

A Local Community Addresses the Linguistic Needs of Refugees

by

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## ABSTRACT

Through interviews and observations, this thesis provides an overview of refugee resettlement and explores the way one community is providing English language instruction to recently resettled refugees. It also describes the research process of this thesis so other researchers will be aware of the challenges such research contexts provide. In the southwestern state studied here, one of the refugee resettlement agencies holds the contract to provide English Language instruction to refugees. Other agencies provide supplemental English instruction and tutoring. The U.S. federal statute Immigration and Nationality Act, title 45 of the *Code of Federal Regulations* part 400—Refugee Resettlement Program, and the local contract between the state and the agency were examined to understand the laws, regulations, and contracted agreement governing the provision of English language instruction for refugees being resettled in the United States. English language faculty and staff, staff at refugee resettlement agencies, and a state official were interviewed to understand their goals and the challenges they face as they address the language needs of refugees. English language instruction classes were observed to note the consistencies as well as some discrepancies between interviews and what could actually be accomplished in the classroom. As the classes are unable to provide intensive language instruction, most students struggle with becoming proficient in English. A list of recommendations is included regarding ways the local community can better address linguistic needs of refugees. Yet as Fass (1985)

argues, it is unknown whether changing refugee resettlement efforts will actually produce different results. Though there are problems, the way the linguistic needs are being addressed in this community is sufficient given the numerous other expectations put on the refugees and the refugee resettlement agencies.

## DEDICATION

To the women, men, and children who rise again, and rebuild their lives in a new place. I have learned so much from you. Thank you for your perseverance, and infectious laughter.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Dr. Karen Adams, my chair, has supported, encouraged, and given me thorough feedback throughout the process of writing my thesis and completing my graduate studies. Thank you for slugging through these trenches with me, and giving me so much assistance from afar. Dr. Elly van Gelderen has modeled warmth, efficiency, and delight with learning. Thank you for helping me keep my mountains in perspective. Dr. Barbara Klimek has graciously shared her knowledge and expertise of refugee resettlement. Thank you, for you have helped me join together my desire to work for social justice with my knowledge of linguistic theories.

Shortly after I finished data collection, I moved to another state and birthed my second son. Though I feared I would not be able to finish, my friends Sara Abercrombie, Rachel Davis, Megan Resch, and Althea Sircar have faithfully encouraged me with every step of this process. St. John's College has provided the space necessary for me to write and be a scholar. My family, particularly my mother, Marissa Laster, and my sister, Leigh Ellen Laster, have supported and encouraged me throughout my studies. Thank you for always taking the time to listen. My sons, Sebastien and Simon Felix, have filled my days with such joy. The support and love of Stan, my husband, has nourished me: caring for our sons, being a short-order chef, and always believing in me. Thank you. And to the One who is everything: My life is abundant because your grace is truly sufficient.

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## NOMENCLATURE

The State of Takora, pseudonym for a southwestern state in the United States
Metropolis in Nalenga County, pseudonym for a city and county in Takora. This is the place where of the research occurred. Approximate population of metropolitan area: 4.3 million. Approximate refugee population: 47,600 between 1983 and 2009. <sup>1</sup>
Cityopolis in Kantena County, pseudonym for a city and county in Takora
Kabanga, sub-Saharan African refugee
<b>Takora Economic Department (TED)</b>
<b>Takora Program for Refugee Resettlement (TPRR)</b>
Mark Gilmore, Director of Refugee Services (male: unknown if bilingual or bicultural)
<b>Blue Bonnet Social Assistance (BBSA).</b> Non-profit refugee resettlement agency.
Samantha Smith, ESL Administrator (female: bilingual and bicultural)
Geoff Wiggins, Refugee Resettlement Chair (male: unknown if bilingual or bicultural)
Ryan, English instructor Mid Level (male: bilingual, unknown if bicultural)
Daisy, Preparation for Citizenship instructor (female: unknown if bilingual or bicultural)
Anthony, English instructor, Low Level (male: bilingual, unknown if bicultural)
<b>BBSA ESL Classes,</b> 21 classes at 12 locations. Most held in apartment complexes.
Basic Level (4 different classes)
Low Level (8 different classes)
Mid Level (6 different classes)
High Level and Even-Higher Level (neither currently offered)
Preparation for Citizenship Exam class (2 different classes)
Vocational ESL (VESL) (1 class at employment site, only for refugee employees of site)
<b>Purple Sage Social Assistance (PSSA).</b> Non-profit refugee resettlement agency.
Amy Burns, Resettlement Chair (female: bilingual, unknown if bicultural)
Isabella Valdez, Vocational Coordinator, ESL teacher, and Matching Grant contact (female: bilingual and bicultural)
Jessica, English & Employment instructor (female: unknown if bilingual or bicultural)
Sue, Refugee volunteer organizer (female: unknown if bilingual or bicultural)
VESL classes / Matching Grant classes (2 levels, 6 to 8 classes total at 4 locations)
<b>Refugee Resettlement, Incorporated (RRI).</b> Non-profit refugee resettlement agency.
Mary Suncloud, president of the local NGO (female: unknown if bilingual or bicultural)
Taylor, visitor guide (female: unknown if bilingual or bicultural)
Leah, English workshop coordinator (female: unknown if bilingual or bicultural)
Heather, client counselor (female: unknown if bilingual or bicultural)
Nilo, client counselor (male: bilingual and bicultural)
Isis, client counselor. Responsible for Interpretation and Translation project.
English workshop for refugee clients from one sub-Saharan African country.
<b>E. Owl Social Assistance (EOSA).</b> Non-profit refugee resettlement agency.
<b>Friends of Refugees (FoR)</b>
Catherine Peterson, president
<b>Takora Refugee Advocacy Group (TRAG)</b>
<b>Big River Community College (BRCC),</b> offers intensive English language classes

<sup>1</sup> This number reflects arrivals, and not secondary migration. Each refugee client has 0-8 dependents, and these numbers are not included in the refugee population.

## DEFINITIONS OF ABBREVIATIONS

<b>Abbreviation</b>	<b>Definition</b>
AMEP	Adult Migrant English Programme in Australia
BBSA	Blue Bonnet Social Assistance, local resettlement agency
BRCC	Big River Community College, local community college
CFR	<i>Code of Federal Regulations</i>
CO	Cultural Orientation
DOS	Department of State
DR Congo	Democratic Republic of Congo
DHHS	U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
DHS/USCIS	Department of Homeland Security, United States Citizenship and Immigration Services
ELT	English Language Training
EOSA	E. Owl Social Assistance, local resettlement agency
ESL	English as a Second Language
ESOL	English to Speakers of Other Languages
FoR	Friends of Refugees, local non-profit agency
FY	Fiscal Year
GED	General Equivalency Diploma
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
INA	Immigration and Nationality Act



<b>Abbreviation</b>	<b>Definition</b>
IO	International Organization
IOM	International Organization for Migration
IRB	Institutional Review Board
MAA	Mutual Assistance Association
MATESOL	Master's Degree in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages
MG	Matching Grant program, part of DHHS
NCVER	National Centre for Vocational Education Research
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
OAU	Organization of African Unity, replaced by African Union
OPE	Overseas Processing Entity
ORR	Office of Refugee Resettlement, which is a part of DHHS
P-1	Priority 1, individual cases with access to the USRAP
P-2	Priority 2, groups of cases with access to the USRAP
P-3	Priority 3, family reunification cases with access to USRAP
PCE	Preparation for Citizenship Exam class, offered by BBSA
PRM	Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration, part of the Department of State
PSSA	Purple Sage Social Assistance, local resettlement agency

<b>Abbreviation</b>	<b>Definition</b>
RP	Refugee Programs, assistance for refugee clients between 181 days and five years <sup>2</sup>
R&P	Reception and Placement, assistance for refugee clients for the first 180 days <sup>3</sup>
RCO	Refugee Community Organization
RRI	Refugee Resettlement, Incorporated, local resettlement agency
SNAP	Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, also known as food stamps
SSI	Supplemental Security Income
TAG	Targeted Assistance Discretionary Grants
TANF	Temporary Assistance for Needy Families
TED	Takora Economic Department, state department responsible for refugees in Takora
TESOL	Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages
TPRR	Takora Program for Refugee Resettlement, part of TED
TRAG	Takora Refugee Advocacy Group
TRS	Takora Revised Statutes
UAC	Unaccompanied Alien Children

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<sup>2</sup> Correct at the time of research, changed as of January 2010.

<sup>3</sup> Correct at the time of research, changed as of January 2010.

<b>Abbreviation</b>	<b>Definition</b>
UN	United Nations
UNHCR	the Office of United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
USC	United States Code
USCIS	United States Citizenship and Immigration Services
USRAP	United States Refugee Admissions Programs
VESL	Vocational English as a Second Language
VOLAG	Voluntary Agency, ten refugee resettlement agencies at the national level

## Chapter 1

### **Introduction**

Teacher: “What, specifically, do you want to learn with English?”

Kabanga: “Everything!”

Teacher: “What do you mean, everything?”

Kabanga: “I want to communicate.”

The following exchange took place in a meeting between a refugee named Kabanga (pseudonym), English teacher, caseworker, and interpreter. Kabanga has been here for two years, yet his English level is extremely low. Multiple individuals have worked with him, yet he still struggles with orienting his paper to write his name. Writing ones’ name is one of the first aspects of English that refugees seek to master. The teacher and Kabanga had the following exchange through an interpreter, as the caseworker had set up the meeting to find the most pressing language needs of Kabanga, so the teacher could best address these needs.

As part of an internship, I was able to work with a pre-literate sub-Saharan African refugee teaching her English. This opportunity clarified for me my interest in people marginalized by language and refugee status. This internship became the impetus for my research.

As refugees are a vulnerable group of individuals, and to maintain the confidence of the individuals who granted me interviews and observations, I have obscured identity and/or used pseudonyms for the state and metropolis, the

agencies themselves, the individuals, the job titles, the English class titles, and the countries of origin for the refugees.

### **Linguistic Framework**

My research falls within the areas of sociolinguistics and applied linguistics, and possibly within critical applied linguistics, as I am looking at language in practice, specifically the ways a local community addresses the linguistic needs of refugees.

Refugees that are resettling in a new place often must learn a new language while building a new life in a new place. Refugees have left their country behind, often in the midst of very difficult circumstances. There are many reasons they leave their own community not speaking the language of the new surroundings. Refugees have not typically planned a kind of second language learning that someone would who was anticipating international employment or education. These displaced people have left their home under duress seeking to rebuild their lives in a different country. If they do not know the new community's language, many refugees seek to integrate into the community by learning the language spoken in the new location, for without it negotiating their surroundings is difficult.

Typically a network of organizations exists to resettle refugees in a new place. The network includes inter-governmental organizations, governmental organizations, and non-governmental organizations. In the United States, the

federal government, local and state governments, and non-governmental organizations work together to resettle refugees, with the goal of the refugee becoming *self-sufficient*. The refugee is considered *self-sufficient* once employed, and so one of the responsibilities of these organizations is to provide English language instruction for the refugees, as it is believed learning English will help the refugee with employment.

Refugee resettlement agencies are not the first place one thinks of as providing English language instruction courses. Community colleges, higher education institutions, public and private educational facilities, and libraries more frequently provide language classes to individuals seeking to learn English. Some of the courses offered at higher education institutions are rather expensive, with tuition costing approximately \$1,000 per month, for example, for an intensive English as a Second Language (ESL) program at a local university. Such a program is efficient, with highly trained instructors, and includes twenty-one hours of instruction each week and extracurricular activities focused on exposing the students to American culture. The students who can attend such courses may work a few hours each week, but most are able to devote the majority of their time to studying English. Few of them are married, and of these few, even fewer have children. Additional expenses in such a course are an estimated \$2,500. Though most students are not wealthy, those enrolled in these courses have enough resources to take full advantage of all the intensive ESL program offers.

In contrast, English language instruction classes for refugees are often provided by refugee resettlement agencies. These programs are taught by local non-governmental organizations, and are often lacking resources and funding. These refugee students are more focused on resettling in the United States and finding jobs than on learning English. The teachers may or may not have had formal training, the classes are often two hours a week, and the students frequently learn with limited course materials. Many of the students are employed or actively seeking employment. Many have additional family members to care for, such as a spouse, children, or extended relatives. Childcare and employment often take precedence over English classes. Students often have limited resources, and their time, money, and energy are focused on many areas at once, rather than solely on English language instruction courses.

As a student of Linguistics, I heard one of my professors begin many lectures with the statement: “All things being equal, people learn language in a similar way. However...” and he would proceed to explore the many factors that affect language acquisition. All things are never equal. It is much easier to teach the English language with an endless supply of resources to students who are solely focused on their studies. There are many more challenges one faces when teaching with few resources to students who have faced persecution and whose attention is pulled in many directions.

## **Research Goal**

Initially, I intended to examine the challenges refugees face when seeking to learn English, as well as to compare the ways that English language instruction is provided to refugees. Yet my questions evolved and changed as I conducted my qualitative research study, due to being unable to interview refugees.

In other countries, such as Canada and Australia, the federal government provides English language instruction to refugees. In the United States, non-governmental organizations--specifically refugee resettlement agencies--are primarily responsible for addressing the needs of resettling refugees. Other resources in the community sometimes assist with these needs, such as a local community college providing English language instruction classes for refugees. However, refugee resettlement agencies are responsible for meeting the needs of the refugees. This includes orienting the refugees to life in the United States, helping refugees find a place to live, enrolling children in school, finding needed medical care, and navigating necessary bureaucratic mazes in order to do things such as receive financial assistance from the government. Frequently refugee resettlement agencies also provide English language instruction to refugees. As a linguistics student, I found this interesting, as it was not the first organization I thought of for providing these classes, and they are duplicating classes that are typically provided by educational institutions. As my knowledge increased about refugee resettlement, I learned the federal refugee resettlement program provides



funds for states to provide English language instruction to refugees. Currently in the southwestern state of Takora, Blue Bonnet Social Assistance is contracted to provide English language instruction for eligible refugees in Nalenga County.

As my research progressed, I became interested in examining the ways the local community addresses the linguistic needs of refugees and in noting the language challenges that refugees face. My research questions for this study became:

1. How is the local community addressing the linguistics needs of refugees?
2. What is the greatest language challenge faced by refugees?

To answer these questions, I observed English classes and interviewed instructors, program administrators, non-profit directors, client counselors, volunteer organizers, and a state director. I also attended several meetings and joined the state refugee advocacy network. I found many individuals as well as organizations who are working hard to meet the linguistic needs of refugees, though housing and employment needs often take precedence over the emphasis on refugees learning English. As I report below, I found similarities as well as differences between the ways the different organizations focused on language instruction. The local community works together very closely to address the needs of refugees, though this is not the case in all parts of the United States.

## **Definition of Terms**

The *local community* includes the state Director of Refugee Services, non-governmental organizations, which include refugee resettlement agencies and mutual assistance associations, and individuals, which includes client counselors, English language instructors, directors and coordinators, volunteers, and others. The local community also includes local colleges and other educational settings.

The *linguistic needs* include learning to listen, speak, read, and write in English. The students need to learn its syntax, discourse structure, vocabulary, pronunciation, alphabet, and writing system. Outside factors affect the acquisition of English, and these factors need to be addressed: childcare, transportation, work schedule, and health issues.

*Refugees* and refugee resettlement are further explored in chapter three. An overview is presented that examines the definitions of a *refugee*, the organizations involved with addressing refugee needs, and the complexity surrounding refugee resettlement.

## **Gaps in the Literature**

As I discuss further in the next chapter, I did not find research articles that examine the ways different agencies address the linguistic needs of refugees. The research I found looked at the literature surrounding refugees and refugee studies (Black, 2001; Hein, 1993; Philips & Hardy, 1997; Tomlinson & Egan, 2002), resettlement needs (George, 2002; McSpadden, 1987; Miralles-Lombardo,

Miralles, & Golding, 2008; Montgomery, 1996), the importance of learning the language of the new place for employment (Chiswick, 1993; Ives, 2007; Majka & Mullan, 1992; McSpadden, 1998), for survival (Elmeroth, 2003), and for becoming self sufficient (Haines, 1988; Tollefson, 1985). Factors that affected language acquisition of refugees include their health (Beiser & Hou, 2001; McDonald, 2000; Willis & Nkwocha, 2006), the way educational needs were being met (McBrien, 2005), and other factors (Beiser & Hou, 2000; Chiswick, Lee, & Miller, 2005; Elmeroth, 2003; George, 2002; Hou & Beiser, 2006; Kleinmann, 1982). Articles that focused on the classroom include ones that examined ESL literacy programs (Guth, 1993), vocational ESL programs (Gage & Prince, 1982), the effects of the ideologies of ESL programs (Benesch, 1993; Tollefson, 1986; Warriner, 2003), and the struggles refugees faced in schools (Taylor, 2008). However, I did not find articles that crossed the disciplines to compare the ways non-profit agencies addressed the linguistic issues faced by refugees.

Given the gap in the literature and considering what I learned about refugee resettlement and linguistic needs, conducting a qualitative ethnographic pilot study addresses the void in the existing body of research.

### **Organization of Thesis**

This thesis is separated into six parts: introduction, background literature, overview of refugee resettlement, methodology, data results and discussion, and

conclusion. Chapter one, the introduction, lays the foundation for studying how the local community meets the linguistic needs of refugees. Chapter two reviews literature concerning local communities addressing the linguistic needs of refugees. The literature includes articles from the fields of Linguistics, Social Work, Refugee Studies, and Education, as well as government and non-government publications.

I began my project by questioning what challenges refugees encounter with learning English in Takora. Yet I quickly learned that becoming resettled is a lengthy and complicated process. This process is not fully explored in most linguistic articles, and most refugee articles examine specific aspects of resettlement, rather than giving an overview of the process. Chapter three covers being a refugee, becoming resettled in the United States, and the way language and language needs intersect with the resettlement process.

In chapter four, the methodology section, I note the federal laws and regulations, and local contracts that I read, and explain how I set up my interviews and observations. I list the individuals I interviewed, and the classes and meetings I observed. Obstacles, setbacks, and fortunate encounters are noted, and are further explored in Appendix L.

Chapter five is the results and discussion of the research findings. The qualitative analysis of interviews and observations highlights common themes and issues, examining the different ways local agencies address the language challenges

the refugees face. Each program has strengths; though this study also identifies ways the organizations can work together more effectively.

