainly influenced our conversations. We were in dialogue with each other and with the characters and narrators in the stories we read. In these dialogues, participants shared stories from their own lives and experiences as they tried to work through what "being good" meant here in this place. Being a good woman was tied to particular expectations around ways of knowing, behaviors, roles, and responsibilities.

A good woman is modest. For Sana and her sisters, modesty was tightly tied to their subjectivities and to being a Muslim woman. In one storied episode, we were talking explicitly about modesty because it came up as we read *The Good Daughter*. We were clarifying what modesty meant in English and in the story. Par spoke up and said, "This is a sign of modesty, us wearing this (tugging her hijab). It's like being more, I mean, I don't know, an easier way of being more [of] a female-like person." Par's older sister Gul interrupted, "Like here, the teenager we see. They don't care about their parents, their cultural things. But, like, we do. So this is one," she said, pointing to her *hijab*. "Another thing is our modesty" (session, 2, episode QQ).

In this episode, Gul and Par explained what *modesty* meant to them, and as their explanation went on, they used the word *parda*, which literally means "curtain" or "veil" in Pashto and is sometimes used synonymously with the Persian word *burqa*. They wanted us to understand that modesty and hijab are tightly tied. That in choosing to wear hijab as a practice, they take on an outward sign of modesty and separation from men, identify themselves as women, and align themselves with their parents and culture. This practice of wearing hijab acts as a signifier to

others that these women are making particular choices about their lives. When these sisters wear hijab, they are performing and embodying particular ways of living and ways of acting. These practices are agentive acts. They make the choice to cover and veil themselves and behave modestly in particular places and at particular times and, in doing so, choose to take up particular subjectivities. For them, hijab signified womanhood, and in particular being a good woman.

A good girl knows how to behave herself. In the narrative episode that follows, the dialogic in our tellings was evident. Even as researcher, as member of the club and a woman, I joined in to share my own experiences of being told what to do as a girl or what was expected of me as a girl or woman. In turns, we corroborated what Par and Gul had been telling us about modesty and how important modesty was to them and in their culture and community. Perhaps to differing degrees and in slightly diverse ways, we all recounted similar stories of expected girl behavior. Our stories were woven together and showed how gender expectations and gendered ways of thinking and being travel across spaces and overlap in ways to exert power over our practices and positions.

Excerpt from session 2, episode RR: "I behave myself"

Amy: [returning from a phone call] Okay. Sorry guys. So the good girl is modest, right, okay? That's what she says. And has good manners.
Par: Listens too. Doesn't talk much.
A: Yeah. Doesn't talk too much. How many of you hear that from your family or your friends, that a good girl doesn't talk too much?
Par: We do.
A: You do?
P: Yeah, like, oh you shouldn't laugh too loud or you shouldn't be too loud.
A: Interesting.
Gul: Don't smile too much, like "Hahaha" out loud. My mom used to say that.
P: It's a sign, like you're drawing attention. Like if you laugh too loud, people will look at you.

A: Oh, they do. I mean, I feel like I have to say sorry because I laugh very loud even now.
P: Me, too.
A: And my voice is loud and then I feel like I have to apologize and then a part of me says, “Well that’s silly.” Because I shouldn’t have to apologize. I’m not really doing anything wrong.
P: Me, too.
A: But that is the thing that people will say. You know what I mean? Especially if you’re a woman. If you are a man doing it, I don’t know that they would that.
G: If there’s a man around, you have to be, like, talk softly so they can’t hear you. Don’t laugh too much; men will think, oh, she’s like showing herself to us. They do like that still.
A: Interesting. So still you hear that?
G: Yeah.
A: Yeah, yeah. What about you?
Lucy: Yeah.
A: Do they say that to you? Who would say that?
L: Like only with the older ones. If I’m with my friends with my age, I talk normal.
A: But if you were with someone older they might tell you that? What would they say?
L: They don’t tell you, but I behave myself. You know?
A: Yeah, yeah.
L: I know what to do.
A: You know what to do. Yes, yes. We do. We very much do.
P: Because they told you.
A: Yeah, uh-huh. Someone told you. You learn what to do. What about you, Nan?
Nan: They don’t tell me because I’m always quiet.
A: You’re already quiet.
L: If I’m around the older, the elder, I just sit quietly and I don’t do nothing.
N: Yeah, me, too. I just sit around and just let them talk.
A: Yeah.
N: Or just go somewhere else, not be around them.

Par added that a good girl listens and “doesn’t talk too much.” In the first part of the narrative, Gul and Par responded to my prompting, telling us about how good girls (and they, as good girls) are expected to be quiet, not draw attention to themselves, not smile or laugh too much, especially if a man is around. Gul explained, “If there’s a man around, you have to be, like, talk softly so they can’t hear you.” She told us that being loud and laughing are not good

because it calls into question a girl's modesty. It gives the impression that a girl is seeking attention, perhaps male attention. The group agreed that gender-based and age-based expectations were part of life for them. Lucy suggested that for her and perhaps among her community and in her culture, good-girl behavior is related to age and is particularly important among elders. When I asked if people told them how to behave or what to do, Lucy responded by saying, "They don't tell you, but I behave myself. You know?" Here, Lucy positioned herself as someone with cultural and social knowledge and as someone who was well aware of expectations. She confirmed this by saying, "I know what to do."

In another meeting, Par reaffirmed what Lucy said. Par said that she knew how to act and did act according to her parents' expectations. She said, "I know what I'm doing. I'm old enough to know what's wrong and what's right. Sometimes when they tell me something and I'm like—Yes, I know that. You know I'm not going to do it, of course. I know that" (session 3, episode C). These women made it clear that there was much that they knew. Par suggested that they knew because they had been told, but both Lucy and Nan resisted this suggestion. They positioned themselves as cultural knowers who did not need to be told. This may have had to do with age, as Lucy and Par alluded to here. At a certain age, a woman should know what to do and how to behave.

In the quote from Par above, she made the connection between being a good girl and being a good daughter. These two often seemed to be entangled. It struck me that in being a girl it was important to know how to behave in particular ways at particular times. Practices differed in different spaces and times. For example, Par and Gul and their sisters behaved differently when they were alone with other women. They did not have to wear hijab, talk softly, or hide their laughter. Lucy knew and enacted different behaviors in front of elders. She spoke the way she

wanted and acted differently in front of people her own age. In fact, she said that in front of elders, “I just sit quietly and I don’t do nothing.” Although what Lucy described may have seemed inactive or lacking in agency, in behaving in this way, she actually positioned herself as one who knows, one with cultural and social knowledge and experience.

Shifting roles and responsibilities for women. Roles and responsibilities in many refugee families are often shifting, as children take on responsibilities for parents in resettlement. Children regularly act as cultural and linguistic brokers for parents and act as family leaders. They find themselves making decisions for themselves and for their families in school and elsewhere. Schooling was highly valued among all of the women in this study. Schooling was also largely unfamiliar and unknown for their parents. Work was also important to participants. Sana, Gul, Mai, and Lucy all had ongoing work or had taken up summer work while in the study. Christy actively sought work, and Pia planned to work after graduation. They took up powerful positions at home, at school, and in the community while also trying to maintain particular roles and responsibilities that positioned them as good women and daughters.

A good daughter is a good student. One of the major responsibilities that these women took up was doing well in school. They desired to be good students and tied this to being good daughters. Being good in school was tangled up in their families’ intentions and hopes in resettlement. These young women faced challenges in school because of their different and often limited past experiences with schooling, their parents’ past experiences of schooling, their positions as English learners, and more. Despite the challenges, they positioned themselves as capable and drew upon resources to help them navigate school challenges successfully.

Talk about school arose often in our book club, and as these instances were coded and clustered, School and Schooling [SC] became a focused code (category) of its own. Every wom-

an in the book club was enrolled in some type of formal high school, GED, or English as a Second Language program, and for each of them schooling was a high priority and a shared practice.

In one session, Christy took an extended turn at talk and led us in the construction of a narrative around school. She described people she knew who were “not really good students.” Christy said, “I know, I have friends who go to that high school. Well, they’re not like—they're not really good, or they’re not really good students. I keep telling them how come at your school you have all these programs you can go to and do all this work. Why don’t you do it and improve? [They say] No, it’s very hard because I cannot—English is not our first language, so that’s the excuses they keep bringing, you know. And that’s not good telling yourself that” (session 6, episode O).

Christy made it plain that there are good students and not good students, and that good students improve, work hard, do not make excuses, and do not tell themselves things that will hold them back. She positioned herself as one who knows and who is a good student. She pointed to some of the resources she took up in her own school practices, such as help and support from others. Christy explained that what you tell yourself is important to school success.

A woman cooks. In our first meeting, Lucy told a personal story related to cooking. She compared being a girl with being a woman and described how she felt she was positioned within her family based on her ability to cook. I titled this story “She’s just like, very like a woman.” Lucy used these words to describe her younger sister, and the story revealed the ways in which her ways of thinking about womanhood were influenced by her family and culture.

Excerpt from session 2, episode SS.: “She’s just like, very like a woman”

> Lucy: Everybody think that she's [younger sister] older than me, and the way she act she's just like, very like a woman.
> Amy: Oh, interesting. Like a woman?
> L: And they imagine that I am the youngest in the family because I act like child. I can't do anything. Just I can cook rice. I can't cook anything. If I cook, if I fry egg I ask them, "What I put first? What I put first?" Then, my dad would laugh at me. Then he would tell my mom and sister to cook, "You guys cook." So annoying.
> Par: Is she older than you?
> A: She's older. (points to Lucy)
> L: She [sister] can cook really good.

What struck me here was how Lucy so tightly tied being a woman or acting like a woman with what her family believed about her and to cooking. She said that she "can't do anything," but in actuality her story is specifically about not being able to cook. Lucy also said that she acted "like a child" and seemed to base this solely on her inability to cook or fry an egg. However, Lucy did resist this positioning to some extent, as she described how her father's laughter and insistence that the others cook annoyed her. Lucy's story showed her frustrations with others' expectations and pointed out how particular practices are tied to gender, gender expectations, and to ways of knowing. Lucy's story also revealed how cooking is considered natural for a woman; something a woman should know how to do. For Lucy, not being able to cook caused her to doubt and question whether she was really a woman and perhaps whether she was a good daughter.

Lucy was actually an excellent student in school and expressed a desire to become a doctor. Lucy was asked by church and community members to come and teach the younger Chin children in the community. Lucy positioned herself as capable and knowledgeable, even as an authority. This positioning outside her home revealed the shifting subjectivities she navigated in different spaces. Lucy was not a good cook and did not "act" like the oldest daughter in her home; however, as a successful student in school and as a multilingual community teacher, Lucy took up different subjectivities and positions. She was making plans and imagining herself as a

capable woman with a future ahead, but her story about cooking at home complicated and called these into question.

A woman takes care of the house. There was another moment in our book club meeting when we were reading *The Good Daughter* aloud. We came upon a particularly difficult passage in which Lili, a main character, was beaten by her first husband. The description was detailed, and I worried about the raw reality Darznik, the author, conjured in such descriptions. Following our reading, Gul spoke up and stated, “I think in this case Lili’s first husband, he beat her because she was too young when she got married, and she wasn’t matured like that to take care of the house the way he wanted” (session 3, p.35).

Gul’s words pointed back to the tension Lucy felt between being a girl and being a woman. Gul recognized that being a woman required that one be old enough and mature enough to appropriately take up particular practices, which here meant taking care of the house, cooking, and cleaning. Gul also made it clear that the man was the leader, the one to be pleased, the one in charge, the owner and ruler of the house. I was surprised by Gul’s response to the story, but it gave me pause to reflect upon the weight that culture carried across borders and bore on everyday lives and ways of thinking for these women.

Imagining and repositioning: crafting new subjectivities.

> “As a young girl, my place had always been with the women, perfecting a pleasing muteness as they gossiped over endless rounds of bitter black tea. With each year, I’d grown more eager to join my father and the other men in their earnest talk of history, politics, and mystical Persian poetry, but very few women crossed that invisible boundary in those days and in those circles of ours, it was unthinkable that I, a young girl, should pull up a chair next to grown men. It would have been indecent.”
>
> — Darznik, *The Good Daughter*, p. 304

Much like Lili in the book we read, the women in this study recognized the expectations and limitations placed upon them. However, in their stories and tellings and in their practices and positionings, they showed their willingness to cross the invisible boundaries that defined their spaces and positions. In navigating and negotiating shifting subjectivities and taking up multi/plural identities, they were able to transgress those borders between men and women, here and there, and good and bad.

In this section, data and analysis provide evidence of these transgressions and shifts and the ways in which these women crafted new subjectivities, repositioned themselves, and imagined new futures for themselves and their lives. These were particularly evident around the focused codes (categories) for Work and Money [WM], School and Schooling [SC], Teaching and Learning [TL], Literacy Practices [LP], and Authority and Agency [AA]. In keyword frequencies, the word *work* showed up 394 times, *job* 102 times, and *school* showed up 389 times. *Work* and *school* were among the top 10 words I counted and studied and reflected the importance of both in the lives of these women and their imagined futures.

Participants were particularly creative in their narrative tellings related to repositioning and projected futures. In one book club meeting at the sisters' house in the suburbs, participants told and wove together three stories. In these episodes, the women in the group shared their excitement and enthusiasm for the future possibilities in this new transnational and transgressive territory. In episodes E–G, three narratives became more meaningful when stitched together. Sewn together with the thread of hope, these stories told of imagined futures. In this book club, women participated in a dialogue between and among texts, other members, narrators and authors, and the past, present and future.

In the first excerpt from episode E, which I called "Working woman," Gul told us about a new job and positioned herself as a professional earning good money and trying to gain experience. When Gul told this story, we were all gathered on the floor in her home and were catching up on our lives before diving into our book and reading. Gul took up a powerful position as someone with a story to tell and something important to say.

Excerpt from session 4, episode E: Working woman

> Gul: [excited tone] Now, I wanna tell my story. Today, this morning I wake up at 5:00 and I pray, and I tell her [Sana] "Let's go!" And we went [to my work], and the door was closed, and the tree was fallen down there.
> Sana: No one call her.
> G: No one email me, so I come back later.
> Amy: What job is it?
> S: It's sewing. I sew for uniform. It's a really easy job. I really like it. You know what we do, the machine does everything. Like the uniform has numbers, we just sew the numbers on.
> A: And you think the money they give you is fair?
> G: Yeah, very good money. In India I cannot find any job for that same.
> A: What do you think? Is it good for her to work there? [looking around at Gul's sisters]
> Farah/Sana: [together] Yeah.
> G: And another thing is more good, because I will have some experience if I apply for another job. That's why I think it's good. I have been working three weeks. Today was a regular workday.
> A: So do you work Monday through Friday every morning?
> G: I can work Saturday, but I don't want to. I have a choice like working. But I like the early morning.
> A: You might as well since you are already up for your prayers. Now, you're really a working woman, not that you haven't been working your whole life anyway.
> G: But the work, it wasn't like professional work, work at home. Like in India, the work was at-home work.

This excerpt, more than the other two, communicated differences and changes here and there. Gul told us about how she got up for her early morning prayers, as she typically did, and then went on share the exciting experience she had as she tried to get to her new job that morning

before we arrived for book club. When I asked about whether she was earning a fair wage, showing my cynicism around refugee and immigrant labor, she described how she had different opportunities here and earned good, fair wages compared to what she did in India. She also made a clear contrast between "professional" and unprofessional work. She said that there in India the work she did all day "wasn't like professional work."

For Gul, the hidden work she did in her home, sewing and doing embroidery and rug-making, was not professional. The low wages she earned played into that feeling. Now, her work was visible, so she was visible, and she positioned herself as a capable and able worker. She told us how this new professional experience would help her move on and perhaps move up to other even better jobs. She said it was good "because I will have some experience if I apply for another job. That's why I think it's good." Gul positioned herself as a professional with a future.

Following Gul's story, I encouraged Christy to share what happened with her in the past week. This short narrative excerpt entitled "Certified Training" reveals the ways in which Christy similarly repositioned herself. She went from being a volunteer to being trained and certified. She imagined her future as a nurse and described how she was agentive in pursuing that dream and desire.

Excerpt from session 4, episode F: Certified training

Amy: Christy has a story to share, too. She started something brand new this week.
Christy: Well, I'm getting CNA training. That's a Certified Nurse's Assistant. I just started this week. Before I used to be volunteering at City Medical, but now this is getting training so that once you finish you have a certificate and you can get a job. Once you finish, you should get a job like working in nursing homes. Once you have experience you can work in clinics and other places, but not like the big hospitals. Yeah, that's what I'm doing.
Gul: Does she have to pay for it?
A: Someone paid for it.
G: Wow! That's so good. Congratulations.

Sana: Oh, we will have one nurse! [everyone laughs]

Shortly after Christy's story, Gul and Sana shared another brief story related to the previous two. When Sana said, "We will have one nurse," she was referring to our group—the group of people all connected through the small, independent school for refugee women where I worked as their teacher. Sana's statement showed the type of bonds and relationships that were created. In the following story, she shared the ways in which the group stayed connected. Throughout our meetings, there were many stories told about old friends from school. They spent a great deal of time catching up on their connections and sharing news of marriages and new children. In the brief narrative entitled "Graduation and Going to College," Gul reinforced that these new imaginings and futures are good.

Excerpt from session 4 episode G, Graduation and going to college

Gul: Another girl from our school, Rebecca [pseudonym], she will go to Agnes Scott College. This is also good.
Amy: Very good.
Sana: I was [online] chatting with her.
Christy: Is she going to live on campus?
G: She lives close, so [trails off]
A: I don't know. I think she may live on campus. Sometimes when they give you a scholarship, they will give you money to stay on campus. Then, you can put yourself into studies.
G: She studying engineering?
C: She always wanted to do that.
S: Did you see her graduation picture? She looks amazing.

I was struck by the power and potential in the stories shared that day in the living room. Taken together, they reveal a great deal about the dreams and determination of these refugee women. These stories also speak to the opportunities and openings these women have seen and created in their lives. These women created communities of support for themselves and maintained relationships with others who also understood the challenges they faced. Our book club was just one example of the ways in which they did that. They also had friends, faith groups,

family, teachers, tutors, and others who surrounded and supported them in their efforts to imagine and reposition themselves. They used social networks and reciprocity as tools and resources for their practices in everyday lives.

During the study, these women were busy with many activities and responsibilities. At one point in early in the study, I wrote a personal memo about my concerns in getting the club meetings scheduled:

> We have had a really difficult time getting together for our third book club meeting. Several of the members who were still in school were feeling overwhelmed in May with exams and wanted to wait until school ended. But, now Mai and Lucy are both helping at their churches and working on Saturdays. Christy scheduled to take the SAT last week, and Gul is going to take her driving exam this Saturday. Her sisters are going with her. I know Christy is also starting to look for work on Saturdays. I am concerned about what will happen. How will I have a book club study if I can't get anyone here? Maybe we cannot meet on the weekends? I worry about how the book club will work in my schedule and their busy lives. (personal memo, June 7, 2013)

I include this here to show the ways in which these women negotiated very busy lives, responsibilities, and shifting subjectivities. All of them had already committed to the book club and were invested in reading and in reconnecting, yet they were also invested in doing well on their exams and getting good grades, in working and volunteering, in taking the SAT so that they could apply for college, in learning to drive and gaining the freedom to travel around the city and work, etc. They were tied to being and doing many things as they moved between spaces and subjectivities.

The final narrative included here took place in a park. Pia, Christy, Mai, and I were the only ones able to meet on this day, and as it was cool summer day, Pia suggested we meet outside. I titled this episode "But here, it's changing" because this line was representative of the ways in which these women recognized and imagined change in their lives and subjectivities

here in this resettled space, but also described the complexity and uncertainty of change. The women talked about how what it meant to be a good girl was changing and would continue to change. They described how their hopes for change were tied to the futures they desired. The co-constructed narrative begins with a connection to the text we were reading aloud from *The Joy Luck Club* and my question about change.

Excerpt from session 6, episode P: "But here, it's changing"

Amy: I was wondering if you think that your families still have very traditional ideas about what it means to be a good girl, or a good wife, or a good mother like here? Or do you think they're starting to change that?
Christy: They're starting to change that.
Mai: I think they're changing here.
A: Because of being here?
C: Yeah, but like back home it's like still in the same way. But here, it's changing.
A: Especially like for you, think about your family letting you stay without them. That's a big deal.
M: Yeah, when you get married, they say like some American people—when their mothers are old, they leave them [in a] special house. [meaning a nursing or assisted living home]
A: Yeah.
M: Yeah, our parents, they say you are really bad if you leave your parents to go another place.
P: Yeah, they say that.
A: So you should take your parents with you wherever you go. As the daughter, is that your job more than the son?
P: I tell my grandmom, "After I get a job, I'm going to live in my own." She say, "Yeah because you want a boy. Blah, blah, blah." I'm just like, "What?"
A: Oh, so living alone when you're a girl implies that you may take a boyfriend or you may not be a good girl.
C: You're not a good girl.
P: A good girl, yeah, that's what they say.
C: A good daughter.
M: We have to live together, you know, like in our culture.
A: But not the boys? Just the girls?
C: Yeah, yeah.
M: Your family, you just have to stay close together.
P: Yeah, the family.
A: Oh, the whole family, including the boys too?

P: Yeah.
C: Why the boys have more freedom? They can like go.
M: Yeah, the boys, like, they can go, but not the girls.
C: They can have their own family, but a girl can only leave the house only when she's going to like be married, that's the only time a girl can leave their family. The boys, they can leave their parents, or they can go out and things.
A: Now that's really interesting. Because when you think about it, what does that mean for all of you that will hopefully go to college? Maybe you won't be living with your family.
C: I know, I know.
A: I mean you might for part of it. But probably, you're going to go away somewhere.
M: But I don't want to live with my family.
A: But I wonder how your families will handle that because it's such a good thing for you to be able to go to college, but it means something culturally very different will happen—that you may have to go and leave your house and your family.
P: But my dad, he won't say anything.
A: He won't say anything?
C: It's going to change.
M: Yeah, yeah, us like, we will stay together.
P: It's like when you work, when you get a job, and you live in the same house, you have to pay a lot of stuff. Because where we live, if you live different, separate, you have to pay your own and you won't have any money.
A: You won't have any money? Yeah. Well, it is hard when you have to pay for yourself. Yeah, I was just thinking about what a change it is, and for these women [in the book], it was the same kind of thing. You know, this is the first generation of women, then when their daughters start telling their stories, that's a part of why it's so hard for them because it's so different.
C: Now, it's the same way, similar with us. It's like we don't really have a lot in common with our parents, you know. It's like we don't really talk to our parents like that, or tell them what we're doing here and what's going on in our daily lives.

This dialogic narrative brought together several of the storylines woven through the discussion of subjectivities. The participants talked about change, expectations, and being a good girl and good daughter, and they imagined new subjectivities as college students and adults separate from their parents and families. In answer to my question, Christy stated that her families' ideas and expectations around being a girl and woman here were starting to change. Mai agreed

that things are changing here. However, later in the narrative she described very specific cultural expectations in her family and community around family staying together; these might not change. She contrasted their ways of taking care of elderly mothers with ours. Mai said that girls had to live close together with family and help. However, a few lines later she simply stated, “But I don’t want to live with my family.” Mai seemed to be imagining her future, as we had been reading about that in the book and talking about the future time when they might marry or go to college. It was clear that Mai thought about the tension between what she wanted to do for her own future and what was expected of her in the family and culturally. Christy, Mai, and Pia all seemed to agree that in their home countries and cultures, they would be expected, as girls, to stay with their parents and care for them and might be positioned as bad girls or bad daughters if they did not. However, Christy’s statement, “It’s going to change,” acted to reinforce her belief that things were changing and would continue to change here.

At the end of this episode, Christy recognized and pointed out that these ongoing changes served to disconnect them from family and particularly from parents. She spoke for the group by using the pronouns “us” and “we,” and she reiterated and recycled pieces of narratives from before about feeling disconnected and distanced from parents. She suggested that changes might add to communication barriers and misunderstandings between them and their parents. Christy said, “We don’t really talk to our parents like that, or tell them what we’re doing here and what’s going on in our daily lives.” By using the word “here,” Christy seemed to be marking a line of real distinction between here and there and perhaps us and them.

These women were living amid and across multiple spaces, navigating borders between worlds, and negotiating subjectivities and selves in new spaces. They moved between stating that their families and parents were changing and questioning that change. They seemed to be uncer-

tain; perhaps they saw their parents' worlds as changing, but maybe more slowly or only in specific ways. Some things, such as girls leaving the family, may have stood as inflexible boundaries. It seemed that Mai recognized that her parents' perspectives and the cultural norms and expectations that traveled with them here might be limiting her possibilities in this world.

Summary: Navigating openings and taking risks in crafting new subjectivities. In this section, I presented evidence of the participants' shifting subjectivities in data and in my interpretations and analysis of data. I focused here on the ways they positioned themselves as women in a resettled space with multi/plural/transnational identities and how these positionings intersected with their imagined futures. Data showed how the participants navigated spaces by taking up different positions and practices. Data also revealed the complexity of these navigations and the ways in which these positions and practices were often held together in dialogic tension.

Changes in ways of thinking, being, and doing were not linear or uncomplicated, and not without risk. I am reminded of a story Christy told us about her friend at church who questioned her faith and Christianity. Christy was particularly troubled when her friend said, "You have all this education that you're starting to use it against God." (NEED PAGE # HERE) Christy's friend had tied together change, new knowledge, education, and sin against God. In taking up new and multiple positionings and sometimes new subjectivities, the women in this study, like Christy, took risks.

Together in the book club, they were willing to take risks, tell their stories, and create counter-narratives that resisted static understandings of culture, belonging, being a woman, being good, and being a refugee. They imagined and took up positions as good students, high school graduates, college students, nurses, teachers, and more. They countered perceptions of refugees

as weak, incapable, ignorant, and powerless with their positions and practices. They explored openings and opportunities in resettlement and drew upon multiple tools and resources, as they took up and negotiated new subjectivities. They explored and interrogated both the resources and practices that traveled here with them and those they found here. They made choices in transnational spaces to position themselves as successful and took opportunities to transform identities and social relations.

In this section, I did not explore fully the ways in which language and literacy practices intersected with subjectivities. However, in our book club meetings, we often talked about how language was connected to change and to the ways that you know and think about the world. Christy said, “Sometimes they tell you something in English, and then I think it” (session 4, p. 33). She recognized the powerful ties between language and thought and the ways in which language can bring change.

Languages and Literacies are Multiple and Shifting and Are Taken Up as Practices and Resources For Particular Purposes in Everyday Lives (Theme 3)

The data and analysis presented here regarding languages and literacies were considered in relation to the overarching research questions posed: How do refugee women engage in an out-of-school book club? What can be learned about the everyday lived experiences, literacy practices, and language use of resettled refugee women through an exploration of the book club? And, in what ways might a book club community influence refugee women’s literacy practices and everyday lives? I was intentional in seeking out and studying participants’ language use and literacy practices within the book club, the stories they shared, and their everyday lives. I chose to focus on languages and literacies, as the literature I studied and my years of experience as a volunteer and teacher in the refugee community revealed the ways in which the two profoundly influenced and affected everyday lives.

All of the refugee women in this study were multilingual. Some could read and write in multiple languages, and all could speak and use more than one language in their everyday lives. All could read in English. Evidence of participants' multiple language use and literacies was clear. Although refugees, especially women, are often depicted and described as illiterate and even ignorant, these participants negotiated multiple, complex literacy practices in and out of school and moved capably between and among languages. They took up languages and literacies as tools and resources and expanded their repertoires of practice to navigate transnational lives and shifting subjectivities. Through languages and literacy practices, they maintained ties to multiple spaces and cultures, crossed borders, and exerted agency over their positionings and imaginings.

In coding, I first noted pieces of transcript text related to Reading with [RD] and coded the pieces related to writing separately. After awhile, I moved from the narrow and distinctly separate way of looking at reading and writing and began to search for pieces related to literacy practices more broadly. These clustered under the focused code Literacy Practices [LP]. Transcript pieces related to language use congregated around the focused code Language [LN]. In keyword frequencies, the word *language* showed up 170 times, and *English* showed up 139 times in our discussions during nine meetings. This is not surprising given the value that is placed on English and the understandings these women possess regarding the power that English and literacy hold. Language and literacy were tightly tied to understanding and knowing, power, authority, and positioning. *Read* was the second most-used word in the keyword frequencies, and *book* was third. This also makes sense considering that the focus of this was a book club.

Data and analysis showed that participants tightly tied reading to knowing and understanding, and they viewed reading as a negotiation of meaning. Reading was also a dialogic and

social practice. In contrast to many theories of reading that situate the practice within the mind of an individual, these young women described and practiced reading socially. For most of the participants, it seemed that this related to the transnational, historical, and cultural practices they had gathered through storytelling and practices of the oral traditions. Although participants regularly and capably took up multiple languages and literacies, they had shifting and sometimes contradictory beliefs and opinions about both. These women recognized that some languages and literacy practices are prioritized and privileged, and they themselves sometimes chose to prioritize and privilege one language over another in particular spaces.

In the subsections that follow, I present evidence to support the overarching theme I found in and through data analysis and interpretation: Languages and literacies are multiple and shifting and are taken up as practices and resources for particular purposes in everyday lives. In exploring evidence related to this finding, I also address my purposes to (a) learn more about refugee women's everyday lives and experiences in resettlement; (b) learn more about the connections and intersections between languages, literacies, and everyday lives; and (c) contest deficit discourses that circulate around refugee women.

The subsections that follow focus attention on evidence to show the ways in which these women took up and deployed multiple languages and literacies to negotiate and transform subjectivities. The women positioned themselves in particular ways in order to transform, create, and maintain social relations and networks. A focus on participants' stories and described experiences will shed light on the dialogic tensions and complexity of these activities. Although language and literacy can be tightly tied together in ideologies, and they can act in similar ways to connect and create historical, cultural, and social bonds, such as in nationalism, the two constructs will be treated separately here. First, I present data, analysis, and interpretations that re-

veal the ways in which the women in the club described their language practices and experiences and used language in their everyday lives. Secondly, I present evidence as to the ways literacies are practiced, experienced, and used in everyday lives. Finally, I discuss the tensions in transformations.

Language use and change.

> My mother prided herself on the ease and speed with which I picked up English. In public with Americans, she'd nudge me and whisper in Persian, "Show them how well you speak! Even better than they can speak their own language!" At home, though, I could expect nothing but reprimands for speaking "that" language instead of "ours." "Don't use your big English words on me!" she'd chide.—Darznik, *TGD*, p. 277

In the excerpt above from *The Good Daughter*, the narrator notes the shifting subjectivities surrounding language use in her life and shows how English is differently tied to power and positionings in different spaces. She recognizes the complex ways that language crosses public and private borders. She and her mother acknowledge that English has public power and holds a privileged status. The mother accepts English for the power, privilege, and position it affords in the wider community, but she resists the daughter's attempts to use English at home. The mother does not seem to want the daughter to take up a position of power in that private space and challenge traditional parent–child roles or the culture of home.

Shifting positions, power, and subjectivities. Most of the participants in this study, like the narrator above, recognized the power of English in their lives and so were invested in learning and practicing. Pia was an exception. As the participant who was the most ambivalent toward English learning and practice, she spent the least amount of time using and practicing the language. She knew it was important in school and was willing to study and work towards graduation because of the material value that she believed that a diploma would have; and yet, outside

of school, she was much more invested in her primary language. For her, the Karen language held more power in her home and community, and that is where she invested her time and placed more value. Pia once told a story about how bothered she was by her younger sisters' inability to speak in Karen:

> Yeah. My little sisters, they don't know their own language; they don't know how to write and read. When they play, my two little sisters, when they play they talk in English and when they talks to me, I say, "I don't know English, don't talk to me in English." (session 2, episode OO)

Pia made it clear throughout the study that her primary language was of primary importance in her life. She spoke often and openly about her desires to return to Burma and Thailand in the future. She understood that in order to do so and find work there she would need to practice and learn more of the Thai language she had lost (session 3, p. 44). Pia also may have felt that using English inside the privacy of their home was inappropriate for her family. Both of her grandparents lived with them and neither spoke English at all, so Pia may have felt that in using English her sisters were excluding and even dishonoring their grandparents.

Pia strongly positioned herself as Karen and Karen-speaking when she said that she did not know English and did not want her sisters to talk to her in English. However, in our book club, Pia used English regularly, as she did at school. Her desires to participate as part of the book club, maintain and make connections, and complete her school summer reading project all became reasons to use and take up English. She did so for particular purposes in a particular space. Pia also admitted that she struggled with English, especially higher-level English vocabulary in her school textbooks and in 11th-grade-level fiction texts. She noted, "It's big words, and when I read, I can't remember" (session 3, p. 58). This sentiment came up in our book club sev-

eral times, and Pia was influential in our practice of reading aloud together. She may have felt inadequate compared to her younger sisters, who had learned English so well that they felt more comfortable speaking in English than in Karen.

In the same narrative excerpt, right before Pia told us about her sisters, Lucy told us that she was no longer going to be able to join us for Saturday book club meetings. She said that she had been asked by her Chin church to teach the younger children language lessons on Saturdays from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. She said, “They decided that most of the children who were born here, they don’t know the language” (session 2, episode OO). Lucy was not willing to say no to this opportunity to act as teacher and leader in her community. She only attended one other book club meeting after this. Like Pia, she and others in her community were concerned about younger children losing their abilities to use and communicate in their primary language. This theme of losing and forgetting language came up a number of times throughout our discussions.

Being multilingual. Participants seemed to be invested in both learning English and holding onto their primary languages. In fact, in one meeting, Christy said, “The old people say, ‘You’re forgetting the language.’ And, I’m like, ‘No, I don’t.’ For me, I don’t think I sound like I’m forgetting the language” (session 3, p. 59). Christy resisted the notion that she might be losing or forgetting her language. She was proud of the fact that she knew at least three different languages fluently.

Nan also came to the United States knowing multiple languages, but she told us that she was losing one of her languages. She said, “The language of Mabaan, I’m, like, losing it. I don’t know. I can’t really speak it that well.” Later she elaborated, “Well, at home I use English and Arabic, but my parents speak Mabaan to me. So, when I answer them, I speak Arabic. … I don’t know” (session 4, pp. 65–66). Nan’s story reflects the difficulties many refugees face. Children,

such as Nan, are sometimes born and raised in countries or cities other than where parents or grandparents were born; they may grow up learning different languages than parents, and this can lead to difficulty communicating and maintaining connections.

Nan's parents used Mabaan at home, a lesser-known language used by the Mabaan people of South Sudan, of which there are believed to be about 50,000 speakers (Lewis, Simons, & Fennig, 2015). Nan grew up in an urban refugee space just outside Khartoum, a large city in Sudan, where she learned Arabic in school. Her parents also knew some Arabic but chose to use Mabaan at home. Because Nan could still communicate with her parents in Arabic, which is spoken by many people from Sudan and elsewhere, Nan was not invested in maintaining Mabaan at the time. Arabic afforded her access to more people and communities and different opportunities than Mabaan could.

Although the women in this study were concerned with maintaining their home languages, Nan, Christy and the others were also invested in learning English, at least for particular purposes. They were all enrolled in school or ESL programs and spent time and energy learning English. This was tightly tied to their subjectivities, the ways in which they wished to be seen and understood, and connected them to real and imagined communities and futures. They understood that English was necessary if they wanted access to communities and spaces for learning, higher education, and work.

The women imagined success for themselves in multiple forms and realized that in order to position themselves as successful and capable in the United States, they needed English. English was a common language needed for negotiations and understandings in school, to get jobs, and to make new friends and build relationships with people from other places. They learned and

understood that some languages are more privileged and more valuable than others. This was clear in one excerpt where we discussed taking a foreign language in high school.

Session 2, episode MM: Knowing languages and doing school

> **Pia:** Next year in my schedule, they put me in Spanish II.
> **Par:** They can tell the school they can read and write in another language, and they won't… [trails off]
> **Lucy:** They say to graduate you have to have one year.
> **Amy:** I know, but you already speak foreign languages! It's not that I'm against you learning Spanish, but the thing is, if you're still learning English and you need more practice… [trails off]
> **Pia:** And the woman who helped me with my schedule, I said, "I don't want Spanish II. I don't want to learn any more." She said, "You need to. If you want to go to college," she was like, "blah, blah."
> **Par:** Tell your counselor that you already know a language. My brother didn't take a language. He told them he could speak and write and read in Hindi and they gave him a test, I think, and he passed it so he didn't have to take language.

Pia had previously expressed to us her frustration around having to take Spanish in school. She struggled to pass the first class and worried about having to take another. Pia was still working to learn English and was not interested or invested in learning Spanish. Pia also spent a great deal of time reading and writing in Karen. She loved Karen stories, and she read the Karen news online and in local papers. However, Karen was not offered as a class at school, and there was no test available in Karen. Pia could not test out for credit, as Par's brother had with Hindi. Unlike Hindi, a language spoken by more people and with more prestige in the global economy, Karen seemed to hold little value.

Recognizing language privilege. The exchange above reflects the sometimes hidden or unrecognized discourses of language privilege. Monolingual English speakers in U.S. schools arguably need access to other languages for travel abroad, study abroad, entrance into institutions of higher education, and business purposes. The languages taught in American schools are often

chosen based on their material value and social capital. The message from schools, then, is that the languages these young women speak, such as Karen, Chin, and Kirundi—their mother tongues—carry little value and add nothing to their educational experiences. In addition, the emphasis in language learning in schools is placed almost entirely on the literacy aspects. There are few measures for spoken language use in schools and little value placed on one's ability to speak and communicate effectively in a language if it cannot also be written and read. For many of these women and their families, access to literacy learning in their primary languages was limited and therefore held limited value and purpose. Communication through spoken word, stories, and songs and the carrying of culture could all be done without print literacy.

Recognizing the power of spoken/oral language. Lucy shared a poignant story about her grandmother that revealed other ways of thinking about language, especially oral language. She told us that her grandmother did not know how to read and write in her Chin language, but "the way she talked, she lived happily, and they say she was very kind" (session 10, p. 27). Lucy went on, "she didn't know how to cook, which I don't know how to cook. But, they say she went to every house, and she knows a lot of stuff and brings them news" (session 10, p.27). In a previous story, Lucy had told us how not being able to cook positioned her as a child in her family rather than as the oldest daughter or as a woman. Here, Lucy used her narrative as an opportunity to reposition and align herself with her grandmother. Lucy spoke highly of her grandmother and connected the ability to talk and speak well, and to orally share information and news with others, as a resource and asset.

Lucy saw the social capital available through talk and speech. She tied speech and language to knowing things, "lots of stuff." Her grandmother may not have known how to cook, but she did know how to talk, tell stories, and connect to people through language, and Lucy seemed

to think this was a very good thing. The fact that Lucy was so eager to take up a position as a language teacher for the community children may very well have something to do with her desire to be valued for her language abilities and as someone who "knows things," like her grandmother.

Christy, Pia, Mai, and Gul spoke openly about the ways in which their language connected them to culture and community. Gul said, "There's so many Hindi songs, when I hear them sing in Hindi, it's so beautiful words" (session 7, p.125). Hindi was not Gul's home language or primary language, but it connected her to India, with its culture, language, and memories of the people she knew growing up there. Mai and Pia described the ways that singing Karen songs in their native language connected them with other youth at church and with the larger Karen community online. Gul, Par, Sana, and Farah talked about their shared prayer times, and Christy described how "Every night, we're supposed to eat together and pray together" (session 4, p.53). In doing so, her family practiced Kirundi together and maintained ties to their language, faith, history, culture, and each other.

Language as multilingual resource. Like Lucy's grandmother, the participants performed and described the ways in which language was used to make connections to the texts we read, the characters in the texts, each other, and others at home and in their communities. Throughout our meetings, book club members moved freely and fluidly between languages. I noted at least 20 times within the transcripts when participants struck up side discussions in languages other than the common language of English. Sometimes participants were translating, clarifying, and questioning; at other times they were working out an agreement or rebuttal story to tie to something that had just been said; at still other times, the conversations were private and did not connect back directly to the rest of the group. There seemed to be no expectations or con-

cerns around these practices. Not once did anyone say anything about someone else speaking her own language.

There was openness and tolerance for multiplicity and plurality and for questioning to clarify what someone else said. Our book club was truly founded on and grounded in this openness. In our very first meeting, participants rallied around the idea that there should be a helpful reciprocity towards understanding the texts. Gul suggested, and others agreed, “Read, and what you don’t understand, write down the vocabulary that we don’t understand; we can discuss” (session 1, p.13). A general understanding prevailed among the group members that sometimes you had to use and talk through things in your own language in order to make sense of them.

Language barriers. Based on their previous experiences, Pia and Mai knew that having a linguistic and cultural broker could improve their school experience. They shared a story once about a new friend who was already 18 and had recently arrived with limited English in a local high school. Pia and Mai said, “She doesn’t know English and how to read and write in English yet. She’s not good at that yet” (session 6, p. 30). They knew that this would make school difficult for their new friend, but they quickly told us, “We will help her. There are lots of Karen people there who speak the language” (session 6, p.30). These women relied on social networks of friends, teachers, mentors, and tutors to help them navigate school, social services, and more. They understood the value of having a guide and broker to help navigate new and complex systems in a foreign language.

Mai shared a related story in the same meeting. She told us that she had recently suffered a severe asthma attack and had to go to the hospital. Once there, she realized that she no longer had medical aid or coverage. Like many of the refugees I know, Mai struggled to navigate the complex U.S. health care system. Language was a major barrier in this struggle. When a health

care aid was sent to Mai's home after her hospital visit, she told us, "I don't know what they say. The agent from family aid comes, but I don't know. They came and asked me lots of questions" (session 5, pp. 4–5). Without a translator or interpreter to help Mai and the agent communicate, little was accomplished. However, Mai got her mentor involved in the process as a linguistic and cultural broker. Mai used the English she did know and understand and drew upon the social networks and resources she had to navigate this situation.

The stories shared above reveal the distinctions between private and public worlds in regards to language and the borders and boundaries that language differences can cause. In the book club and among friends in more private spaces, movement between languages was more fluid and had fewer consequences. It could not be regulated and judged the way that language often is in more official spaces. For the woman who was new to school in the United States at 18, and for Mai, the potential consequences of language were high. Access and opportunities were differently afforded based on the languages they knew and could use.

Language as difference.

> When she dragged me along to the mall or grocery store, I'd stand by mutely as she struggled to communicate with Americans. Very soon I could tell that hers was not a fashionable or exotic accent but rough and ugly to these strangers' ears. One word out of her mouth and Americans would stare her down, hard and long.
>
> —Darznik, *TGD*, p. 277–78

Participants agreed that language was a marker of difference, working to separate and categorize in ways similar to skin color. Christy, Nan, and Mai all shared stories indicating that not knowing English was tightly tied to ignorance. In our fourth meeting, Gul told a story about her younger sister Par, who was actually the most fluent English speaker in the group, that pointed to the ways that language difference can be felt and experienced. She told us Par "cried when she first went to school in the U.S. She felt so different" (session 4, p. 54). Par added, "I was

never in a place where people spoke full English. It was my first time, and it was different" (session 4, p. 53). They told us that Par cried again as she shared her experience at home.

Later in the same book club meeting, Christy said, "I get, like, nervous when I go to places that I know I have to speak, that I will be judged based on how I speak. Then, I just get there and, like, I can't even say anything, even the things I know how to say. I can't even communicate because I'm so nervous that I'm going to be judged on how I speak" (session 4, pp. 58–59). Language marks difference, acting as a mechanism for categorizing people. As Christy described so well, one can become silenced from fear of being marked, categorized, or judged.

Christy also told us she worried about finding a good job due to her natural African hairstyle and her spoken English. In the excerpt above, she explained how her fears and worries might keep her from even being able to speak. Exclusion from particular groups, activities, and opportunities was a daily reality for these women, and was often tied to language. The material consequences of language were clear in their stories. Language and language practices were tightly tied to their abilities to transform and create subjectivities and social relations, to create and maintain ties to multiple spaces and cultures. Language acted as a transnational resource in their everyday lives, evidence of their mutli/plural identities and shifting subjectivities.

In the next section, I present evidence related to how literacy operates in similar ways in participants' everyday lives, and I look at the ways in which these women took up and used literacy in agentive ways.

Literacies. As mentioned in the previous section, literacies and languages are often tightly tied together as tools and resources for affiliation. They can work together to include or exclude people from particular communities and opportunities. However, in this study, participants used multiple and complex literacy practices to position themselves strategically in particular

spaces and resisted exclusion. Although some of the women in this study had limited literacy experiences, all of them took up and deployed multiple literacies in their everyday lives for different reasons. Many of the literacies they used helped them navigate transnational lives, create new and expanding social networks, and maintain ties to faraway people and places. Their literacy practices expanded here in resettlement, as they added new ways of navigating everyday lives around printed texts.

Orality and literacy. As noted, many participants highly valued oral language and the oral traditions and stories of their cultures and countries. All of them had literacy experiences tied to oral language and telling. Many references to prayers, songs, poems, chants, faith stories, cultural stories, proverbs, and sayings were shared during our book club meetings, and participants connected what they knew to these shared oral tradition texts. They also connected these texts to the printed texts we were reading and the dialogic texts we constructed together in the club. On many occasions, Gul talked about Hindi and Pashto poems she knew, connecting them to the new texts we read in the club.

In researching Afghanistan's literature and poetry, I discovered that as a group, Afghan people, whether literate or not, are considered to be a literate culture. Storytelling and in particular poetry are important to Afghan history and culture and allows for both literate and non-literate people to participate in the cultural traditions and pass them along (Dupree, 2002) Christy, Pia, Mai, and Lucy all similarly drew upon literacy practices and resources that blurred lines between orality and literacy. They gathered these resources and practices in their movements across borders and carried them here. As evidenced by their prevalence in our discussions, they continued to use these resources and practices for multiple reasons. However, all of the participants added to their repertoires in resettlement, learning new practices for navigating a print-

focused world here and for maintaining ties across borders. In taking up literacies, participants recognized that, much like language, they carried different amounts of capital and had varying degrees of perceived legitimacy.

In our sixth meeting, I pulled out a longer narrative episode entitled “Woman in the Moon” (session 6, episode R). In our dialogue, we were discussing Amy Tan’s “Moon Lady” story in *JLC*. Several participants connected personally to the story and told the stories and poems they knew about the moon. In doing so, they identified with Tan and positioned themselves as tellers and knowers. They shared cultural knowledge and literature from the oral tradition. Pia, Mai, and Christy all made it clear that they also had a rich heritage of stories and positioned themselves as knowledgeable others. They wanted to teach us about their own stories of the moon, and Pia and Mai tried to recite and translate a Karen moon poem for us. In my research, I found that Karen literature was mostly oral and that the “stories and poems, called *ta*, are a vital, living, and ever-changing aspect of Karen culture” (Ranard, Barron & CAL, 2007). In the oral tradition and in storytelling, stories and poems are dynamic and change with telling in time and space.

Connecting to Pia and Mai’s moon poem, Christy told us a story she knew about the woman in the moon. It was a moral tale, steeped in cultural tradition, and specifically tied to her Christian roots. The moral warned women against work on Sundays, the Christian Sabbath day. Christy positioned herself with Mai, Pia, and Amy Tan as a knower of stories and as someone who possessed knowledge and could pass that knowledge along. In sharing their stories in this space, they positioned themselves as women who know. Although they still considered themselves to be English learners, they had enough English and confidence to move among languages and to share the things they knew in and through their primary languages in English.

This is not the case for many refugees and immigrants, especially when they are newcomers in resettlement. Often, they are unable to show and to share what they know because they do not have the necessary English. Their knowledge, wisdom, and experiences are invisible to most of the monolingual English speakers around them. It is difficult for them to position themselves as powerful or as authorities in almost any area, including in their own families, because they do not possess the language of authority and power.

Being a reader. In choosing to participate in an out-of-school book club, the women in this study positioned themselves as active readers, capable of reading books and creating conversations around books. Although they had little direct knowledge about book clubs, they were eager to participate and imagine themselves as book club members. In our first meeting, we spent a great deal of time talking about the club and our expectations and ideas about it. All participants found agreement around the shared experience of meaning-making. It was clear that for them, understanding was fundamental to reading, and that from their point of view, reading was a social and dialogic practice of making sense. As Sana said, “We can discuss with someone, how can I understand this?” (session 1, episode BB). She pointed out, “We discuss it and make sure everybody understood” (session 1, p.11). Reading did not occur within the mind alone, but rather was socially enacted. In reflection, I felt this was connected to their cultural and social experiences with oral literature and traditions, communal tellings, and shared meanings.

In one early meeting, I realized that Mai had asked four different times for us to read aloud. She was persistent in pushing us toward shared reading rather than reading alone at home. Later, Pia suggested the same thing. I connected this read-aloud practice to oral literacies and reading as a performed telling experience. I was interested in the ways in which schools in the United States focus on silent and individual reading as compared to what these participants expe-

rienced in other spaces. A contradictory statement made in another meeting also struck me. In contrast to the club, Pia and Christy described how they were embarrassed to read aloud at school (session 4, p.59). They took up different positionings and were positioned in different ways inside and outside of school.

Christy also shared that she enjoyed reading books together with a friend from church. One day at the end of book club, Christy asked if I could help her order a book online and have it delivered to her home like I did with our books for book club (session 5, p.131). She told me that she and her friend had been reading a book series from a Christian author with a female main character. She wanted me to order them the last book, which they could not find at the library. In doing so, Christy positioned herself as a reader and made it clear that reading was socially situated for her.

In our first meeting, Christy told me, "I love reading books and then keeping them. … That's part of the reason that I wanted to do the book club, so that I could keep the books" (session 1, p.13). Christy positioned herself as a reader in this statement and made it clear that there was something different about owning a book than borrowing it from the library. Christy saw books as having both material and social value. She could position herself as a reader and as someone who owns and collects books. Situating this statement in the material reality of the space in which Christy lived, as a refugee woman with few financial resources and few material possessions, revealed the power of Christy's positionings and the agency she used to position herself in new ways.

Gul and Sana, too, often positioned themselves as readers in the club. They had opinions about the books and about book choices. Sana suggested, "I want to read books about women and real life," and Gul added that she wanted these to be "adult books, not like teenager books"

(session 1, p.17). In one narrative excerpt, which I titled "Busy Readers and Workers," the two women use their co-constructed story as a tool to position themselves as women who read, are literate, and are capable workers and wage earners.

Excerpt from session 1, excerpt EE: Busy readers and workers

Sana: You see on my table, "Oh, I have that much books!"
Gul: I started a book, reading one month, and I haven't finished.
Christy: I have to read every day for 30 minutes.
S: These last two weeks, we are very, very busy. We don't have time to comb our hair.
G: We working for a church, like we making choir robes.
Amy: Ah! How about that? I was going to ask you how the business was going. So, you're making choir robes now?
S: Yeah. It's in Littleton (pseudonym); it's a Spanish people church.
Par: I think it's a Catholic Church.
Amy: Wow. How about that? I wonder how they found you?
C: Yeah. How did they find you?
Gul: In my school, I have a friend, and she was talking, and I tell her I have my small business, and she ask, "Can you sew?" And I say, "Yes." I gave my card to her, and she say, "We really want you!"
S: For 20 children, we did the measurement when we went.
Gul: It's very hard to make it. Very hard.
Amy: Really?
G: It looks simple, but not simple.

The way that Gul and Sana positioned themselves as readers was impressive given that only five years before, neither of them could read in English. Gul and Sana had very limited print literacy experiences prior to coming to the United States, and they had been unable to attend any formal schooling in Afghanistan or India. However, they had multiple everyday literacies in their lives, especially around oral traditions, faith traditions, carpet-making, embroidery, and sewing. After they told us about their everyday reading practices, they described the challenging work that they do.

Gul told us they got a job sewing 20 choir robes for children because of a friend she made in her ESL class and a business card she had made for their business. By taking up new literacy practices in creating a card, Gul and Sana communicated and acquired the sewing job using English language and literacy. They drew upon multiple literacy practices, some of which came with them across space and time, in designing and creating the robes. They came to this new space as resettled refugees with their family with a wide range of experiences and literacies and took up new literacies in order to position themselves in particular ways and create new subjectivities and identities. Here, they positioned as literate, knowledgeable, successful women.

As readers and book club members, participants shared their difficulties with reading as well as their capabilities. There were times when book club members struggled to make sense of the books we read. In contrast to their reading practices at school, they voiced their concerns and sought help. Participants also shared their challenges at school related to reading. They discussed being embarrassed to read aloud in front of teachers and other students. They talked about difficulties reading long passages and making sense out of them on tests. Pia told us, "Reading [at school] is hard. I don't like reading too hard" (session 3, p.18). Par described reading at school as "boring." She told us that her class was assigned to read *Beowulf* and take notes, and she was struggling to complete the assignment. She said that she "didn't care if there was personification" (session 7, p.122.) She said, "I just want to know what they're talking about" (session 7, p.122.). In her statement, Par echoed the group understanding that reading was about meaning-making. Gul also told us that Par "was so upset when she was reading it [*Macbeth*], she cried" (session 7, p.123) Both Pia and Par aptly described the difficulties they faced reading at school.

Despite their challenges, participants positioned themselves as students with strong opinions about reading. Another example of this is shown here in the excerpt that follows. In our sec-

ond session together, we were talking about how the reading had been going with *The Good Daughter*.

Session 2, episode HH: "I can tell you"

Lucy: It's hard to understand. It's complicated.
Nan: Yeah.
Amy: Okay. Okay, good. Can you tell me why?
Lucy: I mean, the way she writes; [pause] confusing.
A: Can you tell me more? Explain to me why you think it's confusing?
L: The way she writes.
[16 lines/turns at talk later]
Lucy: I can tell you. She stops, and then she writes something else. Then, something else.
Par: Like, she changes her story?
Gul: Like, she changes one subject to another topic. She doesn't, like, go smoothly.
Par: She just doesn't finish the subject.
A: Okay, all right.

Lucy began by clearly stating that the book was complicated and hard to understand. When prodded for more detail, she positioned herself as someone capable of reading and making sense of texts. She put the responsibility for making the story clear onto the author. She later positioned herself as someone who is capable of explaining why a text is challenging or more difficult to read. When she recognized that no one else was able to verbalize what she perceived as confusing, she spoke up again and said, "I can tell you." At that point, Lucy explained how the confusion arose from the author's movement in time and space. Par and Gul agreed and helped corroborate Lucy's position. In this space, these women created a shared explanation. The dialogic space provided for multiple speakers to position themselves as knowing readers. They listened to and valued each other's opinions and regarded each other as knowledgeable. This seemed to stand in contrast to the ways they described reading at school.

Being writers. During our first book club meeting, I handed out colorful journals and multicolored pens. I asked participants to write in these journals any notes, comments, questions, or responses they had to the texts we read. At the time, they seemed willing and open to using and sharing them. As the study went on, I realized that no one was bringing their journals and that probably no one was writing in them. In analysis and in the keyword frequencies, I found that the word *write* showed up 131 times, and *writing* 67 times. In contrast, the word *read* showed up 522 times and *book* 520 times. This indicated that although traditional writing was part of literacy and the book club, it was not as important or prominent in the book club participants' meaning-making and interactions.

As I mentioned in chapter 3, I had assumed that journal-writing would be one of our practices even though it is rarely considered part of a typical book club. As it turned out, though journal writing was not a regular practice in our club, participants did take many opportunities to write emails and texts and sometimes wrote notes in the margins of their books. In the beginning, Par asked, "Are we gonna be able to write in the books?" (session 1, p.13) Like Christy, she had expressed her joy at being able to keep and own the books and seemed excited to be able to write in the books. She wound up mostly keeping track of new vocabulary and unknown words in the margins (session 4, p.21). (This was another obvious difference from reading school books; the club books became their private property.) The participants also took up other digital literacy practices; almost all of our decisions around books and meeting dates were made online. The women in the study were highly capable of using technology in their daily lives and took up digital literacies as one of their daily literacy practices.

In addition to emails, chats, and texts online, these women participated in many other forms of writing in their daily lives outside the book club. Gul and Sana did a great deal of writ-

ing related to their sewing business, such as proposals and invoices. Sana worked with her family and an attorney to prepare all the paperwork for her husband's application for refugee status and resettlement in Georgia. Christy did daily homework for math summer school and studied for her Certified Nurse's Assistant classes. Lucy and Mai taught and prepared classes for younger children in their churches. Pia did her summer reading homework packet. Christy also told us that she regularly wrote in a personal diary (session 7, p.51). These women were writing and were writers, even though they did not often position themselves that way.

I found that for the refugee women in this study, writing was a greater challenge than reading. Being students in different types of formal or official English learning programs seemed to complicate their positions in relation to writing. They were active and creative in using multiple literacy practices, but by and large, they did not position or see themselves as capable writers. Not one of them identified as a writer. In one of our meetings, Pia talked at great length about school and her challenges around language, testing, and writing. She said, "there is too much test" and "you have to write essay all the time" (session 3, p.16). She was especially frustrated by essay-type tests. She said, "Then you receive a topic, and you have to write about it, but I don't know about it. I don't know how to write" (session 3, p.17). Pia's comments and our dialogues around writing pointed to the associations between school and writing.

In another meeting, I told Gul that I thought she was a good writer. She resisted and said, "I'm not good. Like, I study, but I'm not so good for school stuff, study stuff. But other stuff, I like to do" (session 8, p.123). She went on to describe what she meant, saying, "You have vision, but it's hard to put on paper. Yeah. Many times I read, and I have so many ideas. And when I take pen and write, I forget everything. I can't even write one word" (session 8, p.124). Before coming to the United States and learning English, Gul had not known how to write in Pashto or

any other language. At the time of this study, she had been studying English for about five years. She did not yet feel comfortable or confident enough to position herself as a writer. For both Pia and Gul, school-related writing was fraught and frustrating. Pia said, “When I came to America, I never write. I used to write in my language” (session 3, p.53).

Pia’s Karen writing practices traveled with her to the United States, but they were of little use in her American high school. She found that only particular types of literacy were legitimate and valued. School reading and school writing were important and held a great deal of privilege and value in terms of her future. However, the writing she enjoyed doing back in Thailand, such as poems, songs, and fairytales, held no real value for her in the United States. She did not find space to bring what she knew into her classroom and could not use that to position herself as a successful and capable writer or student. Pia’s stories were evidence of the ways in which particular literacy practices were prioritized and privileged, especially those having to do with English, school, and future success, at the expense of other kinds of literacies that had crossed the border with her.

Participants in the study were active in taking up new literacy practices in order to navigate new spaces, and they often shared in our meetings what they learned. For example, Mai explained how she passed all of her May end-of-course exams and had learned about test-taking as a particular type of literacy practice at school. First, she advised the group that when it comes to long reading passages, “You don’t have to read the whole passage. They give you the question in the box there, and then you try to find the answer” (session 5, p.11). Later, she went on to say, “You don’t have to go and read everything. Most often, you look for the specific vocabulary word” (session 7, p.12). Mai had come to this country with very different experiences of schooling; the camp school she described required different tools, skills, knowledge, and resources than

her American high school. Mai and others shared many concerns over end-of-course tests, graduation exams, college entrance tests, driving tests, and tests that required different literacies, and they took up new literacy practices to navigate these.

Digital literacies. Digital literacies, in particular, were highly instrumental in social practices. All of the women in the study used computers, Internet, and cell phones to communicate locally and across borders. They wrote emails and texts, created Facebook pages, used Skype, and chatted. They even asked me to set up a private Facebook page for our book club and use email for our scheduling. They studied online for driving exams and the SAT and ACT. We used Google to look up questions about words or cultures in our book club meetings. We used Amazon.com to order our books and read reviews. We looked up college entrance requirements and jobs postings online. Gul and Sana looked for fabrics for their sewing jobs online. Par, Mai, and Pia used Spark Notes to look up information on books for school. Nan and Christy used YouTube to look up hairstyles.

Literacies connected to faith also traveled with them, and continued to transform in resettlement as the women accessed online faith-related texts, videos, and songs. Mai and Pia used YouTube to learn new songs for youth group and to record and share the videos they made. Pia created videos with friends singing Karen love songs and shared them on YouTube as well. Literacies connected to technologies were part of every book club meeting, as well as participants' everyday lives.

Summary. The following two excerpts from Darznik's *The Good Daughter* illustrate our dialogic understandings around languages and literacies. Together, these lines reveal the privilege that is afforded to English and Western education in discourses that travel globally and

speak to the power of literacies to act as resources and practices for particular positionings and purposes in everyday lives.

> Sohrab sent his nephews to scour the city's bookstores for every last European novel—all the French and English classics he himself had never read but that had always seemed to him an indispensible part of a truly educated person's repertoire. He ordered her to read them all. (p. 119)
>
> Though she could not read and had never been to school, she could recite the Koran by heart from beginning to end in Arabic—God's tongue—and she knew most of the hadith as well (p. 8).

The women in this book club study took up new language and literacy practices in order to navigate transnational everyday lives. Their languages and literacies shifted and were negotiated in particular spaces and times for particular purposes. To a large extent, they were able to use the languages and literacies they carried with them and add new practices to their repertoires. They used these to take up and transform subjectivities as students, drivers, workers, readers, writers, and more. They also used them to create and maintain social relations and networks.

Living Here and There: The Transnational (Theme 4)

During data collection and in the processes of analysis and coding, it became clear that the transnational—the literal, virtual, and imagined border crossings between here and there and now and then—was woven through all aspects of life for these nine women and therefore was woven throughout our readings and book club discussions. I noticed and recorded at least 140 instances where participants spoke directly about "here and there" and the transnational in their lives. I aggregated them under the focused code or category termed Here and There. Although Here and There/Transnational [HT] became one of the 14 focused codes or categories in the analysis process, there was no way to untangle the transnational from the other 13 focused codes and categories that developed: Book Club [BC], Literacy Practices [LP], Others and Othering

[OR], Hardships and Difficulties [HD], Girls and Women [GW], Friends and Boyfriends [FB], Work and Money [WM], Faith and Religion [FR], Family and Home [FH], Language [LN], School/Schooling [SC], Teaching and Learning [TL], and Authority and Agency [AA].

In coding and in the narratives and stories I pulled out for analysis, the transnational was evident. In the women's reading, understandings, and everyday experiences, the local and global were always at play. Their ways of thinking and acting in the world were, are, and seemingly will continue to be influenced and changed by their movement and navigations across cultures, spaces, and times. In the process of analysis and codeweaving, some of the verb phrases I clustered around Here and There [HT] were the following: Living here and there, Being here and there, Resettling, Making choices/choosing and not choosing, Remembering and Forgetting, Changing and Maintaining or not changing, Feeling safe and not feeling safe, Comparing, Judging, Losing and Learning, Imagining, Navigating, Negotiating, and Taking up literacy practices.

As I analyzed, reflected on, and wrote about these processes, I began to see the ways that Here and There [HT] and the transnational were more than a category; they were, for my participants, an overarching theme and way of knowing, being, and doing. In looking back at my research questions, which express the desire to learn more about refugee women's everyday lives, it was clear that my participants' lives in resettlement were first and foremost transnational, lived out across spaces and times—literal, imagined, and remembered. Even our book choices were transnational: *The Good Daughter: A Memoir of My Mother's Hidden Life* (2011) by Jasmin Darznik and later *The Joy Luck Club* (2006) by Amy Tan (see Selected Text Table). The two texts chosen, read, and discussed in our book club often illuminated and reflected participants' transnational experiences.

Excerpt from session 3, episode H: "Live partially there and also here"

Christy: I want to go back to live. But not stay there.
Pia: Me too; I want to go back there.
C: Actually live partially there and also here.
P: I don't really like America.
Amy: You don't really like America?
C: No, me neither.

This episode occurred during a special book club meeting held outdoors in a park. Only three of us were present that day. The intimacy, setting, and text we brought with us led to a more reflective session in which participants, Christy and Pia, shared memories and experiences from Africa and Asia, respectively, and tied these to their lives here and their future imaginings for themselves. The short co-constructed narrative above, told in the present tense, revealed the ambivalence they expressed at that moment about living here and/or there. Christy started by simply stating that she wants "to go back [to Burundi] to live." She immediately qualified her statement with a "but," making it clear that she would go to live "but not stay there." Christy attempted to further clarify by stating that she would "actually live partially there and also here." She seemed unsure but interested in being part of both worlds. Pia resisted Christy's sentiment, pronouncing, "I don't really like America." Christy then shifted her positioning, perhaps to build consensus with Pia. Her agreement might be understood as movement back towards her first statement and towards a desire to go back to the place that was once her home. This narrative ended on a negative note, and the distaste, discomfort, or discontent with life in America is foregrounded.

The brief narrative created between Christy and Pia reminded me of a section we had read from *The Good Daughter*. In it, Jasmin, the narrator, contrasted the Iranian girl to the American girl. Implicitly, an Iranian girl is a good daughter, and an American girl is not, and maybe can never be.

> Then we came to America and I started turning into an American girl. That's when she began telling me about The Good Daughter. The Good Daughter lives in Iran. She didn't talk back—as I had learned to do in this *kharab shodeh*, this broken-down place. (Darznik, 2011, p. 2–3)

The passage draws to a bitter end, like Christy and Pia's narrative, when in the last sentence, Jasmin describes herself and America using her Farsi words, "as a broken down place."

In these two texts, the push and pull between here and there and the transnational influence on these women's lives is clear. Christy and Pia each longed for and imagined a time when she might go back home. They pointed out that things are different here and there and imagined that changing places would in some way change their lives. Jasmin, too, recognized difference, and she compared what she was "here" to what she might have been "there" in Iran. Her mother connected being good to that place. Meanwhile, Jasmin learned and understood that in being American she could not be like the good daughter there in Iran. She was tied to America and seemed dissatisfied with that, as she likens herself to the "broken down place." America is broken down and thus, so is she. Similarly, the women, Christy, Pia, and Jasmin, were discontented with America and desired alternative options. Their transnational experiences and histories opened up and limited possibilities. Their stories revealed the ways in which everyday lives, subjectivities, and future imaginings are influenced by what they know and have experienced both here and there.

The subsections that follow offer more specific examples of the evidence and importance of the transnational in these refugee women's lives and show how the transnational operated and influenced everyday lives and also acted as a resource for these women. The transnational afforded opportunities to cross borders and opened spaces for imagination, positioning, and possibility while also acting to limit other opportunities and possibilities. Transnational ways of think-

ing, being, and doing were taken up and used as dialogic resources for these women in negotiating multiple and shifting subjectivities and navigating everyday lives and imagined futures.

Tying transnational stories to transnational lives.

Excerpt from session 6, episode R: Woman in the Moon

Amy: So, how did you learn the story about the lady in the moon?
Mai: I don't know; we hear a lot of people say it.
A: Who?
Pia: Like my mom. They say you see the women in the moon when you're young.
M: Without blinking, they say you will see her.
A: Okay.
P: They say you see a tree, the grand-mom, the grandson. The grandson like a [trails off; talks to Mai in Karen]
Christy: That's similar to ours.
A: Is it? So you know that too. Tell me what you know.
C: So as we say that, [pause] I mean, when I was back home, I could see this in the moon, a mom, and she has the child on her back. And she's, like, chopping wood. They always say it's the story that this lady went to chop wood on Sunday. She went into the mountain to get wood and she had her baby on her back, then she was chopping wood. She knows she was not supposed to do that; it was on Sunday. And then something happened; I think it was a thunder struck her. The moon was blank, and then, I don't know the [lightening] it struck and it took her picture and put it on the moon. Then she got to be on the moon, and it was not white anymore. You could now see the shadow of this lady. It's just a story we tell. You are not supposed to do work on Sunday. (session 6, episode R, lines 192–209)

"…As they walked, Lili searched her memory for all the best stories that Khanoom used to tell her when she was a child. "*Yeki bood; yeki nabood*," she always began, the traditional Iranian invocation of a story. "One was all, all was one." (Darznik, 2011, p. 182)

Our discussions in book club meetings, as recorded in transcripts, revealed the importance of making personal connections to texts. In almost every instance, when someone initiated a turn at talk, told a story, or when we had an extended conversation around a topic, it was intended to communicate a personal connection to the text(s). In the first excerpt here, three par-

ticipants shared what they knew and had gathered from other people and places about the moon. Just before this, we were discussing the Moon Lady's story in *The Joy Luck Club*. The book is a collection of stories from multiple times and places, weaving together stories of women's lives in China and America. After we read the Moon Lady's story aloud in our meeting, Pia shared a Karen poem she had learned in Thailand about the moon. This poem had traveled from Burma to Thailand and with her to the United States. *The Joy Luck Club* became a dialogic space for storytelling that mirrored the stories we shared from multiple spaces and times.