The conclusion, the sixth chapter, answers the research questions, proposes changes, addresses the weaknesses of the current study, and suggests ways to strengthen future research. As disciplines overlap and the distinctions between each becomes blurred, this study will prove useful to others who are interested in the overlap between second language acquisition, teaching English to speakers of other languages, refugee resettlement, and the ways non-profit organizations address the needs of their clients.

## Chapter 2

### **Background Literature**

Literature exists on different components of the language acquisition process of refugees, as well as ways organizations address the resettlement needs of refugees. However, I have not found research that examines the ways different agencies attend to the linguistic needs of refugees. None of the research discussed the ways the various groups in the community worked together to address the refugees' linguistic needs. The literature review includes articles from the fields of Linguistics, Social Work, Refugee Studies, and Education, as well as government and non-government publications.

### **Critical Applied Linguistics**

The aim of critical applied linguistics is to "help us understand in much more complex ways the contexts in which TESOL occurs and offer the prospect of change" (Pennycook, 1999, p. 346). This research examines one of these contexts: the local community teaching English to refugees.

Garrett and Baquedano-López (2002) explore recent literature of the language socialization paradigm, examining the ways it occurs in institutional contexts and diverse settings. As refugees are being resettled in the United States, they are learning far more than simply the mechanics of English. Those who are providing English language instruction must take into account the theoretical implications of language socialization as they teach English to refugees, for "local

values, ideologies, patterns of social organization, and cultural preferences are inscribed in everyday discourse” (Garrett & Baquedano-López, 2002, p. 341). Warriner (2003) and Garrett and Baquedano-López (2002) both address language ideologies at the macro and micro levels.

### **Refugee Studies**

Black (2001) reflects on the previous fifty years of refugee studies, noting the emergence of the field, and the ways the field is closely tied to policy concerning refugees. He questions the ability to theorize about the construct of *refugee*, as the term is grounded in policy and is simply a reality; there is not, nor can there be a “theory of a refugee”, a phrase noted by Bascom (1998) (as cited in Black, 2001, p. 66). Several of the terms overlap, and most are not precise nor encompassing the totality of individuals who ought to fall within the term. Black wryly states within refugee studies, the parts are greater than the sum. The more I have pushed to precisely define terms and the exact way practices occur, the more elusive both have become. Black notes there is not a central place for refugee studies, as the academic debate surrounding refugees and their concerns takes place within and across disciplinary and interdisciplinary journals. Articles about refugees are published in multiple journals; likewise the background of authors in refugee specific journals is quite diverse. Hence my struggle to find articles on the linguistic needs of refugees: it is an intellectual patchwork body of knowledge.

Hein (1993) wrestles with the very notion of *refugee* in a realist/nominalist debate, questioning whether refugees are fundamentally separate from immigrants, or simply a social construction that hides similar qualities with immigration. A label conveys much protection and assistance, or persecution and isolation. It seems Hein finds refugees have characteristics of each: refugees and immigrants share similarities, supporting the nominalist perspective, yet refugees are essentially marked by their relationship with the state, supporting the realist perspective. As I push the definitions for a more solid foundation, it is interesting considering the ways the definition of *refugee* is intertwined with *immigrant*.

Phillips and Hardy (1997) assert there are two aspects to refugee identity: *what* is a refugee, and who *is* or *is not* a refugee. They argue that “the idea of a refugee . . . is a concept. Originally defined by the UN it continues to be negotiated over time . . . as new texts are . . . added to the existing discourses” (Phillips & Hardy, 1997, p. 167). They contrast three discourses surrounding refugee identity, each declaring that refugees are “helpless and incompetent”, “silent client” or “vocal constituency”, or “autonomous, competent, capable, self-reliant” (Phillips & Hardy, 1997, p. 179).

There are stark differences with the discourses constructing who or what is a refugee. Each of these images challenge and contrast with the other images (Tomlinson & Egan, 2002). Their article wrestles with refugee identity, definitions of refugee, and the implications of this discourse, specifically as it relates to



employment. They note a commonly held assertion is “refugees are thought to be resettled when they are economically self-supporting” (Tomlinson & Egan, 2002, pp. 1020-21), however this is not necessarily true.

Is one always a refugee? Once one has “settled” into a new place, is it “I am a refugee” or “I was a refugee”? Refugees will refer to themselves as either, as there are “multiple understandings of self-identity – the range of answers that may be given to the question ‘who am I?’ [depends] on the context in which the question is asked.” (Tomlinson & Egan, 2002, p. 1022) Arguably, refugee communities—being on the margins of mainstream society—may keep the refugee on the margins, because by having a “refugee community” it denotes them as separate from the greater mainstream community. In similar ways, by focusing on a “separate refugee identity” (Tomlinson & Egan, 2002, p. 1019), the individual has trouble immersing with the greater society. In interviews, many stressed that refugees are good and hard workers, as if they were combating a different image. I questioned why they fought so strongly to position refugees seemingly against another image, yet after reading Tomlinson and Egan (2002), I realize the individuals were defending refugees against the perceived dominant culture belief of refugees being dependent and needing assistance.

### **Methodological Issues**

Conducting research with refugees can be quite challenging, due to issues with gaining access to refugees, interacting with gatekeepers, identifying a sample,

eliciting participation from the sample, translating questions, and using interpreters. Bloch (2001) identifies these methodological issues and suggests ways to navigate these issues. I encountered all of these issues, and due to methodological constraints, my questions adapted and changed throughout the course of this qualitative ethnographic pilot study.

### **Refugee Resettlement**

Stein (1981) outlines the stages of the refugee experience<sup>4</sup> as being “perception of a threat; decision to flee; the period of extreme danger and flight; the early and late stages of resettlement; adjustment and acculturation; and, finally, residual states and changes in behavior caused by the experience” (Stein, 1981, p. 321). Stein reflects on the emotional state and its effects during each of these stages. Regarding flight and resettlement, most refugees fall into the anticipatory refugee movement or the acute refugee movement. Either they leave their home when there are rumors of troubles, or they depart at the last minute, sometimes in the midst of trouble.

Refugee adjustment separates into four periods: “1) the initial arrival period of the first few months; 2) the first and second years; 3) after four to five years; 4) a decade or more later” (Stein, 1981, p. 325). Often, refugees first must face their losses, and then they fight to rebuild their lives. After several years,

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<sup>4</sup>Stein based his work on Keller (1975), who first described these stages of the refugee experience. See Keller, S. L. (1975). *Uprooting and social change: The role of refugees in development*. Delhi: Manahar Book Service.

they are rather settled into their new place, and become resigned with the way the previous five years have occurred. After ten years, they achieve stability. And yet, “the sum total after the first decade is one of decline. Despite the drive and determination, the effect of exodus is to produce lower status” (Stein, 1981, p. 326). Though this is a dismal picture, Stein raises the point that “the refugee fled for safety and freedom not for economic or social values or opportunities” (Stein, 1981, p. 328).

A case study of Ethiopian refugees that highlights the needs and challenges as they are resettling is McSpadden’s study (1987), which is particularly concerned with the psychological wellbeing and adjustment to American society. Ethiopian refugees resettled by volunteers/congregations are better off psychologically, as compared to Ethiopian refugees resettled by caseworkers/agencies. The refugees have more one-on-one contact, closer relationships with Americans, and more assistance employment and education. Notably, McSpadden found these refugees needed assistance moving “upward” from their entry-level job; McSpadden (1987) notes what Gordon (1974) found: “a common error of us all is to assume that a person who speaks the language understands and can use the cultural system effectively” (as cited in McSpadden, 1987, p. 817). McSpadden found that out of 59 interviewees, “In no case did any Ethiopian refugee, whether resettled by a congregation or agency, get his first job on his own.” (McSpadden, 1987, p. 816) This was even true for Ethiopians who

knew English well, and had worked in Ethiopia. It is beneficial if someone takes an interest in the refugee, and remains a part of their life for the first several years they are adjusting to life in the United States.

Lanphier (1983) examines different models of refugee resettlement, with one axis based on the volume of refugees received by the country, and the other axis based on the emphasis placed on either economic or cultural resources for the refugee when resettling. By comparing the resettlement practices of the United States, Canada, and France, Lanphier finds the intersection of these two variables impacts the way the refugee adapts to life in the new country, as depending on where they intersect, they “produce certain constellations of service delivery which imply structural constraints upon the absorption of refugees as well as implicit paths into the social organizational fabric of the three societies” (Lanphier, 1983, p. 5) The United States practices the model with a large volume of refugees admitted and resettled with an emphasis on economic adaptation. This refugee resettlement model cuts out extraneous steps, connects the refugee with the necessary resources, and often concludes most resettlement services between one to three months. If friendships form between individuals at the resettlement agencies and the refugees, these are spontaneous, as there is not the emphasis on forming relationships with clients. Within this model, the refugee is encouraged to take one of the first jobs available, and it is believed the refugee will adapt and

learn to navigate their new surroundings fairly quickly. This model works well for resettling many refugees rapidly.

### **Goals of resettlement.**

George (2002) conducted a study identifying the best model to address settlement needs of African newcomers in Canada: elicit the perspective and opinions of the newcomers. Prospective immigrants fall into three categories “economic, social, and humanitarian” (George, 2002, p. 466). George found the literature on the settlement service delivery models are theoretical or practice-based, categorizing the theoretical into two categories: “broad models, such as cultural competence models, anti-racist models, ecological or eco-system models and empowerment approaches, [or specific models] which refer specifically to different stages of immigrant adaptation” (George, 2002, pp. 468-69). The practice-based models “often contrast two types of structures: ethnic or ethno-specific agency service and mainstream agency service delivery . . . [Others] have explored bridging models or collaborative approaches” (George, 2002, p. 470).

Notably, George (2002) found the Canadian Council for Refugees (1998) noted the goal of settlement services in Canada is “to facilitate the full and equal participation of newcomers in Canadian society” (as cited in George, 2002, p. 468). Nothing is mentioned of *self-sufficiency*. As settlement services are helping newcomers to “adapt and integrate into their new society” (George, 2002, p. 468), the best organizations embrace the following values: “inclusivity, empowerment

of newcomers, holistic approach, respect for newcomers, cultural sensitivity, community development, collaboration, reliability of services and accountability” (George, 2002, p. 468). Initially, the major needs of newcomers include: “employment, shelter, host-country language acquisition and basic orientation” (George, 2002, p. 470). Signs newcomers are settling into life in their new country include “entering the labour [sic] market, and voting and acquiring a new social network” (George, 2002, p. 468). In later stages of adaptation and integration, newcomers are “more concerned with career advancement, ethno-cultural and/or racial identity and full political and social participation in their new society” (George, 2002, p. 470). The settlement service provider needs to meet the different needs at different stages in the process of newcomer adaptation and integration in the new country. George found much has been written on theory models and the needs of service providers, yet little has been written in consultation with the newcomer, and input from newcomers and services providers is the result of George’s study.

The newcomers identified the following needs “affordable housing, employment, language training, information on available services, orientation to Canadian life, family counseling, and community connections...[and noted the] major barriers to settlement and adaptation [were] linguistic and cultural differences” (George, 2002, p. 473). These needs are consistent with the refugee resettlement needs that I encountered in my study.

Haines (1988) examines the two goals of refugees learning English and becoming *self-sufficient*. He finds the former is not an end goal, and the latter as a goal is filled with problems, though good in principle. How does one define self-sufficiency? Who—the individual or the family unit—is striving to become self-sufficient? And how can self-sufficiency be measured? Rather than the federal government pursuing the highest level of self-sufficiency for all refugees, the goal of self-sufficiency has become “rapid employment and reduction of dependency” (Haines, 1988, p. 205). Haines points out the broad goals are appealing, and yet problematic because they cannot be accurately measured and assessed. It is tricky to know if a program is truly “succeeding” or “failing”, when one cannot measure the results against the stated goal.

Montgomery (1996) found for refugee adjustment and adaptation—grouped as economic adaptation, sociocultural adaptation, and subjunctive adaptation (meaning satisfaction with Canadian life)—different components affected each aspect of life, and had different effects on other areas of life, sometimes having a negative or no effect. Also and notably, English skills had no direct effect on each area of adaptation. The author is surprised, due to the findings of other studies and the commonly held belief that English plays a significant role in adjusting to life in a new country. Montgomery posits the “ability in the new language...is not likely to be significant for economic or self-perceived adaptation for at least the first five years” (Montgomery, 1996, p. 696).

This is very interesting, as learning English is commonly viewed as being one of the most pressing and immediate needs of recently resettled refugees.

### **Language and employment.**

Miralles-Lombardo, Miralles, and Golding (2008) examined the ways multicultural community organizations in Australia assist refugees with learning the English language and work skills, focusing on refugee groups from Bosnia-Herzegovina, Iraq, and Sudan. They conducted their research with 175 individuals through in-depth interviews with members of the organizations and “in-language” focus groups discussions with refugees. They found building trust, providing informal learning opportunities, addressing specific needs at the time of the need, and allowing for different paths for individuals is essential, as the individuals have different needs with learning English.

It is important for refugees to build social capital, through the means of *bonding* (with individuals of similar backgrounds, often refugees) and *bridging* (with members of different backgrounds, often the wider Australian community), which is beneficial to all. The results are relevant to my questions; because this is one of the only studies that examined the way the organizations address the linguistic needs of refugees as they learn English.

Ives (2007) focuses on the experiences of twenty-four Bosnian refugees in the U.S., and compares their interviews against the stated policy. The participants described the four areas that one needed to take part in to become fully integrated:



“(a) acculturation and culture, including language and religion, (b) employment (and education), (c) social support, and (d) citizenship and advocacy” (Ives, 2007, p. 57). One of the first steps to becoming successfully resettled and fully integrated is learning English. And yet Ives found the English classes offered by the resettlement agencies are ineffective, due to insufficient federal funding, and refugees are often stuck in minimal-wage jobs, because of the push for immediate employment upon arrival, and the priority of employment over English proficiency. Tollefson (1991) states the language policy of American resettlement English courses for refugees are “designed to channel them into jobs in the peripheral economy” (as referenced by Ives, 2007, p. 60). Ives noted, “Language acts as a gatekeeper for employment, miring refugees in low-paying employment with little job security or opportunities for advancement, threatening the goal of long-term self-sufficiency” (Ives, 2007, p. 60).

Majka and Mullan (1992) examine the ways different sociodemographic variables affect employment retention. Not surprisingly, they note English proficiency levels, in addition to other variables, play a statistically significant role with employment patterns. Majka and Mullan note the way to improve refugees attaining and retaining jobs are understanding both employer beliefs and practices, and employee concerns that affect work, such as housing, transportation, childcare, and safety. Resettlement organizations play an important role mediating between these two groups.

Regarding the intersection between English fluency, depression, and employment, Beiser and Hou (2001) conducted a ten-year longitudinal study of Southeast Asian refugees in Canada. At the beginning of resettlement, the level of English did not have an effect on employment or depression, though by the end of the first decade, the lack of the ability to speak English was a noticeable predictor of unemployment and depression, particularly with females. The resettlement community must address mental health needs as well as vocational English, as the ability to speak English and be mentally healthy are essential to refugee resettlement. Chiswick (1993) looked at the linguistic and economic adjustment of Soviet Jews to the United States, and found similar results as Beiser and Hou (2001). Becoming employed is essential, having many choices on all aspects of American life is overwhelming, and lack of employment coupled with the plethora of choices can also contribute to depression.

McSpadden (1998) counters the commonly held measure of self-sufficiency: “accepting that becoming economically independent through a dead-end job with no further training or education possibilities is not adequate for effective resettlement in the long run” (McSpadden, 1998, p. 165). Refugees are simply expected and required to get a job as quickly as possible, English classes are not sufficient, and this amounts to refugees *not* being well prepared to successfully integrate for the long term.

## **Addressing Linguistic Needs, Teaching ESL to Refugee Students**

Guth (1993) profiles adult ESL literacy programs as being community-based organizations, community colleges, workplace settings, and adult schools. The various approaches used by these groups affect the way the material is presented, which is often determined by who is funding the courses: workplace literacy programs, family literacy programs, and state funding. Guth reflects that for an organization to best respond to learner needs, the organization must actively use a needs assessment, as the learner needs are quite diverse and specific to each community. Guth concludes, “The more the needs of learners and the needs of the surrounding culture can be articulated and negotiated, the better we will be able to rise to the challenge of providing appropriate language and literacy resources for adults who need them” (Guth, 1993, p. 536).

In Australia, the federal government has tasked the National Centre for Vocational Education Research (NCVER), a not-for-profit company, with the research and dissemination of results concerning vocational education and training in Australia. Within NCVER, the Adult Migrant English Programme (AMEP) Research Centre conducts research on the ways to best address the educational, and specifically language, needs of adult migrants. AMEP has succinctly presented some of their information—in the form of Fact sheets—to their teachers. The following table comes from Teaching Issues 10, which addresses course planning for preliterate and low-literacy learners, and is based on

recommendations from experienced teachers, who recommend the following regarding course intensity:

Table 1

Adequacy of course intensity for preliterate and low-literacy learners

<b>Session hours</b>	<b>Focus group view</b>
2 hours per day	Doesn't allow enough time to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• cover cultural background information</li> <li>• introduce new language items</li> <li>• recycle and repeat previously learned material (essential for these learners)</li> </ul> Students tend not to retain knowledge, progress is limited and slow, students lose motivation
3 hours per day	A good model, less tiring for students and teachers More effective if offered several times throughout the week.
4 hours per day (with mid-session break)	Highly recommended Allows adequate time for out-of-class, concrete, hands-on, kinaesthetic activities Allows teachers more time to review and recycle previously learned language, vary the pace Allows for more time-consuming elements (for example computer-based learning)
<b>Weekly schedule</b>	
2 days per week	Not adequate for beginners and those in early stage of 510 hours
3 days per week	Adequate but not preferred
4–5 days per week	Students learn more, cover more material Teachers can include more learning element such as out-of-class learning, computer skills

*Note.* This table is reproduced from Adult Migrant English Programme, 2007, p. 3.

McBrien (2005) examines the educational needs and barriers for refugee students, specifically students that are children, in the United States. McBrien notes the ways refugees, more so than immigrants, have a difficult time adjusting

and acculturating to life in the United States. Trauma, semi-voluntary immigration, religious background (such as being Muslim), and cultural background (Black Africans are not the same as African-Americans) are just a few of the ways that make it more difficult for refugees to resettle in America. McBrien questions what refugee students need to succeed, what obstacles they face, and what can be done to help refugees succeed. Interestingly, a “major need for successful adjustment [is] meeting the psychological and social needs of stressed and traumatized children through education” (McBrien, 2005, p. 339). It is essential we meet these needs, as the students’ “adjustment, identity, and language learning are affected by discrimination, cultural dissonance, and the reception that refugees receive from their host society” (McBrien, 2005, p. 344). The intergenerational tension and cultural misunderstandings are quite challenging to students seeking to learn English, and succeed with their education. The simple solution would be to provide “social services to facilitate refugee children's adjustment, provide language instruction for students and their parents, and combat discrimination” (McBrien, 2005, p. 353) yet this is easier said than done.