Later, when Pia called on Mai to help her remember something about the Moon Lady poem, Christy shared her own moon story, which traveled with her and her family through three countries in Africa to the United States. Now it exists in both worlds. The story she told functions as a fable or morality tale, instructing members of the community, particularly Burundian Christian women, about how to act and behave. This moral function may be particularly important now that Christy lived in a very different place with different challenges. Although Christy no longer lived in Burundi, the story lived with her here and became part of her dialogic ways of knowing and being in the world. Christy personally connected to what we were reading and then shared that connection with us, and in so doing, she shared pieces of her culture, beliefs, and traditions. We learned something about Christy's funds of knowledge, about the value of stories for her, and about her homeland.

We also learned something about Iranian culture and traditions through the second excerpt from *The Good Daughter*. In starting stories with "One was all, all was one," readers get a real sense of the value and power of the communal and collective in Iran and among its people. Taken together, these two excerpts pointed to the importance of memories and stories to connect people, places, and times and to shared histories, cultures, and knowledge. These passages show

the value and importance of stories to communities and the connections created and maintained through them.

In examining the data, particularly the audio recordings and transcripts, it became clear that the women's personal connections to texts were important. Shared connections to texts and others' experiences of displacement were also important to ways of knowing, relating, and making sense of texts and lives. In this group, shared histories of movement, resettlement, and border crossings acted as resources for meaning-making, connecting, and communicating. Understandings and experiences across times and spaces added multidimensionality and flexibility to constructions and negotiations of meaning-making. Meaning-making often occurred as a recursive and unstable process. As participants engaged in dialogical performances around texts and in interactions with others, they drew upon transnational resources to co-construct narratives of identity and to imagine future possibilities.

The two books that the group chose to read were closely related to each other and resembled the experiences and lives of the women gathered together to read them. The main characters in both books are women who experience the complexity of transnational living, literal and imagined. Both books center on stories of the complex relationships between mothers and daughters who inhabit different worlds. Stories span across vast spaces and times, and focus on storytelling as a means for making sense of lives and selves that cross geographic, historical, cultural, and linguistic borders.

Woven through the dialogic interactions in and among participants were themes such as alienation and loss in migration, generational and cultural barriers, familial obedience, linguistic barriers and miscommunication, language tied to culture and knowing, the importance of food as connected to place and culture, the power of stories and storytelling, gender inequities and ex-

pectations for girls, making sacrifices for future generations, and the complexities around marriage, gender, and faith. These intertextual transactions brought the here and there and now and then closer and allowed for a deeper exploration of experiences of displacement and resettlement across borders and over time.

Transnational ways of knowing. The following excerpts were taken from a session that contained a string of four connected and co-constructed narratives around transnational lives and ways of knowing. Before Gul spoke here, we were talking about *The Good Daughter: A Memoir of My Mother's Hidden Life* and how knowledge affected the narrator's life. Gul made a comment, and after several turns at talk passed, she told us more.

> **Excerpt from session 4, episode A: "She knows . . . so she's always good"**
>
> **Gul:** She [the narrator, Jasmin, in *The Good Daughter*] didn't know anything, that's why [she wasn't such a good daughter]. It's good to teach your children, to tell them everything from the beginning, so they will understand.
>
> [After 15 turns at talk among six different people, Gul tells more about how the text connects to her own experiences and explains what she stated previously.]
>
> **Gul:** Yeah, this thing happened with me, too. When we were in India, I grew up in India, and so I didn't know about Afghanistan. Like with anyone from my family when they called, we don't talk to them. I don't want to talk, I don't want to know about them, nothing. I just don't want. But later, when I found out a little bit about them, my mind changed. Now, it's like, that's our relative. We can't go far away from them. So, we understand. So that's why. But she [younger sister, Par], she knows from the beginning, everything, so she's always good.
> **Amy:** Good Par, the good daughter. [laughs]
> **G:** During that time, my parents were working. They didn't tell us anything. They didn't have time.

In this excerpt, Gul connected personally to the text we were reading and argued that the reason the narrator in the book was not the daughter she might or could have been was because

"she didn't know anything" and did not "understand" her own or her mother's history. Gul waited for an opportunity to take an extended turn at talk to reveal her personal connection to this character and explain what she meant. In the lines that followed, she said that she knew from personal experience because the same thing happened to her. She was disconnected, displaced in India, and uninterested in her family roots and family members in Afghanistan. She said that she did not really want to know her family, and she equated this feeling with being less than good.

Gul's storytelling here moved back and forth in time and across space, and her learning was tied to these transnational movements. Gul shared her learning and knowledge with us when she said, "We can't go far away from them [family]." She seemed to weave a moral into her story here. She connected being good and being a good daughter with being close to family and history and perhaps to honoring family and history. She ended by telling us that her lack of knowing was not her fault, as her parents did not have the time to teach her about or tell her about her family and history in Afghanistan.

As resettled refugees trying to make a life in India, Gul's family members all worked very hard. Even Gul and her sister Sana worked at home sewing, embroidering, and helping to weave and knot carpets. Her story was as a sort of warning or moral tale for others, perhaps those in the room, who were experiencing the challenges of displacement. Gul alluded to social, familial, and economic challenges that often interrupt lives in resettlement and hinted at the ways that displacement and resettlement can change people, for better or worse.

Gul returned to this theme of change throughout our meetings. In telling another story about language, she described how her brother's language changed in the United States. She was happy in telling the story because her brother had become more invested in learning and practicing Pashto and Dari, their home languages, since arriving in the United States. She said, "It's

like, he don't understand, maybe very few words that he understands. But now, when he came to the United States, his Pashto become very beautiful. He also learned Dari so good. He can't say he's the same guy as in India. He's becoming a different guy here. I don't know why. Everyone in my family is so different" (session 2, p.11).

Gul's transnational stories were sewn together here to show how place is tied to knowing and understanding. *Understanding* and *knowing* were major keywords and subthemes that also ran throughout the transcripts and focused codes (categories), and I began to see that transnational ways of knowing and transnational understandings were fundamental to the ways these women acted in, and interacted with, the world. The keyword *know* showed up an astounding 2,263 times throughout the 700+ pages of transcript, and the word *understand* another 196 times. These totals matched up with my noticing. The terms were used in consensus-building, to affirm knowing, and to position oneself as a knowledgeable other, one who knows. Knowing was tied to power and agency, and participants use what they knew to act and position themselves in specific ways and for particular reasons.

In the process of sense-making and inter/acting, participants engaged in and described practices of remembering, imagining, comparing, changing, resisting, navigating, and negotiating, among other things. Transnational ways of knowing and understanding enabled participants to draw upon experiences and knowledge from multiple spaces and times in their efforts to understand and navigate everyday lives. Living in and trying to navigate resettled border spaces was not simple or easy. For these women, life in and on the border was laden with danger and difficulties.

There was a great deal of talk about the hardships and challenges in navigating and negotiating this everyday border space. Hardships and Difficulties [HD] became one of the 14 catego-

ries and *hard* one of the top-10 most frequent keywords in the meeting transcripts. The word *hard* showed up 298 times and was used more than the words *home, friend,* or *family*. I thought about how the beliefs that Western citizens and educators hold about people can make their resettlement harder or easier, and how the deficit discourses that circulate can operate to make life harder for these young women and their families. Yet, despite the challenges shared and described in meetings, all nine participants described their transnational experiences in terms that might be understood as resources, assets, or capital. As Gul pointed out in the story about her brother, transnational lives and experiences provide refugees with resources and capital. Multiple languages, multiple ways of knowing and understanding or viewing the world, memories, stories, poems, beliefs, faiths, cultures, and more travel with them across space and time.

However, as my keyword analysis showed, participants often found it difficult to navigate multiple spaces and negotiate their identities and subjectivities in resettlement. Ambivalence and contradictions arose in depictions of lives here and there. At times, participants talked about the past and described life in the refugee camps or in India in seemingly romanticized ways. At other times, they told stories about the dangers, difficulties, and their deep desires to start a new life in the United States. They did the same as they described life in the United States. At times, participants expressed confidence and hopefulness in the possibilities and changes, and at other times sadness and anxiety.

In the piece below, participants once again sewed their stories and experiences to the stories in *The Joy Luck Club*. Together, we read from Tan's text:

> Over the years, I learned to choose from the best opinions. Chinese people had Chinese opinions. American people had American opinions. And in almost every case, the American version was much better. It was only later

> that I discovered there was a serious flaw with the American version. There were too many choices, so it was easy to get confused and pick the wrong thing. (Tan, 2006, p. 191)

In the co-constructed narrative that follows, I started the dialogue by rephrasing what we just read about having too many choices in America, and Christy expressed her understanding and agreement. Mai and Nan both supported Christy's understandings. Their narrative reveals the common and shared understandings, their personal connections to the text, and the complexity and seriousness of living in the United States in resettlement. For these young women, everything was changing, and as Christy wisely said, "It sort of affects your whole life." For them, new options and new opportunities were new potential challenges.

Excerpt from session 7, episode W: "Too Many Options"

Christy: That's true.
Amy: What do you think that means?
C: It's very hard to make decisions in America, or you have all these choices that it makes it hard for you to make choices, and if you make that one choice then it sort of affects your whole life.
A: Why are there more choices in the American version than in another version?
C: Because America has all these opportunities and all these things.
Mai: Because in America there's too many options.
C: It's a developed country.
A: Do you think it has to do with the fact that we're more developed?
C: Of course. Yeah.
A: Okay. So, if you were living in Burundi right now, you think if I were there I wouldn't have so many choices. Do you think that? Do you think if you were still living in Thailand or living in Burma somehow…
M: Yeah, I think it's easier. I just go to school, and I want to be a teacher, so I become a teacher. But when I come here, I don't even know what I'm gonna do.
Nan: So many choices that you have to choose.

> **M:** I don't think I'm ready for anything, because my English is not so good and just, you know. But when I lived there I was so sure that I would become a teacher. I really want to teach. Yeah.

In *The Joy Luck Club*, one of the characters states, "In America, nobody says you have to keep the circumstances somebody else gives you" (Tan, 2006, p. 254). This quote reflected the power of options and opportunities and the sense of hopefulness many refugees and immigrants equate with the American Dream. For these women and their families, the promise of education, safety, physical and economic security, and new possibilities for the future led them here to the United States, but navigating change and new possibilities was not easy or uncomplicated, as their narratives above suggest.

They recognized the challenges and barriers to taking up new ways. Mai made it clear that things here were harder for her. She told us that here in the United States, she doesn't "know" and her "English is not so good." In the last two lines of the excerpt, Mai revealed that in coming here, her dreams of being a teacher might have been lost. The realities of refugee life for her—moving from Thailand as a teenager, learning English as a new language, and the complexity of life and life choices in the United States—had caused her to question and doubt her future. Mai, Christy, and Nan sewed different stories from different spaces and experiences together and what they created here showed the instability of resettled spaces and how knowing changed and affected their everyday lives.

In order to navigate and overcome these challenges, these women drew upon their transnational resources and tools they carried with them, things they gathered in their movement and journey to the United States. These resources included family and friends near and far, as well as affiliations to faith groups and ethnic and cultural groups. They also included resources such as

wisdom carried in the form of stories or knowledge and experiences, multiple languages, multiple ways of knowing, and more.

Transnational ties/Maintaining connections to people and places. Maintaining ties to people and places across borders was important for participants and their families. Sana was able to go back to Afghanistan during the study for her wedding, but for the rest of the women, actual travel back home was elusive and mostly imagined. Pia spoke often of going back to Thailand after graduating from high school but also realized that she was limited in financial resources and probably could not manage it. Gul, Sana, Par, and Farah told us that they and their families often talked to friends and family back in Afghanistan.

Others, such as Nan, spoke less about ties to faraway homelands but did point out that local ties to others with similar backgrounds, cultures, and experiences were important. For example, although Nan did not report that she had ties to others in Sudan, she spoke openly about the African women's soccer team and the African church she attended. Mai and Lucy also talked about the importance of maintaining ties to local youth who shared their cultural and ethnic heritage. Karen and Chin youth meetings, Sunday school classes, camps, and summer trips helped them maintain ties to faraway homes in local communities. Christy explained that she had few friends outside of church in the United States, and in the following story she connected with something Pia said about missing her friends from Thailand.

Excerpt from session 3, episode J: "It's like you always have to work hard"

Christy: To me, it's never, like Pia said, it's not that fun. Ever since I got here, I've always had to be like a grown up and just like always doing— [pause] I can't just be. You know like in the camp I was, sometimes I'd just be like careless and just be like a child. But ever since I got here, I always have to act like a grown-up and just be like a grown-up and all that. I got to be all the time, all this hard stuff. Studying and always doing things like that. And you

> can’t, like, you can’t just be like I want to go to a friend’s house or like that. Like I want to do that, just going and do that or [trails off]

Christy brought up several of the themes woven through the stories of here and there. She compared life here with life in the camp and described the difficulties she faced here. She had to “act like a grown-up” here. She had more and different responsibilities and was dealing with shifting subjectivities and with change. Here, Christy, like many of her female friends in the local community, was not permitted to play outside. Her parents’ fears about crime, violence, and danger in the community, and her own fears about school success, kept her from spending time as she used to, being “careless” and free in the camp. This story, when juxtaposed with the previous excerpt about options and opportunities, reflects the different ways that the transnational interacted and intersected in participants’ everyday lives.

Pia also reported that maintaining tight family ties here was much more difficult than it was in the refugee camp in Thailand. Her parents worked at a chicken factory. Their long shifts and commutes kept her and her siblings from spending much time with them. Pia reported that her father and mother had not been able to attend the large annual Karen New Year event for the past two years because they had to work on Saturdays, whereas when they lived in the camp in Thailand, they “all stayed at home all the times” (session 5, p.18).

For most participants, despite the challenges of maintaining affiliations and ties, this was often accomplished through technology. News, movies, television shows, and music were all accessible to participants and their families through the Internet and sometimes in local stores. Several stores in their town carried printed newspapers and DVDs from other countries, but, by and large, cell phones and the Internet enabled a constant flow of information between people across spaces. Facebook was part of daily life for most of the participants, except Christy. They had real and virtual friendships with people from multiple countries and communicated with

them in multiple languages. These interactions across borders are examples of the transnational literacies that participants used to navigate everyday lives and maintain ties and affiliations.

Participants and their families also maintained culture and language through technology. They used YouTube to hear music and stream movies from multiple places. Sana used Skype to stay in touch with her new husband in Afghanistan. For her, the transnational movement occurred across literal, imagined, and virtual spaces. Whereas for others transnational movement might be more emotional, social, or even imagined, for Sana, literal movement across borders was part of her new life being married to a man in Afghanistan.

For many refugees like Sana, family ties are disconnected; relationships are disrupted and sometimes destroyed by distance. Dealing with the damage of broken family ties can be a difficult challenge for many living in resettled spaces. All of the women in this book club experienced the loss of family and homelands but remained tied to people and places faraway through stories, memories, technology, food, and faith.

Faith as transnational resource in transnational lives. All of the women in this study openly shared aspects of their faith and religion within the book club. I coded at least 40 pieces within the transcripts as Faith and Religion [FR]. Religious and faith-based activities were intricately connected to our planning and scheduling in the club. We tried and sometimes had difficulties planning our book club meeting dates around Christy’s fasting Saturdays with her church, Ramadan, summer Bible camps, and Karen Youth Retreats. Descriptions of faith and religious practices often brought the transnational into view. Pia and Mai told stories about their times in the refugee camp in Thailand and shared memories of Muslim prayers heard chanted over speakers and their own Christian holiday traditions and rituals. Christy shared Christian moral stories

from Africa, and Gul, Sana, and Par shared Muslim teachings in the club to illustrate their beliefs and values.

Faith and freedom of religion are embedded within the very definition of *refugee*. Religion is listed as the second possible reason for persecution in the definition outlined by the 1951 Convention. In the data gathering and analysis for this study, it became clear that these women valued faith and used it as a transnational resource in their everyday lives. Religious practices including regular worship, study, and faith fellowship were taken up by all nine of the participants. They carved out time for worship and prayer, went to church or masjid with and without their parents, fasted, and spoke openly about this as part of their lives. Two of them, Pia and Christy, grew up as children of pastors. Religious study and worship were part of daily and weekly routines and affected participants' plans and activities. For the four Afghan sisters, daily religious study and attention to prayers were highly valued, and religion was intricately connected to their identities as women. They embodied their faith in strict observance and obedience to hijab, or covering with headscarves.

Their religious beliefs also incorporated multiple literacy practices as they sought to make sense of religious texts, learned new songs, studied faith teachings in books and online, and sought to understand the texts we read together in the book club. The women's religious beliefs, knowledge, and experiences were influential in their understandings, evaluations, and discussions of texts. The values they embraced based on their religious beliefs were evident in their tellings, their meaning-making, and the ways they interacted with group members and positioned themselves. Often, they could take a stronger stance or refute a text or what someone else said based on their strong beliefs and what they knew from their religious learning and backgrounds. However, these strong beliefs were not unquestionable, especially in border spaces.

In one excerpt, Christy provided an example of how she questioned her beliefs and imagined how they might be changing here in light of the ways her life was changing and shifting. We were discussing the connections among faith, womanhood, pregnancy, and birth control. Christy was questioning what she had learned in church, wondering openly about why birth control was not acceptable even for married women. She said, “In my country, because of their religion, a lot of women don’t use birth control, even though they have it. Even though they have babies but they don’t want to, but because their religion says they can’t use birth control, they don’t use it” (session 7, p.47). In light of the “starving children” she saw there in Africa and what she learned here, Christy questioned this practice. She said, “They say this, but I don’t understand. Just doing this will make me go to hell? I don’t understand that” (session 7, p.50).

Religious beliefs and practices are transnational; they travel across borders with displaced people, but are often changed in new spaces. The women in the club relied on their faith resources but also resisted practices and ways of knowing that did not make sense. They used the book club as another space to negotiate new ways of thinking, to question, and to reinforce their beliefs. For example, when Christy was questioning what she had learned from her church, Pia stated that for her, and in her church, birth control was not “stopping something from happening” and was not “a sin,” but that “abortion is not good” (session 7, p.48). Pia went on to say that in her beliefs, “God always takes care of the little kids” (session 7, p.49). Pia didn’t agree with what Christy knew about her Christian faith and used what she had learned to refute and resist understandings that did not match her own.

Gul explained that for herself and her family, faith was tightly tied to relations with parents and culture. When she explained why she wore hijab and kept hijab, she said, “Like here, the teenager[s] we see. They don’t care about their parents, their cultural things. But like we do.

So this [hijab] is one thing; another thing is our modesty." Gul used her faith and religious beliefs to contrast teenagers here in the United States with the observant Muslim "we" who care about their parents and culture. For Gul, wearing hijab set her apart in a good way and was a marker of her faith, values, culture, and transnational ties.

Food and eating as transnational ties; tied to resources and relationships.

> I'd forgotten home, I'd forgotten Iran, but just as some memories linger in spite of our longing to forget them, there are some loves that will take in just about any soil. When my mother Lili lined the bathtub with pomegranates, she was giving me an appetite for an unearthly fruit and the stories and secrets encased in its many-chambered heart, and this, she knew, was a pleasure from which not even a small girl could be exiled. (Darznik, *The Good Daughter*, p. 293)

In participants' everyday lives, food was a consistent transnational tie. All of them preferred, and regularly ate, food from their countries of origin. They did not care for traditionally American foods such as hamburgers or pizza. Thus, even in our meetings, food was always important. We enjoyed food from the Asian Buffet restaurant on two different occasions and on others, deliciously seasoned and spiced Afghan food such as *pulao* and *korma*. Even when I hosted at my home and served less exciting foods, whole fruits, nuts, and hummus provided connections to and opened conversations about foods enjoyed with friends and family in other places and times.

Like many book clubs, food was an essential component of our meetings. This emerged at the first meeting, when Par excitedly suggested, "Let's talk about books while we're eating" (session 1, episode FF). In my coding, I noted at least 10 different dialogues that centered around food and drink. For example, Gul, Sana, and Par said that they did not eat fish often because where they grew up in India was not near the water. They also told us about how they drank Af-

ghan tea and made Afghan cake called *roate* to serve with it. They explained, “We make it a lot at home. Sometimes we have guests, and we say, ‘Oh, we should make it’” (session 4, p.17).

One of the main reasons that participants were eager and willing to travel to the sisters’ new house outside of town for book club meetings was for food. Lucy said to Gul in the first meeting, “I miss the food from your house!” to which Gul replied, “Come. You can come anytime.” A few lines later, Par suggested, “We can do this book club at our house” (session 1, episode LL). Most of us had visited the sisters’ home before and knew that delicious, spicy Afghan food would be served. After that, we started planning for at least two book club meetings in their home. During our meetings, participants talked about sharing food with friends or neighbors and conversations arose around food preparation, recipes, likes and dislikes, and connections to cultures.

For Christy, Gul, Pia, and perhaps others, talk about food was also connected to gardening and other transnational ways of knowing and living that traveled with families in resettlement. Gul’s family was very proud of the large garden they had planted in the backyard of their new home. Christy’s father had helped to plan, plant, and maintain a Burundian community garden, and Pia’s grandparents tended a large fruit and vegetable container garden outside the family home. Talk about gardening and about food was often a dialogic space for participants to share opinions and knowledge and position themselves as knowledgeable authorities on the subject. For example, Par, Gul, and Sana taught us about tea and about different ways of drinking teas with and without sugar cubes.

Participants also connected talk about food to traditions and cultural norms around eating and to changes in their everyday lives here. In one meeting, Christy said, “That’s how it is in my culture. The parents go first when you’re eating or drink[ing] something. The parents always

have to go first." Mai agreed: "Yeah. We have to be very respectful. The first scoop of rice, you give to your mom or dad, especially your dad because he is the head." Mai went on to explain that since her family had come to the United States, they did not eat together as a family anymore. Nan stated that the same was true in her family.

These stories shed light on familial tensions often faced by refugee families in resettlement. Amidst the new realities, long-held traditions like eating together were lost. For these three women and their families, ways of knowing and being in a transnational space required negotiations and a tolerance for ambiguity and change. They simultaneously held both the here and now and the there and then together through everyday things such as foods that were sensual reminders of other people and places in a new space.

Schooling in refugee women's transnational lives. In data analysis, I coded at least 150 pieces of transcript text as related to School or Schooling [SC] in my initial coding list. In my keyword analysis, the word *school* appeared in all of the recorded and transcribed book club meetings. It showed up as the sixth most frequently used word on my list, at least 389 times. The word *college* came up 68 times, *test* 69 times, and *exam* 23 times. As reported previously, the focus on schooling seems to be related to the fact that knowing and understanding were prevalent themes throughout the data and analysis. *Know* was the most frequent word I noted, used more than 2,200 times, and *understand* was used another 200 times. Knowing and understanding were not always tied to schooling, but there is surely some connection between the importance and value placed on knowing and the emphasis and value placed on school or education.

The nine participants in this study had widely different experiences with schooling. Pia, Mai, and Lucy had all been to refugee camp schools in Thailand or Malaysia for most of their school-age years with few interruptions. Christy and Nan also attended refugee camp schools but

had more prolonged interruptions and gaps in their formal education. Sana, Gul, and Farah never had any formal education before coming to the United States, but their youngest sister Par had attended school in India, as she had been born there and was eligible to attend. Schooling and education were tightly tied to participants' experiences as displaced refugees. Their parents, in applying for refugee status, all sought refuge from war and violence and education for their children.

Pia's previous experience with schooling reflected a transnational perspective. She said, "We went to school. We learned English, Burmese, Karen, and Thai" (session 3, p.44). Pia understood school as multi/plural, and her experiences in monolingual English-speaking school contrasted starkly with that understanding. In our meetings, Pia often acted ambivalent and even resistant to school, perhaps due to her dissatisfaction with the more limited approach and perspectives. Participants spent a great deal of time in meetings talking about difficulties and challenges in school in the United States. They talked about worries around graduation, friends dropping out of school, grades, standardized tests, teachers, peer pressures, and more. School was an important thread that wove through many of our meetings.

Schooling as a practice was understood through and influenced by their previous experiences of school in different spaces and times. Participants understood school in relation to the past and also their futures. All nine reported and accepted that schooling was directly tied to their opportunities for higher or continuing education, economic opportunity, and social status or capital. The narrative excerpt below revealed the complexities around culture, schooling, language, past, and future.

Excerpt from session 5, episode L: "Here in America"

Christy: I think for us that association [to American culture] is stronger.

> **Amy:** You think it is?
> **C:** I think it is. And that's why I think the parents feel that their kids are disobedient. Here in America the kids are so disobedient and think like that. Because the kids are like, [pause]. Well, I don't know, like, my brothers or my siblings. I remember once when my dad went [to] their school, my parents went to their school and then when come back, oh, my God. They're like, "Why did you come to my school? Why did you introduce yourself to my teachers? Why did you have to say all these things to my school?" They don't like being around my parents in public. But for me, it's not a problem. Well, yes, it's not really like that strong as theirs, but yeah, there's a little.
> **Mai:** I don't tell my mom anything about my school whatever. I feel like if I tell her she don't understand because she grew up somewhere else and then come to America. I don't know, so I don't tell her anything.
> **Nan:** Yeah, well, when they had the parent conference, I didn't want to bring my mother to school, so I never told my mom when is the parent conference.
> **A:** But don't you think she should be able to come and find out about your school?
> **Nan:** I never tell them anything about parent's conference.
> **Mai:** Not anything.
> **A:** Why though? I want you to help me understand that more because
> **Nan:** [interrupting] I mean they won't understand if they would go there.

Mai, Christy, and Nan co-created a narrative dialogue that told a shared story of their experiences with parents and school in the United States. Christy started this story, wanting to explain her belief that "us," the women in the club, have a "stronger" association to American culture than to their home cultures. Christy could have used any number of examples as evidence for this, but she chose school as the example. For Christy, Mai, and Nan, this story revealed both the status of school in their lives and the ways in which school separated them from their parents and home cultures. They described how their parents did not know or understand school. Mai said that her mother, "don't understand because she grew up somewhere else and then come to America," and Nan agreed, saying, "they won't understand if they would go there [school]."

Many refugees seeking asylum have had limited and interrupted access to school due to displacement, legal status, poverty, and expectations and norms for girls and women. However, education is often cited as a major motivation for resettlement and is highly valued by parents. These women placed a great deal of value on knowing things, and in this case, they did not believe that their parents knew about school. Mai and Nan's parents had very little formal schooling. Christy's mother also had little to no formal schooling, although her father did. Schooling was a practice that all of the participants engaged in but was challenging.

Christy told us once, "I'm so tired with school" (session 3, p.62). There was a great deal of agreement around this statement. School required these women to take up many new practices and draw upon many new resources. What they brought with them to school often seemed to be of little value. For example, the oral literacies that all the participants had valued and practiced in their home languages, faiths, cultures, and families were seemingly disconnected from the print literacy practices emphasized in their classrooms. They traveled with stories, songs, proverbs, and other technological and digital literacy practices, but these were not acknowledged at school. However, at school, these participants did learn test-taking skills and new reading strategies; they talked to counselors, found tutors, shared online resources for reading assignments, and more. They found ways to position themselves as capable students and continue their schooling and education despite the barriers and challenges.

Summary: Transforming transnational lives. At times, the realities of what it meant to live across spaces and times were clearer to see. In the excerpts that follow, participants' dialogic constructions reveal the complexities of becoming and being a refugee.

Excerpt from session 4, episode C: Resettlement story

Amy: What's going on right now with your husband? What's he doing?

Sana: Nothing special.
A: Working?
S: Nothing.
(Talk in Pashto between sisters—Gul, Sana, and Par.)
Sana: He gets ready for the interview.
A: Oh, really?
S: It will be on July 12.
A: Oh my goodness. Wow!
S: The office called me.
A: Wow. That's much faster than I thought. Oh my goodness.
Gul: But sometimes when the interview happens, it goes very fast, but sometimes in many cases, it takes a year, you know.
A: Yeah, but still, to have it done and behind you, that's good. That's much faster than I thought.
Par: So now, like everything from here, it's done. Now, he just has to take care of it.
Sana: I told him pass interview, don't make any mistakes.
A: Does he have to really sit and think about the ways that he is answering those questions? Do you talk to him?
S: Yes, I talk to him all time about those things. I give him the date, or what he do, I did all, first. So, I told him all of this.
G: We don't have their things. We don't have the dates. So some dates, she make them up.
A: I understand. You have to make them up because you don't know. You just have to say because you don't want to look different from the paper.
Gul: Yes, that's why they don't remember. They don't remember when they ask, maybe they will tell something wrong and that's when people think they are lying. Then, they make it, it takes so long time. Like now, he did not remember the date when his father died, but she made up the date because they did not remember.

In this narrative, Sana told us that her new husband was preparing for a government interview for his resettlement. He lived in Afghanistan when they were married but hoped to resettle in the United States to live with her. Sana's family was working to build out the basement in their new house so that they could all live there together. This episode revealed how Sana's life was lived both here and there, both physically and emotionally. She was tied to her new husband and his family and had gone back and forth to Afghanistan for the wedding and to prepare him for the interviews. Interestingly, Sana seemed to take the lead in this resettlement application

process. She was a woman in a very traditional Arab and Muslim family, and would not typically take the lead in such a visible and official process. However, in this case, she had the privilege of English and political status as a refugee. She positioned herself as one who knows and understands this system and as the leader. She told us that she “did it all first,” so now her husband must do well and follow her lead.

When people apply for refugee status, they are required to tell very specific types of stories to the officials who interrogate them and decide their futures. These stories must be stories of suffering and persecution and must be perceived as true. One way that officials decide on truth is whether a story can be corroborated by evidence, particularly documents. For many displaced and uprooted people, documents are scarce and, during the move, may not have been conceived of as important. Documents and dates seem to have little consequence until the time comes that you must show “proof” to corroborate the stories you tell. In some ways, a person’s refugee status can be attributed to her ability to tell a convincing story—one that is both sufficiently compelling and can be corroborated.

Refugees may face ethical dilemmas in the interview process. Sana and her sisters are devout and observant Muslims and position themselves as good and moral. Yet, Sana was forced into fabricating dates and pieces of their story so that she could please the interviewers. This episode pointed to the ways in which stories travel and change and to the status afforded particular types of stories and evidence. Refugees are required to testify to and provide evidence of their suffering and persecution. On one hand, they must position themselves convincingly as helpless and weak, while on the other had, they must appear to be competent enough to tell a true story and support themselves and their families in resettlement.

Sana’s interview story was followed closely by another narrative episode that related to

testimony and truth-telling and their relationship to documentation and literacy. The episode also shed light on differences here and there, then and now.

Excerpt from session 4, episode D: "They only believe in papers"

> **Sana:** Like in my mother's time, they don't make a certification [of marriage].
> **A:** I know. But a lot of places still don't, right?
> **S:** Yeah. I did. But still, when they get married in Afghanistan, like in the village, they can or not. [pause] But, I was coming here, and with his [husband] work, so we make [certified/certificate].
> **A:** That's good. Some of the families that I've worked with, they don't have any paper or anything that says that they're married, but they say that they're married and they have children. Then they give them a hard time trying to get family help. What proof do you have that you're married? Well, we came here together; these are our children. We have papers, but we don't have that [marriage certificate]. They did not do that. They did not have papers.
> **Par:** Like, just a piece of paper is going to prove that we're married. It's so crazy.
> **Christy:** It's so weird.
> **Gul:** Here in America, maybe happens so many things like wrong in this way, maybe that's why they only believe in papers.
> [Eruption of laughter; Sana translated for her mom.]

This episode is etched into my mind because it was one of the times that I could, through the perspective and words of someone else in the club, get a clearer view of my own Western, middle-class culture. Gul made strong reference to both the fact that many things are potentially "wrong" with marriage here in the United States and to our seeming preoccupation and obsession with documentation and papers. Gul and her sisters spoke openly about arranged marriages and the high rates of divorce among Americans, who are often so quick to condemn arranged marriages. Gul also pointed to the focus and emphasis we place on paperwork and documentation. In Gul's family and culture, oral traditions, oral literacies, and a person's word were important and highly valued. In the United States, print literacy holds privilege and priority. I imagined that Gul's family, like many other refugee families resettled here, may not have ever imagined how

much paperwork they would be responsible for and how this would impact their everyday lives in resettlement.

In the United States, a person is expected to be able to read and write and fill out forms for almost everything, from medical and social services, to jobs, schools, library cards, cable television, driving, citizenship, and more. Nearly everything requires signatures, documentation, and certification. For those with limited English or literacy, this creates enormous challenges and barriers. For Gul, it seems the spoken, oral word has little long-term value or power in the United States. It is the written word that can be documented, copied, and captured and shown in courts that matters most to us. For people like Gul and Sana, who have lived both here and there, this can be a difficult transition and a barrier. However, in the previous episode and again here, Sana showed us how she took up Western expectations and norms by creating an interview narrative with consistent and set dates and by choosing to get her marriage in Afghanistan certified. In doing so, she positioned herself as an insider who knows and understands what is expected and as someone with enough power to move between these two worlds and lead others in this transition as well.

For refugees living transnational lives and learning to navigate resettled spaces, they are patching and sewing together pieces with different amounts of tension. But, there is always some tension (the dialogic) in every act of sewing and in every seam. Two or more pieces sewn together in a seam cannot be effortlessly undone or untied. It takes effort to create and sew pieces up and also takes effort to undo them. These women were choosing what to use, how to position themselves, thinking about what might change, how it might be changed and how to reimagine and reshape lives here while also maintaining lives connected to there. They are *mestiza*—both. For these women, the transnational was tangled and tied to all aspects of life. Participants were

clearly influenced by both local and global perceptions, expectations, and experiences. Past and present and here and there were at work as they negotiated everyday lives and new and shifting subjectivities and imagined what it meant to be a woman in this resettled and often unsettled space.

Remarks on the Findings

In this chapter, I presented evidence related to the findings from this study of a refugee women's book club. The data, analysis, and interpretations were considered in relation to the questions posed: How do refugee women engage in an out-of-school book club? What can be learned about the everyday lived experiences, literacy practices, and language use of resettled refugee women through an exploration of the book club? And, in what ways might a book club community influence refugee women's literacy practices and everyday lives? I developed four themes through coding to offer insight into the dialogic nature of refugee women's everyday lives: (1) Participants shaped and used the book club as a dialogic, border practice and space; (2) Participants navigated and negotiated shifting and changing subjectivities and took up multi/plural identities; (3) Participants used multiple languages and literacies as practices and resources; and (4) Participants were living "here and there," transnational lives.

In chapter 5, I take a different perspective on the findings, looking at the ways in which these themes intersected with the specific experiences of three participants. I argue that although refugee women share common histories of displacement and resettlement, they experience these in vastly different ways. By presenting and describing their experiences in depth, I show what I learned about refugee women's everyday transnational lives as they intersect with shifting subjectivities, language, and literacy practices in the book club. Rather than looking at the book club as a whole group and the ways in which themes crossed over people, meetings, codes, and sto-

ries, I focus on what the book club study revealed about individual lives and consider the differences and parallels in their lives.

Finally, in chapter 6, I discuss the findings presented in chapters 4 and 5 in relation to existing research and imagined possibilities. I address the implications of my findings for educational research and for classroom teachers. In addition, I discuss possibilities for further study and alternative pedagogical approaches in light of what I learned from my participants' lives, stories, and practices.

5 NARRATIVES

"We say like any picture has two faces, so it's like that."
—Gul, session 4, p.38

Christy, Gul, and Pia: Sewing Stories Together

In this chapter, I describe the ways in which three of the participants, Christy, Gul, and Pia, navigated and negotiated their subjectivities and their transnational lives through the stories they told and their practices in the book club. In the epigraph above, Gul shared a proverb she translated from Pashto and that she said was used often in her home and culture. Within the context of the club, her meaning was clear to us all: there are two sides to every story and to every person. She told us, "If someone tell me—Oh, those people are bad—if someone tell they are bad or good, I don't make my decision about them" (session 4, p.38). She had been talking about reading and being open-minded and about seeing "many things we have are similar and many things are different" (session 4, p.38).

The women in the club shared many similarities but also had differences. Although they were all legal refugees, resettled in the southern United States, and were all women, their life experiences, histories, and imagined futures were different. Below, I present individual narratives in order to shed light on the similarities and differences in three participants' personal lived experiences as they intersect in the book club. In presenting narratives separately, I also offer a more nuanced picture of each woman and her particular lived experience.

In the process of coding, narrative analysis, and theme generation, participants' stories and lives can become disconnected and distorted. The ways in which themes intersect and influence particular lives can become difficult to see. A focus on the whole human story offers a different perspective into data and analysis. These three participant stories were chosen because they represent distinct regional, cultural, and historical experiences of displacement and reset-

tlement. These women were also among the most active in the book club and are representative of the wide age range among book club members.

Christy

Christy was one of the first to agree to come to book club and participate in the research study. She attended eight out of the nine meetings over the six-month period, more than any other participant, and was a core member of the group. She had been a participant in my dissertation pilot project two summers before. I met Christy when she was a student in my English as a Second Language class for two years. She had come to the United States four years earlier around age 14. She came with six years of refugee camp schooling but could speak at least four languages and could read and write in two of those. She came with great determination and an intense desire to learn, graduate from high school, and go to college. However, Christy had limited English and literacy and no experience in formal Western schools. She was still a beginning English reader when I met her but spent vast quantities of time reading outside of school and quickly grew in her fluency and comprehension. Christy's participation in both the pilot and dissertation studies was evidence of her commitment to continued growth and to positioning herself as a dedicated student and English speaker and reader.

As a student, she was highly invested in school and her education. She worked hard and was dedicated to doing her very best. During this study, Christy had just turned 18 and was working to finish high school at a private school. She received a scholarship from the school and financial aid from one of her school mentors. The small private school provided her with an individualized, self-directed program for graduation. During the span of the study, Christy spent a great deal of time practicing math on her own in order to be on track for graduation; she stated that she struggled to understand the subject because she had missed years of schooling.

Christy was simultaneously studying for her Certified Nurse's Assistant (CNA) classes and exam. When I first met her, she made it clear that she wanted to be a nurse, and she was determined to pass her CNA classes and exams that summer so that she might gain experience and "credibility," as she put it. She was also hoping that having the certification on her college application might help her gain admission into local and highly competitive nursing programs. Christy went to visit several local colleges with friends and mentors. She spent time studying for the SAT on her own and with friends. She used the computer and books to prepare. She signed up to take the test, which she took during the study period. Christy positioned herself as a potential college student and a capable and competitive applicant.

Christy typically wore skirts, simple t-shirts, and sandals or sneakers to book club. She usually carried a bag and often had multiple books inside. She never wore makeup, except for a little lip-gloss. Her skin was dark and smooth, and her smile big and bright. Sometimes she wore headbands, hair ties, and bows. Christy always kept a "natural" style. Her hair was not straightened or colored. As noted in the section on subjectivities, Christy knew that some people judged her on her hairstyle choices. She said, "They look at you differently" and "act like you're ignorant or something," but "I don't care" (session 3, p.46). Christy recognized the ways in which people tried to position her and categorize her based on her appearance, but she resisted these categorizations.

Christy was articulate and verbally expressive. Although still learning English, she could make herself understood with relative ease. Christy had a large and growing vocabulary. She was very interested in learning new words and regularly asked about words she did not yet know. Despite this, Christy often spoke in our book club about judgments based on her accent and language. She told us that not knowing English well and speaking with an accent positioned one as

"ignorant" and incapable. She described feeling judged by older people in her community who thought she was forgetting the language or "mixing" it with other languages, and she also described feeling judged at school and in "professional" places. Christy was concerned that her language might keep her from finding a job. She told us that she was so fearful of being judged based on her language and that sometimes she was silenced and could not speak (sessions 2, 3, and 4).

Although Christy was concerned about what other people thought about her language, she said that not knowing English should not be "an excuse" for not doing well in school (session 6, p.15). Christy recognized the ways in which language might be used to categorize and position her, but she resisted. She openly described the difficulties and challenges she faced in school but always positioned as determined and able and imagined futures in which she had overcome obstacles to reach her dreams. Christy used her imagination and her stories to craft particular subjectivities, and these included being a strong survivor, good daughter, good student, high school graduate, college student, and nurse. At one point, Christy explained that she had to take public transportation back and forth to school. It was more than an hour's trip by train, bus, and bike. She told the group that despite the challenges, "I don't want to care or think; I just have to do it" (session 4, p.8). She did not let obstacles stand in the way of school or her dreams and imaginings.

When I first met her and when the study started in spring 2013, Christy lived with her grandparents and her immediate family of eight. I had two opportunities to go to their home and share meals with them, elaborate events with their large extended family and guests. On both occasions, oversized aluminum trays were filled to overflowing with African meat and vegetable dishes and homemade breads. Two long tables were pushed together, and mismatched chairs

were brought in for all to sit together around the table in the long kitchen that faced the front of the house. The air smelled of spices and carried the sounds of children laughing and people chatting in multiple languages—English, Swahili, Kiswahili, Kirundi, and also French at times. Christy's family interactions were steeped in religious tradition, and guests were expected to participate in and share these traditions. Christy's father and grandfather were both pastors. Prayer, singing, and Bible readings were part of daily routines and were required before eating. Christy's mother and father were also very involved with local refugee gardens and growers. Her father held a full-time job in addition to his work as church pastor, church van driver, and gardener.

Christy's family made several moves while in Africa to keep their family safe. They lived in three different countries while seeking refuge and resettlement. Christy's parents were originally in Burundi, and then moved to Congo, where Christy was born in 1995. They lived in a refugee camp in Tanzania for 11 years after fleeing the violence in Congo. Christy's mother and father made it clear that they sought safety and schooling for their children and that finally brought them to the United States. Christy's family was originally settled in a small apartment in Rockside where many other refugees had been resettled. But with a large and growing family, they sought out a bigger, single-family home for rent. Both parents worked for a chicken factory in order to provide for their family and pay rent. Christy had to take on additional responsibilities to help care for the younger siblings while both parents worked. Their house sat on a large lot in a quiet, wooded suburban neighborhood. Although they enjoyed the home, they worried about the local pubic schools. Christy's father told me that he especially worried about sending his oldest daughter there. The school was mostly African American and had a reputation for violence and low academic achievement. Christy's father actively pursued alternative schooling options for her. Christy, too, actively sought support and help in finding alternative school options. As

the oldest girl, Christy had many family responsibilities and contended with many specific cultural and familial expectations.

In one of our meetings, Christy told us that her family had decided to move to another city. Her mother had become pregnant again, and her father had grown tired of managing multiple jobs and traveling back and forth to the chicken factory for work, so he had decided to move the family to a less expensive city where he found work as a janitor. Christy and her family both worried about the move. She was deeply concerned, mostly about her schooling. She had come so far and had only one year of high school left. She was also in the middle of her Certified Nursing Assistant program. Christy shared her family's struggles around the move with us in the book club. Then she announced that her family had decided that she could stay in the area with a long-time family friend, Sally, a White woman with experiences working with refugees in the area. Sally had met Christy's family soon after they arrived from Tanzania and had maintained a close relationship with them. She also worked with them in the community garden.

We were all surprised that Christy's father allowed her to stay and live with Sally. In our meetings, Christy described the negotiations and discussions around the decision-making. She told us her family worried about the potential danger and harm to Christy's future, reputation, and the family honor that might be caused by living alone as a woman outside of the family. As Christy explained, "In my culture, you know, a girl cannot leave the house until she is married," and "in Burundi, you know, girls that go to boarding schools and things like that, they sometimes get pregnant and stop focusing on their school" (session 4, p.16). However, Christy told us that her mother and grandfather were her advocates, telling her dad, "We know she is going to do good" (p.16). Christy's mom persuaded her father to let Christy stay through the end of high school.

Christy positioned herself as “good” and took up subjectivities and practices that reinforced her mother’s trust in her and belief in her goodness. She was an excellent student and an attentive sister and daughter. She was faithful to her family and church. Christy cared for her siblings, cooked for her family, made good grades in school, spent time in church, fasted and prayed, spent time studying and reading outside of school, and had worked to honor her family and their dreams for education and success in the United States. Nevertheless, this one decision could have potentially called all of this into question.

Christy and her parents felt that in Burundi there would be no questions; she would be at home with them, as the oldest girl in the family, to help her mother with the new baby. There, she would be living with her father until she was married to another man, where she would be safe and secure in the private and less visible home space. Here, Christy would be alone, outside the family home, pursuing schooling in public spaces where there were men and other potential dangers. Christy and her family had to navigate the tensions among the various values, traditions, beliefs, and gender norms from their homes and communities in Africa and from their faith community with their dreams and desires in the United States. This episode in Christy’s life focused attention on the complex negotiations and navigations Christy faced as a multi/plural woman living across spaces and times, and the fears that circulate around women specifically.

Christy spoke about the challenges she faced in adjusting to new ways of living, particularly around schooling. She described the difficulties she had trying to keep up with classmates who had never missed a year of school and who were learning in a familiar language. Her strength in sharing and overcoming those challenges and stories positioned her as a leader among those in the club. Almost all of the members (except Par) had been in classes with Christy previously at the school where I taught, so they were aware of her work ethic and dedication to

school. In fact, in the first meeting when I asked for a leader, they all pointed to her. Christy agreed to do it, but the group moved away from any one person taking on that role. Christy did take opportunities to lead the group in discussion and shared many stories with us.

In our fourth meeting, Christy, Mai, Nan, and I were catching up with each other and sharing updates on our daily lives as we regularly did. Christy told us more about the CNA program and classes she had been taking over the summer. She shared that, at age 18, she was the youngest person there. Christy went on to tell us that her classes and texts were "not hard" for her. She seemed to be assuring us that, while young, she was capable and would pass her CNA classes and exam. Following that, Nan and Mai asked some questions about nursing. They wanted to know what a nurse practitioner was, and Christy told them that it was a "specialized nurse" who "has to go to a little more school" and then is "a little bit ahead of the other nurses" (session 4, p.12). Christy explained that she also planned "to get a high degree in nursing, maybe a Master's degree in nursing" (session 4, p.13). She positioned herself as someone seeking a higher status, a job with more privilege—"ahead" of the other nurses—and someone who is future- and goal-oriented. Through this dialogic give-and-take, she reshaped her dream of being a nurse to being a particular nurse with status and authority.

Christy was invested in the club and used that space and practice to imagine and position herself as a knowledgeable, capable, valuable person with a future. Christy drew upon the resources she carried with her from Africa (stories, values, beliefs, ways of thinking, practices such as prayer and fasting and reading, etc.) and upon the resources she was gathering here (new ways of thinking, formal schooling, mentors, books, training, etc.) to navigate her transnational life and shifting subjectivities.

Gul

Like Christy, Gul was eager to take part in the book club and study. She and her older sister, Sana, had also been part of my pilot study and summer literacy club. They were students in my ESOL classes for two years. Gul was about 25 when I met her, and I was surprised to learn how old she was because she appeared very youthful. She rarely wore makeup, aside from lipgloss, and never went without hijab at school or in public. In the privacy of book club meetings at her home, she did take off her headscarves and revealed long, thick, dark hair. Her eyes were brown and deep. She was shorter and heavier than her sisters, which seemed to bother her at times. She often wore jeans or pants with brightly colored blouses and sandals to school and to book club, but whenever I visited her at home, she always wore clothes in an Afghan or Indian style—longer, brightly colored shifts adorned with beads and other ornaments worn over loosely fitting pants of similar bright colors. She and her family never wore shoes in the house, and she always took them off at my house, too.

When I met Gul in my class, she was aware that she was too old for high school in Georgia but was interested in learning English and perhaps pursuing a GED. She had never had the opportunity to attend school before and had never learned to read and write in English. She was multilingual: she could speak Pashto, Dari, Hindi, and English, and was capable of reciting passages from the Quran and hadith, as well as traditional Afghan poems. She had tremendous life experiences and had worked from about the age of seven. In India, she had learned to hand-knot rugs, sew, and do beautiful and elaborate hand-embroidery work. For more than 15 years, while they lived in India, she had helped support her family by working in the home.

Gul moved to the United States from India at 21. Born in Afghanistan, she was one of four sisters and also had four brothers. She said, “When I was four years old, my family was

forced to move to India. We were living in India for 17 years, but we were not citizens." Gul told us that her father had been a businessman in Afghanistan and was being coerced into joining the war efforts. He did not want to join the military, and because of his resistance, their home was "almost bombed." After that, her father moved to Pakistan alone and then moved the entire family to India. They tried to get citizenship in India but were denied. Then, they applied for resettlement and moved to the United States. Gul and her family had no other familial ties to the United States but remained in close contact with family and friends across borders. Gul's sister Sana married a man in Afghanistan. One of her brothers was living and working in Pakistan, and one other brother was living in England. Gul's transnational ties stretched across many countries, including Afghanistan, Pakistan, India, America, and England.

Gul's sisters Sana, Farah, and Par also participated in the book club. None of her sisters, except Par, had formal schooling before coming to the United States. Par was born in India and thus was permitted to attend school if her family could afford to send her. Gul reported that her brothers also had some formal schooling in India. Gul and Sana were instrumental in helping to earn the money to support the family and send their siblings to school. Gul was the second-oldest sister to Sana, and she and her youngest sister, Par, attended five book club meetings over the six-month period. Gul and her sisters did not attend meetings in July during Ramadan, an important Muslim holiday. It was difficult for them to manage the 45-minute drive each way while fasting during the day, and they stated that it would be awkward not to eat or to keep others from eating during the meetings. Food was an important part of our meetings, and eating was one of our regular practices. Also, Gul wanted to be home to begin food preparations for the important daily meal with family after sundown.

In one meeting, Gul told us, “Whenever we have money problems, that is sad. But, when we [have] family problems, that is very bad thing” (session 8, p. 104). In this statement, Gul positioned herself as a person who has gained some wisdom. Gul did this often throughout our time together. Gul’s history and experiences from across transnational spaces taught her that avoiding family problems is important, that maintaining ties to family is important, and that family is more important that money. Gul had lost members of her family and time with family members in their moves from Afghanistan to India and finally to America, and she positioned herself as someone committed to family.

About a year before the study started, Gul and her family moved into a very large house in the suburbs. Her father made it clear to me that he hoped all four of his daughters would come to live in the house and raise their families there once they were married. I was surprised when Gul and her sisters agreed to participate in the book club because the new house in Hilldale was at least 45 minutes away from where I lived. They had to give up at least 1.5 hours in travel for each meeting, in addition to the three hours or so we spent talking, reading, and eating.

Gul’s family was originally resettled in a small apartment in Rockside where most refugees are placed, and then moved into a rental house near the refugee community. Although the rental house was in an established, wooded neighborhood in a quiet part of town, Gul and her sisters expressed concern over violence and worried about crime being “too close.” Gul reported happily that her brothers had helped support her parents in buying the much larger house, far away from the town where they were initially settled. The suburban development to which they moved was new and filled mostly with similar, large uniform brick and siding houses. The trees and bushes were small, but the garages housed multiple cars, and it was clear that the family had

made a move up. They all reported that they were thrilled with their new home and excited about their family's future there.

Gul and her sisters were quick to invite the book club group to meet in their new home. We arranged for those members living near me to drive together in my van and had two of our meetings at their new house. On our first visit, the entire family seemed to be very proud of their home, their newly planted garden out back, and the basement they had remodeled themselves. They were already busy preparing the space for Sana and her new husband, who was coming from Afghanistan to live. The entryway into the house was grand, with high, vaulted ceilings and lots of light from high windows. I could see straight into the living room from the foyer and immediately saw the extra-large television set, sitting on a credenza right beside the fire place.

Once, when I had visited their previous rental home during the pilot study, I had shared lunch with them. They had prepared five different Afghan dishes and presented heaping plates of delicious food on a low table in front of me. That day, showing my enjoyment and appreciation for the food was important to Gul. Cooking and food preparation was something she took pride in and was also another way in which she positioned herself as capable and contributing to her family. Gul explained that in her home, food preparation was done exclusively by the women in the house; the act of preparing food was tied to familial duties and obligations, and also to being a good girl, daughter, and potential wife. On that day, when we sat in the living room to eat, Gul turned on their large-screen TV to show me some Afghan music videos. She and her sisters wanted me to see one of their favorite female singers. They spoke highly of her beauty, voice, and long career. Apparently, they had spent many hours with their parents watching her sing and learning her songs. Another time, after we had read *The Joy Luck Club* as a group, we watched the movie version on the large-screen TV in the family's new living room as Gul and her sisters

prepared Afghan food for us in the kitchen. Gul took time away from a very hectic work schedule in order to host our book club at her home and cook for us. She showed that she was invested in the club and in sharing her private home life with us. Gul's practices (cooking, watching television, and sharing music and song) also reinforced her transnational and plural positioning and revealed her desires to maintain transnational ties and share those with us.

Gul's eagerness to join the club and her investment in meetings was due in part to her desire to position herself as a reader. When I first met Gul, about four years before the study, she was still a very new reader in English. It had become important for her in resettlement to learn to read and write. She understood that navigating life in a print-rich and print-reliant world here would be difficult if she could not read and write. Gul put a great deal of time and effort into reading especially. She told the book club, "Every night I read like two, three pages" (106.7). She also told us, more than once, that after she reads, she rereads the same pages two or three times in order to really understand the book. These are particular practices that Gul learned and had taken up in order to position herself as a reader and a literate person who understands what she reads. In sharing her reading practices and strategies with us, Gul also positioned herself as a teacher, one who knows about reading and can help others.

Gul positioned herself as a determined and committed reader, a person who valued reading and was willing to dedicate time and attention to making sense of books. In our first book club meeting, she said, "that [which] we don't understand, we can discuss" (session 1, p.13). She valued meaning and did not believe that decoding the words on the page sufficiently qualified as reading. For Gul, meaning-making and understanding were fundamental to reading.

Growing up in India as an unrecognized refugee, Gul had been denied access to schooling. She was multilingual and could speak English to some extent but could not read it at all

when she arrived in the United States. Only at age 25, as a resettled refugee in the United States, was she able to attend school for the first time, where she learned to read. She recognized the need for English literacy in the United States and the material consequences and opportunities tied to reading and literacy. She could not take a driver's test, could not pass a work readiness test, and could not manage everyday life here (doctor appointments, grocery shopping, paying bills, etc.) if she could not read and write. In joining the book club and taking up daily literacy practices, Gul showed that she was literate and valued literacy, especially English literacy.

In addition to participating in book club, Gul also attended an adult English, literacy, and continuing education program in a technical school near her home. Gul also managed a home sewing business with her sister and worked at a sewing factory in the area. In her adult education class, Gul told a friend about her small business sewing work and handed her a business card. Through this friend, Gul and her sister got a job creating choir robes for children at a local Catholic Church. Gul compared the work that she does now to what she did for so many years in India; she said that in India her work "wasn't professional work, work at home." Gul was active and agentive in her world and her work. She positioned herself as a professional and a business owner. She was invested in literacy and in continuing her education. Yet, in so many ways and for so many reasons, she could have been positioned as deficient, illiterate, unknowing.

When she had arrived here without formal schooling, she was not permitted to register for high school because she had long passed the age limit. She was not ready to attend college or technical school because she had no English literacy. She could not find work for some years. However, with imagination and determination, and through the support of social networks, Gul had shaped a life for herself. She was a transnational woman drawing upon resources and knowledge gained across time and space to imagine and position herself as multi/plural. She dai-

ly used the knowledge and practices she gained in India, Afghanistan, and finally in the United States.

In our book club, Gul also positioned herself as an observant Muslim and a modest woman. Faith was important in Gul's life, as it was for all the book club members. Gul kept a traditional Muslim prayer schedule and prayed five times per day. She got up very early so that she would not miss the first prayers of the day, and even set her schedule at the sewing factory around this. She explained that her employers provided their workers with the freedom to set their own hours. Gul went in around 6:30 a.m. after finishing her prayers. Gul also explained to the group why she chose to wear hijab in public spaces. For Gul, wearing hijab was tied to obedience to her faith and her parents. It was also tied to potential dangers around men. Gul said that modesty and wearing hijab means, "You listen to them [your parents], respect them." She went on to describe how a woman wears hijab, "outside to be careful" (session 2, episode QQ). Gul took up hijab as a daily practice. For Gul, being marked as Muslim was tied to being good and safe, and it helped her maintain ties to her family and her faith, her country and her culture.

Gul's ties to her faith were strong and helped her negotiate shifting subjectivities in her everyday life. She defended her religion and refuted any pieces of text that did not reflect her understanding of her faith. In one episode, we discussed a passage in *The Good Daughter* where the main character describes a disputed Iranian practice, the temporary marriage or *siqeh*. Gul immediately told us that she had never heard of that, and it must be made up by the author. She went on to say, "Yeah, because we don't have it. In Islam, never." Gul appeared to be very troubled and concerned by the passages we read. She couldn't imagine how the characters in the book, who claimed to be Muslims, could take part in these *siqeh* practices, which allowed Iranian men to take up multiple wives in temporary marriages. In these marriages, wives were not grant-

ed the rights associated with traditional marriages. These practices seemed to be related to ancient Islamic teachings that permitted men to have up to four wives.

Gul resisted the text and refuted it with her own knowledge and understanding of Islamic teachings on marriage. She said, "When Islam came, we [women] had the right to divorce, to marry again, all those things. You know what? It's from lack of education that people think, 'It's [Islam] bad, it's bad.' But if you study real Islam, you know. . . . So if you're not happy, the women, and they have so many trouble, they divorce" (session 2, episode NN). Gul made sure that we all understood what "real Islam" had taught her. She wanted the group to know that in her understanding of the Muslim religion, women were afforded protections, including permission to divorce and remarry. Again, Gul positioned herself as knowledgeable. She used what she knew and had learned to resist, refute, and teach others.

In our second meeting, Gul shared a story she had learned from a friend. We were talking about growing old and getting married, and Gul told us about an older woman who had just married later in life after becoming a doctor. I titled the story "She's an old lady" because that is how Gul referred to the older woman at first:

> There was an Egyptian man, her teacher. He realized that she could be a doctor. And she said that she never thought she could be a doctor or something that high. She said the teacher asked her why she didn't try because she is so good. She realized, and she said okay, and she tried and become a doctor. (session 2, excerpt TT)

Gul took up this particular story that was shared with her, and then she used it to teach others that even older unmarried women can be good and can be doctors. She used the story to show that even when one does not have a dream of her own, she might be inspired by someone else to

dream bigger and higher. Gul, like the lady in her story, was also unmarried and already 30, past marrying age for most women in her home culture and country. It seemed that Gul took up this story and used it as a resource for imagining her own story in resettlement. Gul also revealed that she understood that women could do "high" things if they tried and had support.

Gul showed that she possessed knowledge, took up new knowledge, and was open to learning and changing in this place, in ways she might not have been in other spaces and times. She also seemed to use storytelling not only to position herself, but also to teach or perhaps inspire others. She told us, "I learned from that, when I read that kind of book, it changed my mind not to be prejudiced about people because many things that we have are similar, and many things are different" (session 4, p.38). Gul recognized the ways in which other women in the books we read and in the room were both the same as and different from her. In the book club, the women who participated did share many things in common—being woman, daughter, refugee, displaced—but their individual stories were different. The differences between and among them often provided space for questions, shifts, creativity, and change.

Pia

Pia and her older sister were students in my ESOL class for two years. Pia was born in Thailand in a refugee camp, where she lived until coming to the United States around age 13, the same age as Christy. Both women attended the school where I worked. Pia's family was Karen, and originally from Burma. Pia was quick to respond to my request to join the book club; like Christy and Gul, she had also participated in my pilot project two summers earlier. Pia hoped that the book club might help her with summer reading projects; she was to read and write about several books. She was influential in our decision to read *The Joy Luck Club*, which was on her list. She brought it to the group and asked me to read the online reviews. When the group chose

The Good Daughter instead, we agreed to read *The Joy Luck Club* second. Pia later wrote a paper about the book. Pia positioned herself as a person with power, drawing upon resources such as the book club and relationships with others to get what she wanted and do things that she needed support in doing.

Pia's family, like both Christy's and Gul's, had recently moved away from the town where they had originally resettled in an apartment, into a rental home in a suburban neighborhood with better schools. Their new house was a split-level ranch, big enough for their immediate family of six and Pia's grandparents. The house was gray and set back on a heavily wooded lot. Although sun exposure was limited by lots of tall pine trees, Pia's grandparents worked hard to garden in containers that could be moved to catch the sun. When I visited, they had at least 30 five-gallon buckets filled with all kinds of vegetables and herbs. Although the new house was bigger and better for the family as a whole, Pia felt very isolated there. She was distanced from the Karen community physically and socially because this house was at least 30 minutes away from her friends and church. Her new school had few Karen students or speakers. For Pia, the move disconnected her from the social networks and relations that had supported and sustained her. Pia took up multiple practices, particularly digital literacy practices involving social media, in order to mitigate and navigate these changes and maintain her position within the Karen community.

Pia had one older sister, who was invited but did not participate in the book club. Over time, it became clear that Pia did not want her sister to join the club, wanting time away from her, and perhaps from the rest of the family. Pia told us that she had many conflicts with her whole family. She said, "After I get a job, I'm going to live on my own" (session 6, p.54). This was unusual in Pia's culture, and her family had just moved into the large house so that they

could stay together. But, Pia made it clear to us that she was struggling to maintain and manage her home relationships. She told us, “My dad talk too much. He talk too much” (session 7, p.58). Like many young people, Pia may have been experiencing intergenerational conflict associated with growing up and seeking independence. Navigating and negotiating these conflicts were especially complicated for Pia because leaving the family and moving out were not options in her culture and family. Christy and Mai seemed to share Pia’s desire for freedom to leave her family and pursue new options, and in the book club their dialogues and stories offered space to imagine these possibilities.

Pia had a round face, light skin, large dark eyes, and dark straight hair that could swing past her bottom when she wore it down. Pia was very proud of her hair and concerned about her appearance. She regularly talked about clothes, fashion, hair, and especially weight. Pia was concerned about overeating and gaining weight in the United States. It was a regular part of our conversations. Pia often compared herself physically to others and was a harsh critic of her own appearance. She was very short in stature, and often wore high-heeled shoes. She dressed with an eye towards fashion, preferring short skirts and tight pants. Pia seemed very interested in attracting attention with her clothes, hair, and makeup. She talked about boys often and often shared stories of love and loss.

Unlike Christy and Gul, who had never had boyfriends, Pia was known for her love relationships. Christy and Gul both had parents who were adamant that they not date. Gul’s family was planning a marriage for her, and dating could ruin that hope. Christy’s father prohibited romantic relationships until marriage. Pia’s father was a pastor, like Christy’s, and had done his share of warning and scolding. According to Pia, her father argued with her over boys and dating, but her father did not thwart Pia’s desires for boyfriends and male attention. Once, Pia said,

"I'm sexy" (session 6, p.35). In and through our discussions and dialogue, Pia took opportunities to position herself in the ways she desired—and being sexy was one of them. During the book club, Pia often showed us flattering pictures of herself and potential boyfriends on her cell phone. The phone and Internet were important to her and helped her maintain attention and affiliations. Pia was featured in several online music videos singing Karen songs, and her appearance and performances in the videos were also important to her.

When Pia had been a student in my class at school, I realized that she had a love for stories. She told me that she loved reading books and stories in Karen, her primary language. She also told me that she struggled to read in English, so she rarely did it outside of school for enjoyment. She reported much more pleasure in reading the stories and books her parents brought with them from Thailand. It is unusual for refugees to bring many books with them in resettlement, so I asked Pia about the books. She told me that both of her parents had once been teachers in a camp primary school for children and had been Bible teachers for adults. Now, they both worked in the chicken factory to support their family. Pia's parents also had a love for books and stories and managed to bring some of those with them. Pia said that she liked writing stories in Karen, especially fairy tales about princesses. But Pia reported that, in English, she struggled. She said, "When I came to America, I never write. I used to write in my language" (session 3, p.53). Pia reported that she did not like reading and writing in English, nor did she consider herself a "good" reader or writer in English. Pia seemed to be invested in being beautiful and in love, in finding a prince, and in maintaining tight ties to her language, homeland, and Karen community.

Pia struggled more with spoken English than either Gul or Christy. She was often difficult for me to understand, even after having known her for some years. Pia seemed to show,

more than Gul or Christy or anyone else in the club, a general ambivalence about learning, speaking, reading, and writing English. This ambivalence was also apparent in her talk about living in the United States. Pia, more than the others, seemed to live in the past and dream of the future. She longed to be back in Thailand. She talked of it openly and made plans to go back after finishing high school. Unlike Christy and Gul, who expressed desires for professional careers (Christy as a nurse and Gul as a business owner), Pia never talked about having a career—only being done with high school, having a car, and being free to travel back to Thailand. Once she asked me, "After I graduate school, will you find me work?" (session 6, p.97). Whereas Christy and Gul positioned themselves as future professionals in America, Pia seemed more focused on positioning herself culturally and linguistically within her Karen community and maintaining ties to her homeland.

Pia spent the least amount of time with English speakers. She spent almost all of her time with other Karen speakers. Pia was part of a Karen heritage dance group and was also a recognized Karen singer in the community, known for her large repertoire of traditional Karen love songs. Pia spent a great deal of time watching Karen music videos and movies online, as well as Korean dramas and Bollywood movies. (She rarely watched English television or movies.) During the book club, she also shared Karen poetry with us. She talked about how she loved the songs, poems, books, and stories she learned and gathered from her homeland, and preferred those to any other. Pia was committed to finishing high school and to literacy in English insofar as that helped her in high school, but she did not seem to value English in her everyday life.

Pia was honest about her struggles in school. She connected school success with being smart, and because she struggled in school, she felt she was not smart in the United States. She also connected school success with English and expressed that English was difficult for her and

stood in her way of success here. In one discussion about the challenges of high school and needing tutors and help studying, Pia interjected, "I hate it. When I was in Thailand, my favorite subject was English, and the president, I mean no the principal, she teaches English. She said, 'I like you because you're smart'" (session 3, p.71). Pia told us that back then in the camp school, she was learning English among other languages and did not have to study like she did here. It seemed that school and being a "good student" had once been an important part of Pia's sense of self, and that shifted here. She may have felt forced to take up new positions and subjectivities in school as a struggling student or as a person who is not smart because she did not know enough English. This might have fueled Pia's desires to go back to Thailand, where she could be smart and successful again, and her lack of interest in college or a professional career here in the United States.

Pia picked up the discourses of deficiency that circulated around her as an English learner in high school. In Georgia, even though Pia did not feel smart and no longer liked learning English, she placed some value on it. She understood her parents' desires for education and school success, and she knew that her work options would be limited without a high school diploma and some English. Although she spoke often in the club about her challenges at school around language, she did not drop out because she was close to graduation and was invested in finding a job and earning money. I believe Pia was less invested in English language and literacy because she had not yet formed strong connections to the English-speaking community. She did not have a sense of belonging in this new, monolingual, English-dominated space. Her family, friends, and boyfriends were Karen, her church was Karen, her history was Karen, her music and stories were Karen. Pia's practices and the stories she shared showed that her investments were mostly there and not here.

People have varied investments in learning new language and literacies. For Pia, new literacies around technology were particularly important. Phones, Facebook, photos, and videos were common topics of discussion. Digital literacies were a valuable means for Pia to remain connected to other people, especially in the Karen community all over the country and the world, including Thailand. The YouTube videos she posted of herself singing Karen songs were quite complex and included multi-media. These practices were valuable to her and worth her investment of time and effort because they shaped her identities and solidified her belonging within particular groups.

Pia positioned as a multi/plural person who knew and could use Karen, Thai, Burmese, and English. Pia used multiple languages online. She had a good grasp of popular texting language, and when she would use it with me and other book club members, I often had to ask for translations and guidance in meaning-making. Pia's investments were tied to her transnational ways of living and her shifting subjectivities, which in turn were tied to her feelings of belonging and isolation. Pia was isolated from English-speaking communities and people in school. She also felt more isolated from the Karen community because her family had recently moved. Her practices in the book club and everyday life reflected her desires and values, as well as her shifting subjectivities in a transnational space. Pia was trying to reimagine and transform herself here. She imagined a future that was more inclusive of her past. Her practices revealed her ambivalence toward English and school, but her investment in expanding repertoires of practice helped her negotiate and position herself as Karen, capable, desirable, and included.

In the club, she positioned herself as capable and powerful, influencing our book, meeting location, and food choices. Pia loved Asian food and wanted to share this with us. On two occasions, Pia suggested that we share lunch at a local Asian buffet after the meeting. In the res-

taurant, we continued reading and talking while we ate. In the conversation, Pia said simply, "I love to listen" (session 6). In that comment, Pia expressed her own personal desires to listen to and hear stories and be part of stories and storytelling. It seemed that our storytelling and sharing in the club conjured up Pia's past experiences hearing, reading, and writing stories in her language and helped her position herself. Pia expressed ambivalence toward and dissatisfaction with her life in resettlement, as well as uncertainty about what she would do or where she would go in the future, and yet in the book club and in the moment she made this comment, she seemed to have found some joy, sense of comfort, and belonging. For Pia, being part of the book club was more than just reading together. It opened up spaces for storytelling, social relations, and connections. The book club as a space and practice provided Pia with opportunities to tell her stories and to listen to, learn from, and use the stories other refugee women had to tell.