Gage and Prince (1982) wrote about the 1980 Vocational ESL project, in which they researched the entry-level jobs—often the first jobs for refugees—to understand the language demands of the jobs, as well as ways to incorporate these language needs into the ESL classroom and reflect on-the-job training in the ESL classroom. Gage and Prince found VESL training is beneficial upon immediate

resettlement, as well as beneficial once the student has worked for a bit, so the refugees can learn important skills in order to advance with their job. Too often refugees begin working in entry-level positions, yet there is not room for advancement or moving up with the company.

Tollefson (1985) reviews the research on Southeast Asian refugees, and summarizes the findings for ESL educators, which can serve as a model for the analysis here. Though he writes about research on all areas of resettlement, Tollefson finds learning English is key to successfully resettling. He notes the barriers for attending class; the importance of attending class as otherwise the refugee may have no other regular opportunity for speaking English; the preferred methodologies for teaching English—encourage natural interaction and use the communicative approach; the benefits of smaller and mixed ethnicity classes; the benefits of being literate and having some education help in learning English; and that ESL classes are essential because of the impact on employment and long-term self-sufficiency (Tollefson, 1985, pp. 754-757).

### **Relevant ESL ideologies and theories.**

Benesch (1993) has found all ESL instruction conveys an ideology, and notably the curricula for survival, competency-based, and functional ESL, which was taught in US Refugee Processing Centers, “[orients] students toward modest goals, as cheap labor, compliant workers, and passive citizens in U.S. society” (Benesch, 1993, p. 709). Some ESL curriculums encourage being passive members

of society, some encourage a pragmatic and accommodationist ideology, and others encourage a critical approach, which falls within an ideology of resistance. Benesch supports the critical approach, and urges educators to encourage their students to think critically within and beyond the classroom. This is essential for refugees, as they are learning to assert their needs and navigate the demands of a new society.

Tollefson (1986) examines and critiques the functional competency-based approach to teaching ESL. He finds the greatest problem is that the curriculum and checklist of competencies is based on what individuals *feel* is important, rather than being grounded on solid research. In addition to being built on a weak foundation, there are many values present in the curriculum. Perhaps this is unavoidable. Yet, Tollefson asserts the problem is not with the functional curricula itself; rather, a critical analysis of the curriculum “will lead to theoretically sound and socially responsible approaches to curriculum development” (Tollefson, 1986, p. 662). Though the research is more than twenty years old, it is still relevant to today’s ESL programs, as one must make sure the practices are backed up with a solid theoretical foundation, and one is aware of the explicit and implicit values in the curriculum.

### **Language challenges facing refugees.**

Trauma, stress, post-traumatic stress disorder, depression, and other mental health issues affect one’s ability to learn a second language. McDonald

(2000) examines the affects of trauma on second language learning, and offers suggestions to teachers regarding the implications in the classroom, and ways to cope with hearing of the traumatic events in the lives of their students. Hou and Beiser (2006) note one of the only factors that may set refugees apart from most immigrants is pre-migration trauma, and this could affect refugees' language acquisition as they could be struggling with depression, post-traumatic stress disorder, or other forms of mental or physical illness. It is worth noting that the health needs must be addressed, though this study does not look at these effects.

Different ethnic groups bring their own ethos to the classroom, and this significantly affects their learning of English. Smith-Hefner (1990) examines the Khmer community, and finds that “notions of person, intelligence, and motivation...[and] ideals of person, identity, and behavior” (Smith-Hefner, 1990, p. 251) significantly affect their beliefs about language learning. Often, it is difficult to directly access these beliefs, so one must unearth these underlying convictions from other angles. Smith-Hefner is but one of many researchers conducting an ethnographic study (see also Goldstein, 1988; Sylvester, 1997; Warriner, 2007; Weinstein, 1984). The Center for Applied Linguistics, a nonprofit organization focused on improving communication through understanding another's language and culture, has published *Refugee Backgrounders* (on refugees from Iraq, Banyamulenge Tutsi refugees, the 1972 Burundian refugees, Kunama refugees, and Bhutanese Refugees in Nepal) and *Culture Profiles* (on refugees from



Burma, Meskhetian Turks, Liberians, Hmong, Somali Bantus, Bosnians, Haitians, Iraqi Kurds, Iraqis, Somalis, and Muslim refugees in the United States) for information and to better understand recently resettled ethnic groups. In addition, the Cultural Orientation Resource Center, which is connected with the Center for Applied Linguistics, has many resources on their website related to refugee integration and learning English. Please see my Works Consulted for further information regarding these resources. It benefits the ESL teacher to learn about the cultural background and refugee experiences of his or her students.

Taylor (2008) discusses recent educational policies in Australia, and the ways it affects high school students' education. Too often the policy and provisions for refugee students is intertwined with ESL needs, and there are not specific provisions for *refugee* students. Teachers, faculty, and researchers are finding the needs of refugees are immense and difficult to address, and there are not specific governmental provisions for these needs. The students are lumped into other categories, and their specific needs were not being met. The greatest challenge teachers are facing with the refugee students, many of whom are from Africa, is the lack of formal education and literacy, and so the subject-specific secondary teachers are filling in ten years of schooling, so they can focus on the material at hand. Other challenges often include a pre-migration background with poverty, rural setting, health issues, and trauma and torture (Taylor, 2008, p. 58). Though some teachers stressed, "The challenges are massive" (Taylor, 2008, p.

61); others emphasized, “They are resilient and strong, survivors. They have a lot of strategies, and strengths . . . They don’t give up – they never give up” (Taylor, 2008, p. 61). And so, though resources are inadequate, each school is doing the best it can to meet the needs of these students. The most important way a school can meet the needs of refugee students is by utilizing a holistic model that addressed the educational, social, and emotional needs of the students.

Warriner (2003) examined the macro-levels and micro-levels of language ideology, literacy, and English language learning in the lives of seven female refugees. Warriner’s dissertation is an in-depth research project observing classes, analyzing program descriptions and course material, and interviewing participants (seven students, five teachers, one administrator) at an ESL program. What is lacking from Warriner’s study is exploration of the other individuals who are assisting refugees with resettlement. The study reported on in this thesis complements Warriner’s study, as it is worthwhile noting the ways the greater community is working to help refugees achieve self-sufficiency.

Warriner (2007) examines the ideologies surrounding language, the discourses of immigration, and experiences of refugees, Warriner finds all components of life—education, economic, social—are affected by many different factors. Currently, the assistance refugees receive is simply a “band-aid”, as “the educational policies and practices . . . often provide very few of the skills, resources, and connections that refugees and immigrants need to become active, contributing

members of local communities” (Warriner, 2007, p. 356). Warriner (2007) asserts that current research demonstrates

the need to transform such “band-aid” approaches into teaching and learning practices that facilitate the transformations required for genuine educational access and inclusion, long-term economic self-sufficiency and stability, and social mobility for all groups historically marginalized in the United States, including recently arrived refugees from war-torn African contexts. (Warriner, 2007, p. 356)

It is my hope that even though I observe practices that are quick fixes, I also see evidence of transformative practices that lead to lasting changes.

#### **Factors affecting language acquisition.**

Chiswick and Miller (1998) created a theoretical model for destination language acquisition, meaning immigrants’ acquisition of the language of their new country<sup>5</sup>. They have identified three broad factors that determine proficiency in another language: economic incentives, efficiency in language acquisition, and exposure to the dominant language before and after migration. This is modeled as:

$$\text{LANG} = f(\text{economic incentives, efficiency, exposure})$$

(Chiswick & Miller, 1998, p. 16)

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<sup>5</sup> Chiswick has explored the concept of ‘destination language acquisition’ in multiple studies. For an in-depth look at this concept, please see Chiswick, B. R., and Miller, P. W. (2001).

This model has been tested in numerous studies<sup>6</sup>. In each study, the variables change, yet the factors remain the same.

Chiswick, Lee, and Miller (2005) examine the effect of family dynamics upon immigrants acquiring a language. They conducted this study in Australia, and looked at the acquisition of English. They use the following model by analyzing the effect of these variables:

LANG =  $f$ (visa category, age at migration, education, gender, birthplace, whether there was preparation for migration, expected duration in destination, family structure, prevalence of origin language in region of residence, linguistic distance of mother tongue from English, geographic distance of origin country from state of residence in Australia, reason for choosing state). (Chiswick, Lee, & Miller, 2005, p. 633)

They found spouses significantly affect one another's acquisition of English. Interestingly, they found unmeasurable variables have the strongest effect on predicting the proficiency of each spouse: if one spouse is more or less

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<sup>6</sup> See the footnote on p. 633 of Chiswick, Lee, and Miller (2005): "This approach has been used in empirical studies of English-language skills among immigrants in the United States (Chiswick and Miller 1992, 1998) and Australia (Chiswick and Miller 1995, 1996, 1999), Hebrew-language skills in Israel (Beenstock 1996; Chiswick 1998), French- and English-language skills among immigrants in Canada (Chiswick and Miller 1992, 1994a, 2001) and language skills among immigrants in Germany (Dustmann 1994). The model is highly robust across destination countries, time periods, countries of origin and legal status. See also, Espenshade and Fu 1997 and Stevens 1994 for sociological approaches to this issue."

proficient in English, the other spouse is as well. These variables cannot be measured in this study, as they include motivation, language learning aptitude, and the effects of their spouse's language learning skills (Chiswick et al., 2005, p. 642). Children negatively effect their mothers' acquisition of a language, yet have no effect on their fathers' language acquisition. Women are at a linguistic disadvantage, due to fewer opportunities to learn and practice the language of the host country (Beiser, M., & Hou, F., 2000). Family dynamics affect each person's acquisition of English, and it is important to consider the impact each person has upon other family members. Chiswick, Lee, and Miller (2005) argue that when a community is addressing the linguistic needs of individual refugees, they must consider the family unit as well and the effect each member has upon one another.

The health of refugees also affects their ability to learn English, become employed, and resettle smoothly into American society. Yet, the United States admits on a humanitarian model, individuals with great health needs. This is challenging, because once the refugee has arrived, the emphasis switches to economic self-sufficiency, and becoming employed as quickly as possible. Willis and Nkwocha (2006) seek to improve the current health care provided to refugees by assessing the current situation of Sudanese refugees in Nebraska, and offering recommendations to the individuals who provide health care. This research argues

that when refugees are learning English, they must learn the vocabulary needed to communicate their health care needs.

Kleinmann (1982) argues the external needs of Indochinese refugees are not being met, and in order for the refugees to successfully learn English and focus in the classroom, their health, stress levels, and mental health needs must be addressed through various social support networks. Also, as many have not had formal schooling, their ESL coursework ought to favor communicative interactions, and address the survival, prevocational, and occupational language needs. This article dates from 1982, and what Kleinmann proposed in 1982 has proved to be correct. Subsequent research has shown that ESL curriculums and programs have addressed the external needs of refugees, the communicative approach has been far more successful than drills, and survival and VESL language needs have been added to the curriculum, holistically meeting the needs of refugees.

Hou and Beiser (2006) conducted a ten-year longitudinal study examining English language acquisition among South-East Asians between 1981 to 1991 in Canada. This article examines the effects of the following variables upon learning English:

1. Demographic: age at immigration, female, married before immigration, married after immigration
2. Pre-immigration achievement: initial English level, initial education

3. Personal investment: Canadian education, private English tutoring, use of Canadian media
4. Opportunities and Incentives: like-ethnic community, church sponsor, private sponsor, non-ethnic network, presence of children, attendance at ESL class, employment history, use of English at work, ethnic co-workers.  
(Hou & Beiser, 2006, pp. 149-153)

The effects of these variables change over time. At the beginning, the variables within the demographic and personal achievement categories play the most significant role in becoming proficient in English, yet as the years go by, the variables within the opportunities and incentives category become increasingly more important. After a decade, employment and formal education are two of the most important factors with becoming proficient in English.

Oddly in their study, ESL classes have little effect on acquiring English, though Hou and Beiser caution the reader regarding this point. Hou and Beiser note that Samuel (1987) found most people attend ESL classes for less than six months, and often as part-time students during these six months. Hou and Beiser state that to be able to fully evaluate the effectiveness of ESL courses, “investigations should include a measure of exposure which contributes to factors such as number and timing of classes, class sizes, and participant satisfaction” (Hou & Beiser, 2006, p. 158). My research will consider the ways the local community is responding to several of the variables identified by Hou and Beiser.

Though my study is not longitudinal, I have observed each of these factors affecting the refugee community in differing capacities.

Elmeroth (2003) examined factors, such as “age, intelligence, language ability, personality, motivation and contact with people who speak the language being studied” (Elmeroth, 2003, p. 432), to note the effect on immigrants’ language acquisition, specifically focusing on motivation. Elmeroth conducted interviews in Sweden, contrasting twelve Kurdish refugees with twelve immigrants. The most important component of learning Swedish is interacting with Swedes, as “it is not unusual for adults’ language development to cease due to insufficient contact with speakers of the target language” (Elmeroth, 2003, p. 433).

Unfortunately, most of the refugees are essentially in solitary social confinement, for they do not have opportunities to practice their Swedish. Elmeroth found former schooling helps students learn Swedish because it provides a framework for learning, it has provided language learning strategies the students can use again, and it helps the students establish clear goals with Swedish. Elmeroth’s study directs me to consider opportunities for refugees to interact with English speakers in the teaching context and the possible effect of prior educational achievement.

## **Conclusion**

I began with the linguistic framework. I looked at the way the terms are framed in refugee studies. I noted some of the methodological issues that affect



research studies. I examined literature surrounding refugee resettlement, and looking specifically at linguistic issues within refugee resettlement. This naturally led to an examination of articles concerned with teaching ESL, language challenges, and factors affecting language acquisition. All of these articles brought to the forefront the numerous linguistic issues refugees face when they resettling in the United States. I take note of the ways the local community is addressing these linguistic issues with the refugees, and the ways refugees are confronting their language challenges.

## Chapter 3

### **Overview of Refugee Resettlement**

As the process and policy surrounding refugees is complex and not well understood beyond those who work closely with refugees, I am providing background information on refugees and explaining the individuals and organizations involved with refugee resettlement. It is important to understand who refugees are, what the US policy is, and how this flows into the actual classroom and impacts the lives of each resettled refugee, as they are settling into life in the United States, learning English, and becoming self-sufficient.

#### **Background on Refugees**

An individual must become eligible for refugee status. There are different definitions of a *refugee*, though the commonly accepted definition is from the 1951 Convention and 1967 Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees. There are other categories of individuals who leave their homes, and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) considers many of the people who leave their homes due to forced migration to be *people of concern*.

#### **Reasons one becomes a refugee, characteristics of refugees.**

Sometimes a refugee is fighting against injustices in their country, and their government is now persecuting them. Often though, they are ordinary people seeking to live a normal life, and they happen to be in the wrong place at the wrong time. War or conflict is occurring nearby. They happen to have a different

skin color, a different religious background, a different political background than the ones who have come to power, and those in authority seek to harm or remove all who are “different” from them. Or, they are a small people group, and they are trying to eke out survival in their corner of the world, and country lines have been drawn around them, and now the ones in power have decided the minority must be removed, because they do not have the “right” to live there.

When governments are unstable, frequently individuals become refugees. This happened after World War II, during the post-colonial period in Africa (which began with Libya’s independence in 1951, and continues present day) and Asia, when the Soviet Union collapsed, and with the conflicts in the Middle East. In the 1950s there were many from European countries, during the 1970s and 1980s many from Viet Nam, Laos, Cambodia, and other Southeast Asian countries, as well as Cuba, Haiti, and other Latin and South American countries, during the 1990s many refugees from Soviet or satellite Soviet states, and since 2000 there are refugees in all parts of the world, though most are from the Middle East, Africa, or parts of Asia.

Refugees come from all backgrounds: wealthy to poor, PhDs to no formal schooling, monolingual to multilingual, urban to rural, agrarian farmers to technical workers--each with different sets of life skills and types of knowledge. The time of living in transition is different for all: Some have been refugees for a few weeks, and others have solely known life in a refugee camp, as they have lived in the

camp for at least twenty years. Refugees have many different experiences. The one common denominator is either being persecuted or fearing for their life.

**Definition from the 1951 Convention and 1967 Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees, and the role of the UNHCR.**

*Refugee* is a legal status that grants certain protections to individuals who are considered to be refugees. After World War II, the General Assembly of the United Nations held a conference in 1951 in Geneva, concerning refugees, specifically the European individuals who were displaced as a result of the war. The 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees defines a refugee as one whom

~~As a result of events occurring before 1 January 1951 and~~ [striketrough added] 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 nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country; or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of his former habitual residence as a result of such events, is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to return to it. (Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refuges, 2007a, p. 16)

The 1951 Convention was amended with the 1967 Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees—as shown above with the striketrough—by removing the

geographical and time limits to encompass more individuals (Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, 2007a, p. 48). A total of 147 countries (as of 1 August 2007) have signed the document into effect: agreeing to the definition of a refugee, provisions for refugees, obligations of refugees, juridical status, right to employment, provision of welfare, administrative measures such as right to travel and prohibition of refoulement (expulsion), and executory and transitory provisions such as cooperating with the United Nations regarding national laws and information or providing data on resettled refugees.

The United Nation General Assembly created the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in 1950, and the UNHCR officially started working on 1 January 1951. They began by working to protect the refugees of World War II, yet quickly expanded their role to look after *all* refugees: protecting, resettling, and working with the governments of countries regarding refugees. In addition, the UNHCR works with sister agencies within the United Nations, international organizations, and over 650 non-governmental organizations (Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, 2007b, p.29). It is suffice to say that addressing the needs of refugees is quite complex.

**OAU refugee definition, Cartagena refugee definition.**

And yet, others have found the definition from the 1951 Convention and 1967 Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees is not encompassing enough.

There are other definitions of *refugee*, notably the definition from the 1969 Refugee Convention of the Organization of African Unity (OAU), and the Cartagena Declaration in Latin America.