Conclusion

In chapter 5, I presented a different perspective on the findings and explored the ways in which the four major themes intersected with three participants' lives. I shared evidence of these women's lived experiences in and out of the book club and considered what can be learned from their particular stories. Their stories revealed the multiplicity that they recognized and took up in their stories and lives. They recognized in themselves more than one face, as Gul expressed in her shared proverb. In resettled transnational spaces, they were more than one and were capable of shifting and changing, active in negotiating and navigating multiplicity. In chapter 6, I discuss the findings presented in both chapters 4 and 5 and explore the implications of this study in relation to existing research and imagined possibilities.

6 DISCUSSION

Introduction

As others have stated (e.g. Bigelow, 2010; Fong, 2004; Hajdukoski-Ahmed, Khanlou & Moussa, 2009; McBrien, 2005), little is known and has been written about the lives of resettled refugees, especially women, and further research is needed into their language, literacy, and learning (Bigelow, 2010; Brown et al., 2006; Perry, 2007, 2009; Warriner, 2009a, 2009b; Woods, 2009). In this qualitative study of a refugee women's book club, I set out to investigate three research questions: (1) How do refugee women engage in an out-of-school book club? (2) What can be learned about the everyday lived experiences, literacy practices, and language use of resettled refugee women through an exploration of the book club? (3) In what ways might a book club community influence refugee women's literacy practices and everyday lives?

My purpose in pursuing these questions was to explore and gain insights into several key issues around refugee experience: the everyday lives of refugee women in resettled spaces, particularly the southeastern United States; the connections among literacies, language, and their everyday lives; the book club space and refugee women's book club practices; the ways in which learning intersects with refugee women's lives, language, and literacies; and the role that education plays in resettlement. Finally, I sought to contest deficit discourses tied to knowledge, literacy, and language that often circulate around refugee women and their communities. In this chapter, I discuss the findings presented in chapters 4 and 5, sewing them to my research questions, to the foundational theories and theoretical conceptions that informed my work, and to the empirical research. I also note the limitations of the study and address the implications of my findings for further research and for educational practice. Finally, I discuss possibilities and alternative

pedagogical approaches in light of what I learned from observing my participants' lives and practices, and from hearing their stories.

I identified four major themes from analysis: (1) Participants shaped and used the book club as a dialogic, border practice and space; (2) Participants navigated and negotiated shifting and changing subjectivities and took up multi/plural identities; (3) Participants used multiple languages and literacies as practices and resources; and (4) Participants were living here-and-there, transnational, dialogic lives. My understanding of the participants came to focus on their agency and activity. In appropriating, navigating, negotiating, knowing, shaping, questioning, telling, practicing, resisting, reading, and writing, these women were consistently acting on their worlds and were, themselves, accomplishing one of my own main purposes in conducting this study: they were contesting and countering deficit discourses.

In their discussions and stories, these women resisted widespread and fixed conceptions of refugee women as needy, helpless, illiterate, or incapable (Anzaldúa, 1987/2007; Grewal, 1994; Hajdukowski-Ahmed, 2009; Minh-ha, 2010), and they created counter-narratives of strength, helpfulness, literacy, and capacity. Consistent with the findings of other researchers who have challenged deficit discourses (e.g. Cummins, 2003; Gonzalez et al., 2005) and shown the complex ways in which refuges can navigate learning and literacies in their daily lives (Roy & Roxas, 2011; Warriner, 2007c), I observed that my participants were active agents in the book club, even while managing multiple roles and responsibilities in their families and communities. In short, the refugee women I studied were both transforming and transformative.

Research Question 1. Engagement in Book Club

The first research question was, "How do refugee women engage in an out-of-school book club?" According to the literature, book clubs are predominantly social spaces occupied by

women, where women read and talk about "what matters to them" (Poole, 2003, pp. 278–280). Little research into book clubs outside of schools, especially among non-White, nondominant groups, had been done, although such study is warranted given book clubs' long history and increasing popularity as sites of social and cultural engagement (Long, 2003; Poole, 2003). For refugee women of color, who are too often excluded from research and referred to as illiterate and uneducated (see Minh-ha, 2010; Piller & Takahashi, 2010; Pittaway & Bartolomei, 2001; Sarr & Mosselson, 2010; Semlak et al., 2008), a book club study offered a space to explore engagement, learning, and literacy practices that resist dominant discourses of deficiency, disconnection, and disenfranchisement. The book club was a space for engagement that provided, as Long (2003) suggests, "valuable resources for women navigating a social world that is both volatile and demanding" (p. 188). Twomey (2007) has argued that book clubs can, in certain circumstances, provide opportunities to resist and reimagine dominant discourses, and I argue that book clubs may provide spaces for reflective, critical, and transformative practices of reading and writing (Freire, 1968/1993). The book club in this study was able to operate in this way because of mutual relationships and histories, shared ownership and authority, and general flexibility and freedom in meetings and among members.

One striking finding was the high level of participation and investment observed among book club members. Six of the nine core participants attended five or more sessions, and the last two book club meetings had at least seven participants present. This shows that although work, family, school, and religious obligations and responsibilities competed for participants' time and attention, these women were committed to and invested in the club (Peirce, 1995; Norton, 2000). An email from Gul (June 10, 2013) quoted in chapter 4 demonstrates how participants were both committed to the club and agentive in asking for schedule changes to accommodate other re-

sponsibilities. Gul and her youngest sister, Par, managed to attend five meetings in total, usually travelling more than 30 miles to attend. The sisters hosted on two occasions, cooked for the group, and included their parents in meetings. Through their engagement and participation, they dialogically positioned themselves as readers, leaders, good daughters and women, faithful Muslims, accomplished cooks, cultural knowers, and more.

The members' investment in the club corroborates Norton's (1995, 2000) theory of investment in learning, which ties learners' desires, commitment, and engagement to their identities and to the resources they bring to learning experiences. The concept of investment highlights the learner's access and agency and relates to Lave and Wenger's (1991) notion of a community of practice in which learners (newcomers) are legitimate participants who use their resources to learn from and with knowledgeable others in order to gain new knowledge and practices. Despite being new to the concept of a book club and even to reading group outside of a school space, the women who participated in my study were invested, brought many resources, and used the club as an opportunity to act as knowledgeable others, gain new knowledge, and add to their repertoire of practices. In and through their participation in the club, they resisted dominant discourses of illiteracy and inability, reshaped book club practices to suit their needs, and reimagined their identities and lives.

The women's high levels of participation and engagement, though consistent with my assumptions in framing the study, were not consistent with the literature. My own assumptions (based on my experiences) are that refugee women are interested and invested in school and in learning. They and their families have stated that gaining education was a major factor in their pursuit of resettlement. Yet studies have shown that for many immigrant and refugee students (youth and adults) in schools, engagement, attendance, and retention are persistent problems

(McBrien, 2005; Menken, 2013; Sarroub et al., 2007; Schlage & Soga, 2008; Valdés, 2001; Valenzuela, 1999). Schlage and Soga's (2008) ethnographic study of adult ESL students showed students' frustration with the school's inability to address their needs. They found that schooling was prescriptive and that it discounted adult students' experiences and the knowledge they possessed. Many adult students in the study were regularly absent from school, and others dropped out. Likewise, studies of refugee and immigrant women show that they often feel excluded from educational settings, and that they feel they do not belong in English communities of practice (Bigelow, 2010; Gunderson, 2000; Norton, 2000; Warriner, 2009a, 2009b). Much empirical literature has shown that negative experiences and outcomes are prevalent in the education of immigrants and refugees, yet my study demonstrates that these experiences and outcomes are not inevitable.

The high level of participation, engagement, and investment among women in this study might be explained by the voluntary nature of the club, shared ownership, previous relationships among members, and general openness and flexibility among the club members and within the meetings themselves. Conducting the book club study outside of a school space among a group of already-connected women provided an opportunity to explore engagement in a completely different context. In the discussion of results below, three forms of participant engagement in the book club are considered: how participants engaged with one another, how they engaged with the books we read, and how they engaged in discussion during book club meetings.

Relationships among members. The relationships among book club members were characterized by reciprocity, negotiations, and give-and-take. The book club was highly relational, and participants engaged with each other as much as or more than with the books. As these participants had been displaced and uprooted, the relational aspects of being in a book club and

the opportunities to connect with others who had shared understandings and experiences were important and valued. As suggested by other scholars and researchers, book clubs provide opportunities to maintain and gain affinities and connections (Barstow, 2003; Long, 1986, 2003; Poole, 2003; Moll, 2005; Dail et al., 2009). For refugee women who have lost or struggle to maintain connections to home and faraway family, and who often feel different and disconnected in their local everyday lives, these opportunities to connect can be particularly powerful. An early email from Gul's older sister Sana revealed why she initially chose to join the club. She wrote, "Thank you for the great idea of a book club to make us together again" (personal email, April 15, 2013). For Sana and the others in the group, our pre-existing relationships, formed through school, made the idea of coming together in the book club more appealing, and were in fact essential to participant engagement.

In our group discussions, several members reported feeling isolated, alone, and disconnected in their everyday lives. Gul explained how, at work in the sewing factory, "We don't talk. We just do our work, and I don't know their [the other workers'] names" (session 8, p. 92). Pia told us how different life in America was from life in the refugee camp: "When we got here, like, everybody was so busy, we don't…we don't spend time" (session 3, p.66). She also shared how her family's recent move out of the refugee resettlement neighborhood meant leaving her Karen community behind and how difficult that had been for her. In addition, Nan shared how she almost never talked to her parents and siblings at home (session 5). Given the isolation that was common in their everyday lives, the women welcomed the opportunity to engage in this voluntary book club, and they were interested in sharing enjoyable time and talk together around books (Long, 2003). The desires to build and strengthen relationships and create connections were central to their engagement in the club.

A number of scholars have pointed to the importance of positive, supportive relationships and feelings of safety for newcomer immigrants and refugees in schools (Brown et al., 2006; McBrien, 2005; Sarr & Mosselson, 2010; Suárez-Orozco et al., 2009; Suárez-Orozco et al., 2009; Townsend & Fu, 2001). Scholars who research adult education have also found that safety and relationships are factors for engagement in learning among adults in formal and informal learning spaces (Compton-Lilly, 2009a, 2009b; Dail et al., 2009; Finn, 2010; Goodkind, 2006; Prins et al, 2009; Schalge & Soga, 2008; Taylor, 2006). Prins et al. (2009), for instance, reported that a family literacy program for women afforded a place for socializing and mutual support, as well as self-discovery and development. They found that the practices that were most important to the women and enhanced their outcomes were those that made the program feel "like a family" (p. 345). In the book club for this study, caring and supportive relationships were essential to engagement, suggesting that social aspects of participation are critical to understanding participants' investment in the book club and in learning. As Pittaway (2004) suggested, "A learner's investment is often fragile and is subject to change by interaction in the social world" (p. 203).

The club that we created was a safe place for relationships; it was made up of all women, and everyone except for me was a refugee. Long (2003) explained, "Most [reading] groups grow out of participants' informal social networks" (p. 49), and thus, reading groups among women are "more notable for their homogeneity than for their diversity" (p. 141–42). She contended that historically "this kind of homogeneity may have made it easier for women to speak in their book clubs" (p. 49). Indeed, drawing upon Pratt's (1991) description of "safe houses" (p. 40), I came to see the book club as a social and dialogic space where refugee women could find shared understanding, trust, and temporary protection. Pratt (1991) said that in the often-homogenous space of a book club, people who have been subordinated or marginalized can find room for

healing and mutual recognition. She contended that safe houses provide spaces in which to construct shared understandings that participants can then bring into the contact zones in their everyday lives.

In the context of this study, I contend that because the participants had shared histories and experiences of displacement as multilingual refugee women, and had all resettled in the same city, they were able to create a sense of sisterhood and shared understanding that reinforced feelings of trust, intimacy, and safety. However, like the women in Frye's (1999) study, my participants also had diverse experiences and histories and were eager to tell and share their individual stories. Members of the club did have similarities that fostered relatedness and mutual understanding, but they also embodied many differences. They came from different countries, spoke different languages, and followed different faith traditions—and they were aware of and recognized their dissimilarities. They maintained these differences, allowing space within the book club and in their everyday lives for diversity, ambiguity, and fluctuation. Together, the women's similarities and differences enabled and empowered them as they claimed the right to speak (Norton, 1997, 2000), shared their stories, and imagined their lives and futures outside of the club.

Role of the setting in fostering relationships. Several characteristics of the book club setting contributed to fostering relationships among members. The meetings, conducted largely within our homes, were safe, relatively unstructured, and private, so that intimacy and understanding were fostered. Canagarajah (2004) argued that students seek out and need safe spaces in which to practice complex, critical, and creative forms of participation. As "sites that are relatively free from surveillance" (p. 121), "safe houses" (as defined by Pratt, 1991) are unofficial, often interstitial spaces in which learners take on hybrid and imagined identities and engage in

heterogeneous discourses. In safe houses, learners may try on identities, discourses, and practices, and may incorporate values and subjects that matter to them outside of school. In these often hidden spaces, learners may confront, contest, or contradict without risking failure or condemnation.

The book club was an open space, less regulated than a school space, and as such, it allowed for interruptions and the unexpected. Participants shared texts, phone calls, music, photos, and more during meetings. We paused discussions to look up words and answers on our computers, and to eat and talk about old friends. We took up an adaptive and contingent approach. Participants allowed for multiple leaders, languages, changes, and interruptions. They were flexible around time and afforded each other opportunities to talk at length and share stories without limits. The meetings were never less than two hours, and some lasted as long as five hours. This flexibility and contingency provided opportunities to know each other better, build relationships, and learn from one another. The approach afforded participants with opportunities and space to be knowers and to practice multiple languages and literacies (Baynham, 2002). They were free from time pressure and fixed expectations around performances and participation. In our very first meeting, participants co-constructed narratives that gave shape to the club: they wanted a club that was collaborative where "everyone participates" and "everyone will enjoy" (session 1), but they set out no fixed rules for this. Members were afforded ownership over the club (agreeing to be recorded was my only requirement), and ownership of the club fostered a sense of belonging that in turn seemed to increase investment, and engagement in the club.

Reciprocity, negotiation, and give-and-take. Overall, the relationships among book club members were characterized by reciprocity, negotiation, and give-and-take. Members were agentive in their mutual influence, taking turns at sharing knowledge. This finding was contrary to

Freire (1968/1993), who warned that members of oppressed groups can become "convinced" that they know nothing and are "unfit" to learn, be productive, and contribute because of the persistent negative discourse to which they are subjected (p. 45). By contrast, when I was coding transcripts, I noticed the ways in which participants repeatedly used discursive moves to exercise agency, directing dialogue and positioning themselves and others in particular ways. Authority and Agency [AA] became a focused code or category around which I clustered more than 150 utterances related to power and positioning.

Reciprocity depends upon mutual recognition, trust, and the belief that each person is a legitimate and valuable member of the relationship. If participants in the book club were unable to position themselves as having something to give, then a reciprocal relationship would not have been possible. In schools, reciprocity between teacher and student is often impossible because students are not afforded opportunities to give to the class or teacher (Noddings, 1984, 2006; Freire, 1968/1993, p. 45). The exercise of both reciprocity and negotiation depend on having power—specifically, the power to give, act, and be creative. In a non-reciprocal setting, the development and practice of literacy is hindered. Freire (1968/1993) noted that the very construct of literacy is defined in terms of power: "Literacy becomes a meaningful construct to the degree that it is viewed as a set of practices that functions to either empower or disempower people" (p. 141). In this book club study, it was important that the participants' exchanges and transactions occur in genuine dialogue within the context of a reciprocal community, where knowledge-sharing is possible.

The participants in this study, in articulating their own stories and experiences, looked to others for responses, support, and sometimes for answers. As in Beach and Yussen's study of adult book clubs (2011), the women all brought valuable resources to the reading group. Sana,

Par, and Gul explained much of *The Good Daughter* to us, illuminating the text with their nuanced explanations of the meanings words unfamiliar to the rest of us (session 3). Their understandings of multiple languages and cultures enabled them to act as literacy and cultural brokers for us in the meaning-making process around texts. Participants did this in other ways around digital literacies, with Pia teaching me about texting, test-taking literacies, doing hair, cooking, and more. Beyond the exchange of knowledge, club members also exchanged care. Caring relationships within the book club encouraged a dialogic community of practice in which members engaged in constructive and collaborative meaning-making as both listeners and speakers.

I interpreted the members' participation and reciprocity in terms of Bakhtin's (1986) conceptions of responsivity and addressivity. He contended that in conversation, utterances are actively connected and will find response in the subsequent speech or behavior of the participants. Speakers anticipate addressivity or active listening, understanding, and response. Responsivity assumes understanding and action. Both practices assume agency, reciprocity, and give-and-take. The goal of these reciprocal dialogues was to exchange knowledge and come to understanding. From the beginning, participants expressed that understanding was important to them and explained that discussion was important to understanding (Bakhtin, 1986). For them, understanding was fundamental to reading, and it seemed that from their point of view, reading was a social and dialogic practice of making sense. As Sana said, "We can discuss with someone, how can I understand this [the book]?" (session 1). She later repeated, "We discuss it and make sure everybody understood" (session 1, p.11).

Vygotsky (1986) theorized that individuals learn through socially mediated interactions. He argued that interaction, language, and collaboration are essential aspects of learning and described how learning occurs through supportive peer relationships with more knowledgeable

others (Vygotsky, 1978). During readings, the women worked together to make sense of the texts—sometimes interrupting, asking questions, making connections to their personal lives, re-stating, refuting, and more. They drew upon available resources and funds of knowledge to make meaning of the books we read and the narratives shared by others in the club.

Relationships with texts. The book club members' relationships with texts were both personal and transactional. Personal relationships were characterized by a sense of agency, an emphasis on orality, and an ability to make connections to the text. Transactional relationships with the texts involved putting the text to some creative use, beyond just making personal connections to them.

Agency in selecting and interpreting texts. Authority over book choice and time and space to make personal connections to the texts they had chosen were important aspects of engagement in the club. Participants chose books that they connected with and that reflected their shared histories as women, as refugees, and as transnationals (see *The Joy Luck Club* and *The Good Daughter: A Memoir of My Mother's Hidden Life*). Much like the 17 Latina women who met for ESL classes in Frye's (1999) study, participants appreciated being part of a women's group where they could talk about what it meant for them to be refugee women in this resettled space. In choosing two books with a focus on transnational women, they were able to use the characters' stories to reflect on and recreate their own. Their choices and co-constructed discussions and narratives in meetings were not merely reflections of their lived experiences but recreations and new creations of future possibilities.

Participants were active in deliberations around choosing the books for the club, but book choices were made collectively and without formal voting. Members explicitly mentioned only a few criteria in making their choices, and most of these revealed the importance of being able to

relate to and connect to the text. Sana said, "I want to read a book about a woman and real life" (session 1, p.17), and her sister Gul said that if they chose a book set in India or Iran, "I can relate very well, maybe I can understand" (session 4, p.84). Their statements reveal the ties between understanding and lived experience and a desire to understand. In choosing texts about transnational women, the book club members positioned themselves as experienced knowers who could contribute to discussions and understand complex texts. As relatively new readers of English and newcomers to a book club, this seemed important. Reading texts that they could relate to and understand enabled them to act as legitimate readers and members in a book club community.

Long (2003) described how book club members take up knowledge and authority when discussing characters in literary texts because they are able to draw upon their knowledge and experiences with people in the real world. Participants in this club did exercise such authority and also used characters in the book for their own "creative identity work" (p. 221). For example, Lucy positioned herself as someone who is capable of explaining why a text is challenging or more difficult to read; recognizing that no one else was able to explain a passage they found confusing, she spoke up and said, "I can tell you" (session 2, episode HH). As another example, in our sixth session, as we discussed *The Joy Luck Club*, Christy said of one of the women in the book, "She's my favorite character…It's not being disobedient, but she's trying to [do] good for herself, but not in a way that hurts other people. I like her" (session 6, p.60). At the time, Christy and others in the club were working through choices and changes in their own lives.

Christy was navigating choices and changes that required managing family obligations and cultural expectations along with her own desires and hopes for the future. Christy expressed a desire to honor her parents and be an obedient, good girl, but she also expressed the desire to

do things that her friends, family, and cultural community might perceive as disobedient. Christy and her family were deciding whether or not she would transfer schools in her senior year to be with the family in another state or whether she would stay with a family friend and finish out school here. She said, “They [my family] are going to need my help, you know? . . . Now, I feel so bad. . . . I know back in Africa—the daughter’s supposed to be there. I know people give them a hard time because I can tell, especially when I talk to my dad” (session 8, p.189). It seemed that Christy’s affinity towards this character revealed the ways in which she could relate the character’s life and actions to her own. Christy also didn’t want to be disobedient or hurt her family, but she did want the freedom to do “good for herself.”

In choosing books focused on women, book club members engaged in a process of living through other people’s stories (Long, 2003, p. 188). Participants in the book club drew upon autobiographical narratives and experiences as knowledge and resources for interpreting texts. Gul contended, “I can relate very well, [so] maybe I can understand” (session 4, p.84). They brought their real life, real world experiences to bear on the text and worked together to make meaning and fashion interpretations of the books we read. Long (2003) contended, “there is no need to produce an authoritative reading of a book” (p. 147) in a book club and differentiates reading for pleasure from “schooled reading” (p. 229) in the variety and diversity of responses. Rather than looking for one authoritative, correct response, a diversity of responses and stories adds to the “many-voiced” (p. 147) discussion. Following Bakhtin (1986), I hold that interpretation requires understanding and imagination, taking what is given, responding creatively, and then transforming these elements into understanding (p. 159). Authority and agency in choosing and interpreting texts afforded book club members opportunities to recognize the knowledge they had to

share with others and position themselves as legitimate, capable, and creative members in the book club community.

Orality in community. A distinctive characteristic in this particular book club, as compared to those described in the literature, was the way in which this club's members engaged in oral reading as social meaning-making. Data and analysis showed that participants tightly tied reading to knowing and understanding, and they took up reading as a social act of co-constructing meaning in community. These oral and social reading practices contrast with the many theories of reading that situate the practice within the mind of an individual. Rather than reading silently and alone, outside of meetings, they chose to read much of both books aloud together at meetings. In one early meeting, Mai requested that we read aloud, and she was persistent in pushing us towards shared readings. Pia voiced her agreement, and from that time on many hours were spent reading long passages to one another. Readings were typically interrupted for reflections, stories, questions, and dialogue, as the participants engaged in conversation about the text. The group's preference for oral reading made sense in light of the fact that many participants highly valued the oral traditions and stories of their home cultures. Participants regularly referenced prayers, songs, poems, chants, faith stories, cultural stories, proverbs, and sayings during meetings. It seemed that oral reading related to the transnational, historical, and cultural practices they had gathered through storytelling and oral tradition practices.

Participants chose adult books that were challenging for them but that they could relate to and reflected their own experiences. They were capable of decoding them on their own but made it clear that reading together would help them make sense and understand what they read. They brought knowledge, skills, emotions, and imagination to the process, and they connected their cultural and social experiences of engagement with oral literature and traditions, communal

tellings and shared meanings to the book club practice. Participants all drew upon transnational literacy practices and resources that blurred lines between orality and literacy. They resisted my suggestions for journal writing, and instead extended writing in unexpected and untraditional ways (New London Group, 1996). They took up familiar online and digital tools and practices in the book club including Facebook, texts, and emails and used them to extend shared reading out-side of meetings. Social connections and collaborative meaning-making continued outside of the club, and even reading done at home was not an isolated practice for them.

As participants added to their repertoires of practice in the book club, they reshaped and reimaged them. Book club reading for them became a socially situated, largely oral, and collabo-rative literacy practice. Perry (2007, 2009) noted that researchers often refer to the connections between storytelling and literacy practices, yet they continue to contrast oral and literate practic-es. In this study, ties were evident between the oral and literate practices of refugee women in the book club. In one narrative episode entitled "Woman in the Moon," participants in the club tied moon stories they had gathered from other places and times to the "Lady in the Moon" story from *The Joy Luck Club* (session 6, episode R). In the discussion we realized that we all shared and had heard stories about the shadows and outlines on the moon. Pia and Mai worked together to remember, translate, and share a Karen poem about the moon that evoked images of thankful-ness, women and children, and harvesting rice. Christy's moon story was a cautionary tale about the dangers of women working on Sundays. My story was about a kind man in the moon and not about a woman at all. We shared and examined oral tellings and knowledge we had gathered from here and there alongside the written story in our book. In our co-constructed narrative, sto-ries both oral and written, from different places and times, bumped up against one another, and

multiple ways of knowing emerged. Each participant was afforded space and authority to know, to share, to teach, to tell, and to transgress the borders between them.

Personal connections to texts. Our discussions in book club meetings, as recorded in transcripts, revealed the importance of making personal connections to texts, like the moon stories in the previous section. In almost every instance when someone initiated a turn at talk or told a story, or we had an extended conversation around a topic, the intent was to communicate a personal connection to the text(s) or to another book club member. At least 12 of the 44 narratives pulled out for analysis were directly connected to the texts we were reading, thus about one-third of them revealed the ways in which participants positively related and connected their own lived experiences to books and to characters in books (Choi, 2009; Long, 2003). Long (2003) found that in book clubs, members generally value "excursions into the personal," and conversations "recognize the validity of experiential truths and the perspectival nature of knowledge" (p. 108). In making personal connections to the texts we read, participants in the club could share and exchange their knowledge and ideas about the world and about their lives as resettled refugees.

Perry (2009) contended that for the Sudanese refugee men in her studies, the most important purpose of storytelling was as a tool and resource for identity construction and navigating new spaces and social worlds. Similarly, the women in this study used their personal connections to texts as opportunities to construct narratives, reflect upon their lives—past, present, and future—and navigate shifting subjectivities and identities in new spaces. For example, in session 5, we read passages from *The Joy Luck Club* that dealt with difficulties in communication between mother and daughter. One passage read, "These kinds of explanations made me feel my mother and I spoke two different languages, which we did. I talked in English, she answered me back in Chinese" (p. 33–34) and "My mother and I never really understood one another. We translated

each other's meanings and I seemed to hear less than what was said, while my mother heard more" (p. 37).

In response to this reading, Christy remarked, "Now, it's the same way, similar with us. It's like we don't really have a lot in common with our parents, you know. It's like we don't really talk to our parents like that, or tell them what we're doing here and what's going on in our daily lives" (session 5, episode P). Christy not only connected personally with this text, but she tied *The Joy Luck Club* to *The Good Daughter* and to Jasmin, the main character's daughter, who "didn't want anything to do with The Good Daughter of my mother's Iranian world. The less I resembled her, the better it suited me" (Darznik, 2011, p. 3). Christy also used the words "we" and "us" to tie all the book club members together in her response. In this case, Christy voiced what others had previously said, and in doing so, tied together their experiences as daughters and transnational and multilingual women in a changing world.

This excerpt is part of a bigger narrative and connected to other narratives told in the club about the changes these women must navigate their everyday lives. It reveals the ways in which stories and storytelling act to position people and situate them within particular groups. Stories can be resources used to create a sense of community and belonging. For these women, the texts we read and the texts we created in dialogue were intertextual, transactional, and tied to trans-formations.

Transactions and creative practice. Although participants' connections to texts and to others were reciprocal engagements, their interactions with texts (in books, online, and in stories told) moved beyond making connections to making transactions. Rosenblatt (1994) used the term *transaction* "to designate a relationship in which each element, instead of being fixed and prede-fined, conditions and is conditioned by the other" (p. 180). She contended that this is "an ongo-

ing process" (p. 17) that involves "not only past experiences but also the present state and present interests or preoccupations of the reader" (p. 20). It is "an active process lived through" (p. 20). This way of understanding reading is dialogic and underscores the ways in which members understood and practiced reading in the club. Rosenblatt (1995) further explained that literature can offer a release from time and space and reveal possibilities and alternatives for lives.

As creative and generative processes, reading, dialogue, and storytelling allow participants to imagine, cross boundaries, make shifts, learn, and change. Transactions in reading go beyond the text to make meaning in readers' lives (Freire, 1968/1993; Moll, 2005). Long (2003) explained transactional reading by saying that "reading among trusted coparticipants engenders a particular kind of reflection that can have transformative potential" (p. 187). This form of reading is not a receptive act but a creative practice, and like other cultural practices, can be used to transform, reimagine, and reshape selves and social actions.

Participation in the book club provided these women with space, opportunity, support, and resources for movement and negotiations. They could take up multiple ways, selves, and positions in and through this practice. Keyword frequencies showed that we used the words *change* and *changing* at least 84 times and the word *learn* at least 138. For me, these data signified participants' openness towards transactions, transformations, and towards transgressions and boundary crossings. Gul once told us that in and through our reading together she learned things and ", "It changed my mind not to be prejudiced about people because many things that we have are similar and many things are different" (session 4, p. 38). She was challenged in a safe space to risk changing her mind. The book club was safe, supportive, shared, and shifting. It was private and also public in that some of the private dialogues and utterances participants carried with them were voiced and made public and known to us in the group. For example, in one narrative

excerpt, Gul resisted the text we were reading (*The Good Daughter*) and texts she had heard, refuting them with her own knowledge and understanding of Islamic teachings on marriage. She said, “When Islam came, we [women] had the right to divorce, to marry again, all those things. You know what? It’s from lack of education that people think, ‘It's [Islam] bad, it's bad.’ But if you study real Islam, you know. . . . So, if you're not happy, the women, and they have so many trouble, they divorce” (session 2, episode NN).

Gul made sure that the group understood what “real Islam” had taught her. She wanted to make public her private and personal understandings about the Muslim religion, in which women were afforded protections, including permission to divorce and remarry. Gul positioned herself as knowledgeable and active. She used what she knew and had learned in order to resist, refute, and teach others. As Bakhtin (1986) suggested, “The text lives only by coming into contact with another text” (p. 162). For these women, the books we read became valuable in dialogue and in contact with our lives, experiences, and stories.

Engagement in discussion. The book club members engaged in discussions in meetings in two key ways: positioning, that is, defining one’s place within the group and/or the larger world; and dialogism, or multi-voicedness, a co-construction of discourse and meaning about the texts, the book club, and the world outside the group.

Positioning and identity. Agency, authority, and engagement were key elements in our discussions in the book club. Participants took up agency and authority in reading and meaning-making and in shaping the club. Bakhtin (1981) suggested that authoritative discourses and structures do not allow for flexible borders and argues that authority distances itself from the “zone of contact” (p. 345). In the case of this club, authority and flexibility coexisted in the club. Authority emerged from within the club and was taken up by participants rather than being pressed upon

them. They engaged in the club in ways they desired, and these were additive and multi/plural rather than subtractive (Bigelow, 2010; Goodkind, 2006; McBrien, 2005; Sarroub, 2002; Townsend & Fu, 2001; Valenzuela, 1999; Walker-Dalhouse & Dalhouse, 2009). Gul's eagerness to join the club and her investment in meetings was due in part to her desire to position herself as a reader. She put a great deal of time and effort into reading, telling the group more than once that she reread the same pages two or three times in order to really understand the book. Gul positioned herself as a teacher, sharing her reading strategies with us as one who knows about reading and can help others.

Participants created a space that was flexible and loosely structured, one that allowed for transgressions and border crossings. They brought in multiple languages, literacy practices, and ways of knowing and being. They engaged in subjective ways and positioned themselves for particular purposes in the club. Participants were speakers and listeners and were eager and willing to answer, add to, consent, or contest what others said. Participants depended on members with different knowledge to answer their questions and act as authorities. My own expertise and experience as an English teacher was usually only called upon and useful when literary questions or difficult vocabulary questions arose.

In terms of cultural knowledge and real-world experience, participants often acted as and positioned themselves as knowledgeable others. The book club was a space where learners could take up new practices and knowledge from others about driving tests, college admissions, marriage, work, family, hairstyles, and more. They used the book club site to create a community of practice that fostered their sense of legitimacy and belonging in this reading community and the larger English-speaking community. They used the space to discuss and work out imagined futures in high school, college, work, marriage, and more together. They used the books we read

and the co-constructed dialogic texts created in discussion and stories to understand, reflect, re-member, and imagine. They were capable readers and knowledgeable women, learning and changing with the help and support of others in a book club. The women were legitimately lit-erate in this space.

Research suggests that for language learners, especially women, informal settings such as book clubs offer spaces to disrupt traditional relations of power and build relationships based on mutual respect and reciprocal caring. Norton (2000) contended that the context for their diary study meetings, conducted outside of school and in her home, "reframed the women's expecta-tions of whose knowledge was considered more legitimate and valid" and "each woman was an expert on her own life" (p. 147). I found that the outside-of-school spaces in this study did change dynamics and disrupt our previous teacher-student relationships. I also saw that partici-pants took up positions of authority and as more knowledgeable others. Participants were eager to share what they knew and understood from their own lives and experiences but did not neces-sarily seem to see themselves as experts. They were confident and capable in sharing their stories and knowledge, but they were also open to learning, change, and new knowledge. In fact, they desired and expressed a need for support and new knowledge in this new home and resettled space. There seemed to be a tension between knowing and not knowing and changing and not changing. Participants were eager to share knowledge they already possessed but were also en-gaged in the construction of new knowledge, practices, and selves in a new resettled space.

Dialogism. Like the Latina women in Frye's (1999) study of an ESL Saturday study group, participants in the book club focused on relationships and favored less structured discus-sions and storytelling over directed lessons or lectures. In our book club, reading was tightly tied to but secondary to discussion. Over the six-month period, participants chose and read two

books, and these were read slowly and mostly aloud in meetings. Reading was consistently intertwined with talk, eating, and storytelling. There was no rush to read because meaning-making, knowledge, and understanding were important and were gained in connections to the texts and to others. For these participants, engagement was dialogic and heteroglossic, a blending of worldviews through languages and texts in multiple voices and viewpoints (Bakhtin, 1981). I believe that for these transnational women who lived and navigated movement, change, and difference, their ways of being and knowing provided space for openness and flexibility. They were open to uncertainty, fluidity, and transformation and did not shut down or silence what they did not know or understand.

In our discussions, their stories overlapped and intertwined; the women noted both similarities and differences and wove them together into co-constructed narratives. These co-constructed narratives revealed the ways in which their different perspectives came together and informed our understandings of the club, books, and lives. Participants in the book club engaged in reciprocal and transactional ways with texts and with each other that seem to reflect Bakhtin's (1986) conceptions of intertextuality and dialogism. As in the example with Christy above from session 5, readings from both books tied together with the stories participants told and heard, as they worked to construct meanings and made space for multiple and co-existing voices. For Bakhtin, all utterances presuppose a social context in which they can be heard and ultimately comprehended. In order to invite responsiveness, an utterance must be understood, and this understanding is always dialogic (pp. 76, 125). Participants in the book club did not assume that meaning could be found in the text alone or in solitary reading; they recognized that meaning was socially situated and could be created "in the zone of contact" (Bakhtin, 1981, p. 345) and in

a community of practice. Swain and Deters (2007) suggested that Bakhtin's dialogic perspective "creates a greater space for human agency" (p. 829).