The 1969 OAU Convention Governing the Specific Aspects of Refugee Problems in Africa first defines a refugee by using the definition of the 1951 Convention and 1967 Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees, adding

The term 'refugee' shall also apply to every person who, owing to external aggression, occupation, foreign domination or events seriously disturbing public order in either part or the whole of his country of origin or nationality, is compelled to leave his place of habitual residence in order to seek refuge in another place outside his country of origin or nationality.

(Organization of African Unity, 1969, Article 1, para. 2, p. 2)

This definition is legally binding regionally in Africa. An individual does not need to have a well-founded fear of persecution, as found in the 1951 Convention definition. It is enough for external disturbances to compel him to leave his home, for him to be considered a refugee.

In Latin America, government representatives wrote the Cartagena Declaration on Refugees in 1984, which adds the following to the 1951 Convention and the 1967 Protocol Regarding the Status of Refugees definition, persons who have fled their country because their lives, safety or freedom have been threatened by generalized violence, foreign aggression, internal

conflicts, massive violation of human rights or other circumstances which have seriously disturbed public order. (*Cartagena Declaration on Refugees, Colloquium on the International Protection of Refugees in Central America, Mexico, and Panama*, 1984, III, para. 3)

Though not a treaty, many of the Latin American countries adhere to this definition, and many of these countries have added this definition to their own national legislation.

Arboleda (1991) presents a compelling case for the inadequacies of the 1951 Convention and 1967 Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees definition of a refugee, and the strengths of these two regional definitions, as these definitions “conform with the tenets of humanitarianism, as well as the dictates of pragmatism” (p. 186). Nevertheless, the definition from the 1951 Convention and 1967 Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees remains the most widely used and accepted definition of who is eligible for refugee status and protection.

### **Terms for migrants, people of concern.**

*Migrant* encompasses anyone who leaves his or her country of origin.

*Immigrant* refers to anyone who permanently resettles in a new country.

*Economic migrants* are considered to leave their country of origin by choice.

*Refugees, Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs), and asylum seekers* refer to persons moving due to forced migration, not by choice. To be considered a refugee, an individual must first leave their country. If they remain in their

country, they are considered an IDP. Once they leave their country, they are considered an asylum seeker.

In 2007, the UNHCR calculates there were 32.9 million *people of concern*: refugees, asylum seekers, IDPs, returnees, stateless people—though estimated at 5.8 million, it is probably closer to 15 million, and others (which is undefined). *Stateless persons* are not recognized as a national of their country of origin or sometimes by *any* country, and thus, are not protected. 45% or 15 million people of concern were in Asia, 30% or 9.7 million people of concern were in Africa, 10% or 3.5 million people of concern in Latin America, 10% or 3.4 million people of concern in Europe, 3.5% or 1.1 million people of concern in North America, and 0.2% or 85,500 people of concern in Oceania, as noted in *Protecting Refugees and the role of the UNHCR*, a publication of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR, 2007b, pp. 12-13, 30).

*Refugee* is defined by international laws and government policy, as the countries that have signed the 1951 Convention and / or 1967 Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees agree to uphold its statues in their countries. Though *stateless person* and *IDP* are not granted the same legal protection as *refugee*—as there are not similar laws protecting these individuals—many organizations are now working to protect these categories of individuals as well.



### **Applying for refugee status.**

An individual must apply to be classified as a refugee, and they may apply for refugee status to the UNHCR or to the government of the country they are in.<sup>7</sup> An individual or family must perceive a threat, leave their home, get out of their country (or, in rare cases, go to another government's embassy in their country to apply for refugee status), get into a neighboring country, and either go to the local government office to apply for refugee status, or go to a camp that has been set up for refugees. The UNHCR, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), or International Organizations (IOs) run the refugee camps. Refugees must register once they arrive in the camp.

The UNHCR notes the top ten countries of origin for individuals applying for refugee status, as of 1 January 2007, are: Afghanistan, Iraq, Sudan, Somalia, DR Congo, Burundi, Viet Nam, Turkey, Angola, and Myanmar (UNHCR, 2007b, p. 15). The same publication lists the top ten asylum countries as of 1 January 2007 as Pakistan, Iran, United States, Syria, Germany, Jordan, Tanzania, United Kingdom, China, and Chad (UNHCR, 2007b, p. 16). These lists are always changing. If their application is denied, they are ineligible for the rights and protections that come with being considered a *refugee*. They remain an *asylum*, and are deported back to their country of origin, though the UNHCR recommends

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<sup>7</sup> www.refworld.org maintains two lists of the top ten countries of origin: by applicants to the UNHCR, and by applications to the local government. The majority of asylum seekers apply to the UNCHR for classification as a refugee.

the file be reviewed before deportation, as it could be disastrous for the individual if the decision is incorrect (UNHCR, 2007b, p. 26). Either a person applies individually, or if they are part of a mass exodus of people fleeing a country, they are sometimes granted *prima facie* refugee status.

### **Three Options: Voluntary Repatriation, Local Integration, or Resettlement**

Individuals are sometimes resettled quickly, though often they wait in refugee camps. Their lives are in limbo, sometimes between three months to more than twenty years. Their options are *voluntary repatriation*, *local integration*, or *resettlement*. Voluntary repatriation, which is the sought after and most preferred outcome, means the refugee or asylum seeker returns home once conditions have improved and some stability has been restored. In 2006, 734,000 refugees repatriated voluntarily to 57 countries (UNHCR, 2007b, p. 23).

Yet if voluntary repatriation is not feasible, local integration and resettlement are the other possibilities. Local integration and resettlement are similar, in that both involve establishing a permanent home in a country other than their country of origin. Local integration is often difficult, as frequently the neighboring country is unprepared for the quantity of asylum seekers and refugees seeking to establish permanent residency, as typically many individuals are persecuted at the same time.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Data for the number of refugees who were able to integrate into the first asylum country was not listed in UNHCR (2007b).

The third option is resettlement in a third country. Less than one percent of all refugees are resettled in a third country. Very few countries take part in resettling refugees, and unfortunately the number of people resettled is much smaller than the number of people of concern: in 2006, 71,700 people were resettled in 15 countries. In 2006, the United States resettled 41,300 people, Australia resettled 13,400 people, Canada resettled 10,700 people, Sweden resettled 2,400 people, and Norway resettled 1,000 people. The remaining 2,900 individuals were resettled amongst the ten other countries. (UNHCR, 2007b, pp. 22-23)

### **United States Refugee Policy: Refugee Admissions**

The Immigration and Nationality Act (INA) is the official policy on immigrants to the United States. The INA delegates responsibility for refugee admissions and resettlement as follows: The Department of State (DOS), specifically the Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration (PRM) is responsible for refugee admissions. The Department of Homeland Security, United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (DHS/USCIS) is responsible for refugee processing. The Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR) is responsible for refugee resettlement.

## **Selecting refugees for admission to the U.S..**

Section 101(a)(42) of the INA defines who is a refugee, as based on the 1951 Convention and 1967 Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees. Section 207 of the INA covers refugee admissions. Section 207(a)(3) of the INA prioritizes *which* refugees have access to the United States Refugee Admissions Programs (USRAP): those “of special humanitarian concern”. According to the U.S. Department of State’s annual *Proposed Refugee Admissions* publication, there are three priorities of cases that have access to the USRAP:

- Priority 1 – Individual cases referred to the program by virtue of their circumstances and apparent need for resettlement [abbreviated as P-1]
- Priority 2 – Groups of cases designated as having access to the program by virtue of their circumstances and apparent need for resettlement [abbreviated as P-2]
- Priority 3 – Individual cases from eligible nationalities granted access for purposes of reunification with anchor family members already in the United States [abbreviated as P-3] (2009, p. 6)

The emphasis of selecting refugees for resettlement in the United States is on saving lives and reuniting families, specifically it is “a humanitarian effort that reflects American compassion for some of the world’s most vulnerable persons.” (U.S. Department of State, 2009, p. ii) When an individual applies, it might solely be the individual, or it might have the family as dependents of the applicant. If the

immediate family—spouse and unmarried children under 21—has been separated, the family may join after the initial refugee has been approved, and their numbers are *not* counted in the total number of refugees, as they are viewed as dependents of the refugee. Extended family may file “following-to-join” petitions, or may apply as P-3 applications. (U.S. Department of State, 2009, pp. 13-14) Section 207(e) of the INA is specific to setting the refugee admission ceiling, as set annually by the President, regarding how many refugees may be admitted and resettled in the United States from each part of the world.

#### **Processing refugee admissions.**

PRM works to help refugees voluntarily repatriate, locally integrate, and resettle to third countries. PRM and UNHCR work together to meet the needs of refugees: UNHCR identifies and refers refugees for resettlement to the USRAP, which is coordinated and managed by PRM. UNHCR only refers refugees who are considered P-1, P-2, or P-3 to apply to the USRAP. PRM works closely with DHS/USCIS, as it is DHS/USCIS officers who actually interview refugees to decide whether or not to admit them to the United States for resettlement.<sup>9</sup>

Refugees are processed in Overseas Processing Entities (OPEs), which are run by NGOs, IOs, or U.S. Embassy contractors. There are currently ten OPEs in

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<sup>9</sup> For further information detailing the process of refugee admissions, including the specifics of who fits in P-1, P-2, and P-3 categories, and the status of refugee situations and admissions in all regions of the world, please see the U.S. Department of State (2009). *Proposed Refugee Admissions for Fiscal Year 2009 Report to Congress*.

the world. If a refugee camp is not an OPE, an OPE contractor will visit the camp a few times a year to process refugee resettlement applications. The OPE staff process the refugees: pre-screen applicants, line up the face-to-face DHS/USCIS interview, and if approved, line up medical exams, the one to three day pre-departure cultural orientation (CO) classes, get sponsorship assurance, and then refer the case to the International Organization for Migration (IOM) for transportation to the United States (U.S. Department of State, 2009, p. 16). In the CO, each refugee family is given *Welcome to the United States: A guidebook for refugees* (2004), which is a refugee resettlement guidebook published by the Center for Applied Linguistics, with input from resettled refugees, refugee resettlement agencies, and government officials. The purpose of the guidebook is to present a realistic picture of what to expect upon arrival to the United States. *Welcome to the United States* is published in fifteen languages, and an accompanying video is shown during many of the COs as well. After the processing steps are complete, the OPE refers the case to IOM. DOS contributes funds to IOM for refugees to travel to the United States. IOM arranges and pays for the refugee's travel—in the form of a loan—to the United States, and the refugee must begin repaying the loan six months after arrival.

### **Reception and Placement, PRM, and the VOLAGs**

It is actually PRM that funds the Reception and Placement (R&P), the initial refugee resettlement services, through the ten national Voluntary Agencies,

which are known as VOLAGs. Nine are private voluntary agencies, and one is a state government agency. As these are cooperative agreements, the VOLAGs supplement the PRM funds with other private funds. These ten VOLAGs are at the national level, and work with about 350 affiliated offices to provide initial reception and core services. The ten are as follows:

1. Church World Service
2. Episcopal Migration Ministries
3. Ethiopian Community Development Council
4. Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society
5. International Rescue Committee
6. Iowa Department of Human Services, specifically the Bureau of Refugee Services.
7. Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service
8. U.S. Committee for Refugees and Immigrants
9. United States Conference of Catholic Bishops
10. World Relief

Four of these ten VOLAGs have affiliated local refugee resettlement agencies in this Southwestern city. I have used pseudonyms to obscure their identity. Their names are Blue Bonnet Social Assistance (BBSA), E. Owl Social Assistance (EOSA), Purple Sage Social Assistance (PSSA), and Refugee Resettlement, Incorporated (RRI). Because of the use of PRM funds, the local refugee

resettlement agencies—who are each affiliated with a national VOLAG—are obligated to provide these R&P services:

- Sponsorship;
- Pre-arrival resettlement planning, including placement;
- Reception on arrival;
- Basic needs support (including housing, furnishings, food, and clothing) for at least 30 days;
- Community orientation;
- Referrals to health, employment, education and other services as needed;
- and
- Case management and tracking for 90-180 days.<sup>10</sup> (U.S. Department of

State, 2009, p. 18)

There is overlap between the PRM and the Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR), as PRM is involved with the initial resettlement services, which are the R&P services, and then the ORR continues the support services. PRM is finished with their responsibilities once R&P services conclude.

To conclude the role of DHS/USCIS, refugees must apply to the DHS/USCIS after one year for their status to be changed to lawful permanent

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<sup>10</sup> At the time of my research, January to May 2009, this was true. However, as of November 2010, the refugees' case is closed at 90 days, as per the current Cooperative Agreement issued by DOS.



resident, and if approved, may apply five years after arrival for citizenship (U.S. Department of State, 2009, p. 18).

### **United States Refugee Policy: Refugee Resettlement**

Section 413 of the Immigration and Nationality Act covers refugee resettlement in the United States. Section 413(a) is the Refugee Act of 1980, which is the foundation of current policy concerning refugee resettlement in the United States. The Refugee Act placed responsibility for domestically resettling refugees within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, specifically the Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR).

#### **Examining the role and responsibilities of the Office of Refugee Resettlement.**

Every year, the Secretary of Health and Human Services submits an annual *Report to Congress*, which specifically discusses the expected social and economic impact, and their secondary migration, of the admission of refugees; and reports on the services and assistance that has been provided to promote refugee self-sufficiency as soon as possible. The report details admissions of refugees, allocations of funds, profiles of the refugee population, the economic adjustment of refugees, assistance to victims of human trafficking, and assistance to the unaccompanied alien children program. ORR's annual *Report to Congress* states,

Economic self-sufficiency is as important to refugees as adapting to their new homeland's social rhythms. . . . The achievement of employment and

economic self-sufficiency by refugees . . . involves a balance of three elements: (1) the employment potential of refugees, including their education, skills, *English language competence* [emphasis added], and health; (2) the needs that they . . . have for financial resources . . .; and (3) the economic environment in which they settle. (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2006, p. 56)<sup>11</sup>

It is by balancing these three elements that the ORR seeks to help refugees achieve self-sufficiency, through their refugee resettlement program.

The ORR provides funds for the Domestic Resettlement Program, which covers refugee appropriations, cash and medical assistance, social services, targeted assistance, the voluntary agency Matching Grant program, refugee health assessments, the Wilson/Fish alternative projects, the Cuban/Haitian Initiative, and the Unaccompanied Alien Children (UAC) program. The Domestic Resettlement Program “consists of four separate resettlement approaches: (1) the State-administered program, (2) the Public/Private Partnership program, (3) the Wilson/Fish program, and (4) the Matching Grant program”<sup>12</sup> (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2006, p. 6). Individual states pay for temporary

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<sup>11</sup> Though required to submit this report annually, I was unable to find reports after 2006.

<sup>12</sup> Please see the *Report to Congress – FY 06* to learn more about the Public/Private Partnership program and the Wilson/Fish program (pgs 12-13), as I have omitted discussing them here. Neither pertain specifically to ESL instruction.

cash and medical assistance, social services, and are responsible for unaccompanied refugee children. Each state funds Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), which is cash assistance for families with children under 18; Supplemental Security Income (SSI), which is federal cash assistance for aged, blind, or disabled individuals; and Medicaid, which covers medical assistance for refugees eligible for either TANF or SSI. ORR does not reimburse states these costs. If refugees are not eligible for TANF, SSI, or Medicaid, they may receive assistance through Refugee Cash Assistance (RCA) and Refugee Medical Assistance (RMA), and they may receive these benefits for eight months. ORR reimburses states the costs of RCA and RMA. ORR also provides funding to states for the cost of social services.

**Regarding English language training.**

Within the Domestic Resettlement Program, English language training is one of many social services funded by formula grants, which are given to States and non-profit organizations by the ORR. Different measures of economic adjustment include employment rates, self-sufficiency, medical coverage, education level and self-reported English levels upon arrival, and types of cash assistance received. English language training is also funded through the Matching Grant program, which has been funded by Congress since 1979 and is an alternative to State-administrated employment programs for refugees.

The Matching Grant (MG) program seeks to help refugees become self-sufficient within four to six months after arriving, without public cash assistance. If the refugee is enrolled in the MG program, the refugee cannot receive employment services from the state funded employment programs. Nine of the ten VOLAGs participate (Iowa abstains), and they agree to match the ORR grants with fifty percent cash and in-kind contributions. The agency provides cash, food, and housing for at least the first four months, and case management and employment service for at least the first six months. The agency may provide additional services, like English language training, either within their agency or through a referral to another program.

English language training / ESL services are also funded by the ORR with Targeted Assistance Discretionary Grants (TAG) and technical assistance to certain grantees, though these were not examined as they are not relevant to this Southwestern state.

In ORR's annual *Report to Congress* FY 2006, the second section focuses on characteristics of the refugee population, based on a survey of a national sample of all refugees who had arrived between 2001 and 2006. English is a factor that affects employment and "self-sufficiency". The report assertively claims "refugees had made solid progress in learning English" (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2006, p. 65). Upon arrival, 61.6 percent spoke no English, yet by the time of the interview 19.4 percent spoke no English (U.S. Department

of Health and Human Services, 2006, p. 66). “The ability to speak English is one of the most important factors influencing the economic self-sufficiency of refugees . . . . There was a significant difference in the employment rate among refugees with different levels of English fluency” (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2006, p. 66). A surprisingly small percentage of refugees attend English classes: 23.7 percent have attended English classes in the past year, yet only 13.7 percent are currently, at the time of the study, attending English class. (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2006, p. 69) Yet the report points out only 6.9 percent are attending job-training classes (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2006, pp. 66, 69), so in comparison more refugees attend English classes. The report points out “historically, most refugees improve their English proficiency over time” (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2006, p. 66).

### **Resettlement at the Local Level:**

#### **Beginning life in the new country.**

Much happens rapidly: the client counselor at one of the local refugee resettlement agencies finds out a refugee client—either an individual or a family—is arriving in one week, and finds a home. This home is set up with the basic necessities. The client counselor picks up the refugee from the airport, takes them home, gives them a culturally appropriate meal, returns within 24 hours, and orients them during the first week with community information. Shortly after

arrival, the refugee receives a social security card. The refugee receives core services (housing, furnishing, food, and clothing) for the first thirty days.

The client counselor and refugee together create a plan for resettlement, so they are working together to meet the needs and desires of the client. Each plan is different, based on the goals of the client. However, the plans share the common themes of resettling smoothly, becoming self-sufficient, and integrating into the new country. The client counselor helps the children begin school, assists with doctor appointments, and sorting through mail and necessary paperwork. English classes are provided, and the refugee is encouraged to attend, simply with a “referral” from the client counselor. The refugee receives cash assistance for the first thirty days. The refugee reapplies for social services: cash assistance, food assistance, and medical assistance at different times, between every three to six months. The refugee must find a job, so they can pay for their food, housing, and living expenses. Most succeed in finding a job within two to four months. However, with the recent economic downturn, refugees have struggled with finding a job quickly.

### **Pursuing “self-sufficiency”.**

The goal is to become economically “self-sufficient”, which is measured by whether or not they have a job between 90 to 180 days. Preferably, they will have a job by 90 days, but if not, they “must” have a job by 180 days. At 180 days, the refugee moves from a Reception and Placement (R&P) client counselor, who

provide core services for the first 180 days to a Refugee Programs (RP) client counselor, who provides assistance as needed between 180 days (six months) to five years. Many refugees are finished receiving services at 30 days. They close their case with their R&P client counselor. If needed, they will reopen their case with the RP client counselor to receive assistance navigating something, such as a tax form, school trouble, or unemployment.

Table 2 presents a timeline for refugee resettlement, from the moment a refugee arrives in the United States until all possible resettlement services have concluded.

Table 2

Timeline for refugee resettlement

First day.	The refugee arrives, often by plane. The client counselor picks them up from the airport, takes them to their new home, and gives them a culturally appropriate meal.
First week.	The refugee goes through a community orientation, learns about ESL classes, has medical exams, registers children for school, and learns of the different social assistance programs. They begin receiving temporary cash assistance, food assistance, and refugee medical insurance. After seven days, the refugee receives their social security card. They are now eligible to work.
At 30 days.	The Department of State funds “basic needs support (including housing, furnishings, food, and clothing) for at least 30 days”. ( <i>Annual Report to Congress</i> , 18) After 30 days, if the refugee still needs assistance, ORR provides cash and medical assistance.

Table 2, continued.

At 90 days. <sup>13</sup>	They must reapply for cash assistance every three months. The Department of State funds case management and tracking for 90 to 180 days.
At 120 days.	If a refugee is participating in the Matching Grant program, they are encouraged to be self-sufficient (have a job) by the 120 <sup>th</sup> day. Agencies participating in the Matching Grant program provide assistance (cash, food, housing) for a minimum of 120 days.
At 180 days. <sup>14</sup>	They must reapply for food assistance every six months. They move from R&P services to RP services. The Department of State concludes their care. Their goal is to be working by this point, if not before. If the refugee is participating in the Matching Grant program (MG), the goal is to be self-sufficient (be employed) by the 180 <sup>th</sup> day. Agencies participating in MG provide intensive case management and employment assistance for 180 days.
At twelve months.	The refugee must apply to the Department of Homeland Security for a change to their status, to that of permanent resident alien.
After five years,	Only services connected with citizenship and naturalization are permitted for refugees after five years. All other services conclude. At five years, the refugee is eligible to apply for citizenship.
After seven years.	The refugee is no longer eligible to receive any refugee resettlement services, including citizenship preparation classes.

<sup>13</sup> At the time of my research, January to May 2009, this was true. However, as of November 2010, the refugees' case is closed at 90 days, as per the current Cooperative Agreement issued by DOS.

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## **Refugee Resettlement In Takora**

In the southwestern State of Takora, two of the fifteen counties resettle refugees: Nalenga County and Kantena County. In Nalenga County, the largest city and surrounding metropolitan area is Metropolis, with a population of approximately five million inhabitants. Metropolis has four refugee resettlement agencies: Blue Bonnet Social Assistance (BBSA), Purple Sage Social Assistance (PSSA), Refugee Resettlement, Incorporated (RRI), and E. Owl Social Assistance (EOSA). There are other NGOs and Mutual Assistance Associations (MAAs) that also work with refugees in Nalenga County, though they are not responsible for resettling refugees. The Takora Economic Department (TED) works with refugees and resettlement agencies, as well as providing welfare to the disabled, economically challenged, and aged populations of the state.

TED funds English as a Second Language (ESL) classes for refugees. Agencies place a bid with TED, vying to win the contract to provide ESL instruction to refugees for a year. In Kantena County, Kantena Community College has won the contract and is responsible for ESL instruction for refugees. In Nalenga County, Blue Bonnet Social Assistance (BBSA) has won the contract and currently provides ESL instruction for refugees.

## Chapter 4

### **Methodology**

Chapter four focuses on what I did for the study, and how it was done. It is a description of the data – legal documents, interviews, and observations – and of collecting the data. Because my questions have evolved and changed throughout my research, I have struggled with having too much data, irrelevant information, and data and articles that I must carefully examine to find the parts that fit with my evolved questions. My questions have evolved to become:

1. How is the local community addressing the linguistics needs of refugees?
2. What is the greatest language challenge faced by refugees?

Initially I planned to examine all components of an ESL program for refugees. As I was unable to interview the recipients of the instruction—the current refugee students and graduates of the program—my research expanded to interview individuals involved with refugee resettlement, to learn of the ways other members in the community were addressing the linguistics needs of refugees. I observed English language classes, which were the primary place of addressing the linguistic needs, as well as meetings either addressing refugee resettlement or involving refugees, to note the ways the English language played a role in these meetings. And I read through federal policy and regulations, to understand the laws and regulations governing refugee resettlement.

## **Qualitative – Not Quantitative – Research Study**

I selected the individuals and organizations based on who I was able to gain access to. I do not claim the individuals or organizations are representative, statistically significant, or a random sample. It was not possible to gain access – due to gatekeeping constraints – to enough individuals to have a quantitative study. Had I been permitted to interview more instructors, had more time to interview more client counselors, been able to better compare responses by using a Likert Scale, or observed more classes, this could have been a quantitative study. And yet, the data I collected is precisely the necessary information for a qualitative research study.

To understand the way the local community addresses the linguistic needs of refugees, it was useful to interview many different individuals who work with refugees – to elicit their perspectives and opinions – to understand how their role fits in to the greater community of refugee resettlement. As a qualitative study, I could better explore each encounter. My interviews with individuals and observations of ESL classes highlight the situation of refugees as they seek to integrate into the local community and learn English.

## **Explanation of Participants Selected**

I recruited the individuals with my email recruitment script (Appendix A), and explained my research study through my information / consent letter (Appendix B). There is one state Director of Refugee Services for the state of

Takora: I spoke with him (Appendix C contains the interview questions). There are four refugee resettlement agencies that are local affiliates of the national VOLAGs: I interacted with three of these agencies. I interviewed one Resettlement Chair (Appendix D for my interview questions), and it is likely there are four Resettlement Chairs, one at each of the resettlement agencies. I interviewed two client counselors (Appendix E for my interview questions), though the total in Metropolis is unknown. I did not formally interview individuals at any of the Mutual Assistance Associations (MAAs) or Refugee Community Organizations (RCOs), though I conversed with individuals at two periphery organizations (FoR and TRAG) that support the work of the refugee resettlement agencies. These were not formal interviews, as the organizations do not explicitly address the language needs of refugees in Takora. The total number of MAAs, RCOs, and other organizations involved with refugee resettlement in Metropolis, Takora is unknown.

One organization has the contract (please see Appendix F for the ESL Scope of Work) to provide English language training in Nalenga county, Takora, and I was able to interview individuals with this organization. I interviewed the ESL Administrator (please see Appendix G for my interview questions), and interviewed three out of twelve instructors (please see Appendix H for my interview questions), and observed three courses (from a total of twenty-one). Neither quantity can be considered a representative sample. As other

organizations provide supplemental English instruction and tutoring, I interviewed another English language instructor / coordinator (please see Appendix I for my interview questions) and observed at two other organizations, to provide supporting information of the ways others in the local community are also addressing the language needs of refugees. I did not contact any of the local educational institutions, such as community colleges, to learn if and how they address the language needs of refugees. Any information on these institutions is provided solely from interviews and conversations with individuals working within refugee resettlement.

### **Methodology: Reading Federal Policy and Federal Regulations, Interviews and Observations**

I researched to learn where all federal laws are codified concerning immigration, nationalization, and refugees. I searched the Immigration and Nationality Act to find the parts pertinent to refugees and refugee resettlement. Through my interview with Mark Gilmore (Appendix C contains interview questions), I learned the *Code of Federal Regulations* contains the guidelines for how the INA will be implemented. I carefully read 45 *C.F.R.* part 400 to learn the regulations governing refugee resettlement. Gilmore also granted me permission to see the local contract between the state and agency responsible for providing ESL instruction to refugees (Appendix F contains the ESL Scope of Work contract).

My research project was approved by the IRB at Arizona State University on February 13, 2009, and my interviews and observations commenced on February 23, 2009 (See Appendix J for IRB approval). I conducted interviews, and observed classes and meetings between February 23, 2009, and May 14, 2009, in Metropolis, which is a large city in the fictional State of Takora, located in the southwestern United States. I spoke with the following individuals:

- six ESL instructors (Anthony, Daisy, Isabella, Jessica, Leah, Ryan)
- three education coordinators (Leah, Samantha Smith, Isabella Valdez)
  - one ESL Administrator (Samantha Smith)
  - one Vocational coordinator and ESL instructor (Isabella Valdez)
  - one English language workshop coordinator and ESL instructor (Leah)
- two non-profit directors (Amy Burns and Catherine Peterson)
  - one non-profit director at a local refugee resettlement agency who oversees refugee resettlement (Amy Burns)
  - one non-profit director who advocates for refugees and seeks to involve the local community with refugees (Catherine Peterson)
- two non-profit volunteer organizers who coordinate volunteers to work with refugees (Sue and Taylor)
- the Director of Refugee Services for the State of Takora (Mark Gilmore)

- two client counselors (Heather and Nilo)

In total, I conducted formal interviews with ten individuals, though I spoke with fourteen individuals at four of the non-profit agencies that work with refugees.<sup>15</sup>

In addition, I observed eleven English classes at three of the non-profit agencies. This gave me a broad perspective of the types of classes available that were free. I also attended one meeting between refugee resettlement client counselors and educators and refugees to understand the conversations that take place among teachers, parents, and the NGOs involved.

For a larger picture of the state refugee context, I joined the state refugee advocacy network (TRAG). I attended also one networking breakfast, one advocacy meeting, one community gathering of refugees, and a non-profit fundraising breakfast.

### **Interviews.**

As I set out to learn about an area that I was not intimately familiar with, I believed an interview would be the best way for me to learn about refugees learning English. I wanted to learn from the experience of individuals who work closely with the refugees, and who help the clients learn English. Initially, I wanted to focus on refugees, with interviews with other individuals being

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<sup>15</sup> My conversations with Jessica, Catherine Peterson, Sue, and Taylor were not formal interviews. I am not counting email correspondence with Mary Suncloud or Geoff Wiggins as conversations or interviews, as I did not speak in person with either. I did not interact with Isis. Please see the nomenclature chart at the beginning of this study for further information on each individual.

secondary to the interviews with refugees, yet I did not have access to refugees, so I shifted my emphasis to focusing on the local community as I had access to the individuals surrounding the refugees in the refugee resettlement community. I conducted semi-structured interviews, so I could be flexible during the interviews by responding to the answers of my interviewees and further pursuing information that seemed important. Please see Appendices C, D, E, G, H, and I for the questions used during my interviews.

As I sought to understand the ways the community addresses the linguistic needs of refugees, I interviewed two ESL program administrators (and spoke with a third) to get a better understanding of the way they address the big picture and specifics of refugees' language needs. (Appendices G & I)

ESL program administrators have a vision for teaching ESL as well as meeting the specific needs of refugees. They have a plan for the way their teachers instruct the students. They see the big picture yet they are responsible for the details, too. As the ESL program administrators serve as gatekeepers, another reason I spoke with the administrators was to gain access to their instructors.

Once an administrator granted me permission to observe and interview the ESL instructors, I could attend classes. I interviewed five ESL instructors to understand the ways they put into practice the vision of their administrators, and to understand what goes on in the classroom. I interviewed the instructors to understand the ways the individual refugees participated, as well as to learn about



the pedagogical practices that may be unique to this community. The instructors spoke about their daily struggles and addressed classroom issues. (Appendices H & I for questions asked of instructors)

As my interviews progressed, I realized most refugees are similar to other adult English language learners; they simply have additional and unique struggles beyond the classroom, such as having experienced trauma, and being expected by the federal government to become employed quickly. I interviewed two client counselors (Appendix E) and one refugee resettlement director (Appendix D) to learn about refugee concerns and resettlement issues. I interviewed the Director of Refugee Services for TPRR (Appendix C) to understand his vision for all refugees in the state. I had believed refugee resettlement was set up as a pyramid in the state, with the non-profit agencies addressing refugee resettlement issues according to his vision. Instead, I learned that he coordinates social services for refugees, suggests ways the resettlement agencies can better meet the needs of refugees, and assists the non-profit agencies with the demands of resettling refugees, yet he cannot control how the refugee resettlement agencies resettle refugee in this particular Southwestern state.

One non-profit director, not at a refugee resettlement agency yet with a non-profit that works closely with refugees, spoke with me about advocacy for refugees and education for community members. She works to connect the different community resources together. Two volunteer coordinators at refugee

resettlement agencies shared with me the ways they recruit and educate members of the local community to assist with refugee resettlement—by befriending refugees, volunteering with English classes, donating items, and taking part in refugee-community activities and events.

### **Observations.**

I observed six teachers in eleven English classes at three of the non-profit agencies. By observing the classes, I could see the way the teachers were addressing the linguistic needs of the refugees. I saw for four of them the ways what they said in interviews lined up with what occurred in the classroom. I saw the ways the students interacted with one another, the ways they sought to learn English, and some of the challenges that they faced outside of the classroom brought into the classroom.

Table 3 clearly shows which instructor, the location, which course, and the number of students present at each of my observations with the three refugee resettlement agencies. I actually observed six classes with BBSA, though due to communication troubles, could not observe two other BBSA classes. I observed three out of the five classes with PSSA, due to communication troubles as well. And with RRI, I observed one out of one class, without any communication troubles. All classes had seven to twelve students, and the students had different language backgrounds, different ethnicities, and different ages. BBSA classes were grouped by ability level, PSSA by program involvement, and RRI by background.

Table 3

Record of Observations of English language classes at BBSA, PSSA, and RRI

<b>BBSA: Formal and Official ESL Program</b>
<i>Basic Level</i>
With Ryan, at Cactus Wren Apartments, in a room adjacent to office manager's office.
On 3/10/09: 0 students. No students showed up for class. Instructor present. I was present. The class has recently started, students are not yet consistently attending.
With a female instructor, at Road Runner Apartments, in the complex clubhouse.
On 5/15/09: I missed the class. Class happened, I showed up after it had ended. I did not see any instructors or students. Samantha communicated to me the incorrect class time.
<i>Low Level</i>
With Anthony, at Road Runner Apartments, in the apartment complex clubhouse. (Students are from East Asia and East Africa, 7-12 students on roster, 9 usually attend)
On 3/12/09: 3 female, 6 male: 9 students.
On 3/26/09: 5 female, 4 male: 9 students.
On 3/31/09: 5 female, 5 male: 10 students.
On 4/2/09: 4 new students, yet I did not record total in attendance for this class.
<i>Mid Level</i>
With Ryan, at Cactus Wren Apartments, in a room adjacent to office manager's office. (Students are from East Asia, and Near East region, 8 students usually attend)
On 3/10/09: 4 female, 3 male: 7 students. (PSSA: 1, RRI: 2, EOSA: 2, and BBSA: 2)
<i>High Level (none currently offered) and Even-Higher Level (none currently offered)</i>
<i>Preparation for citizenship exam class</i>
With Daisy, at Whooping Crane Apartments, in the apartment complex clubhouse. (From East Africa and Near East regions)
On 3/30/09: 11 female, 1 male: 12 students (3 young girls were present, too).
<i>Vocational ESL (VESL)</i>
Not permitted to attend.
<b>PSSA: VESL classes / English tutoring for Matching Grant clients</b>
<i>Level One</i>
With Isabella, in a classroom at another non-profit agency. (Students are from East Asia, Near East, and East Africa. 14 students are on class roster)
On 5/5/09: I went, but no class. Noticed another person attempt to open the locked door. Perhaps a refugee student. Class had recently switched from Tues/Thurs to Mon/Wed. Isabella and I miscommunicated regarding which day had the class.
On 5/6/09: 6 female, 6 male: 12 students (also, one baby, and one elementary aged girl). Isabella was late, I began teaching the class, and then Isabella took over and I observed.
On 5/11/09: I taught the class alone, and did not record attendee in my notes.
On 5/13/09: I was to teach the class alone, yet arrived late and no students were present.
With Jessica, class is held in an empty apartment at Cedarwood Apartment Complex.
On 5/14/09: I did not take note of attendees.
<i>Level Two (did not observe)</i>
<b>RRI: English language workshop solely for RRI clients from one specific country</b>
With Leah, in a large community room in the RRI. (Students are from a particular country in sub-Saharan Africa. Typically 10 adults and 15 children attend each class.)

On Saturday, 04/11/09, 2-4pm: I did not record the number of students present.

Though interviews and classroom observations, and the implementation of federal laws and regulations, were the focus of my project, I also sought to participate in as many refugee resettlement events as I could between February and May 2009, as my thesis addresses the question, “How is the community addressing the linguistic needs of refugees?” This happened most directly in the ESL classroom. Yet I saw refugees’ linguistic needs outside of the classroom, and the ways community members sought to address these needs. The state refugee advocacy network brought together members of many organizations, and sought to pull together many different resources to address refugees’ needs, specifically the five most pressing needs being housing, employment, health care, education, and learning English. Housing and employment are the most urgent and measurable needs, as the economic downturn of 2008-2009 has had dreadful ripple effects in refugee resettlement. Yet refugees face language struggles as they seek housing and employment.

Of the five meetings I attended all shared the common theme of educating one another of different resources, as the meetings connected individuals of different skills together and fostered a sense of community. A community gathering of refugees’ event included refugees, community members that work for the non-profit agencies, as well as members of the greater community in the metropolis. Attending this allowed me to see the greater community pull together to mourn the loss of life of fellow refugees. Linguistically, I saw many languages

present in one place, with individuals communicating with one another in their native languages as well as English. The program was presented in the native languages with English interpreters.

### **Obstacles Encountered**

Though I encountered numerous obstacles, such as time and schedule constraints, and gatekeeping constraints, I attribute many of these challenges to being a novice researcher. I believe it is worthwhile to share my experience, in the hopes to help fellow researchers sidestep some of my mishaps. Interestingly, I interacted with three organizations, and each served to highlight three different ways that organizations chose to participate in a research study. However, as the obstacles and extraneous information regarding the ways each organization either opened or closed their doors to me does not truly fit well in any of these chapters of my thesis, please see Appendix L to learn more about the research process I underwent with this paper.