Dialogic engagement in the book club included storytelling as a practice. Paying close attention to small stories (Bamberg & Georgakopoulou, 2008; Georgakopolou, 2006) and "stories-as-interaction" (Norton & Early, 2011) and drawing upon narrative methods of analysis allowed me to see the ways in which stories were constructed and used in the book club and as a means of negotiating meaning and moving reading beyond the text and into everyday lives. Participants brought other worlds and everyday lives into the club through their stories. Data and narratives from the book club revealed the importance of the dialogic experiences with texts and with others.

Research Question 2. Everyday Lives, Literacy, and Language Use

The second research question was, "What can be learned about the everyday lived experiences, literacy practices, and language use of resettled refugee women through an exploration of the book club?" In conducting this book club study and gathering data during meetings, aspects of participants' everyday lives were sewn into the stories they told. The second research question actually became the overarching question that guided my process of data collection and analysis. The four major findings discussed in chapter 4 all work to answer this question. The themes were as follows: (1) Participants shaped and used the book club as a dialogic, border practice and space; (2) Participants navigated and negotiated shifting and changing subjectivities and took up multi/plural identities; (3) Participants used multiple languages and literacies as practices and resources; and (4) Participants were living here and there, transnational and dialogic lives.

In this section, I focus mostly on what I learned about participants' everyday lives in and through their stories. I touch on each of these themes in the discussion below, which is organized into three sections: what I learned about the participants' subjectivities and identities (theme 2); their language and literacy practices (themes 1 and 3); and the transnational in their lives (theme 4). Several common threads are observed through all three sections: a mismatch between the refugee women's public and private lives, which was challenging to navigate; a tolerance for ambiguity, change, and plurality; and a sense of having flexible expectations and an openness to possibilities.

Multi/plural subjectivities and identities. In addition to the book club, participants were also engaged in school, tutoring programs, soccer groups, faith-based groups, work, and other communities. The stories that participants shared in book club about their everyday lives revealed the ways in which they adapted and appropriated multiple positions, identities, and roles in their everyday lives—as daughters, caretakers, students, workers, wives, readers, multilinguals, and more. For example, Lucy told us in our second meeting that she was no longer going to be able to join us for Saturday book club meetings, as she had been asked by her Chin church to teach the younger children language lessons on Saturdays. She said, "They decided that most of the children who were born here, they don't know the language" (session 2, excerpt OO). Even though she desired to be a reader involved in a book club, Lucy was not willing to say no to this opportunity to act as a competent teacher, leader, and multilingual knower in her cultural and linguistic community and her church.

Like Lucy, other participants' subjectivities were often shifting and their identities were multi/plural, *mestiza*, much as Anzaldúa (1987/2007) describes: "The new mestiza copes by developing a tolerance for contradictions, a tolerance for ambiguity. . . . She learns to juggle cul-

tures. She has a plural personality, she operates in a pluralistic mode" (p. 101). As the participants juggled their multiple selves and roles, they found that these did not always piece together. In particular, a sense of mismatch between private and public roles and expectations around these roles was common. My research also confirmed the mismatch between home and community spaces (Li, 2008). There was a disparity between what participants could do in their personal and private lives and what others believed or imagined they could do—or wanted them to do—in public spaces and structures. I also observed differences in how participants positioned themselves in private versus public spaces. In the relatively private space of the book club, participants often took turns exercising authority and acting as knowledgeable others. At home, participants also often took up roles as multilingual knowers, translators, authorities, and literacy brokers. Paradoxically, familial and cultural expectations of women at home also served to limit their options and opportunities.

The women's subjectivities and ways of describing themselves in their stories often shifted depending on the context. Although participants showed they were capable of crossing boundaries, the public structures, relations of power, and resistance to their dialogic ways of being and knowing the world often limited opportunities to do so. For example, Gul explained that in her home and for her family and in her culture, the women in the house did all the food preparation and cooking. The act of preparing food was tied to familial duties and obligations and also to being a good girl, daughter, and potential wife. Gul positioned herself as both a good cook and a good woman. I was surprised by Gul's response to our reading and the ways she positioned herself because she was also running a successful small business and going to English classes at school. Nevertheless, it gave me pause to reflect upon the weight that gender and cultural norms

and expectations carried across borders and bore on these women's everyday lives and ways of thinking.

The literature has addressed multi/plural subjectivities and identities in terms of the construct of in-betweenness. Sarroub (2002) found in her study of female Yemeni American students that participants used the term *in-between* to describe themselves and their feelings, and she defined in-betweenness as "the immediate adaptation of one's performance or identity to one's textual, social, cultural, and physical surroundings" (p. 131). The concept speaks to the boundaries these young women experienced between home, community, and school, and between being Yemeni and American. However, when I reflected on in-betweenness in relation to the women in the book club, the construct seemed too constraining: it implied something intermediate or in limbo, whereas these women were adept at adapting their performances in context, their subjectivities and identities as open. My participants created and inhabited an open and plural space, not between two spaces but among multiple ones. They never described feeling stuck or caught; instead, they seemed to be dialogically working through plural options and choices. In fact, Mai talked about how there were "too many options" here (see Narrative X). Similarly, the women in my study were navigating change and imagining multiple ways of being and doing in this resettled space. Just as their literacies were shifting and multiple, so too were their subjectivities. This is fitting given the close connection between literacy and identity, between language use and experience.

Language and literacy practices. Outside of the club, especially in school and work spaces, access to power was often limited, and in turn, access to different positions and knowledge was also limited. Language, at least to some extent, defines who and what we are and who and what we believe we might be. Language produces meaning and creates social reality

(Richardson, 2001); shapes actual and imagined communities (Anderson, 2006); and is often an indicator of membership, integration, and inclusion. Literacy, much like language use, is a multiple, situated, and shifting social practice of meaning-making that works to limit and afford access to communities and ways of knowing, being, and doing. Many scholars contend that language, literacy, and learning are tightly tied to one's sense of self (e.g. Lave & Wenger, 1991; Menard-Warwick, 2005, 2008; Norton, 2000). For refugees in resettlement, the language barrier is one of the greatest and most complex challenges they face (Fong, 2004; Martin, 2004; McBrien, 2005; Pipher, 2002), perhaps because language is entangled in every aspect of life, and lack of language knowledge and literacy can be profoundly isolating and limiting. McBrien (2005) found in an extensive literature review that nearly all of the refugees represented had reported feelings and experiences of isolation and alienation in schools (Brown et al., 2006; McBrien, 2005; Sarr & Mosselson, 2010; Townsend & Fu, 2001).

For Christy, language was indeed a marker of difference and silencing, especially in public spaces such as school and work. She said, "I get like nervous when I go to places that I know I have to speak, that I will be judged based on how I speak. Then, I just get there and like I can't even say anything, even the things I know how to say. I can't even communicate because I'm so nervous that I'm going to be judged on how I speak" (session 4, pp. 58–59). Christy felt very different from the other people at her school, in part because her mother had limited English and had difficulty communicating with others. This made Christy fear that others would view her mother as ignorant. Thus, language was a marker and positioner not only for the women themselves, but also their family members and others in their communities.

Yet other participants displayed a sense of confidence in their English literacy in different spaces. Gul and Sana, for example, owned and operated their own small business; for them,

school spaces shared with other English learners provided them opportunities to draw upon their multilingual and multicultural resources, transnational backgrounds, and multiliteracies to make connections and build their business. Gul and Sana created a business card and brochure and used English language and literacies to communicate and acquire sewing jobs. They took up powerful positions as multilingual knowers and professionals.

I learned that in much the same way as language, literacies are afforded varying amounts of privilege and value depending on the context. As with roles and identities in general (discussed above), a disconnect can also exist between public and private lives in terms of language and literacy practices. For both Pia and Gul, school-related traditional writing was fraught and frustrating. Pia said, "When I came to America, I never write. I used to write in my language" (session 3, p.53). Although Pia strongly positioned herself as Karen and Karen-speaking, and she brought her writing practices (Karen poems, stories, and songs) here, she used English in our book club and at school. Her desires to participate and make connections motivated her to take up English and read *The Joy Luck Club* in the book club, as it was on her summer school list. Meanwhile, her Karen literacy was of little use and not valued. Pia did take up 21st century digital literacy practices in order to maintain affiliations with her Karen community near and far; however, she did not find space to bring her Karen literacy practices into her classroom, and thus could not use them to position herself as a successful and capable writer or student.

Much like Pia, all of the participants in the study took up technologies and digital literacy practices to stay connected with others in the book club and with friends and family outside the club. For them, digital literacies were highly instrumental in social practices. All of the women in the study used computers, Internet, and cell phones to communicate locally and across borders. They even asked me to set up a private Facebook page for our book club. In addition, they en-

gaged in digital literacy practices to access and acquire resources. They told us how they studied online for driving exams and the SAT and ACT and how they gathered news from their home countries online. We used Google to look up questions about words or cultures in our book club meetings. We used Amazon.com to order our books and read reviews. We looked up college entrance requirements and possible jobs online. Gul and Sana looked for fabrics for their sewing jobs online. Par, Mai, and Pia used Spark Notes online to look up information on books for school. Nan and Christy used YouTube to look up hairstyles. They were able to take up and use 21st century literacy practices to gather new knowledge and resources and to position themselves as knowledgeable and capable.

In general, as Perry (2007) suggested, these women's practices suggested that there was a mismatch between home and school literacies, and those privileged in school are often disconnected from everyday lives and practices. Participants were often highly invested in learning and taking up new literacy practices as needed. Studying for standardized tests, reading driver's manuals and nurse's training texts, and completing government resettlement documents all sharpened their English literacies, as did reading challenging English texts in the club. The data further showed that in the participants' learning, practices, and navigations, they drew upon funds of knowledge gathered in and through their families.

Everyday literacy practices are often tightly tied to refugee learners' funds of knowledge (Bigelow, 2010; Perry, 2009; Sarroub, 2002, 2008). Gonzalez et al. (2005) described these funds as the "historically accumulated and culturally developed bodies of knowledge and skills essential for household or individual functioning and well-being" (p. 133). As the participants approached reading in the club or acted out their everyday lives outside of the club, they drew upon accumulated bodies of knowledge gathered across spaces and times. Sarroub (2002) suggested

that recognizing funds of knowledge help us to understand "how individuals learn, produce knowledge, and sustain cultural or social identities in multiple worlds" (p. 146).

Moll (2015) contended that these funds are often hidden home and family resources. I suggest that because they are often perceived as invaluable, they are largely ignored. However, participants in this study and in this space were willing to show and share their funds of knowledge, including faith-based knowledge, transnational knowledge of other spaces and worlds, multiple languages, cultural knowledge, song and oral traditions, knowledge about food preparation and cooking, storytelling, knowledge of gardening and plant cultivation (especially Pia, Sana, and Gul's families), knowledge about clothes and hair/fashion, knowledge about sew-ing, driving, and more.

Similarly, Martinez et al. (2008) have suggested those students' rich repertoires of oral and literacy practices, such as translating, are often unrecognized and unvalued in schools. Par-ticipants in the club also showed and described how they took up and used varied and growing repertoires of practice in the club and everyday lives. Compton-Lilly (2009a, 2009b) argued that "building on the practices that students bring not only provides knowledge about what students can do, but it honors students' abilities" (p. 42); further, "teachers would do well to recognize and develop competencies from outside of school" (p. 42).

The funds of knowledge approach is concerned with connections and breaking down bar-riers between home, school, and community. Gonzalez et al. (2005) contended that despite defi-cit discourses that suggest otherwise, all families accumulate bodies of beliefs, ideas, skills, and abilities based on their experiences. The challenge consists in connecting these resources with teaching practice in order to connect the curriculum with students' lives and supporting students as they seek to use funds and practices gathered outside of school as resources for schooling.

Participants' views of language and literacies were additive rather than subtractive. As discussed in chapter 2, most researchers report that teachers tend to take a deficit and subtractive view of refugee students, their parents, and their literacy practices (Bigelow, 2010; Goodkind, 2006; McBrien, 2005; Sarroub, 2002; Walker-Dalhouse & Dalhouse, 2009). So-called "subtractive schooling" (Valenzuela, 1999), which reinforces a deficit perspective and aims to assimilate students into the dominant culture, is prevalent among refugee students in the United States and elsewhere (Bigelow, 2010; Brown et al., 2006; Gunderson, 2000; Sarr & Mosselson, 2010; Townsend & Fu, 2001; Woods, 2009). Encouragingly, though, the participants in this study were highly invested in learning and taking up new knowledge, practices and expanding their repertoires without losing what they already had: their own cultures, languages, and literacies. They seemed to understand their lives in dialogic ways and took on dialogic perspectives and worldviews. They saw the influences of place and time, culture and history, on their everyday lives. They shared a competency and capability for holding more than one way of seeing and being in tension.

This study confirms what others have found (see Menard-Warwick, 2005; Norton & Toohey, 2004; McKinney & Norton, 2008; Norton, 2000) regarding the tight tie between identity on one hand and learning on the other. These women were in a process of change experienced in and through daily transactions with people and their multiple worlds. Their languages and literacies tied them to their various communities. For example, Pia's literacy practices tied her to the Karen community locally and globally. Perry noted that among the Sudanese refugees she studied, literacy was taken up and used in particularly valuable ways that were religious, interpersonal, and community-oriented. Similarly, many of the literacies these women practiced were important for maintaining ties to faith-based, cultural, and family communities. Literacies that ena-

bled connections were particularly important. Perhaps this is why the book club proved to be so engaging, and such a powerful setting for the participants to practice literacies.

Transnational lives. I argue that for most refugee women, actual and imagined transnational spaces are influential aspects of their everyday worlds (Faltis & Valdés, 2010) and inform their multiple positions and subjectivities, as discussed above (Weedon, 1999, 2004). Through the study, I learned about the intersections of the transnational across contexts and in almost all aspects of the participants' lives. I learned that they used multiple languages in meaning-making and that collaboration and shared understandings were important in language use. I heard them speak to each other in numerous languages, writing in one field note, "I was also very aware of the way in which the sisters moved between languages. Their facility and ease back and forth between English and Pashto as they talked to each other and translated for mom amazed me" (Field note, June 14, 2013). Even though they sometimes felt the embarrassment of their home languages and the judgment of others around language and appearance related to being other, they did not want to lose their language or deny their histories.

The participants' literacies can best be described as transnational: Warriner (2007c) used the term *transnational literacies* to refer to literacy practices whose meanings and interconnections extend beyond and across national borders, spaces, and times. The women in this study were able to use the languages and literacies they carried with them and add new practices to their repertoires. Indeed, the expansive term *transnational* seems a more fitting descriptor of these women than *refugee,* which emphasizes their act of flight rather than the cultures and knowledge they carry with them.

The transnational literacy practices in which these women regularly engaged included acting as literacy brokers, translators, and interpreters for family and friends and maintaining fa-

milial, cultural, and national ties and affiliations through written, oral, visual, online, and digital social activities (texting, chatting, watching shows or movies, singing and listening to music, reading news, reading faith-based texts, and more). The concept of *multiliteracies* offers a frame for understanding the interaction of literacies across global and local contexts and multiple modes. From a multiliteracies perspective, reading is viewed as an active, critical social practice rather than a passive cultural transmission (Mills, 2005; New London Group, 1996).

New Literacy Studies and multiliteracies offer additional ways of thinking about literacy as situated and integrated in rapidly changing times. From this perspective, participants' diverse literacies can be seen and understood as resources, strengths, and assets rather than as deficiencies (Li, 2008). This study confirms what many others have found: in their everyday lives, learners are often flexible, creative, successful, capable, and engaged in negotiating multiple literacies at home, in their communities, and at work (Bigelow, 2010; Goodkind, 2006: Perry, 2009; Sarroub, 2002, 2005; Warriner, 2004a, 2004b).

Transnational lives are not without unique challenges. In a study of immigrant and refugee women in urban schools, Li (2008) found that the "women not only have to follow the domestic code from their countries of origin but also take on part of the men's responsibilities of financial support and decision-making to help the family make it in America" (p. 168). In Li's (2008) study, all four women in immigrant and refugee families were responsible for the family and home while also maintaining "multiple low-wage occupations such as sale technician or factory worker" (p. 168). Such responsibilities often represented a contradiction of the roles many refugee women had in their countries of origin or in refugee camps (Fong, 2004; Pipher, 2002). In addition to acquiring and maintaining outside work, many refugee women must still maintain

domestic and familial responsibilities (Binder & Tošić, 2005; Li, 2008; Martin, 2004), negotiating new roles and subjectivities across domestic and vocational spaces.

In this study, participants recognized that languages held different amounts of power and privilege in different spaces and afforded them different amounts of capital depending on the context. They explored openings and opportunities in resettlement and drew upon multiple tools and resources, as they took up and negotiated new subjectivities. They made choices in transnational spaces to position themselves as successful and took opportunities to transform identities and social relations. These women's transnational spaces are always present because their everyday lives include the cultures, languages, knowledges, and practices formed from experiences in multiple worlds. Their transnational lives were also tightly tied to imagination. In their memories of the past and their imaginings of the future, they maintained ties and continued on as members of multiple communities. In session 7, Christy, Mai, Pia, and Nan moved back and forth in a co-constructed narrative between their homelands and here. They reflected on their pasts and imagined what their futures might have been if they were still in their home countries. Each of them was able to participate in the dialogue because they had shared experiences of movement and displacement, albeit experienced and described in different ways.

Their narrative pointed to some ambivalence and tension around these choices. Perhaps it was good to have new opportunities and choices other than marriage and child-rearing; however, it also seemed to make things unstable and unsure. However, their transnational experiences, reflections, and imaginings also enabled Pia to imagine one day going back home to Thailand and/or Burma, Christy to dream of living both here in the States and there in Africa one day, and Sana's to create a happy life with a new husband in Afghanistan that joined together families here and there.

Indeed, through imagination, literacies can sustain communities over time and space. Lam and Warriner (2012) stated, “Oral, written, and visual practices with texts are used to reach across time and space, to create and sustain social connections, and to facilitate participation in communities of learning” (p. 203). These participants were doing this regularly inside and outside the club. They were invested in learning and connecting and these practices extended across borders and boundaries. In this sense, their lives and their literacies are deeply transnational.

Research Question 3. Influence of Book Club on Literacy Practices and Lives

The third research question was, “In what ways might a book club community influence refugee women’s literacy practices and everyday lives?” Some of the experiences that participants had in the book club would go on to influence their literacy practices and lives. Participants shaped and were shaped by book club practices, like the African American families in Dail, McGee, and Edwards’ (2009) study of a community book club. These women took up particular practices and shaped the club in particular ways. I witnessed transactions, transformations, and navigations in the club and heard stories about lives outside of the club. Although my research here did not include following participants into their everyday lives or following up after the conclusion of the club, I imagine ways in which having participated in the book club may influence their future lives.

Future literacy practices. The women in this study used literacy practices in ways that were focused on making connections, meaning, and transformation. In addition, their practices were transnational in that they extended across linguistic, cultural, temporal, and geographic boundaries to include multiple spaces and times. They engaged in multiliteracies that were multimodal and blurred boundaries between oral, print, and digital practices (New London Group, 1996). They were transgressive in that they crossed traditional expectations around literacy, book

club reading, and participation (mostly reading aloud and together, not choosing leaders, not creating rules for the club, extending the club into the digital and online realm, using multiple languages, and including family in club meetings). Participants engaged in what hooks (1994) describes as "transgressions—a movement against and beyond boundaries" (p. 12). For all of the women, practicing literacy in a book club was new, yet even as newcomers, they took up agency and authority and were creative and transgressive in shaping literacy practices in the club to suit their needs and desires for connections, understandings, and transformations.

This book club worked to influence refugee women's literacy practices and consequently counter deficit discourses by giving participants opportunities to negotiate new subjectivities and (re)position selves; exercise and build their sense of agency; act as knowers; gather new knowledge; ask questions and practice problem-solving; practice English literacies; transgress traditional power structures (such as those in school and work); build intercultural awareness; and imagine new ways of knowing, being, and doing. Specifically, participants in the club had experiences and opportunities to strengthen relationships; create a sense of belonging in and ownership over a community of practice in which reading and English was central; learn with and from knowledgeable others; act as hosts, leaders, teachers, and authorities; use stories to refract and reflect lives and re/imagine past, present, and future; build confidence in reading and confidence in crafting new identities; practice picking texts and reading "adult" books; affirm beliefs around shared meaning-making and collaborative understandings; and talk about histories and experiences as refugees and as women. These refugee women sewed together the oral practices and traditions they had brought with them from other places and times together with the digital practices taken up in here-and-there lives, engaging in transnational literacy practices. Their understandings of literacy were social, collective, and collaborative, and they brought these

understandings to bear on their new practices. For them, literacy practices were about meaning-making and doing (Barton & Hamilton, 2000; Street, 1998), as these practices were valuable for their usefulness (understanding, knowing, gaining medical aid, passing an exam, completing documents for resettlement, and more).

Norton (2000) contended that “if learners have a sense of ownership over meaning-making, they will have enhanced identities as learner and participate more actively in literacy practices” (p. 1). My participants varied in their level of investment in learning new languages and literacies, and the club afforded space and freedom to take up and use practices in multiple ways. For Pia, her investments were tied to her transnational ways of living and her shifting subjectivities, which in turn were tied to her feelings of belonging and isolation. Her stories revealed the tensions around literacy practices in terms of legitimacy, acceptability, and value. One time, Pia said simply, “I love to listen.” In that comment, she expressed her desires to listen to and hear stories and be part of stories and storytelling. It seemed that our storytelling and sharing in the club conjured up Pia’s past experiences with hearing, reading, and writing stories in her language of origin, and thus helped her position herself as a literate person.

In the book club, participants could explore and explain their own understandings around literacy and navigate new ways of knowing and practicing literacy with support and understanding. For instance, in one narrative, Gul described the tensions she navigated in the new space between oral and print practices. She told us about how she had discovered that here in the United States people “only believe in papers” (session 4, excerpt D). In her own experience, a person’s word was valuable and meant something, and what was said orally was binding. Yet the oral traditions of her family and culture did not hold that same value in the United States. She understood that what mattered was what had been written down and documented in print.

Gul and her older sister Sana shared a similar story (session 4, episode C) about how Sana was helping her new husband in Afghanistan prepare the documentation for his resettlement in the United States. Gul and Sana described how Sana had drawn upon her knowledge, literacy practices, and previous experiences from her family's resettlement process five years before in order to prepare for his resettlement. The women also explained how the accounts Sana gave in the required papers were not always accurate because written records were not readily available to them. Sana, her family, and her new husband were, in a way, forced to create stories around written documents, and their stories could not be corroborated because their word was not enough in the United States. They took up the requisite new practices even though these called their own practices and ways of knowing into question.

In the United States, one is expected to be able to read and write and fill out forms for almost everything from medical and social services, to jobs, schools, library cards, cable television, driving, citizenship, and more. Nearly everything requires signatures, documentation, and certification. For people like Gul and Sana, who have lived both here and there, this can be a difficult transition and a barrier to belonging. In the book club, they were afforded the space to explain their understandings and express their feelings around these changes and challenges. Most importantly, they were afforded the opportunity to meld their oral practices with written and print practices.

A book club for refugee women can offer a space to use literacies to imagine new ways of knowing. Co-constructed narratives, stories, and books act as affordances and resources for refugee women in the book club. They reflect a range of options and possibilities and an opportunity to "try on" (Pavlenko, 2001) other ways of being, doing, and living. Together, members chose books about transnational women. In the club, they had the opportunity to engage in litera-

cy around books of their choosing. In contrast to the frustration Par felt in being forced to read *Macbeth* in school, these women had the power to decide whether a book was relevant to their lives. Their sister Par had different experiences in school. She spoke regularly about challenges in school, especially with reading and writing, and was the subject of a particular story that revealed how lack of agency, choice, knowledge, and power in school can lower students' self-efficacy and limit their abilities to understand and position themselves as capable. Par contended that reading should be about understanding. She told us, "I just want to know what they're talking about" (session 7, p.122). Gul went on to tell us that Par "was so upset when she was reading it [*Macbeth*], she cried" (session 7, p.123).

Christy used the books we read and her own imagination to craft particular subjectivities, and these included being a strong survivor, good daughter, good student, high school graduate, college student, and nurse. Christy and her family had to navigate the tensions among the various values, traditions, beliefs, and gender norms from their homes and communities in Africa and from their faith community with their dreams and desires here in this place. Christy drew upon the resources she carried with her from Africa (stories, values, beliefs, ways of thinking, practices such as prayer and fasting and reading, etc.) and upon the resources she was gathering here (new ways of thinking, formal schooling, mentors, books, training, etc.) to navigate her transnational life and shifting subjectivities.

In participants' interactions in the book club, they resisted arbitrary and imagined boundaries between here and there, between languages and literacies, between visible and invisible, between past and future selves, and among each other. Together they were willing to take risks, tell their stories, and create counter-narratives that resisted static understandings of culture, belonging, womanhood, morality, and refugee status. They imagined and took up positions as good

students and daughters, high school graduates, college students, nurses, teachers, and more. They countered perceptions of refugees as weak, incapable, ignorant, and powerless in and through their literacy practices. The book club was an opportunity to defy and resist deficit discourses surrounding refugees.

Everyday lives. The book club influenced participants' everyday lives in ways that echo Anzaldúa (1987/2007), who wrote, "Books saved my sanity, knowledge opened locked places in me and taught me first how to survive and then how to soar" (n.p.). In this passage, Anzaldúa points to the power of books and knowledge to provide support and open possibilities in her life. They provided a support system in relationships, opportunities to act as knower and to learn and gain knowledge, and freedom and space to imagine and soar. Likewise, in this out-of-school, in-formal community of practice, refugee women came together and in some ways created or recre-ated a family of care and support. The book club space acted as another family or an extended network for women who had already lost those in transitions and movement. Like the Sudanese refugee women in Hayward et al.'s (2009) study, these women trusted one another to understand their past and current positions as refugee women. They talked to each other about problems that they did not share with parents, and they looked to each other as listeners and knowers.

For instance, Pia told us that she had conflicts with her family. She said, "After I get a job, I'm going to live on my own" (session 5, p.54). Like many young people, Pia may have been experiencing intergenerational conflict associated with growing up and seeking independ-ence. Navigating and negotiating these were especially complicated for Pia because leaving the family and moving out were not options in her culture and family. Christy and Mai seemed to share Pia's desire for freedom, freedom to leave their families and pursue new options, and in the book club their dialogues and stories offered space to imagine these things.

Many researchers have pointed to the importance of relationships in learning, especially for immigrants and refugees (Brown et al., 2006; Dail et al., 2009; Finn, 2010; Goodkind, 2006; McBrien, 2005; Norton & Gao, 2008; Prins et al., 2009; Schalge & Soga, 2008; Suarez-Orozco et al., 2009a, 2009b; Townsend & Fu, 2001; Walker-Dalhouse & Dalhouse, 2009). This study confirms much of what the research and scholarship has shown regarding relationships, engagement, and learning. The book club provided participants with opportunities to develop and grow supportive relationships, space for ownership, for belonging and for difference, opportunities for agency, authority, and for shared meaning-making around texts. We could do this in large part because the structures and boundaries of space and time were more flexible and fluid and afforded opportunities and opened possibilities for participants to take up agency and shifting positions of power.

While we were in the club, Christy was simultaneously studying for her Certified Nurse's Assistant (CNA) classes and exam while working towards high school graduation. She was determined to take and pass her CNA classes and exams so that she might gain experience and "credibility," as she put it (session 4, p.13). She was also hoping that having the certification on her college application might help her gain admission into local and highly competitive nursing programs. She shared that, at age 18, she was the youngest person in her CNA class. Christy told us that her classes and texts were "not hard" for her. She seemed to be assuring us that, while young, she was capable and would pass her CNA classes and exam. Following that, Nan and Mai asked some questions about nursing. They wanted to know what a nurse practitioner was, and Christy told them that it was a "specialized nurse" who "has to go to a little more school" and then is "a little bit ahead of the other nurses" (session 4, p. 12). Christy explained that she planned "to get a high degree in nursing, maybe a Master's degree in nursing" (session 4, p. 13).

She positioned herself as someone with agency and power, seeking a higher status, a job with more privilege—"ahead" of the other nurses—and someone who is future-and goal-oriented. In this dialogic book club space, Christy had active and open listeners and the freedom of time to share her stories, desires, and beliefs about the future with us.

The flexibility and freedom in the club extended to choice of books, meeting locations, and meeting members. Participants were active in voicing opinions about where and when to meet, and they negotiated options in and through discussions. When the weather was particularly pleasant, Pia urged us to meet at a local park. Sana, Gul, Farah, and Par all wanted us to come to their home for meetings, too. For these women, our reading group was like an extension of family. They were eager to have us in their home and to include their parents in our group. When we had our meetings at their house, their mom sat with us and encouraged her daughters to translate our conversations into Pashto.

When we had our final meeting at the park, both mom and dad came to join us for the picnic lunch. Sana's connections between the book club group and family are evident in her email: "Thank you for coming to our home. It was wonderful time we spent together and also my mom was happy. I wish we will have more good time like that " (email from Sana, June 17, 2013). Enjoyment and opportunities to host were also important to Sana. Contingency and openness in the club enabled Sana to take up positions as hostess, cook, translator, and homemaker. She acted as a provider and caretaker for the group and for her parents during meetings. In the book club, participants were free to draw upon funds of knowledge and lived experiences and to engage their own desires.

Understanding the ways in which literacies, language, learning, and life overlapped was fundamental to this study, and it was my hope that we may in our book club do, as Moll (2005)

described, and turn "the study of literature into a critical examination of their families, communities, and society at large" (p. 282). For the women in this study, excursions into literature provided opportunities for examining and reflecting upon lived experiences and opportunities for empowerment within the club that may extend to their everyday lives in the wider world. I see the relationships formed in the club as enduring and as equally influential in everyday lives. For refugee women who have experienced loss in displacement and isolation in resettlement, it is my hope that the relationships of support that grew out of the club and the transgressions that occurred in this space are remembered, taken up, and used again.

Limitations, Recommendations, and Conclusions

In the subsequent sections, I report on the limitations of my study and make recommendations for future research and educational practice. These are followed by my conclusions regarding this study of a refugee women's book club.

Limitations. The findings from this study cannot be assumed to apply to refugee women in general. The participants were purposefully chosen, and the sample size was intentionally small. Moreover, as all my participants engaged in the reading group by choice, they may have had beliefs about reading and literacy practices that are not generalizable to the general population of refugee women.

Another limitation of this study is its focus on the club meetings themselves. I did not directly examine or gather data on participants' everyday practices and lives at home, in the community, or in school. Rather, in this study, I have presented participants' co-constructed stories of everyday experiences as performances and reflections of their lives. In future studies, data on refugee women might be collected outside the club meetings and over a longer period of time.

Finally, my study was limited by the types of data collected. Although I did use triangulation across multiple data sources, including online and digital texts, audio and video recordings, transcripts of recordings, and field notes, I did not conduct one-on-one interviews. This additional data source might have provided perspectives, insights, or stories that did not emerge within the group setting. Because my focus was on engagement, interaction, and storytelling within the book club, however, formal individual interviews were not considered crucial.

As with any qualitative study, even when multiple data sources and analysis methods are used, some subjectivity in the findings and conclusions is inevitable. To increase validity, I conducted informal member checks during club meetings (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007), although I did not include participants in the process of writing up. In a future extension of this work, I will allow more time to incorporate participants' feedback into the writing. I do believe that my rapport, previous relationships, and extensive time with participants before, during, and after the study lent trustworthiness to my understandings; however, I believe that having participants involved in the writing process will allow us to share in the research storytelling and afford the participants a greater degree of power and ownership over their stories (Pavlenko, 2002; Reyes, 2008).

Recommendations for further research. Given the findings and limitations of this study, I propose several specific directions for further research. In order to continue improving the educational experiences of students who are refugees, more classroom studies are needed that focus specifically on refugees, rather than on English learners in general or on both immigrants and refugees. Additionally, larger studies on the intersecting contexts of refugee lives in resettlement (home, school, community, work) would add to the knowledge needed to better support refugees' transitions into schools and elsewhere.

Second, in order to counter the discourses of deficit that still prevail, future studies can focus on refugees' resilience and resources, and on educators' and policymakers' responsibilities to refugees. Researchers can examine other informal learning spaces besides the book club, such as family literacy centers, sports groups, sewing circles, faith-based study groups, community and recreational activity centers, libraries or technology/media centers, etc. Exploring the teaching and learning that occurs within dialogic and interactional settings may shed more light on the social and emotional aspects of learning and allow researchers to further examine how relationships and social support enhance learning for refugees.

The third recommendation for research is to investigate transnational literacy practices and ways of knowing in greater depth. Such research is needed in order to better support refugee learners and, more generally, to inform classroom teaching in our globalized world. Studies might examine the ways in which refugees engage across literacy modes (digital, oral, and written/print), and in different times and spaces. Researchers should also examine how the practices refugees bring with them are transformed in new spaces and explore the consequences of these transformations.

Finally, I recommend further research into the particular lives, literacy practices, and learning of refugee women in resettled spaces. The majority of the world's unschooled and "illiterate" are women, and many of the refugee women who are resettled have been unable to attend school or have experienced gaps in their formal education. Many do not speak, read, or write in English when they arrive, and they need specific support as women and as older emergent readers. Educational researchers need to learn more about out-of-school practices and the various funds of knowledge that refugee women and other refugee learners bring to their school experiences and everyday lives.

Recommendations for educational practice. The findings of this study highlight how particular ways of knowing, being, and doing are privileged over others. In general, little room is left for difference in our public spaces, structures, and discourses. Yet what students need—especially students from typically marginalized groups, such as refugee women—are opportunities for safe exploration and learning, support for ambiguity, additive rather than subtractive approaches, and ways to draw upon and use what they know.

Schools and teachers can increase their efforts to recognize, understand, and value multiple kinds of knowledge (e.g. transnational, linguistic, cultural, and technological knowledge) and can offer students opportunities to bring those knowledges to their learning. Knowing more about students' out-of-school literacy practices and lives may inform teachers' decisions about school-based literacy practices and thereby enrich students' overall academic and emotional experiences. Educators who work with refugees might also consider the power of relationships and reciprocity to foster learning, as well as the possibilities of dialogic classroom practices.