### **Data Collection**

I accessed the Immigration and Nationalization Act and the *Code of Federal Regulations* online. Mark Gilmore gave me the ESL Scope of Work TED has with BBSA (Appendix F). I found the Scope of Work used for general contracts between TED and refugee resettlement providers on TED's website, and I have included it in Appendix K. ESL instructors gave me copies of course material. I recorded four interviews and one class, and took longhand notes of the

other interviews. I took few notes of most of the classes I observed, as I was rarely a passive observer and able to focus solely on note-taking; rather, I was an active participant as I volunteered, assisted, and tutored during most of the ESL classes I attended. I encountered limitations with collecting data, due to being a participant observer, being denied permission to record, and having a poor quality audio recorder.

### **Data Analysis**

I am comparing the observations and interviews against the federal policies on refugee resettlement concerning refugees learning English, and comparing the observations and interviews against the contract the state of Takora with the English language program provider (Appendix F). By triangulating my data, and comparing the federal policies, federal regulations, and the state contract against what I saw and heard, this presents a more complete picture of the ways the local community is addressing the linguistic needs of refugees.

## Chapter 5

### **Data Results and Discussion**

This chapter contains a brief recap concerning refugee admissions and resettlement; a discussion of the relevant components of the Immigration and Nationality Act, *Code of Federal Regulations*, and local contracts; and an examination of interviews with individuals and observations of ESL classes and refugee resettlement meetings in the state of Takora.

#### **Refugee admissions and resettlement**

The Department of State or the UNHCR recommends a refugee—who fits into P-1, P-2, or P-3 category—for an interview with the Department of Homeland Security, who admits them to the United States. The Department of State, Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration (PRM) pays for their Cultural Orientation (CO), and their transportation (in the form of a loan, which the refugee must begin repaying after six months). There are ten refugee resettlement agencies (VOLAGs) that participate in the Refugee Admissions Reception and Placement (R&P) Program, which is the cooperative program between the Department of State and the agencies that agree to sponsor a refugee by helping with resettlement. These ten agencies are at the national level, and the agency places the refugee in one of the affiliated local agencies, at the state and city level. The local refugee resettlement agency is responsible for providing initial

services, for the first 30-90 days (or 90-180 days) in the United States.<sup>16</sup> The Department of State partially funds these initial services, which are paid by the federal government and by the sponsoring agencies. These services are administered by the states or resettlement agencies. At some point, refugee resettlement responsibility shifts from the Department of State to the Department of Health and Human Services Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR) Refugee Program (RP). Perhaps at 180 days, when the refugee moves from R&P to RP services, ORR funds services. Or, there is overlap from the moment the refugee has arrived in the United States, and PRM and ORR together fund resettlement core services.

**Immigration and Nationality Act, specifically pertaining to refugees and English language instruction.**

The Immigration and Nationality Act § 101, 8 U.S.C. 1101 *et seq.* (2010 through March 4), hereafter known as the INA, codified together the different laws concerning immigration and becoming a citizen of the United States. The INA went into effect in 1952, and though it has been amended over the years, it is currently in effect and contains the federal laws concerning immigration. Within

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<sup>16</sup> This was current at the time of my research, though the laws have changed. As of November 2010, all case management services must conclude at 90 days. The Department of State expects the refugee resettlement agency to provide core services for the first 30-90 days, yet when I spoke with individuals at the refugee resettlement agencies, they said the refugee may receive core services for 90-180 days. I believe this differs by agency, and is dependent on how long the refugee needs core services. However, all core services must conclude at 180 days.



the INA, title IV chapter 2 contains the provisions of the Refugee Act of 1980. The Refugee Act of 1980 “created The Federal Refugee Resettlement Program to provide for the effective resettlement of refugees and to assist them to achieve economic self-sufficiency as quickly as possible after arrival in the United States” (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Refugee Resettlement, 2010, para. 1). The Refugee Act of 1980 begins by establishing the Office of Refugee Resettlement, within the Department of Health and Human Services, “to fund and administer . . . programs of the Federal Government” (INA § 411(b), 8 U.S.C § 1521(b)) for refugee resettlement. The head of the Office of Refugee Resettlement is the Director, who is appointed by the Secretary of Health and Human Services. English language training has a prominent place within federal policy.

According to the federal policy stated within the INA, second only to employment training, the director of ORR shall “provide refugees with the opportunity to *acquire sufficient English language training* [emphasis added] to enable them to become effectively resettled as quickly as possible” (INA § 412(a)-(1)(A)(ii), 8 U.S.C. 1522 (a)-(1)(A)(ii)) Also, Congress intends that social service funds for refugee assistance “should be focused on employment-related services, *English-as-a-second-language training* [emphasis added] (in non-work hours where possible), and case-management services” (INA § 412(a)-(1)(B)(ii), 8 U.S.C. 1522 (a)-(1)(B)(ii)). The Director of ORR is charged with developing

“plans to provide English training . . . to refugees receiving cash assistance” (INA § 412(e)(1). As the United States government is always concerned with tracking results, the Secretary of Health and Human Services is responsible for submitting an annual report of activities in which there must be an evaluation of whether “the services provided under this chapter are assisting refugees in achieving economic self-sufficiency, *achieving ability in English* [emphasis added], and achieving employment commensurate with their skills and abilities” (INA § 413 (b)(1)(5)(A), 8 U.S.C. 1523 (b)(1)(5)(A)).

***Code of Federal Regulations, specifically pertaining to refugees and English language instruction.***

The law states what is to be done and the *Code of Federal Regulations* states how it is to be done. Each regulation must receive its authority from a law, and each regulation is written by the federal department responsible for fulfilling the law. The Immigration and Nationality Act is the law that gives authority to the Office of Refugee Resettlement. Within the *Code of Federal Regulations*, title 45 concerns Public Welfare, and Chapter IV is specific to the Office of Refugee Resettlement, which is a part of the Administration for Children and Families, which is under the Department of Health and Human Services. Part 400 concerns the Refugee Resettlement Program. Part 400 receives its authority from Section 412 of the Immigration and Nationality Act.

Within the Refugee Resettlement Program section, Part 400, “English” is mentioned twelve times, and seven of these are specific to adult English language instruction<sup>17</sup>: the purpose of the Refugee Resettlement Program is to “provide for the effective resettlement of refugees and to assist them to achieve economic self-sufficiency as quickly as possible” (45 C.F.R. § 400.1(b)) and “the Director has established the provision of employment services and *English language training* [emphasis added] as a priority in accomplishing the purpose of this program” (45 C.F.R. § 400.1(c)); within the employability services section (45 C.F.R. § 400.154), a State may—note, not they must—provide “*English language instruction, with an emphasis on English* [emphasis added] as it relates to obtaining and retaining a job” (45 C.F.R. § 400.154(d)). Other components of employability services that may be provided include creating an employment plan, and providing assessment services, on-the-job training, vocational training, skills recertification, day care for children, transportation, translation and interpreter services, case management services, and assistance with obtaining necessary employment documents (45 C.F.R. § 400.154(a)-(k)). Outside of employability services are “other services” that a State may provide. From 45 C.F.R. § 400.155 (a)-(j), these include information and referral services, outreach services, social adjustment services which include emergency services, health-

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<sup>17</sup> Regarding the five other times “English” occurs, three relate to documents written in English, one to English language instruction for unaccompanied minors, and one for disabled refugees applying for citizenship obtaining a waiver from English requirements for naturalization.

related services, and home management services; day care for children, transportation, translation and interpreter services, case management services, any additional service that has been approved by the Director of ORR that strengthens and supports the refugee, and “citizenship and naturalization preparation services, including *English language training* [emphasis added] and civics instruction to prepare refugees for citizenship” (45 C.F.R. § 400.155 (j)).

The service requirements section 45 C.F.R. § 400.156 (a)-(g) clearly states the way the above services must be provided: “English language instruction...must be provided to the fullest extent feasible outside normal working hours” (a), these services need to be “seamless, coordinated services to refugees that are not duplicative” (b), “English language instruction...must be provided in a concurrent, rather than sequential, time period with employment” (c), though the services “must be refugee-specific...to meet refugee needs... English language training need not be refugee-specific” (d), the services “must be provided...in a manner that is culturally and linguistically compatible with a refugee's language and cultural background” (e), the services “must be provided...in a manner that includes the use of bilingual/bicultural women on service agency staffs to ensure adequate service access by refugee women” (f), and finally a “family self-sufficiency plan must be developed for anyone who receives employment-related services funded under this part” (g).

In sum, the Immigration and Nationality Act explicitly state laws concerning refugee resettlement, and title 45 *Code of Federal Regulations* part 400 precisely state how the laws must be implemented. Though the regulations are specific and detailed, they also allow each agency freedom to determine how the laws are put into practice. To see the ways the federal regulations are implemented in each of the local refugee resettlement agencies, please see Table 4.

Table 4

Implementation of title 45 *Code of Federal Regulations* part 400 at TPRR, BBSA, PSSA, and RRI

<b>Federal Regulation</b>	<b>Takora Program for Refugee Resettlement</b>	<b>BBSA</b>	<b>PSSA</b>	<b>RRI</b>
Provides employment services (§ 400.1 (c))		Yes. Client counselors develop self-sufficiency plans with their clients, and provide case management services. Offers employment class, yet only for refugees who are employed at one particular job site.	Yes. Client counselors develop self-sufficiency plans with their clients, and provide case management services. Their employment team provides some additional job and vocational ESL training for their refugees. Participates in Matching Grant program.	Yes. Client counselors develop self-sufficiency plans with their clients, and provide case management services.
English language instruction (§ 400.1 (c))		Yes.	Yes.	Yes

Table 4, continued.

<b>Federal Regulation</b>	<b>Takora Program for Refugee Resettlement</b>	<b>BBSA</b>	<b>PSSA</b>	<b>RRI</b>
A State may provide the employability service – English language instruction, with an emphasis on English as it relates to obtaining and retaining a job (§ 400.154 (d))	Only funds ESL instruction with BBSA.	Has the official contract to provide English as a Second Language instruction to all refugees in Nalanga County.	Not funded by the state. Provides VESL classes for PSSA clients. Mandatory for clients enrolled in the MG program, other clients may attend.	Not funded by the state; not specific to employment. Offers ESL class solely for RRI clients from one sub-Saharan African country.
ESL instruction must be provided outside normal working hours. (§ 400.156 (a))		Yes, in the mornings, afternoons, and evenings.	Yes. During lunch break hours, though most are not employed.	Yes. Once a week on Saturdays.
Services must be seamless, coordinated, and not duplicative. (§ 400.156 (b))		- Yes. - No. - Yes, not duplicative.	Questionable: - Yes. - No. - Uncertain.	Questionable: - Uncertain. - No. - Uncertain.
ESL instruction must be provided in a concurrent time period. (§ 400.156 (c))		Yes.	Yes.	Yes.
ESL instruction need not be refugee-specific. (§ 400.156 (d))		On the surface: yes.	On the surface: yes.	On the surface: yes.
ESL services must be culturally and linguistically compatible with a refugee's background. (§ 400.156 (e))		On the surface: yes.	On the surface: yes.	On the surface: yes.
Bilingual/bicultural women on staff for adequate service by refugee women. (§ 400.156 (f))		Yes.	Yes.	Yes.

The three refugee resettlement agencies I examined in Takora are fulfilling the federal regulations for providing English language instruction to their refugees. However, more coordination is necessary between the agencies regarding English language instruction, and further analysis would be necessary to assess if the instruction is culturally and linguistically compatible with refugee clients' language and cultural background.

I did not contact any individuals at the national VOLAGs, to learn of their input regarding English language instruction with their affiliated local refugee resettlement agencies.

### **Moving from the Federal Level to the Local Level**

#### **Takora laws, regulations, and contracts for refugee resettlement, specifically ESL.**

As a reminder, I have changed the state name, state department name, and city name, though all other information is reported verbatim. Because of the authority given by Section 412(c)(2)(B) of the Immigration and Nationality Act, 45 CFR Part 400, [T.R.S] §41-1954 (A)(6) and (8), and the June 30, 1999 [Takora] Gubernatorial Designation of Authority, the Takora Economic Department (TED) provides funds for services to refugees in Takora. As the Takora Program for Refugee Resettlement (TPRR) is designed to assist clients to achieve economic independence and successfully transition to life in Takora. . . . New client arrivals . . . need

specialized help to become employed and self-sufficient prior to the expiration of their public cash assistance. It is essential that they receive client-specific services that address the barriers to self-sufficiency.

(Appendix K, section 1.5.2).

The Takora Program for Refugee Resettlement (TPRR) focuses services on the following five categories: Assistance, Training, Transportation, Childcare, and Health. Assistance

will be provided to refugees by non-profit refugee resettlement agencies that have entered into Cooperative Agreements with the United States Department of State as part of its Reception and Placement program . . . Childcare, Training, and Transportation areas each include a ‘Coordination’ service. The plan is to have one service provider for each service in [Metropolis] and one service provider for each service in [Cityopolis]”

(Appendix K, section 1.3)

The TPRR services are to

provide for the effective resettlement of refugees and to assist refugees to achieve economic self-sufficiency as quickly as possible. Services available include, but are not limited to: case management, *English as a second language*, relocation adjustment, job development and placement, coordination, consultation, transportation, program development, nursing services, dental assistance, medical assistance, unaccompanied minors



service, work adjustment training, job training and community education and information. (Appendix K, section 1.5.1)

**Takora Economic Department, ESL scope of work.**

English as a Second Language (ESL) classes fall within the Training category of the Refugee Resettlement Scope of Work with the Takora Program for Refugee Resettlement. A service provider submits a bid to purchase the contract to provide ESL instruction to refugees in Nalenga County. The specific parts of the binding contract that spell out the expectations is known as the “Scope of Work”, which contains the purpose, description, performance measures, and administrative, service, and reporting requirements for the service provider.

The mission of TED “promotes the safety, well-being, and self-sufficiency of children, adults, and families” (Appendix F, section 1.1) and the vision of TED is that “every child, adult and family in the State of [Takora] will be safe and economically secure” (Appendix F, section 1.2). The purpose of the Scope of Work is “to purchase English-as-a-Second-Language Training, hereinafter known as [English as a Second Language classes (ESL)] for individuals who meet the definition of a ‘refugee’” (Appendix F, section 2.1). [TRS] § 41-1954 (A)(6) gives TED the authority to “contract and incur obligations within the general scope of its activities and operations.” (Appendix F, section 2.2) Section 412(c)(2)(B) of the Immigration and Nationality Act is the law that gives the federal regulation 45 CFR Part 400 its authority, and the Gubernatorial Designation of Authority

empowers the Takora Economic Department (TED)—specifically the Takora Program of Refugee Resettlement Program (TPRR)—to make funds available to provide refugee services in Takora to fulfill the federal act and regulations.

In 2006, 965 refugees attended ESL classes, and it was projected that 600-800 refugees would receive ESL services in 2007. This Scope of Work awarded one contract for Nalenga County, which began on November 1, 2006 “with an initial contract term of eleven (11) months with extension options” (Appendix F, section 2.4). This Scope of Work remains in effect for Nalenga County as of April 2009. The ESL service is funded by formula grants, specifically the Formula Social Services and Targeted Assistance Grant from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR), as well as other funding sources as available. The funding for Nalenga County is approximately \$225,000 per twelve (12) month period. The service provides

instruction in practical English language skills . . . with an emphasis on English as it relates to obtaining and retaining employment including identifying and assessing the instructional needs of eligible refugees needing to become conversant and literate in the English language, and reporting the results to [Takora Economic Department / Takora Program for Refugee Resettlement]. (Appendix F, section 3.2)

To assess the ways BBSA is fulfilling the requirements of the ESL Scope of Work, as based on my interviews and observations, please see Tables 5 and 6.

Table 5

BBSA fulfilling the English as a Second Language Scope of Work contract with TED/TPRR: ESL performances, with stated “as measured by” assessment

<b>Scope of Work: ESL Requirements</b>	<b>As measured by</b>	<b>BBSA</b>
A service that provides instruction in practical English language skills (3.1)		Yes. Provides instruction and practical English skills.
<b>Performance (5.0)</b>		
ESL will improve refugees’ ability to communicate within the work environment and/or community (5.1)	- client testing and/or - confirmation from an employer and/or - agency staff (5.1)	- Yes client testing, unknown how effective. - unknown employer confirmation. - Reports are sent to liaisons at each refugee resettlement agency.
ESL will improve refugees’ likelihood of securing, retaining or enhancing employment (5.2)	- a sampling of individual and family self-sufficiency plans maintained by each agency (5.2)	- Unknown.
Refugees will acquire essential reading, writing and spelling skills (5.3)	- follow-up testing and - the number of refugees advancing at least one or more levels of ESL or successfully exiting ESL (5.3)	- There is testing, however validity, reliability, and results unknown. - Number of advancees and graduates: Unknown.
[ESL] will prepare refugees to satisfy English language and civics requirements for the United States Naturalization Exam (5.4)	- the number of refugees who pass a USCIS sample Naturalization Exam (5.4)	- Unknown how many refugees pass the sample USCIS Naturalization Exam. - Unknown how many refugees pass the actual exam.

Each of the performances stated in section five is held accountable by specific measures. This is stated above in Table 5. The administrative, service, and ESL requirements are not measured against specific outcomes, though the ESL provider is still accountable in other ways. This is stated below in Table 6.