Many of the expectations, practices, and ways of knowing and doing that teachers take up are limiting and based on taken-for-granted views that position refugee students as deficient (Bartolomé, 2010; McBrien, 2005; Valdés, 2001; Valenzuela, 1999). Teachers and schools might consider more flexible structures and contingency approaches to teaching and learning (groupings, time, curriculum, etc.) that allow students to bring their worlds and ways of knowing into the classroom and position themselves as knowledgeable and capable. As Bell (2002) suggested, "Issues that directly affect the ways in which learners experience immigration, settlement, and language learning are wrapped in the stories they hold" (p. 211). If we wish to learn more about our students, refugee and otherwise, then we must provide space and opportunities for them to teach us by sharing their stories.

Based upon this study of a refugee women's book club and my own seven years of experience as a literacy teacher in the refugee community, I propose that we reimagine educational spaces for refugee learners, schools, and teachers. In so doing, the following actions should be considered:

- Incorporating more flexibility and contingency into schedules and classes, including time for extended talk and open discussions, storytelling, imaginings, interruptions, and the sharing of related knowledge and experiences.
- Recognizing refugee students' experiences, backgrounds, funds of knowledge, and repertoires of practice; caring for refugee learners by knowing them as historically, politically, and socially situated (Valenzuela, 1999). Reframing refugee and immigrant students as transnationals, with local and global knowledges, resources, and skills (Kasun, 2015).
- Changing roles, viewing refugee students as knowers and possible leaders and teachers as active listeners and facilitators of learning.
- Building bridges and relationships among students, between teachers and students, and among schools and families and communities; drawing upon family and community strengths and support; blurring lines between public and private spaces and between insider and outsider.
- Using a club model, like the book club, to foster learning in a way that focuses on belonging, relationships, dialogism, opportunities for agency and authority, reciprocity, choice, collaborative meaning-making, flexibility, contingency, and fun.
- Creating conditions and safe spaces that will support interactions, dialogic engagement, and transactions in the classroom and the wider world; for example, organizing small learning groups with students from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds to culti-

vate the acceptance and understanding necessary for living in multicultural spaces and for having positive and productive intercultural experiences.

- Creating relevant "real-world" experiences for literacy practice, incorporating multiliteracies and multiple modes.
- Taking critical pedagogical approaches in schools/classrooms that acknowledge power relations and discourses that circulate around refugee students and allow for opportunities to contest and resist these power relations and discourses.
- Taking an additive approach to learning among refugees and other linguistically and culturally diverse students, resisting and rejecting a subtractive approach or one that assumes these students know nothing; instead, drawing upon funds of knowledge and repertoires of practice in developing curricula, activities, and assignments.
- Rethinking and reimagining reading and writing practices, opening spaces for overlap between oral and written literacy practices and between English and other languages, allowing time for shared readings and collaborative meaning-making, and including more 21st-century digital and online writing practices among this particular group.
- Looking at literacy practices across contexts for a fuller understanding of the breadth and depth of these practices, paying closer attention to transnational literacy practices as part of women's repertoires of practice.
- Recognizing participants' multiple purposes for participation and investment in learning and viewing socializing as integral to learning rather than as a distraction from learning.

By the recommendations above, educators can work to reimagine educational spaces for refugee learners, schools, and teachers.

Conclusions

> "In America, nobody says you have to keep the circumstances somebody else gives you" (p. 254). –Amy Tan, *The Joy Luck Club*

Although many would agree with the epigraph above, I see limitations to this way of thinking. For many, like the refugee women in this study, there are discourses, often strong and powerful, that circulate to limit the range of options available to them. Among the participants in this study, there were powerful transnational, cultural, educational, and familial discourses that served to situate and position them in particular ways, especially as women. Even now as I write, I am surrounded by discourses in the media and my community that position refugees as different, deficient, and even dangerous. Recent media attention on tragic global events and the growing numbers of refugees sheds light on the ways in which discourses circulate to produce and reproduce particular social, historical, and cultural scripts. The number of refugees is larger now than it has been since World War II (Chappell, 2014), and as attention grows, the discourses and borders grow stronger and more powerful (Minh-ha, 2010).

For at least a decade, Georgia—where this study was conducted—has been among the largest resettlement spaces in the United States; in recent years, however, the refugee resettlement program has become more controversial and politically contentious. On November 16, 2015, I received a memo from Governor Deal's Office of Communications:

> Gov. Nathan Deal today announced that he will not accept Syrian refugees in Georgia and called upon President Obama to suspend the resettlement program in the United States. Since 2012, Deal has demanded that the federal government limit the number of refugees sent to Georgia. (Email press release)

Like Deal, governors from more than 15 other U.S. states have expressed the intention of limiting refugee resettlement for a number of reasons, including "fear that violent extremists pos-

ing as refugees might gain entry to the country" (Phillip, 2015). Recent presidential debates have also served reinforce nationalistic discourses around refugees, Muslims, and other immigrants and migrants crossing borders into the United States. The negative discourses that circulate around refugees and migrants reinforce othering, displacement, and unbelonging and serve to marginalize and exclude. They are political and have material consequences. For those seeking safety and for those already resettled, discourses influence people and policies and affect the availability of resources, limit access, and enforce inequity in schools and elsewhere (Redmon, 2015).

In research, the everyday lives of resettled refugee women have remained largely invisible, even as refugees (construed as a homogenous group) have become increasingly visible in mass-media social and political discourses. Loughry (2009) noted that, in regard to refugee women, it is more difficult to find resilience research than trauma narratives; the former is often hidden from mainstream view (p. 169). Similarly, Fong (2004) contended, "Little is written about the process of transitions after they [refugees] have arrived in the United States" (p. 12). To borrow Foucault's (1978) phrase, narratives and discourses of invisibility and disability exert power from "innumerable points," reinforcing Freire's (1968/1993) contention, "So often do they hear that they are good for nothing, know nothing and are incapable of learning anything—that they are sick, lazy, and unproductive—that in the end they become convinced of their own unfitness" (p. 45).

In this study, I sought to bridge the gap between what is known and unknown and call into question the "regimes of truth" (Foucault, 1995) that circulate as taken-for-granted knowledge in discourses and position refugee women as unfit, illegitimate, illiterate, incompetent, incapable, and ignorant. It is my hope that the stories shared here disrupt these metanarratives, especially in

schools and classrooms, and make visible alternative representations of refugees, especially refugee women.

Findings from the study revealed how both *being fit* (adaptive, capable of drawing on funds of knowledge, surviving) and *fitting in* (belonging) were tied to the deficit discourses that circulate and the potential of the book club and possibilities for the future. For the women in the study, the book club provided space and opportunities to belong, to know and act in flexible and adaptive, additive and dialogic ways.

Peshkin (1988) argued that the "goodness" of qualitative research lies in its promise and its potential for understanding human complexity, as it "brings us very close to the phenomena we seek to illuminate" (p. 28). In closeness and through this study of a book club, I gained a more complex view and understanding of these nine refugee women's lives. I came to see the multiple ways in which they lived, navigated, and transgressed borderlands (Anzaldúa, 1987/2007) and the ways in which knowing and belonging were fundamental to these navigations.

Through the book club, participants enacted and shaped knowing as something bidirectional and transnational, and as something of value that could be shared. They recognized that "they, too, 'know things' they have learned in their relations with the world" (Freire, 1968/1993, p. 45) and thus came to resist deficit discourses. The women took opportunities to position and act as both knowers and ones seeking knowledge. They also understood—and Gul and Mai expressed—that knowledge was contingent, fluctuating in space, time, and value. Gul said, "We all know this in Afghanistan, but I'm here" (session 2, p.1), and Mai said, "When I was in Thailand, I knew I could do them [specific things like become a teacher]. I already knew. In America, I don't know what I'm going to do" (session 6, p.45). These refugee women recognized that what

you know from one space does not always transfer and may or may not hold the same value in another space.

Knowing in the club was tied to place, access, agency, and authority. Participants acted as if they belonged in the book club. They took ownership over it and were invested in it. Participants drew upon what they knew to shape the club and their transactions with texts and others. Their funds of knowledge and repertoires of practice informed understandings, and were taken up as they engaged in dialogic practices and performances. The club, readings, and dialogue encouraged and afforded new imaginings, positionings, and possibilities, as they affirmed each other as knowers and members in the community.

Together, they chose texts about transnational women (some of whom came to settle in the United States) with whom they could connect, and they stitched their own stories (remembered and imagined) to those they found in our books and to the stories of the other women in the book club. They took opportunities to doubt, discover, and demonstrate knowledge. They showed how their lives were lived out across spaces and times, as they drew upon transnational resources. They took up multi/plural practices, identities, and ways of knowing in the club. They shared how they navigated shifting subjectivities outside of the club and showed how they took up different subjectivities inside the club. They expressed and were open to uncertainty and ambiguity. They allowed room for knowing and not knowing. They collectively revealed how knowledge is dialogic, socially situated, and constructed, as well as how language and literacy practices are tangled up in ways of knowing.

Through the club, I came to see how practices, like discourses, are exercises in power. They are transformative as they are used, repeated, and recognized. Luke (2003) argued that literacy [as a practice] has "radical potential for altering life pathways and inequitable access to

discourse, knowledge, and power" (p. 139). In this way, participation in a book club extends into the material world, as it affords access and opportunities to take up and use new knowledge and to transform discourses.

In the book club, participants engaged along the borders between the visible and invisible, in spaces where their often-invisible stories of resilience, resourcefulness, reciprocity, capacity, and capability could be heard alongside stories of struggle. This was a dialogic space where the unknown and unvalued histories, cultures, and languages that can get consumed in assimilation and in the strongly structured institutions such as schools could be heard. In the club and in our stories, the discourses of deficiency that often circulate around immigrant and refugee learners in school were resisted and rewritten. Participants' transnational practices and ways of knowing revealed the vast and varied resources and repertoires they took up and used in resettlement. A transnational perspective onto these women's lives and practices "privileges their abilities to navigate multiple worlds" (Kasun, 2015, p. 278). Taking up Kasun's (2015) contention that immigrant students should be reframed as transnational, I argue that we might take an additive approach here as well, reframing refugee women as transgressive transnationals, capable of crossing and breaking down borders and holding multiple ways of knowing, being, and doing in tension.

This is a story, sewn together from many stories co-constructed by refugee women in a book club. It is a story of imagination and of possibility. The participants in this study navigated boundaries between here and there and past, present, and future. When Christy pronounced, "It's going to change here, " in a discussion about women's lives here and there, she confronted and contested the constraints she felt as a refugee woman (session 5, p.55). Christy's words revealed the optimism and openness she and other participants in the club embodied and embraced in their

navigations. Christy imagined a different life for herself here, as a woman and student pursuing a high school diploma, a college education, and a nursing career. In another meeting, Christy described a recent college visit. She said,

> It was perfect for me. I really think so … Just the whole environment. It was like the relations between the teachers, professors, and the students, like the professors get to know the students, the person, you know? They know their names, they know what they're doing. (session 9, p.3)

In this excerpt, Christy pointed to the importance and value of relationships and of being known. She imagined a future for herself in a place where she could belong in a new community of practice. As she prepared to take on new practices and ways of knowing within a college community, she imagined a space where she could be a legitimate and valuable member and where she could engage in relationships with others who would know her. Through this study, I learned that relationships and safe spaces for contingency and agency were important to these women and to their learning and imagined futures and opportunities. I learned that books and book clubs matter most when they connect human lives and create connections that are consequential and can be used and taken up again.

Together, these women and their stories acted as "transgressions—a movement against and beyond boundaries" (hooks, 1994, p. 12) and contributed to the creation of a counter-narrative that I hope serves to disrupt deficit views of refugee women, especially in the context of education. Bartolomé (2010) has argued that dominant deficit views "rationalize" disregard and disdain for refugee students and encourage teachers to uncritically accept the status quo as natural or even unchangeable (p. 511). However, according to hooks (1994), engagement in education occurs at all levels—minds, bodies, and souls—of those seeking shared knowledge in

community. As such, new ways of knowing are possible if we "open our minds and hearts so that we can know beyond the boundaries of what is acceptable, so that we can think and rethink, so that we can create new visions" (p. 12). Within a dialogic context, communication is polyphonic and multi-voiced; differences are acknowledged, and utterances have the potential to transform and act on one another without being dissolved or erased in transactions. In spaces such as the book club in this study, which afford and encourage engagement and dialogism, education has the potential to be what Freire (1968/1993) described as collaborative and reflective acts of freedom—freedom to think, to imagine, to act, and to change.

REFERENCES

Alvermann, D. E. (2000). Narrative approaches. *Reading Online, 4,*5. Retrieved March, 16, 2009 from http://www.readingonline.org/articles/art_index.asp?HREF=/articles/handbook/-alvermann/index.html

Anderson, B. (2006). *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (Revised ed.). New York, NY: Verso.

Anzaldúa, G. (1987/2007). *Borderlands: The new mestiza/La frontera* (3rd ed.). San Francisco, CA: Aunt Lute Books.

Appadurai, A. (2000). Grassroots globalization and the research imagination. *Public Culture 12*, 1, 1–19.

Auerbach, E. R. (1993). Reexamining English-only in the ESL classroom. *TESOL Quarterly, 27,* 1, 9–32.

Auerbach, E. R., & Burgess, D. (1985). The hidden curriculum of survival ESL. *TESOL Quarterly, 19,* 3, 475-495.

Bakhtin, M. M., & Holquist, M. (1981). *The Dialogic Imagination: Four essays*. Austin, TX: University of Texas Press.

Bakhtin, M. M. (1984). *Rabelais and his world*. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press.

Bakhtin, M. M., Holquist, M., McGee, V., & Emerson, C. (1986). *Speech Genres and Other Late Essays*. Austin, TX: University of Texas Press.

Bamberg, M. (2006). Stories: Big or small—Why do we care? *Narrative Inquiry, 16,* 1, 139-147.

Bamberg, M., & Georgakopoulou, A. (2008). Small stories as a new perspective in narrative and identity analysis. *Text & Talk, 28,* 3, 377-396.

Bankston, C. L. (2007). New people in the New South: An overview of Southern immigration. *Southern Cultures, 13,* 4, 24-44.

Barstow, J. (2003). Reading in groups: Women's clubs and college literature classes. *Publishing Research Quarterly, 18,* 3-17.

Bartolomé, L. I. (2010). Preparing to teach newcomer students: The significance of critical pedagogy and the study of ideology in teacher education. *Yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education, 109,* 2, 505-526.

Barton, D., & Hamilton, M. (1998). *Local Literacies: Reading and Writing in One Community*. London, England: Routledge.

Barton, D., Hamilton, M. (2000). Literacy Practices. In D. Barton, M. Hamilton, & Ivanič, R. (Eds.). *Situated Literacies: Reading and Writing in Context*. London, England: Routledge, p. 7-15.

Baynham, M. (2002). Taking the social turn: The New Literacy Studies and SLA. *Ways of Knowing Journal, 2,* 43-68.

Baynham, M. (2006). Agency and contingency in the language learning of refugees and asylum seekers. *Linguistics and Education: An International Research Journal, 17,* 1, 24–39.

Baynham, M., & Prinsloo, M. (Eds.). (2009). *The Future of Literacy Studies*. London, England: Palgrave MacMillan.

Beach, R., & Yussen, S. (2011). Practices of productive adult book clubs. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy, 55,* 2, 121-131.

Belcher, D., & Hirvela, A. (2001). *Linking Literacies: Perspectives on L2 Reading–Writing Connections*. Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press.

Bell, J. S. (1995). The relationship between L1 and L2 literacy: Some complicating factors.

TESOL Quarterly 29(4): 687-704.

Bell, J. S. (2002). Narrative inquiry: More than just telling stories. *TESOL Quarterly, 36,* 2, 207-213.

Bell, J. S. (2011). Reporting and publishing narrative inquiry in TESOL: Challenges and rewards. *TESOL Quarterly, 45,* 3, 575-584.

Benhabib & Resnik (2009). *Migrations and Mobilities: Citizenship, Borders, and Gender.* Ed. Seyla Benhabib, Judith Resnik. New York: NYU Press.

Berman, H., Giron, E. R. I., & Marroquin, A. P. (2009). A narrative study of refugee women who have experienced violence in the context of war. *Canadian Journal of Nursing Research, 41,* 1, 144-165.

Beverley, J. (2005). Testimonio, subalternity, and narrative authority. In Denzin, N. & Lincoln, Y. (Eds.). *Sage Handbook of Qualitative Research* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage. P. 547-558.

Bigelow, M. (2010). *Mogadishu on the Mississippi: Language, Racialized identity, and Education in a New Land*. Chichester, West Sussex, U.K.: Wiley-Blackwell.

Binder, S., & Tošić, J. (2005). Refugees as a particular form of transnational migrations and social transformations: Socioanthropological and gender aspects. *Current Sociology, 53,* 4, 607-624.

Bogdan, R. C. & Biklen, S. K. (2007). *Qualitative Research for Education: An Introduction to Theory and Method* (5th ed.). Boston, MA: Pearson.

Brown, J., Miller, J., & Mitchell, J. (2006). Interrupted schooling and the acquisition of literacy: Experiences of Sudanese refugees in Victorian secondary schools. *The Australian Journal of Language and Literacy, 29,* 2, 150-162.

Bruner, J. (1991). The narrative construction of reality. *Critical Inquiry, 18*, 1-21.

Burwell, C. (2007). Reading Lolita in times of war: Women's book clubs and the politics of reception. *Intercultural Education, 18,* 4, 281-296.

Canagarajah, A. S. (1993). Critical ethnography of a Sri Lankan classroom: Ambiguities in student opposition to reproduction through ESOL. *TESOL Quarterly, 27,* 4, 601-626.

Canagarajah, S. (2004). Subversive identities, pedagogical safe houses, and critical learning. In B. Norton & K. Toohey (Eds.), *Critical Pedagogies and Language Learning* (pp. 116–137). Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press.

Capps, R., Newland, K., & Migration Policy Institute. (2015). *The integration outcomes of U.S. refugees: Successes and challenges*. Washington, DC : Migration Policy Institute.

CBS News (2014, June). Massachusetts mayor: Enough is enough; Stop sending my city refugees. Retrieved from http://www.cbsnews.com/news/massachusetts-mayor-enough-is-enough-stop-sending-my-city-refugees/

Chappell, B. (June 20, 2014) online NPR news, retrieved from http://www.npr.org/sections/-thetwo-way/2014/06/20/323952215/number-of-displaced-people-hits-a-high-last-seen-in-world-war-ii

Charmaz, K. (2006). *Constructing Grounded Theory: A Practical Guide Through Qualitative Analysis.* London, England: Sage.

Choi, J. (2009). Asian English language learners' identity construction in an after school literacy site. *Journal of Asian Pacific Communication*, 19(1), 130-161.

Clandinin, D.J. & Connelly, F.M. (2000). *Narrative Inquiry: Experience and Story in Qualitative Research*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Compton-Lilly, C. (2009a). What can New Literacy Studies offer to the teaching of struggling readers?. *Reading Teacher, 63,* 1, 88-90.

Compton-Lilly, C. (2009b). Disparate reading identities of adult students in one GED program. *Adult Basic Education & Literacy Journal*, *3*(1), 34-43.

Conquergood, D. (1991). Rethinking ethnography: Towards a critical cultural politics. *Communication Monographs, 59,* 179-94.

Cook, V. (2001). Using the First Language in the Classroom. *Canadian Modern Language Review, 57,* 402–423.

Creswell, J. W. (2009). *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed-Methods Approaches.* 3rd ed. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Cummins, J. (1986). Empowering minority students: A framework for intervention. *Harvard Educational Review, 56,* 18-36.

Cummins, J. (2001). Empowering minority students: A Framework for intervention with an introduction by the author. *Harvard Educational Review, 71,* 4, 649-675.

Cummins, J. (2003). Challenging the construction of difference as deficit: Where are identity, intellect, imagination, and power in the new regime of truth? In P. Trifonas (Ed.), *Pedagogies of Difference: Rethinking Education For Social Change* (pp. 41–60). London, England: Routledge.

Dail, A. R., McGee, L. M., & Edwards, P. A. (2009). The role of community book club in changing literacy practices. *Literacy Teaching and Learning, 13,* 25–56.

Darznik, J. (2011). *The Good Daughter: A Memoir of My Mother's Hidden Life*. New York: Grand Central Pub.

Davies, B. (1990). Agency as a Form of Discursive Practice. A Classroom Scene Observed. *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, *11*(3), 341–361. Retrieved from http://www.jstor.org/stable/1392847

Davies, B. & Harré, R. (1990). Positioning: The discursive production of selves. *Journal for the Theory of Social Behaviour,* 20(1), 43-63.

DeCapua, A., & Marshall, H. W. (2010). Serving ELLs with limited or interrupted education: Intervention that works. *TESOL Journal, 1,* 1, 49–70.

DeMarrais, K. B., & Lapan, S. D. (2004). *Foundations for Research: Methods of Inquiry in Education and The Social Sciences*. Mahwah, N.J: L. Erlbaum Associates.

Denzin, N. K., & Lincoln, Y. S. (2008). *Collecting and Interpreting Qualitative Materials*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Dewey, J. (1929/1988). *The Quest for Certainty*. (J. A. Boydston, Ed.). Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press.

Dewey, J. (1938/1997). *Experience and education*. New York, NY: Touchstone.

Dupree, N. H. (2002). Cultural heritage and national identity in Afghanistan. *Third World Quarterly*, *23*(5), 977–989.

Eckert, P., & McConnell-Ginet, S. (1992). Think practically and look locally: Language and gender as community-based practice. *Annual Review of Anthropology, 21,* 461–490.

Ellis, C. (1991). New Ethnographies. *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography, 20,* 2, 237–239.

Ezzy, D. (2002). *Qualitative analysis: Practice and innovation*. London, England: Routledge.

Faltis, C., & Valdés, G. (2010). Education, immigrant students, refugee students, and English learners. *Yearbook for the National Society for the Study of Education*. New York, NY: Teachers College, Columbia University. P. 285-296.

Finn, H. B. (2010). Overcoming barriers: Adult refugee trauma survivors in a learning community. *TESOL Quarterly, 44,* 3, 586-596.

Flint, K. (2006). Women and reading. *Signs, 31,* 2, 511–536.

Fong, R. (Ed.). (2004). *Culturally Competent Practice with Immigrant and Refugee Children and Families.* NY: Guilford Press.

Foucault, M. (1970). *The order of things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences*. London: Routledge.

Foucault, M. (1972). *The Archaeology of Knowledge*. New York: Pantheon Books.

Foucault, M. (1978). *The History of Sexuality*. New York: Vintage Books.

Foucault, M. (1995). *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*. New York, NY: Vintage Books.

Frank, A. W. (2002). Why study people's stories? The dialogical ethics of narrative analysis. *International Journal for Qualitative Methods*, *1*, 1, 109–117.

Frank, A. W. (2012). Practicing dialogical narrative analysis. In J. A. Holstein & J. F. Gubrium, (Eds.), *Varieties of narrative analysis* (pp. 34-50). Los Angeles, CA: Sage.

Freire, P. (1968/1993). *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (20th anniversary revised ed.). New York, NY: Continuum.

Freire, P., & Macedo, D. (1987). *Literacy: Reading the Word and the World*. Critical Studies in Education series. South Hadley, MA: Bergin & Garvey.

Frye, D. (1999). Participatory education as a critical framework for an immigrant women's ESL class. *TESOL Quarterly, 33,* 3, 501–513.

Gay, G. (2000). *Culturally Responsive Teaching: Theory, Research, and Practice*. New York, NY: Teachers College Press.

Gee, J. P. (1999). Critical issues: Reading and the New Literacy Studies: Reframing the National Academy of Sciences report on reading. *Journal of Literacy Research, 31,* 355–374.

Georgakopoulou, A. (2006). Thinking big with small stories in narrative and identity analysis. *Narrative Inquiry, 16,* 1, 122–130.

Goldstein, B. L. (1988). In search of survival: The education and integration of Hmong refugee girls. *Journal of Ethnic Studies, 16,* 2, 1–27.

González, N., Moll, L. C., & Amanti, C. (2005). *Funds of Knowledge: Theorizing Practice in Households, Communities, and Classrooms*. Mahwah, N.J.: L. Erlbaum Associates.

Goodkind, J. R. (2006). Promoting Hmong refugees' well-being through mutual learning: Valuing knowledge, culture, and experience. *American Journal of Community Psychology* 37, 77–93.

Grbich, C. (2007). *Qualitative Data Analysis: An Introduction*. London: Sage.

Grewal, I., & Kaplan, C. (1994). Introduction: Transnational feminist practices and questions of postmodernity. In I. Grewal & C. Kaplan (Eds.), *Scattered Hegemonies: Postmodernity and Transnational Feminist Practices* (pp. 1–33). Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press.

Gubrium, J.F., & Holstein, J.A. (2008). Narrative ethnography. In S. N. Hesse-Biber & P. Leavy (Eds.), *Handbook of Emergent Methods* (pp. 241–264). New York, NY: Guilford Press.

Gunderson, L. (2000). Voices of the teenage diasporas. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy* 43, 8, 692.

Hajdukowski-Ahmed, M. (2009). A dialogical approach to identity. In M. Hajdukowski-Ahmed, N. Khanlou & H. Moussa. (Eds.). *Not born a refugee woman: Contesting identities, rethinking practices* (pp. 28–54). New York, NY: Berghahn Books.

Hajdukowski-Ahmed, M., Khanlou, N., & Moussa, H. (Eds.). (2009). *Not Born a Refugee Woman: Contesting Identities, Rethinking Practices*. New York, NY: Berghahn Books.

Hatoss, A., & Huijser, H. (2010). Gendered barriers to educational opportunities: Resettlement of Sudanese refugees in Australia. *Gender and Education, 22,* 2, 147-160.

Hayward, L., Hajdukowski-Ahmed, M., Ploeg, J., & Trollope-Kumar, K. (2009). "We want to talk, they give us pills": Identity and mental health of refugee women from Sudan. In M. Hajdukowski-Ahmed, N. Khanlou & H. Moussa. (Eds.).*Not born a refugee woman: Contesting identities, rethinking practices* (pp. 196-214). New York, NY: Berghahn Books.

Heath, S. B. (1983). *Ways With Words: Language, Life, and Work in Communities and Classrooms*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Heller, M. (1996). Legitimate language in a multilingual school. *Linguistics and Education, 8,* 2, 139–57.

Heller, M. (2010). Language as resource in the globalized new economy. In N. Coupland (Ed.), *The Handbook of Language and Globalization*, 349–365. MA, USA: Blackwell Publishing Ltd.

Hirvela, A. (2004). *Connecting Reading and Writing in Second Language Writing Instruction*. Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press.

Holstein, J. A., & Gubrium, J. F. (2012). *Varieties of Narrative Analysis*. Los Angeles, CA: Sage.

Hooker, S., Fix, M., McHugh, M., & Migration Policy Institute (2014). Education Reform in a Changing Georgia: Promoting High School and College Success for Immigrant Youth.

Retrieved from http://www.migrationpolicy.org/research/education-reform-changing-georgia-promoting-high-school-and-college-success-immigrant-youth

hooks, b. (1994). *Teaching to Transgress: Education as the Practice of Freedom*. New York, NY: Routledge.

Hopkins, G. (2010). A changing sense of Somaliness: Somali women in London and Toronto. *Gender, Place & Culture, 17,* 4, 519–538.

Hornberger, N. H., & Link, H. (2012). Translanguaging and Transnational Literacies in Multilingual Classrooms: A Biliteracy Lens. *International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism, 15,* 3, 261–278.

Hull, G., & Schultz, K. (2001). Literacy and learning out of school: A review of theory and research. *Review of Educational Research, 71,* 4, 575–611.

Hull, G., & Schultz, K. (2002). *School's Out!: Bridging Out-Of-School Literacies with Classroom Practice*. New York: Teachers College Press.

Kamberelis, G., & Dimitriadis, G. (2004). *On Qualitative Inquiry: Approaches to Language and Literacy Research*. New York, NY: Teachers College.

Kasun, G. S. (2015). "The only Mexican in the room": Sobrevivencia as a way of knowing for Mexican transnational students and families. *Anthropology & Education Quarterly, 46,* 3, 277-294.

Kim, M. (2004). Literature discussions in adult L2 learning. *Language and Education, 18,* 2, 145–166.

Kubota, R. (2004). Critical multiculturalism and second language education. In B. Norton & K. Toohey (Eds.), *Critical pedagogies and language learning* (pp. 30–52). Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press.

Kvale, S, and Brinkmann, S (2008). InterViews: Learning the Craft of Qualitative Research Interviewing (2nd ed). London: Sage.

Ladson-Billings, G. (1995). Toward a theory of culturally relevant pedagogy. *American Educational Research Journal, 32,* 3, 465–491.

Lam, W. S. E., & Warriner, D. S. (2012). Transnationalism and literacy: Investigating the mobility of people, languages, texts, and practices in contexts of migration. *Reading Research Quarterly, 47,* 2, 191–215.

Lantolf, J. P. (2011). The sociocultural approach to second language acquisition: Sociocultural theory, second language acquisition, and artificial L2 development. In D. Atkinson, (Ed.), *Alternative Approaches to Second Language Acquisition* (24-47). London: Routledge.

Lather, P. (1992). Critical frames in educational research: Feminist and poststructural perspectives. *Theory into Practice, 31*, 2, 87-99.

Lather, P. (2004). Critical inquiry in qualitative research: Feminist and poststructural perspectives: Science "after truth." In In K. B. DeMarrais & S. D. Lapan (Eds.), *Foundations for research: Methods of inquiry in education and the social sciences* (pp. 203-215). Mahwah, N.J: L. Erlbaum Associates.

Lave, J., & Wenger, E. (1991). *Situated Learning: Legitimate Peripheral Participation*. Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press.

Levitt, P., & Glick Schiller, N. (2006). Conceptualizing simultaneity: A transnational social field perspective on society. *International Migration Review, 38,* 3, 1002-1039.

Lewis, M.P., Simons, G., Fennig, C. (eds.) (2015) *Ethnologue: Languages of the World* (18th Ed.) Dallas, TX: SIL International. Online version: http://www.ethnologue.com

Li, G. (2008). *Culturally Contested Literacies: America's "Rainbow Underclass" and Urban Schools*. New York, NY: Routledge.

Lippi-Green, R. (2012). *English with an Accent Language, Ideology and Discrimination in the United States* (2nd ed.). London: Routledge.

Long, E. (1986). Women, reading, and cultural authority: Some implications of the audience perspective in cultural studies. *American Quarterly, 38,* 4, 591-612.

Long, E. (2003). *Book Clubs: Women and the Uses Of Reading in Everyday Life*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

Loughry, M. (2009). The representation of refugee women in our research and practice. In M. Hajdukowski-Ahmed, N. Khanlou & H. Moussa. (Eds.). *Not born a refugee woman: Contesting identities, rethinking practices* (pp. 166-172). New York, NY: Berghahn Books.

Luke, A. (2003). Literacy and the Other: A sociological approach to literacy research and policy in multilingual societies. *Reading Research Quarterly, 38,* 1, 132-141.

Luke, A. (2004a). On the material consequences of literacy. *Language and Education, 18,* 4, 331-335.

Luke, A. (2004b). Two takes on the critical. In B. Norton & K. Toohey (Eds.), *Critical pedagogies and language learning* (pp. 21-29). Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press.

Luke, A., & Woods, A. (2009) Policy and adolescent literacy. In L. Christenbury, R. Bomer, & P. Smagorinsky, (Eds.), *Handbook of adolescent literacy research* (400-414). New York: Guilford Press.

Madison. D. (2005). Introduction to critical ethnography: Theory and methods. In *Critical Ethnography: Method, Ethics & Performance* (pp. 1-16). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Martin, S. F. (2004). *Refugee Women*. Lanham, MD: Lexington Books.

Martinez, R. A., Orellana, M. F., Pacheco, M., & Carbone, P. (2008). Found in Translation: Connecting Translating Experiences to Academic Writing. *Language Arts, 85,* 6, 421.

McBrien, J. L. (2005). Educational needs and barriers for refugee students in the United States: A review of the literature. *Review of Educational Research, 75,* 3, 329-364.

McKay, S. L., & Weinstein-Shr, G. (1993). English literacy in the U.S.: National policies, personal consequences. *TESOL Quarterly, 27,* 3, 399.

Menard-Warwick, J. (2005). Both a fiction and an existential fact: Theorizing identity in second language acquisition and literacy studies. *Linguistics and Education, 16,* 3, 253-274.

Menard-Warwick, J. (2008). "Because she made beds. Everyday." Social positioning, classroom discourse, and language learning. *Applied Linguistics, 29,* 2, 267-289.

Menken, K. (2013). Emergent bilingual students in secondary school: Along the academic language and literacy continuum. *Language Teaching, 46,* 4, 438-476.

Merriam, S. B. (1988). *Case Study Research in Education: A Qualitative Approach*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Miller, J. (2009). Teaching refugee learners with interrupted education in science: Vocabulary, literacy and pedagogy. *International Journal of Science Education, 31,* 4, 571-592.

Mills, K. (2005). Deconstructing binary oppositions in literacy discourse and pedagogy. *The Australian Journal of Language and Literacy, 28,* 67-82.

Minh-ha, T. T. (1989). *Woman, Native, Other.* Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press.

Minh-ha, T. T. (2010). *Elsewhere, Within Here: Immigration, Refugeeism and the Boundary Event*. New York, NY: Routledge.

Mohanty, C. T. (2003). *Feminism Without Borders: Decolonizing Theory, Practicing Solidarity*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

Moll, L. (2000). Inspired by Vygotsky: Ethnographic experiments in education. In C. D. Lee, & P. Smagorinsky, P. (Eds), *Vygotskian perspectives on literacy research: Constructing meaning through collaborative inquiry* (pp. 256-268). Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press.

Moll, L. (2005) Reflections and possibilities. In González, Moll, & Amanti, (Eds.), *Funds of Knowledge: Theorizing Practice in Households, Communities, and Classrooms*. Mah-wah, NJ: Erlbaum Associates. P. 275-287.

Moll, L. C. (2015). Tapping into the "Hidden" Home and Community Resources of Students. *Kappa Delta Pi Record, 51,* 3, 114–117.

New London Group. (1996). A pedagogy of multiliteracies: Designing social futures. *Harvard Educational Review, 66,* 1, 60–92.

Noddings, N. (1984). *Caring, a Feminine Approach to Ethics and Moral Education*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Noddings, N. (2006). *Critical Lessons: What Our Schools Should Teach*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Norton, B. (1997). Language, identity, and the ownership of English. *TESOL Quarterly, 31*, 3, pp. 409-429.

Norton, B. (2000). *Identity and Language Learning: Gender, Ethnicity and Educational Change*. Harlow, England: Longman.

Norton, B. (2001) Non-participation, imagined communities and the language classroom. In M.P. Breen (Ed.) *Learner Contributions to Language Learning* (pp. 159-171). Harlow, England: Longman.

Norton, B., & Early, M. (2011). Researcher identity, narrative inquiry, and language teaching research. *TESOL Quarterly, 45,* 3, 415-439.

Norton, B., & Gao, Y. (2008). Identity, investment, and Chinese learners of English. *Journal of Asian Pacific Communication*, *18*(1), 109-120. (Look at SLA paper/important to relationships and safe spaces)

Norton, B., & Toohey, K. (2004). *Critical Pedagogies and Language Learning*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Ochs, E., & Capps, L. (1996). Narrating the self. *Annual Review of Anthropology, 25*, pp. 19-43.

Oikonomidoy, E. (2007). "I see myself as a different person who [has] acquired a lot": Somali female students' journeys to belonging. *Intercultural Education, 18,* 1, 15-27.

Oikonomidoy, E. (2010). Zooming Into the school narratives of refugee students. *Multicultural Perspectives*, *12*(2), 74.

Paget, M. A. (1983). Experience and knowledge. *Human Studies, 6*, 67-90.

Pavlenko, A. (2001). "In the world of the tradition I was unimagined": Negotiations of identities in cross cultural autobiographies. *The International Journal of Bilingualism*, 5(3), 317-344.

Pavlenko, A. (2002). Narrative study: Whose story is it, anyway?. *TESOL Quarterly, 36,* 213-218.

Pavlenko, A. (2004) Gender and sexuality in foreign and second language education: Critical and feminist approaches. In B. Norton & K. Toohey (Eds.), *Critical Pedagogies and Language Learning* (pp. 53-71). Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press.

Pavlenko, A., & Norton, B. (2007). Imagined communities, identity, and English language learning. In J. Cummins, & C. Davison (Eds.), *International handbook of English language teaching* (pp. 589-560). New York, NY: Springer.

Peirce, B. N. (1995). Social Identity, investment, and language learning. *TESOL Quarterly, 29,* 1, 9-31.

Pennycook, A. (Ed.). (1999). Critical approaches to TESOL [Special issue]. *TESOL Quarterly*, 33(3) p. 329-348.

Perry, K.H. (2007). Sharing stories, linking lives: Literacy practices among Sudanese refugees. In Purcell-Gates (Ed.), *Cultural practices of literacy: Case studies of language, literacy, social practice, and power* (pp. 57–84). Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.

Perry, K. H. (2008). From storytelling to writing: Transforming literacy practices among Sudanese refugees. *Journal of Literacy Research*, *40*(3), 317-358.

Perry, K. H. (2009). Genres, contexts, and literacy practices: Literacy brokering among Sudanese refugee families. *Reading Research Quarterly* 44, 3, 256-276.

Peshkin, A. (1988). In search of subjectivity—One's own. *Educational Researcher, 17*(7), 17–22.

Philip, A. (November 16, 2015). Governors rush to slam door on Syrian refugees.Washington-Post.com

Piller, I., & Takahashi, K. (2010). At the intersection of gender, language, and transnationalism. In N. Coupland (Ed.), *The handbook of language and globalization* (pp. 540-554). MA: Blackwell Publishing Ltd.

Pipher, M. B. (2002). *The Middle of Everywhere: The World's Refugees Come to Our Town*. New York, NY: Harcourt.

Pittaway, D. S. (2004). Investment and second language acquisition. *Critical Inquiry in Language Studies*, *1*(4), 203-218.

Pittaway, E., & Bartolomei, L. (2001) Refugees, race, and gender: The multiple discrimination against refugee women. *Refuge, 19*, 6, 21-32.

Polkinghorne, D. E. (1995). Narrative configuration in qualitative analysis. *Qualitative Studies in Education, 8,* 1, 5-23.

Poole, M. (2003). The women's chapter: Women's reading groups in Victoria. *Feminist Media Studies, 3,* 3, 263-281.

Pratt, M. L. (1991). Arts of the contact zone. *Profession* (Modern Language Association), *9*, 33-40.

Preissle, J., & Grant, L. (2004). Fieldwork traditions: Ethnography and participant observation. In K. B. DeMarrais & S. D. Lapan (Eds.), *Foundations for research: Methods of inquiry in education and the social sciences* (pp. 161-179). Mahwah, NJ: L. Erlbaum Associates.

Prins, E., Toso, B. W., & Schafft, K. A. (2009). "It feels like a little family to me": Social interaction and support among women in adult education and family literacy. *Adult Education Quarterly, 59,* 4, 335-352.

Purcell-Gates, V. (2004). Ethnographic research. In N. K. Duke & M. H. Mallette (Eds.), *Literacy research methodologies* (pp. 287-306). New York, NY: Guilford Press.

Purcell-Gates, V. (Ed.). (2006). *Cultural practices of literacy: Case studies of language, literacy, social practice, and power*. Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.

Ranard, D. A., Barron, S. & Center for Applied Linguistics. (2007). *Refugees from Burma: Their Backgrounds and Refugee Experiences*. Washington, D.C: Center for Applied Linguistics, Cultural Orientation Resource Center.

Redmon, J. (Dec. 10, 2015) AJC.com, J. Redmon, http://www.ajc.com/news/news/state-regional-govt-politics/georgia-wont-process-benefits-applications-for-new/npgxr/

Refugee Resettlement Relief (2016). Retrieved from http://www.refugeeresettlementrelief.com

Reyes, C. C. (2008). " Disturbing the waters": Using relational knowledge to explore methodology. *The Journal of Educational Foundations*, *22*(3/4), 13-31.

Richardson, L. (1990). Narrative and sociology. *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography, 19,* 1, 116-135.

Richardson, L. (2000). Writing: A method of inquiry. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *The SAGE handbook of qualitative research* (pp. 923-948). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Richardson, L. (2001). Getting personal: writing-stories. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education, 14,* 1, 33-38.

Riessman, C. K. (2008). *Narrative Methods for the Human Sciences*. Los Angeles: Sage Publications.

Rosenblatt, L. M. (1978/1994). *The reader, the Text, the Poem: The Transactional Theory of the Literary Work*. Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press. (previous 1978)

Rosenblatt, L. M. (1938/1995). *Literature as Exploration* (5th ed.). New York, NY: Modern Language Association of America. (previous 1938)

Roxas, K. (2010). Who really wants "the tired, the poor, and the huddled masses" anyway?: Teachers' use of cultural scripts with refugee students in public schools. *Multicultural Perspectives, 12,* 2, 65-73.

Roy, L. A., & Roxas, K. C. (2011). Whose Deficit Is This Anyhow? Exploring Counter-Stories of Somali Bantu Refugees' Experiences in "Doing School". *Harvard Educational Review, 81,* 3, 521-542.

Ryan, S. (2006). Language learning motivation within the context of globalisation: An L2 self within an imagined global community. *Critical Inquiry in Language Studies*, *3*(1), 23-45.

Said, E. W. (1978). *Orientalism*. New York, NY: Vintage Books.

Saldaña, J. (2009). *The Coding Manual for Qualitative Researchers*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Sarr, K. G., & Mosselson, J. (2010). Issues in teaching refugees in U.S. schools. *Yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education, 109,* 2, 548-570.

Sarroub, L. K. (2001). The sojourner experience of Yemeni American high school students: An ethnographic portrait. *Harvard Educational Review, 71,* 3, 390-415.

Sarroub, L. K. (2002). In-Betweenness: Religion and conflicting visions of literacy. *Reading Research Quarterly, 37,* 2, 130-148.

Sarroub, L. K. (2005). *All American Yemeni girls: Being Muslim in a public school*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.

Sarroub, L. K. (2008). Living "glocally" with literacy success in the Midwest. *Theory into Practice, 47,* 1, 59-66.

Sarroub, L. K., Pernicek, T., & Sweeney, T. (2007). "I was bitten by a scorpion": Reading in and out of school in a refugee's life. *Journal of Adolescent and Adult Literacy, 50,* 8, 668-679.

Schalge, S., & Soga, K. (2008). “Then I stop coming to school”: Understanding absenteeism in

an adult English as a second language program. *Adult Basic Education and Literacy Journal, 2*, 3, 151-160.

Semlak, J. L., Pearson, J. C., Amundson, N. G., & Kudak, A. H. (2008). Navigating dialectic contradictions experienced by female African refugees during cross-cultural adaptation. *Journal Of Intercultural Communication Research*, *37*(1), 43-64.

Senate Resolution 1031 (2014). Retrieved from: http://www.legis.ga.gov/Legislation/en-US/display/2013_14/41779).

Short, D. & Boyson, B. A. (2012). *Helping Newcomer Students Succeed in Secondary Schools and Beyond: A report to Carnegie Corporation of New York*. Washington, DC: Center for Applied Linguistics.

Smith, F. (1998). *The book of learning and forgetting*. New York, NY: Teachers College Press

Stagg-Peterson, S., & Heywood, D. (2007). Contributions of families' linguistic, social, and cultural capital to minority-language children's literacy: Parents', teachers', and principals' perspectives. *The Canadian Modern Language Review / La Revue Canadienne Des Langues Vivantes, 63,* 4, 517-538

Street, B. (1997). The Implications of the “New Literacy Studies” for Literacy Education. *English in Education, 31,* 3, 45-59.

Street, B. (1998). New literacies in theory and practice: What are the implications for language in education?. *Linguistics and Education, 10,* 1, 1-24.

Street, B. (2003). What’s “new” in New Literacy Studies? Critical approaches to literacy in theory and practice. *Current Issues in Comparative Education, 5*, 2, 77-91.

Street, B. (2004). Futures of the ethnography of literacy?. *Language & Education: An International Journal*, *18*(4), 326-330.

Street, B. V. (2005). At last: Recent applications of New Literacy Studies in educational contexts. *Research in the Teaching of English, 39,* 417-423.

Street, B. V., & Lefstein, A. (2007). *Literacy: An advanced resource book*. London, England: Routledge.

Suárez-Orozco, C., Pimentel, A., & Martin, M. (2009a). The significance of relationships: Academic engagement and achievement among newcomer immigrant youth. *Teachers College Record, 111,* 3, 712-749.

Suárez-Orozco, C., Rhodes, J., & Milburn, M. (2009b). Unraveling the immigrant paradox: Academic engagement and disengagement among recently arrived immigrant youth. *Youth and Society, 41,* 2, 151-185.

Swain, M., & Deters, P. (2007). "New" mainstream SLA theory: Expanded and enriched. *Modern Language Journal*, 91(5). 820-836.

Talburt, S. (2004). Ethnographic responsibility without the "real." *The Journal of Higher Education, 75,* 1, 80-103.

Tan, A. (2006). *The Joy Luck Club*. New York, NY: Penguin Books.

Taylor, M. C. (2006). Informal adult learning and everyday literacy practices. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy, 49,* 6, 500-509.

Tinker Sachs, G., Hendley, M.L., Klosterman, S., Muga, E., Roberson, A., Soons, B., Wingo, C., & Yeo, M. (2008). Integrating funds of knowledge in the ESOL practicum: The missing element. GATESOL in Action, 21(2), 23 – 30.

Torres, K. (2014, February 24). Georgia Bill: Ban driver's licenses for immigrants without legal status. Retrieved from http://www.ajc.com/news/news/state-regional-govt-politics/georgia-bill-ban-drivers-licenses-for-immigrants-w/ndZ7T/).

Townsend, J. S., & Fu, D. (2001). Paw's story: A Laotian refugee's lonely entry into American literacy. *Journal of Adolescent and Adult Literacy, 45,* 104-125.

Tracey, D. H., & Morrow, L. M. (2006). *Lenses on reading: An introduction to theories and models*. New York, NY: Guilford Press.

Twomey, S. (2007). Reading “Woman”: Book club pedagogies and the literary imagination. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy, 50,* 5, 398-407.

United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). (2010). Global Education Report. Geneva, Switzerland.

United Nations High Commission for Refugees. (2011). Refugee Figures. Geneva, Switzerland. Retrieved from http://www.unhcr.org/pages/49c3646c1d.html

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. (2009). Office of Refugee Resettlement. Retrieved from http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/orr/data/fy2009RA.htm

U.S. Department of Justice (2014, November). DeKalb County School District Reaches Settlement Agreement with Federal Authorities for Harassement Based on Religion and National Origin. Retrieved from http://www.justice.gov/opa/pr/dekalb-county-school-district-reaches-settlement-agreement-federal-authorities-harassment)

Valdés, G. (2001). *Learning and not learning English: Latino students in American schools*. New York, NY: Teachers College Press.

Valentine, G., Sporton, D., & Nielsen, K. B. (2009). Identities and belonging: A study of Somali refugee and asylum seekers living in the UK and Denmark. *Environment and Planning. D, Society & Space, 27,* 2, 234-250.

Valenzuela, A. (1999). *Subtractive schooling: U.S.-Mexican youth and the politics of caring*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.

Vertovec, S. (2001). Transnationalism and identity. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies,* 27, 573-582.

Vitanova, G. (2013). Narratives as zones of dialogic constructions: A Bakhtinian approach to data in qualitative research. *Critical Inquiry in Language Studies, 10,* 3, 242-261.

Vygotsky, L. S. (1978). *Mind in society: The development of higher psychological processes*. Cole, M., John-Steiner, V., Scribner, S., & Souberman, E., (Eds.). Cambridge, MA: Harvard Univ. Press.

Vygotsky, L. (1986). *Thought and language*. Kozulin, A., (Ed.). Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Walker-Dalhouse, D., & Dalhouse, A. D. (2009). When two elephants fight the grass suffers: Parents and teachers working together to support the literacy development of Sudanese youth. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 25, 2, 328–335.

Warriner, D. S. (2004a). Multiple literacies and identities: The experiences of two women refugees. *Women's Studies Quarterly*, 32, 179–195.

Warriner, D. (2004b). "The Days Now Is Very Hard for My Family": The Negotiation and Construction of Gendered Work Identities Among Newly Arrived Women Refugees. *Journal Of Language, Identity & Education*, *3*(4), 279-294.

Warriner, D. S. (2007a). "It's just the nature of the beast": Re-imagining the literacies of schooling in adult ESL education. *Linguistics in Education, 18*, 305–324.

Warriner, D. S. (2007b). Language learning and the politics of belonging: Sudanese women refugees & "Becoming" and "Being" "American." *Anthropology & Education Quarterly, 38,* 4, 343-359.

Warriner, D. S. (2007c). Transnational literacies: Immigration, language learning, and identity. *Linguistics and Education, 18,* 201–214.

Warriner, D. S. (2009a). Competent performances of situated identities: Adult learners of English accessing engaged participation. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 26*, 22–30.

Warriner, D. S. (2009b). Transnational literacies: Examining global flows through the lens of social practice. In M. Baynham, M., & M. Prinsloo, M. (Eds.), *The Future of Literacy Studies* (pp. 160–180). London, England: Palgrave MacMillan.

Watkins, P. G., Razee, H., & Richters, J. (2012). "I'm Telling You ... the language barrier is the most, the biggest challenge": Barriers to Education among Karen Refugee Women in Australia. *Australian Journal of Education, 56,* 2, 126–141.

Weedon, C. (1991). Poststructural feminist practice. In D. E. Morton, & M. Zavarzadeh (Eds.), *Theory/pedagogy/politics: Texts for change* (p. 47–63). Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press.

Weedon, C. (1999). *Feminism, theory, and the politics of difference*. Oxford, UK: Blackwell Publishers.

Weedon, C. (2004). *Identity and culture: Narratives of difference and belonging*. Maidenhead, England: Open University Press.

Wells, G. (2000). Dialogic inquiry in education: Building on the legacy of Vygotsky. In C. D. Lee, & P. Smagorinsky, P. (Eds), *Vygotskian perspectives on literacy research: Constructing meaning through collaborative inquiry* (pp. 51–85). Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press.

Winders, J. (2007). Belonging in the Contemporary US South. Antipode 39.5, 789–955.

Windle, J & Miller, J. (2012). Approaches to teaching low-literacy refugee-background students. *Australian Journal of language and literacy, 35*, 2, 317–333.

Wong, S. (2006). *Dialogic Approaches to TESOL: Where the Ginkgo Tree Grows*. Mahwah, N.J.: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Woods, A. (2009). Learning to be literate: Issues of pedagogy for recently arrived refugee youth in Australia. *Critical Inquiry in Language Studies*, 6(1/2), 81–101.

Yi, Y. (2009). Adolescent literacy and identity construction among 1.5 generation students: From a transnational perspective. *Journal of Asian Pacific Communication, 19,* 1, 100–129.

Zhou, M. (2001). Straddling different worlds: The acculturation of Vietnamese refugee children in San Diego. (pp. 187–227). In Rubén G. Rumbaut and Alejandro Portes (Eds.) *Ethnicities: Coming of age in immigrant America*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press

APPENDICES

Appendix A. Pilot Study

I conducted a pilot study in which I examined the literacy practices and perspectives of a group of seven refugee women who had been students in my English class the previous year.

Table 5. Pilot Study Participants (Pseudonyms).

Participant legal age	Geopolitical locations	Languages spoken	Literacy learning experiences
Gul 27	Afghanistan, India, US	Pashto, Dari, Hindi, Urdu, Arabic, English	learned to read English at 25; Urdu at 22; and Arabic at age 7 learned to write in English at 25 in US
Sana 28	Afghanistan, India, US	Pashto, Dari, Hindi, Urdu, Arabic, English	learned to read English at 26 in school; Urdu at 23; Arabic at 8 learned "a little bit of writing" in Urdu from a neighbor in India at 23
Mai 16	Burma, Thailand, US	Burmese, Karen, English	learned to read Karen in Thai refugee camp at 5; learned English alphabet at same time; learned to write Karen around 5
Shay 15	Burma, Thailand, US	Burmese, Karen, English	learned to read and write when "young in Thai refugee camp"
Pia 15	Burma, Thailand, US	Burmese, Karen, English	learned to read Karen in kindergarten; learned to read English at 12 in US learned to write Karen at age 4/5 and English alphabet at same time
Sung 17	Burma, Thailand, US	Burmese, Karen, English	learned to read Karen in school learned to write Karen at 5/6
Aisha 18	Eritrea, Kenya, US	Kunama, English	learned to read English at school in US, age 9 learned to write English at school in US, age 9

The pilot study took place over one week during the school summer break in an out-of-school literacy club. This club served as a site for exploring situated, social literacy practices. Initially, I imagined the study as more focused on literature-based writing practices in the club. However, participants proved to be less interested in writing and more interested in talking about what they read. I did not demand writing as a caveat for participation but did ask participants to keep reading journals. In the end, four members shared some of their journal entries.

As members in the club, participants chose their own individual books from those I brought, wrote about them, and came together daily to discuss them. The books offered were chosen based on members' stated interests in reading about women, refugees, and love stories. The book choices offered likely influenced discussions and responses, while participant's interests and choices revealed their desires to read about things "that matter to them" (Poole, 2003) and that connect to their personal experiences and lives in some way. In fact, the data later revealed that for these young women, connections between stories in books and their own life stories highly influenced their decisions and desires to read and their beliefs that the books were "good" or worthy of reading and recommending to others. The initial questions guiding the study were: What are refugee students' literacy experiences in a summer club? How do female refugees practice literacy outside of a traditional classroom setting? My intention was to find out more about what my students' did outside of school and direct attention towards literacy as an important aspect of their everyday lives beyond the classroom.

In school, the seven young women who participated in the pilot study were often prescribed books based on their very particular reading needs and levels. Although this process may have improved their reading fluency and reduced frustration, many of them longed for opportunities to read books of their own choosing. In an out-of-school reading group, women can voluntarily come together and read books that they choose in shared literacy experiences that build relationships and provide spaces for re-imaginings.

Data collected during the pilot study consisted of audiotaped recordings of group meetings, individual interviews, informal conversations recorded in field notes, open-ended questionnaires about reading and writing experiences, and participant's reading journal entries. As "the

primary instrument in data collection" (Merriam, 1988), I paid close attention to the particular, diverse experiences of these 7 young women and to my own roles as researcher in the process.

Critical approaches to literacy studies offered a framework and informed data collection and analysis (Freire, 1968/1993; Freire & Macedo, 1987; Giroux, 1993; Luke, 2003, 2004a, 2004b; New London Group, 1996; Street, 2005; Warriner, 2009b). Qualitative methods of coding, categorizing, and synthesizing were used to search for significant patterns and themes in the data (Bogdan & Biklen, 2006; Saldaña, 2009. Although a focus on the ways in which data fit together was useful for developing categories, attention to contradictory or conflicting data were also important to making sense of participants' multiple perspectives, experiences, and lives. Initially, 23 separate codes were noted, and those were condensed, categorized, and refined through a process of reflective writing and textual transactions (Rosenblatt, 1994). In and through analysis, I understood the perceptions, experiences, and ways in which refugee young women made sense of their lives (Merriam, 1988) through literacy practices.

For the purpose of this study, three significant themes developed and were explored: literacy as highly valuable, yet conditionally legitimate (Heller, 1996); the importance of connections to stories, especially as means to narrate personal experiences and lives; and the navigations and intersections of multiple languages for refugee young women readers in a club. These themes were interpreted in relation to theories and other scholarship related to refugee women's lives and literacy practices and informed by four years of work as a refugee family literacy teacher and two years as an English teacher for female refugee students.

Although the overarching themes offer significant insights into the experiences of women in a summer literacy club, it is important to highlight some specific aspects of their experiences that relate to but cannot be encapsulated in these themes and offer opportunities for further dis-

cussion. Participants shared a great deal about their literacy histories, perspectives, and interests during these interviews. Interestingly and often, what the literacy club members wrote on the questionnaires differed greatly from what I discovered in the interviews. For example, Sana, self-identified as a Muslim Afghan, wrote that she did not learn how to read or write in English until she came to the U.S. However, during our interview I discovered that she had learned to read Arabic and later Urdu from a private tutor in her home so that she could read and study religious texts. She was a capable reader in 4 different languages, yet still viewed herself as a new reader with limited abilities.

This occurred over and again in interviews, and discussions and proved to be a valuable lesson for me. These participants had assumed that when I asked about learning to read and write I meant formal *English* language learning. Sana felt that the "other" languages she had learned were not the ones I was interested in or asking about. She assumed, perhaps in part because I am a white, middle-class teacher of English, that I would only be concerned with her learning and use of English in specific, "legitimate" ways (Heller, 1996). In addition, when I asked about everyday literacy practices, participants denied that they engaged in any outside of reading or writing for school. They had not considered and seemingly did not count as legitimate all the reading and writing they did in translating for others, in reading religious texts or news from their homelands online, or the writing they did in diaries or as they composed stories in their first languages. The data and analysis revealed that these refugee learners were heavily influenced by discourses of literacy legitimacy that circulated around them.

The pilot study revealed that these refugee learners were highly interested in participating in a book club outside of school. For many of these refugee women, our short summer literacy club meeting was a refuge and provided a "legitimate" escape from duties, chores, and

the demands of family life that often place women refugees in the gendered role of care-giver (Hyndman, 2010, p. 456). I found that nearly all the refugee women I taught acted as care-givers in some respect for siblings, extended family, and neighbors. They babysat, cooked, cleaned, acted as literacy brokers, and even helped manage their households. However, most of these women were encouraged to participate in any activities that would help them to learn "better English" even if it meant neglecting certain duties. One young woman, Aisha, had particular difficulty managing family responsibilities while her mother was in the hospital and could not complete the study. Those that did participate in the study were excited by the social gathering to discuss their books and lives. Although, these refugee women were eager to socialize, all were highly invested in improving their English, especially their reading and writing. They made it clear that learning English, as a more legitimate language and more valuable resource (Heller, 2010), was the most important reason for their participation in the study and club.

Despite their interest and investment in improving their English reading and writing, participants were less likely to write about their reading. Only 12 journal entries were shared with me, and in these participants tended to focus on summarizing and retelling the story. With prompting, two students did write more about their feelings about and connections to the books they read, but this was not the norm. I suggest there might be two reasons for this, based on data collected. First, participants made clear in discussions, questionnaires, and interviews that writing in English was more difficult for them than speaking. Generally, they expressed more dissatisfaction with their writing abilities than with their reading, especially in English. I contend this has a great deal to do with apprehensions about accuracy (form, structure, meaning) in writing. Secondly, I contend that given the choice, many book club members or readers would not be quick to write about their reading. I know that I have rarely written about books that I have read

in my journals. Thus, my initial focus on writing in the club shifted toward trying to better understand the complexity of participants' experiences and beliefs about writing and literacy broadly as a social practice.

On at least 22 occasions, participants described writing as difficult or as something they were not capable of doing. Gul's comment during an early club meeting illustrated the complex and often contradictory feelings towards literacy several of the participants shared, "Yes, I like writing, but I'm not a good writer." Interestingly, Gul was the only student to submit five journal entries. In two of these, she sought to refute what she perceived as inaccuracies in her book in regards to the treatment of women in Afghanistan. Gul may not have believed she was a good writer, but it seems she imagined the powerful potential in writing as a means of resistance and rewriting "the word and the world" (Freire, 1968/1993).

The findings from the brief pilot study with respect to the role of book clubs, gender roles, agency, the value of literacy, and the complexity of perspectives and practices of literacy inspired me to conduct more comprehensive research. In the current study, a long-term book club provided the opportunity to further explore and better understand the literacies and lives of local refugee women and the connections between the two. The findings from the pilot study pointed towards the legacies of colonialism, the hegemony of English, and the power of discourse in the everyday lives and literacy practices of these refugee women. However, it also revealed the ways in which these refugee women resisted these in multiple ways.

Appendix B. Narrative Episodes

Table 6. Narrative Episodes, Themes, and Related Codes.

Episode Letter and Session #	Episode Title	Episode Themes & Related Codes
Episode AA, S1	"That's why everyone wants to be the teacher"	being a teacher, here and there, authority and power, shared experiences and understandings, subjectivities
Episode BB, S1	What is a book club?	book club, understanding the book, coming together, shared reading, readers, authority and knowledge, literacy, subjectivities
Episode CC, S1	Wedding dresses	here and there, being transnational, sewing and creating, getting married, appearance, woman, subjectivities, multi, plural
Episode DD, S1	"I could keep the book"	writing in books, owning books, reasons to join the book club, valuing books, literacy, subjectivities
Episode EE, S1	Busy readers and workers	being a reader, being busy, working, working woman, literacy, subjectivities, being literate
Episode FF, S1	Readers know about books	opinions on books, reading adult books, books and movies, knowing about books, being a reader, book club, literacy, subjectivities
Episode GG, S1	Readers and drivers	first books read, remembering, required reading for school, transportation to school and work, learning to drive, driving permits and tests, knowing about books and about driving, not being scared, confidence, changing, literacies, subjectivities
Episode HH, S2	"I can tell you"	reading is hard, writing can be confusing, not understanding, feelings and opinions about texts, knowing why a book is hard to understand, knowing, literacy, subjectivities, authority
Episode II, S2	Relating to reading	understanding context, change in context, education as marker of success and modernization, background knowledge, shared experience, relating to text
Episode JJ, S2	Making cultural connections to texts	naming traditions, here and there, culture, folk histories and beliefs, honoring ancestors, cultural knowledge, telling, making connections to texts
Episode KK,	Old friends and marriage sto-	"dad told her to marry", change of subject, turning talk, folk history and be-

S2	ries	liefs, connecting to other stories, being a woman, growing up, change, subjectivities, storytelling
Episode LL, S2	Book club business	food important in the club, ownership and authority in book club, changing book club locations, hosting, shared decision making, talking in other languages, new home, sharing everyday life, subjectivities, multi/plural
Episode MM, S2	Knowing languages and doing school	required foreign language courses at school, speaking other languages, unrecognized languages, language privilege, sharing school knowledge, language tests, passing tests, rude teacher, authority, positioning
Episode NN, S2	Faith, religion and resistance	resisting and refuting ideas in book, questioning, contesting, using technology, talking in other languages, religion and rights, education and religion, knowing and religion, Islam, knowing and not knowing, being a woman, subjectivities, faith and home, here and there
Episode OO, S2	Negotiating the book club, responsibilities, and language teaching	book club business, scheduling meetings, acting as leader, jobs and working, language teaching, knowing your language, learning and forgetting language, being multilingual, men mixing with new culture, gender and language, gender and culture
Episode PP, S2	Working women and women's rights	here and there, comparing men and women, women working, making money and supporting family, women's rights, different experiences as women in different spaces, being a woman, subjectivities
Episode QQ, S2	Modest women	modesty, being a woman, here and there, cultural values, faith, beliefs and behavior, giving opinions and sharing beliefs, *hijab* and *pardah,* positioning, subjectivities, good girl, knowing
Episode RR, S2	"I behave myself"	girl, woman behavior, modesty, changing behavior with elders, being quiet, knowing, positioning, subjectivities
Episode SS, S2	"The way she act, she's just very like a woman"	being a woman, subjectivities, cooking, being older sister, girl expectations, acting like a child, knowing
Episode TT, S2	"She's an old lady"	girl, woman expectations, marrying old, doctors are "high", being good connected to being doctor, privilege, women's choices, storytelling
Episode H, S3	"I like to live there"	remembering, here and there, shared memories, connections, life in the camp, picnics, good memories, playing, being outside
Episode I, S3	"Live partially there and also here"	going back home, being afraid, danger, money, living here and there, hard in America, boring in America, feeling different in America, differences, difficult

Episode J, S3	"It's like you always have to work hard"	here and there, remembering, acting grown up, working hard, kids are different here, difficulties, changes
Episode A, S4	The good daughter	making text connections, being good, girl expectations, subjectivities, sharing stories, knowing
Episode B, S4	Knowing family and culture	text connections, sharing stories, here and there, connecting and disconnecting, displacement and movement, knowing, being good
Episode C, S4	Resettlement story: "They only believe in papers"	telling stories, testifying, marriage and movement, privilege, here and there, comparing, cultural difference, knowing, authority, refugee, subjectivities, literacy, legitimacy
Episode E, S4	Working woman	telling stories, working, here and there, making money, professional work, legitimacy, being a woman, agency, subjectivities
Episode F, S4	Certified training	certification, future, learning, smart girl, working hard, a nurse, professional job, pride and excitement, being a woman, subjectivities, sharing news, relationships
Episode G, S4	Graduating and going to college	going to college is good, learning and studying engineering, graduation, chatting online, staying connected, being a woman, friends and affiliations, future, positioning, subjectivities
Episode K, S5	"In my culture"	Good girls and good daughters, girls and boys, expectations and cultural norms, culture, subjectivities, here and there
Episode L, S5	"Here in America"	transnational lives, being African, school, difference, difference related to ignorance, difference as negative, mom, parents
Episode M, S5	"Because you're an American parent, that's why"	culture, expectations, respect for parents, parental relationships, disconnected from parents, changes, difference, here and there, not talking to parents
Episode N, S5	"You should have known better"	girl behavior, expectations, subjectivities, knowing, turning talk, positioning, changing directions, being a woman
Episode Y, S5	Natural hair	hair, acceptability, subjectivities, being white, learning from Youtube, African scarf, getting a job, being different, getting a job, discrimination, swimming, Ramadan, going out of town, stuff to do, positioning, resisting
Episode O, S6	School chances and no excuses	school, school related to opportunity/chances, not knowing English, no excuse, what you tell yourself is important, getting and going after help, agency, positioning,

Episode P, S6	"But here, it's changing…"	a good girl, being bad, taking care of parents, living with and without family, culture, expectations, staying close, girls and marriage, questioning norms, freedom for boys, college, change, disconnect and distance from parents,
Episode Q, S6	"My duck in Thailand"	remembering, here and there, narratives of the past, living on the mountaintop, home, storytelling, connections, change of subject, agency
Episode R, S6	Woman in the Moon	connections to text, shared knowledge, cultural knowledge, talking in other languages, translation, literary knowledge (poem), sharing stories, culture, folk stories, futures, women and menstruation, women in the moon, folk stories with moral lessons, oral literacy
Episode S, S6	"The red dots"	folk stories and knowledge, beliefs, what's true, spaces outside of school, eating together, talking and eating, shared understandings, oral tellings
Episode T, S6	Everyday life outside of school	going to church, not reading, listening to music, choices, subjectivities
Episode U, S7	Nan's Soccer Story	soccer is fun, not playing any more, making choices
Episode V, S7	"Going back to school"	finishing school, not wanting to be there but ready to go back and get done, future
Episode W, S7	"Too many options"	too many options and choices, opportunities, changing ideas, here and there, English important to options, important decisions, difficult decisions, limited choices, marriage and many babies, new choices
Episode X, S7	Religious questions and condemnation	birth control and religion, questioning, trust, responsivity, community, navigating shifts

Appendix C. Keyword Frequencies

Keyword (KW)	Session 1	Session 2	Session 3	Session 4	Session 5	Session 6	Session 7	Session 8	Session 9	9 Session Total	9 Session Average
Book	128	32	57	91	74	42	9	75	12	520	58
Change	1	5	1	8	9	10	15	17	5	71	8
Changing	0	0	3	0	1	7	1	1	0	13	1
College	4	1	1	1	10	6	3	32	10	68	8
English	9	7	21	23	24	16	10	20	9	139	15
Exam	0	2	5	0	11	0	0	4	1	23	3
Family	5	9	7	36	32	34	13	23	11	170	19
Friend	9	11	24	14	23	15	16	17	8	137	15
Hard	14	22	51	50	38	26	18	69	10	298	33
Home	5	21	16	16	18	15	27	37	2	157	17
Job	1	1	5	14	9	8	19	44	1	102	11
Know	77	175	191	270	223	304	292	605	126	2,263	251
Language	13	10	42	20	29	20	5	27	4	170	19
Learn	8	13	18	15	6	17	17	38	6	138	15
Read	81	39	42	75	74	84	35	79	13	522	58
Refugee	0	0	4	1	4	4	2	27	4	46	5
School	24	27	51	34	69	35	51	111	20	422	47
Sister	17	3	9	12	7	28	10	23	16	125	14
Test	6	15	10	0	8	3	1	25	1	69	8
Understand	20	13	9	32	46	29	21	23	3	196	22
White	4	3	2	3	7	7	30	9	0	65	7
Woman	5	13	0	12	3	32	14	18	0	97	11
Women	42	1	1	13	6	25	12	20	1	121	13
Work	23	28	29	57	40	31	38	126	22	394	44
Write	16	7	32	10	13	11	4	27	11	131	15
Writing	4	1	22	8	4	3	4	9	12	67	7