Table 6

BBSA fulfilling the English as a Second Language Scope of Work contract with  
 TED/TPRR: Assessment of administrative, service, and ESL requirements

<b>Scope of Work: ESL Requirements</b>	<b>BBSA</b>
<b>Relevant administrative requirements (6.0)</b>	
To the maximum extent feasible, provide services by bilingual/ bicultural women on service agency staff to ensure adequate service access by female refugees, and that is culturally and linguistically compatible with refugees' languages and cultural backgrounds (6.1.8)	- Total of bilingual/ bicultural women on BBSA's staff: unknown. At BBSA, I interacted with five people: 2 women (1 bilingual, 1 unknown; 1 bicultural, 1 unknown.) 3 men (2 bilingual, 1 unknown; 3 unknown if bicultural)
Provide services that are appropriate to the language, culture and geographic location of the refugees (6.1.11)	Language appropriateness: unknown. Culture appropriateness: unknown. Geographic location appropriateness: Yes for ESL classes (18 of 21 classes). Questionable for citizenship preparation (2 classes) and employment training (1 class).
Ensure that women have the same opportunity as men to participate in services. (6.1.12)	Questionable. Of the classes I attended, I encountered approximately 30 total students (20 female, 10 male). Yes, females were attending. Ratio of female to male refugees, unknown. Participation of females warrants further study.
Maintain ongoing, individual, confidential case records for each refugee containing at least an individual service plan, a copy of the USCIS Form I-94 or other USCIS documentation that verifies client eligibility and documentation of services provided. (6.1.14)	Unknown. When a new student arrives, the teacher copies down the student's information from their ID (driver's license? I think so.) For most, but not all, classes, the students signed in, and marked which agency sponsors them. I think these lists are sent to Smith, the Administrator, and she follows up with each agency.
Consult no less than two (2) times annually with refugee resettlement agencies, MAAs, and other key community service providers to solicit input on refugees' English language needs. (6.1.16)	Likely yes. Smith, the ESL Administrator has liaisons at each agency. She is a member of TRAG, and interacts with the refugee resettlement community. Yes, she is interacting, but consulting? Implementing the input she receives? Unknown.
Consult with [TPRR] on the reasonableness and feasibility of implementing services to meet the refugees' [ESL] needs and implement upon direction of [TPRR]. (6.1.17)	Unknown. Smith, the ESL Administrator works with Gilmore, the TED Director of Refugee Services concerning ESL needs.

Table 6, continued.

<b>Scope of Work: ESL Requirements</b>	<b>BBSA</b>
<b>Service Requirements (7.0)</b>	
Identify and assess the instructional needs of eligible refugees needing to become functionally conversant and literate in the English language. (7.1.1)	Yes and no. Smith, the ESL Administrator conducts a placement test, and solicits feedback from instructors and students. However, it is questionable how the instructors administer the assessment tests, as for some, it is simply for “bureaucracy”.
Provide [ESL] to refugees in the following order of priority, except in certain individual extreme circumstances: (a) All newly arriving refugees during their first year in the U.S., (b) Refugees who are receiving cash assistance; (c) Unemployed refugees in need of services to retain employment or to attain economic independence; (d) Employed refugees in need of services to retain employment or to attain economic independence. (7.1.2)	Unknown. From what I saw, the teachers did not discriminate or classify students based on this. All who came to class were instructed equally. Perhaps this makes a difference regarding the priority and placement of the geographic location of the classes.
Provide [ESL] in group or individual settings such as classrooms or communal/agency settings that are conducive to learning English. (7.1.3)	Yes and no. Of 21 classes held at 12 locations, I observed at seven classes at three locations. These locations were communal settings. One location has experienced harassment, vandalism, and class disruption. One location sometimes serves as a storage room for extra food from a local food bank. And I recall the final location was dimly lit. However, learning was still taking place in all three locations. So, it is questionably how conducive these rooms were to learning.
Provide [ESL] to the fullest extent feasible outside normal working hours in order to avoid interference with refugee employment. (7.1.4)	Yes. Class times are offered in the mornings and evenings, often twice a day at some locations, so refugees can attend around their work schedules.
Provide [ESL] concurrently with employment or other employment-related services such as job search activities or job counseling. (7.1.5)	Yes. Often refugees attend class immediately after arrival, stop attending once employed, and then gradually begin attending again.
Supervised by a person who holds a Master’s Degree in teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (MATESOL) or English as a Second Language (ESL). (7.1.6)	Unknown. Samantha Smith has taught ESL for many years, in private schools, at the junior high, high school, and college level.

Table 6, continued.

<b>Scope of Work: ESL Requirements</b>	<b>BBSA</b>
<p>ESL instructor will meet, at a minimum, one of the following criteria for teaching English to speakers of other languages:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. A Bachelor’s Degree in teaching ESL or teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL).</li> <li>2. A Bachelor’s Degree in education, English, linguistics, applied linguistics, or bilingual/bicultural studies; and [a Takora] Adult Education Certificate in ELT/ESL/ESOL.</li> <li>3. A Bachelor’s Degree with a major other than those specified in paragraph (2) above; and one year of experience in teaching ESL in an accredited institution; and [a Takora] Adult Education Certificate in ELT/ESL/ESOL.</li> <li>4. Possession of [a Takora] Adult Education Certificate in ELT/ESL/ESOL instruction with three years of progressively responsible experience in a program of language instruction for non-English speakers. (7.1.6)</li> </ol>	<p>Not a one-to-one correlation between stated criteria, Smith’s description, and actual background of the teachers.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Samantha says: “All of our teachers are [Takora] certified to teach ESL or adult education. So they have to have at least five to seven years of experience teaching ESL and it would be better if they did have some experience with refugees. All of our teachers do. Some of our teachers were actually refugees in the past.”</li> <li>- She has 12 instructors teaching 21 classes. Of the three I interviewed:</li> <li>- Ryan’s background: Bachelors in psychology, masters in education; studied lots of language: Japanese, German, Spanish, a little French. He has taught ESL for 15 years. Currently retired, he has only taught here. Yet he later said he has only taught refugees, and he began with Amnesty International.</li> <li>- Daisy: reluctant to share her background.</li> <li>- Anthony’s background: Majored in microbiology, began but has not completed a masters in ESL. Taught overseas for several years. Lived in Central Asia for many years. Came to Takora in 2001, has taught at Big River CC and BBSA since 2001, has taught at BBSA under three ESL Administrators. He has experience teaching refugees and Hispanic speakers.</li> </ul>
<p>A trained ELT/ESL/ESOL volunteer may provide one-on-one volunteer instruction/ tutoring in English for Speakers of Other Languages and in Basic Literacy for such special needs as instruction to homebound individuals, citizenship seekers, etc. (7.1.6.1)</p>	<p>Unknown if this is coordinated and offered by BBSA.</p>

Table 6, continued.

<b>Scope of Work: ESL Requirements</b>	<b>BBSA</b>
<p>Correlate job-related English language instruction with daily work tasks and orientation that will enable the refugee to enter the job market and/or that will lead to greater job potential. (7.1.7)</p>	<p>In the seven classes I observed, I did not note explicit correlation between what happened in the classroom and the students' jobs. In my notes, twice I noted work mentioned:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Teacher asks, "How much unemployment?" Student answers "too much".</li> <li>- Present continuous tense: "I work" becomes "I am working".</li> </ul> <p>However, I was not specifically looking for explicit ties to employment in the classroom. My notes reflect mostly life examples: i.e., weather, time, clothing, colors.</p>
<p>Submit [ESL] progress documentation for active participants to their respective refugee resettlement agency no less than quarterly. (7.1.8)</p>	<p>Unknown.</p> <p>Samantha has the instructors test three times a year with the literacy test.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- One instructor tests the students three to four times a year. Yet during the class, the instructor seemed nervous <i>for</i> the students. "We didn't go over the workbook. When the test comes, that's what we'll be doing – writing in and filling in the answers... The test is just for me. For you and me. It's not for [BBSA]. Just for me. So we see how well you do... What I'm going to do, instead of giving you the test. We'll review Thursday, then look at it over the weekend. Next week, we'll do it in class. This should prepare you."</li> <li>- Nothing is mentioned in another course that pertains to ESL progress. Not surprising, as this course is [Preparation for Citizenship Exam] class.</li> <li>- Another teacher says, "Honestly, in this class, I mean I'm not giving them an assessment. It's just... uhh... I mean we don't, [Samantha] wants us to give some silly test that's SO... I guess it's for bureaucracy more than anything, but it's worthless, if you ask me. They can't even, they can't even get past page one. They can't even put their name on some of them. So why give them the test? I don't assess. I just, we just. I'm supposed to, I really don't have a whole lot of choice. They give me this, these copies from this book and that's what I got to use. I'm a little bit hands, a little bit tied."</li> </ul> <p>Later, as the instructor hands out the test that we did together as a class, the instructor smiles and says as an aside to me, "It's called bureaucracy".</p>

Table 6, continued.

<b>Scope of Work: ESL Requirements</b>	<b>BBSA</b>
Assure that [ESL] instructors receive a minimum of ten (10) hours of professional development annually to expand upon their [ESL] techniques and skills. (7.1.9)	Questionable. - Samantha says, “I have staff meetings with them, probably three times a year, formal ones where they come here, but I’m always talking with them via email and I do sit down with the teachers and I will go to their class” and “...with the trainings we talk about what can we do, maybe we need more colorful pictures, maybe we need more activities, things like that, so I do I do that, in order to find out what’s going on. Kind of you know, like the barometer, to find out what’s going on with the class.” - Regarding support, Ryan says “Training yes, evaluation yes. Irene gives materials, makes suggestions, and gives lots of encouragement.” - Regarding support, Anthony says, “We have these once a year, three times a year, I don’t know, what do they call them? Staff development? But honestly, [laughter/mumble]. Prior days, okay, it really was. When I was with [Big River]—I am with [Big River]—kindof ran on. I don’t go to their staff developments anymore. I’m not sure if they even have them.”
<b>Relevant Reporting Requirements (8.0)</b>	
Quarterly Reports that includes client statistical information (Exhibit 1) and a narrative describing activities that occurred during the quarter (Exhibit 2). (8.1.1)	Unknown.
Provide an annual qualitative and quantitative analysis with indicators of the effectiveness of the [ESL]. (8.1.2)	Unknown.

The emphasis of Tables 5 and 6 is intended to show how well the BBSA ESL program is fulfilling its’ contract, and meeting the terms of the Scope of Work. It is difficult to answer with a simple “yes” or “no” whether BBSA is fulfilling their contract. According to Smith, they are fulfilling the terms of their contract. And



yet, through my interviews and observations with the instructors, in many areas components of the BBSA ESL program are sorely lacking. An in-depth analysis of *all* components of the BBSA ESL program is necessary, to remove my unknowns, and to ascertain the effectiveness of the ESL program.

### **Moving From Documents to Interviews and Observations**

After examining the written words of the Immigration and Nationality Act, the Code of Federal Regulations, and the state of Takora ESL Scope of Work contract, it is important to hear the voices and experiences of individuals involved with refugee resettlement. The ORR works with Mark Gilmore, state Director of Refugee Services in Takora. Gilmore works for TED, and is responsible for TPRR. He has the “responsibility and authority—though sometimes [his] authority is hard to enforce—to coordinate public and private resources to resettle refugees” (M. Gilmore, personal communication, April 1, 2009). Gilmore works with the refugee resettlement agencies in Takora, specifically in Nalenga and Kantena counties. In Nalenga, Blue Bonnet Social Assistance, E. Owl Social Assistance, Purple Sage Social Assistance, and Refugee Resettlement, Incorporated are the refugee resettlement agencies responsible for resettling refugees. I interviewed Gilmore, and learned about refugee resettlement and the ways the following agencies are addressing the English language needs of refugee clients at Blue Bonnet Social Assistance, Purple Sage Social Assistance, and

Refugee Resettlement, Incorporated. Please see Appendix C for the interview questions I asked Mark Gilmore.

**Interview with Mark Gilmore, state Director of Refugee Services.**

Mark Gilmore passionately spoke with me about refugees, the history of resettlement, the importance of integration, and learning English. Refugees are “the residue of broken empires” (personal communication, April 1, 2009). Refugee resettlement “never will stop and get ‘perfect’ – it’s crisis by nature. The US is taking in less than 1% of the refugees in the world. We are expected to deal with problems that aren’t being solved in the world” (M. Gilmore, personal communication, April 1, 2009). As I stated in chapter three, the UNHCR has identified 32.9 million *people of concern*, less than one percent of all refugees are resettled, and for example, of the approximate 71,000 people resettled in 2006, the United States resettled approximately 41,000 refugee cases. The US Refugee program is very complex, the needs of individual refugees are great, and the program is intended to “get the refugees employed so they are not eligible for public cash assistance” (M. Gilmore, personal communication, April 1, 2009). Refugees are admitted purely on humanitarian reasons, yet once here, the refugees must become self-sufficient. Not only is the US refugee resettlement complex, it is “tied to anti-poverty. The system needs to be tied to refugee protection” (M. Gilmore, personal communication, April 1, 2009). The goal ought to be meeting the refugees’ very complex needs. They come from many different countries,

many have suffered the results of trauma, many have poor health, and many come from cultures that are very different from the American culture. Refugees need their needs met in ways that are culturally and linguistically appropriate. Though “we are a human services provider, we deal with political implications, and we spend a great deal of the time explaining the program, why it is merited, our need for volunteers, etc” (M. Gilmore, personal communication, April 1, 2009).

**Specifically, Gilmore’s perspective on learning English.**

Gilmore knows it is very important for refugees to learn English, so they can become a citizen, be competitive in the challenging job market, and navigate systems. As he says, “Everyone agrees: English is a *huge* need. Yet English is competing with so many other needs, and we haven’t even scratched the surface of these needs” (personal communication, April 1, 2009). When the refugee and client counselor are creating a self-sufficiency plan to meet the refugees’ needs, they must identify the barriers to employment and address how these barriers will be overcome. If English is a barrier to becoming employed, then English assistance can be required as a part of the family self-sufficiency plan. However, the client counselor may simply “recommend” attending the ESL class. The client counselor has some leverage—if attending class is in the self-sufficiency plan—this can be tied to the cash assistance they receive.

Refugees should bear responsibility if they’re going to class and if they’re learning. They should be accountable if they do or don’t attend class. The

plan is a joint process, and to not fulfill it can be a breach on the refugee's part. Our goal is for the agencies not to breach their side of the contract" (M. Gilmore, personal communication, April 1, 2009).

When I asked him to share his vision for the English language instruction program, he shared his hopes for the future:

I'd like a more robust program. We need to be more flexible with the needs of our refugees – some are working, some are homebound, we need to consider ESL approaches to serve survivors of torture, I'd like more vocational and jobsite ESL classes, perhaps resources through corporations and foundations. The thrust, on employment, can we be more creative to address ESL needs with employers?

(M. Gilmore, personal communication, April 1, 2009)

And tied to this, if there were no obstacles to learning English, he would like to see refugees "acquire enough English to function and to sustain themselves, [and] have adequate English to navigate and make decisions in their family" (M. Gilmore, personal communication, April 1, 2009). He would like to see "lots more classes in close proximity to where they live, covering the English they need...more vocationally based, [with] more emphasis on oral skills and the ability to speak" (M. Gilmore, personal communication, April 1, 2009). And finally, if there were no obstacles, he would like to see the ESL program "available to all people who want to study English [and] it would clearly correspond with their goals in their

plans and the goals would match and we'd have resources" (M. Gilmore, personal communication, April 1, 2009).

### **Refugee Resettlement Agencies Address Language Needs of Clients**

Mark Gilmore collaborates with the four refugee resettlement agencies in Metropolis, Takora. Specific to my research, it is most useful to begin by discussing BBSA, as they are responsible for providing English language instruction to refugees in Nalenga County.

#### **Blue Bonnet Social Assistance: Providing ESL instruction to refugees.**

Blue Bonnet Social Assistance (BBSA), which provides social assistance to many different individuals, not solely refugees, submitted a contract to teach English to refugees. Their contract was approved, i.e. they won the bid, and they are responsible for providing English language instruction to refugees in Nalenga County. They provide the classes by going out to the refugees, and holding the classes in their apartment complexes. Many of the refugees are resettled by the four refugee resettlement agencies in nearby apartment complexes. BBSA had the contract with TED to provide English language instruction to refugees for more than fifteen years, then PSSA was responsible for providing ESL instruction to refugees for a few years, and now the English language program has been with BBSA since 2006. I interviewed Samantha Smith, the ESL administrator for BBSA (see Appendix G for the interview questions I asked Smith), and three BBSA ESL

instructors (see Appendix H for the interview questions I sought to ask each instructor), and observed several BBSA ESL classes as well.

In 2006, Samantha Smith was hired to administer ESL instruction to refugees. Smith decided to start small with six classes, and as the program became stronger, add more classes as needed. Currently, BBSA offers twenty-one classes for refugees. These classes are held at twelve different locations, with one to three classes held at each location. The courses are Basic Level, Low Level, Mid Level, High Level, Even-Higher Level, Vocational ESL, and Preparation for Citizenship Exam. Currently, there are four Basic Levels, eight Low Levels, six Mid Levels, one Vocational ESL class that is taught at the job site and only refugee employees are permitted to attend, and two Preparation for Citizenship Exam classes that are taught at two different apartment complexes. There are no High Level or Even-Higher Level classes offered this year, as the refugees who attended these classes last year have moved away. Classes are offered in the mornings and evenings, and one class is offered on the weekend. Most of the classes are held in different apartment complexes in Metropolis. One class is held at the employment site. The apartment complexes partner with BBSA, and allow BBSA to use a clubhouse, office, or room in the complex for free. (S. Smith, personal communication, February 23, 2009)

Regarding my observations, I attempted to observe one Basic Level class with Ryan from 5-6pm, yet no students showed up. I also attempted to observe a

Basic Level class on a Friday from 2-4pm, yet Samantha and I miscommunicated regarding the class times, as it was actually 12-2pm. I observed the Low Level with Anthony from 6-8pm four times, the Mid Level with Ryan from 6-8pm once, and the Preparation for Citizenship Exam with Daisy from 6-8pm once.

The classes are fluid, with no start or end date. The levels change frequently to reflect and meet the needs of the students. This is managed with “constant communication” (S. Smith, personal communication, February 23, 2009). If students are struggling, or half of the students seem to be at a different level, Smith will split the class and form a lower level and an upper level. I attended a Basic Level class that had been recently formed, and none of the students showed up. As students improve their language skills, students or classes are moved up to the next level. I observed new students join two classes. Most students attend on a fairly consistent basis. One teacher shared they attend “if they like you [and] if they see you care” (R., personal communication, March 10, 2009). Another teacher found their attendance declines when they start working. (A., personal communication, March 12, 2009) For one class, I saw a student arrive who had been absent for seven months.

Smith said the classes are full, with ten to fifteen students per class. Teachers shared that their class ranges go from seven to twelve students per class. Indeed, this is the range I observed. 1300 refugee clients have come through the program since 2006, and approximately 400 students attend each month. Once

students graduate or complete the program, they are encouraged to attend local community colleges for further education, if they so desire.

As Smith is the administrator of the English language training program at BBSA, she prefers to work closely with others in the community. Not only is she involved with her teachers and familiar with their students, she also works with individuals at each of the resettlement agencies, TPRR and Gilmore, and other organizations connected with refugee resettlement. She speaks with liaisons at each of the four refugee resettlement agencies—BBSA, EOSA, PSSA, and RRI—on a weekly basis. One client counselor at each agency has the additional responsibility of being a liaison with Smith. They discuss the clients, what is going on with them, and what the clients need. They also discuss the “training classes . . . so we know what they need to train on, what kind of jobs are out there right now” (S. Smith, personal communication, February 23, 2009).

However, I am unsure what training classes Smith is speaking of. She is only offering one VESL class, and only refugee employees at this particular company are able to attend the class. And regarding the weekly conversation between Smith and the liaison concerning clients/students, keep in mind the refugee resettlement agencies are responsible for providing services for *all* refugees who have arrived in the previous five years (granted, in descending order of priority, with new arrivals being the most important). Smith noted that 400 clients attend English classes each month, and 1,000 clients attend the ESL program



throughout the year. However, over *two thousand* clients are resettled in Takora *each year*.<sup>18</sup> I am highly skeptical that Smith is truly able to attend to the language needs of *all* of these refugees. How well can she speak with each liaison about every single one of these clients? I am unsure of the secondary migration rate of refugees in Takora. If there was no secondary migration, BBSA is responsible for providing English language instruction to 10,000 refugee clients. Remember, the ESL Scope of Work realistically notes that in 2006, 965 refugees attended ESL classes, and it was projected that 600-800 refugees would receive ESL services in 2007. And remember the ORR 2006 *Annual Report to Congress* found of a random sampling of refugees, only 23.7 percent attended English classes in the past year, yet only 13.7 percent were currently attending English class. So, the rates of refugee clients participating in Metropolis' English language training program fit within both the Scope of Work and that national average, yet I am still troubled that Smith made it sound as though she and the liaison at each resettlement agency are able to speak weekly about (all) of the language needs of the refugee clients at each resettlement agency.

There are twelve teachers teaching twenty-one classes. I am unsure of the course load for each teacher. I observed three of the twelve teachers: Ryan, Anthony, and Daisy. Regarding their experience and certification, Smith said, "All of our teachers are [Takora] certified to teach ESL or adult education. So they have

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<sup>18</sup> 2,415 refugees were resettled in Takora in 2004, 2,182 in 2005, 2,056 in 2006, and 2,394 in 2007. Data unavailable for 2008, 2009, and 2010.

to have at least five to seven years of experience teaching ESL, and it would be better if they did have some experience with refugees” (S. Smith, personal communication, February 23, 2009). Some are former refugees, so they are familiar with some of the experiences of their students. Above, I stated the teacher experience requirements from the Scope of Work, the contract BBSA has with TED. Yet as I noted, one teacher was reluctant to share her background, and though the other two have taught for many years, neither said they have a certificate when I asked them about their background.

I am unsure of Ryan, Daisy, and Anthony’s professions. Though Ryan shared he has taught ESL for 15 years, and he is currently retired, he has only taught at BBSA. Later he said he has only taught refugees, and he began with Amnesty International. Daisy did not share her background. Anthony shared a little more, in that he taught overseas, lived in Central Asia for many years, and came to Takora in 2001. He has taught ESL to Hispanic students at Big River Community College, and is currently teaching a GED course at Big River Community College, in addition to the classes at BBSA. He has taught at BBSA since 2001, with three different ESL Administrators. During the day, he works at a data entry job. For the three teachers I interviewed, their job with BBSA seemed a part time job, and secondary to another profession. I did not have the opportunity to clarify their backgrounds, professions, and teaching credentials.

*In the classroom.*

All teachers use the *New Interchange* curriculum, which was published between 1997 to 2000 by Cambridge. This series has four levels, and is “for adult and young-adult learners of English, [it] teaches students to use English for everyday situations and purposes related to school, work, social life, and leisure.” The curriculum “uses contemporary, real-world topics to introduce conversational language and place grammar in communicative contexts” ([Description of the textbook *New Interchange* (with J. Hull & S. Proctor), (n.d.), para. 1).). Instructors are permitted to incorporate other additional materials into the classroom, as long as they “stay with the basic curriculum” (S. Smith, personal communication, February 23, 2009). The *New Interchange* materials provide a foundation and sense of continuity for students if they move to a different class. The common curriculum is “something that looked the same when they went to different classes, so that they could feel it really is a school” (S. Smith, personal communication, February 23, 2009). Students receive a certificate when they finish, though I am not sure the difference between what students receive when completing each class and graduating from the program.

In addition to the *New Interchange* curriculum, Smith also incorporates teaching safety issues, health issues, available community service, and cultural issues. She encourages students to work together, get to know one another, and help their neighbors. AmeriCorps Vistas, who are volunteers with BBSA, put

together the above information, and Smith and the AmeriCorps Vistas teach this information to various classes.

The students are assessed and tested three times every year. I observed Ryan being visibly nervous for his students regarding an upcoming test, and reassuring the students they would review the test in class, look at it over the weekend, and then do the test in class. I am not sure if this is one of the three assessments, yet if it is, I question the validity and reliability of the results. Anthony scoffed at tests that BBSA requires he administer: he calls the test “bureaucracy” and goes through it with his students. He believes the tests are “worthless,” as some of the students cannot even put their names on their test, and other students cannot make it past page one. Again, I question the validity and reliability of the results of the test.

According to Smith, classes are “fun, very active, and not boring” and the instructors are “really upbeat people” (personal communication, February 23, 2009). Of the three instructors I saw, one was very upbeat, one was upbeat enough, and one was not upbeat. Anthony moved about the room, the class changed activities frequently, and the last part of class was filled with singing. There was much laughter in his class. He created—and everyone sang—a catchy song about the material covered in the chapter. He used shapes (circle, triangle, rectangle, etc) to note different parts of the sentence: subject, verb, object, etc, and as he wrote the additional sentences for the song, he would draw these shapes

around the words. Each class, the students would review the lines from the last class as well as adding a couple lines for the current class. A year later I can easily recall and hum parts of the song “. . . They are riding on a bike!” that described with action verbs twenty different pictures on a page. Daisy moved around, changed the pace of instruction, and switched activities to keep the students engaged. The students had a break for prayer.

However, I did not find Ryan, the third instructor, to be “upbeat”. He remained at the front of the class, the class was quite teacher-centered, and he did most of the talking. The students copied what he wrote on the board, and answered questions that he posed. He went down the line, back and forth, asking a question to each of the seven students. There was no break. At 7:20 when the instructor was shuffling papers looking for a particular handout, some students were drumming their fingers on the table, and there were tired faces around the room. The instructor checked for understanding by saying “Any questions?” yet received no answers, “Everybody understand? Good.” and received no answers, and “Is it starting to seem easy? Yes?” and received a few smiles and nods. During the interview he stated that students are eager to learn, students tell him what their needs are, and he is constantly asking questions to assess if the students are learning. As I only observed one class with Ryan, I cannot speak to the whether this class was or was not typical of his teaching.

*Preparation for Citizenship Exam class.*

The Preparation for Citizenship Exam (PCE) class is intended to help the clients with the naturalization process, as they apply to become citizens of the United States. The instructor for PCE class uses a handout entitled “Current USCIS Test Questions”, and a CD that covers American history, civics, and politics. Daisy said she would never turn a student away, no matter how long they have been in the country, even though the state contract and federal regulations state all services must conclude at seven years. Though surely this material will help the students when they take the citizenship exam, I question how well the class will prepare the students for the other parts of the process. Daisy has never been through the experience of taking the exam, let alone seen the actual exam; nor does she help the students with their naturalization application. I do not know if she works with client counselors, or provides additional information on *how* to become a citizen. I am unsure how most students learn of this class, as most clients have a closed case at six months. It is unknown how many refugees resume contact with their resettlement agency between six months and five years, at which time they are eligible to apply for citizenship.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> Please see Bloemraad (2002), who notes the stark differences between Canadian and American naturalization rates for refugees. Refugees are far more likely to become a citizen and acquire citizenship faster in Canada than in the United States. “Canadian policy, as epitomized by official multiculturalism, is interventionist and encourages Canadian citizenship. The United States, in contrast, embraces an individualist, anti-state ethos (Lipset, 1990) and has no official stance on immigrant integration” (Bloemraad, 2002, p. 214).

*Issues with learning: transportation, childcare, and distractions.*

Smith reported they have no discipline problems, and that the students work together, even though sometimes the students need to overcome their initial nervousness working with someone from a different culture. Though I did not observe discipline “problems”, I saw Daisy redirect and remind a very loud distracted student to use English and focus on copying the words on the board. Anthony shared once he had a class with several students with very bad attitudes, and “one day I had to get tough with one kid, and that was not a good night.” (A., personal communication, March 12, 2009)

Transportation is not provided, as the classes are held in apartment complexes. For many refugees, they simply walk out their door, across the complex, and into the class. Yet for others, they must provide their own transportation to reach the class. For the Low Level class, four students arrived who had walked thirty minutes to reach the class. As class was from 6pm-8pm, this meant the students would be walking home in the dark as well. During the interview with Anthony, the Low Level teacher, he shared that a class he formerly taught was cancelled, and the nearest class was three miles away:

What to do though? The majority of them don't have cars. So they can't go. So what are they going to do? Walk? I mean, walking isn't a foreign thing to them, but it's at night. Are you going to walk two miles to go the nearest class? The nearest class is... two and half, three miles [away].

Yeah, so, oh well. So that was kind of a bummer, but what can you do  
(personal communication, March 12, 2009).

For the Preparation for Citizenship Exam, it was dizzying the way the students trickled in and out of the class. Class began at 6pm, and eight students were present. Most of the students had trickled in by 6:30. Prayers were about 7pm, as many of the students were Muslim, so this class paused for salah, their evening prayer. Some students left and did not return after prayers. Another student left at 7:30pm and the teacher said, "Drive safely". I wondered how far away her home is. Another student *arrived*, just after her classmate departed, at 7:30pm and when the teacher said, "You're late", the student laughed, smiled, and replied, "I know". For the Mid Level class, a man came for a woman at 6:55. She said, "I'm sorry" to Ryan, he said "No problem", and she smiled and departed. Arrivals and departures were an issue for the three BBSA teachers I observed. Students came late, left early, were pulled from class by their family members, walked to class across the apartment complex, walked a couple miles to reach class, and drove anywhere from five to forty minutes to reach their class.

Childcare is not provided, though refugees are encouraged to have their spouses, friends or neighbors watch their children. One apartment manager provides a program for the children that often overlaps with the ESL classes held in this apartment complex. Parents are encouraged to not bring children to the class, as it is distracting for everyone. The lack of childcare is challenging for



refugees. Of the six BBSA classes I observed, a baby was worn during a class, a child knocked on the door needing his mother during another class, and children were present in the third class. Though the children were playing quietly in a corner of the classroom, at one point a child dropped a phone and the room went silent: the steady hum of students working ceased and all eyes turned to look at the children in the corner.

Cell phones rang and disrupted multiple classes. Sometimes the students stepped out to answer, sometimes the students answered while in the classroom, and others did not answer their phone. Some phones rang multiple times before the teacher asked the student to silence his or her phone.

***Rascals and scoundrels: harassment of students.***

One of the worst disruptions with learning occurred at the Road Runner Apartment complex, during the Low Level class. Some of the other residents of the complex had been harassing the clubhouse during class: throwing something through a window, opening the door and throwing something into the room, and shooting a bb gun at the closed door. Each of these incidents happened during class on a separate night. One evening when I was observing, the clubhouse door flung open and a soda bottle was thrown into the room. I jumped. Anthony dashed to the door, and watched the “scoundrels” run away in the darkness. I was too startled to even notice the facial expressions and reactions of the students. Anthony downplayed the event and continued teaching, though I know all of our

minds were still thinking of the disruption to the class. Afterwards, when Anthony was straightening the classroom, he picked up the two-liter soda bottle and muttered, “Rascals!” And when I asked him to share more about what had happened, he listed the ways the classroom has been harassed, and concluded by saying “...it just startles you, and they’re just scoundrels.” These students are refugees who have experienced trauma, torture, and war, and many struggle with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), depression, and other psychological ailments. As McDonald (2000) noted, trauma negatively affects learning.

***The goals of faculty members.***

When asked, “What is your end goal?” Smith responded, “Their end goal is to be self-sufficient” (personal communication, February 23, 2009). Note the change in emphasis—I asked for *her* end goal, and she responded with *their* end goal. And even when pressed to define “self sufficiency”, she spins around a circle without answering the question:

Within a certain amount of time they will not be on any type of assistance whatsoever either from us or from the government... The idea is that when they come we give them all the knowledge, all the help we can...help them do all of that stuff, and then within a certain amount of time they become more and more self sufficient. As far as English classes, they can come to English classes for up to five years working on their citizenship in that point, but we hope that with the training and all of that stuff within four

to six months they can go out and get a job continuing to come to English class. We try to schedule around them, if it's in the morning, if it's in the evening, I do change the schedules every once in a while if someone needs it. But that's my idea of self-sufficiency (personal communication, February 23, 2009).

I pressed her further, "With self sufficiency, would they be proficient in English after four to six months? Or after five years?" Smith responded, "No, not after four to six months. Well, after five years of course I'd like them to be as proficient in English as possible. Do I find some that are not? Yes" (personal communication, February 23, 2009). I quoted her, almost in her entirety, because I *did not* hear her idea of self-sufficiency. I heard vague references to the ways that refugee resettlement agencies provide guidance, how state and federal funds provide monetary assistance, when clients may attend English class, and how she schedules the classes, but I *did not* hear Samantha Smith's goal for the clients who attend the ESL program she administers, *nor* did I hear her own definition of self-sufficiency. There is a serious problem when one cannot explain or elaborate on their goal, or actually define and explain "self-sufficiency".

Previously in our interview, I said "So you want them proficient in reading, writing, speaking, and listening?" and she responded as follows.

Yes, but I'm a realist and I know it's not always going to happen.... Their main goal is English, and they really do work at that. We have had lots

of...students do very well, and they have progressed and they have learned enough to *be* self sufficient. I always encourage them, yes of course, keep coming to class, and if they wish to go on to higher degree, and [have] the ability, then I always encourage them to do that (S. Smith, personal communication, February 23, 2009).

So, at least earlier in our interview she had said a little more about self-sufficiency, and responded further regarding English proficiency.

When I asked the teachers, “What are your goals when teaching your students?” Ryan responded, “To see them understand and succeed” (personal communication, March 10, 2009). He kept his emphasis on his students, and he succinctly answered my question. Anthony gave a much longer answer:

You know honestly, I’d like to see them—somehow one of the ways they test educational gains is if they’ve got a job. But now, it’s harder and harder to get the job. So...my goal [is] that *they make some progress* [emphasis added]. Whether they become level two in this class, I doubt it, because...you’re meeting two hours—not even two hours [each class]—four hours a week, if they come both times...I keep my expectations sort of semi-low so I don’t become too frustrated (personal communication, March 12, 2009).

I was unable to ask Daisy her goals for her students. Concerning what they focus on in the classroom, Ryan shared, “Grammar, vocabulary, and role play, so they

can talk with each other. Using the tape / disc, so they can listen and answer questions. Matching words. We play some games. I remind them, I want to hear their best English. I want perfection. If they are competing with one another, then I can't give them much help" (personal communication, March 10, 2009).

Anthony's students' language needs are pronunciation, grammar, speaking, and listening. He focuses on being "quite repetitive". He tells his students, "Eat your words. Put English in your mouth" as he encourages them to always work on speaking and practicing English (personal communication, March 12, 2009).

***Reflections by BBSA faculty on ESL students.***

Smith has found the students' greatest linguistic need is listening: "Their listening is very, very poor" (personal communication, February 23, 2009) and their writing is poor as well. Regarding their language learning needs, Smith has found it to be literacy. Because of the great culture shock in the beginning, many refugee clients want to cover the basic parts of English, even if they already know parts of this. At the beginning, all classes cover "a lot of pronunciation, a lot of phonics...the very basics" (S. Smith, personal communication, February 23, 2009). Yet the more advanced ESL students want "higher level stuff: they want a lot of cultural level [and] cultural orientation" (S. Smith, personal communication, February 23, 2009). Smith has found time constraints, and needing to do so much in such a brief period of time, to be one of the greatest factors affecting clients as they are trying to learn English. Consistency, the classes having a similar feel, the

teachers and classes are *always* there, the support of teachers and Samantha, and the availability of materials all contribute to helping the students learn English. Smith has found the detractions—the things that pull the students away from learning English—to be time constraints, family needs, and other things going on in their lives. “The first year is very, very difficult” (S. Smith, personal communication, February 23, 2009). Often they go to school until they start to work, stop attending school, and eventually return to school.

Oddly, though she said the classes are always there, and one knows if it is scheduled for a certain time, it will happen at this time, I did not find this to be the case. Regarding a particular Basic class, in February she told me it was from 12-2pm on Fridays. On April 9<sup>th</sup> I sent Samantha an email asking if I could attend. I received no response. I emailed again on May 5<sup>th</sup>, she responded on May 8<sup>th</sup> and said the class has changed and is from 2-4pm on Fridays. I went on Friday, May 15<sup>th</sup>, yet there was no class. I emailed her on May 17<sup>th</sup> saying there was no class. She promptly responded and said it was on Friday from 12-2pm as scheduled. And when I was assisting with PSSA, a student requested I ask Isabella (their instructor) to call him, to let him know whether or not the English class would be happening that evening, as the class had recently been cancelled for a break. So, because of these two instances, I question if the classes always happen as scheduled.

Regarding the teachers' reflections, Anthony has found his students are motivated by rhythm, and helping one another. And the most rewarding part of teaching is "if they get it", and their sense of humor and laughing together as a class. (A., personal communication, March 12, 2009)

Ryan has found students do not attend due to work, childcare, and family problems. His students are eager to learn. They help one another. He finds out what their needs are by the students telling him their needs. He would not answer my interview question what his students' language learning needs were, because he felt we had already covered this question. (We had covered similar questions, but not this specific question.) Their home situation, their mental and emotional state, their employment status, and if they can pay their bills: these are the factors that affect acquiring English. He helps his students become "self sufficient" by helping them, however they need it. Sometimes he will refer his students to BBSA, sometimes he will help them fill out forms. The most challenging aspect of his job is helping the students who need his help more than other students. The most rewarding part of his job is seeing the students really succeed, get jobs, really speak English, and coming back later to say thanks. His ideal language learning situation would be one in which everyone understands, does their work, and asks lots of questions. (R., personal communication, March 10, 2009) I did not have a chance to ask Daisy any of the reflection questions.

## **Expanding the Research: PSSA and RRI**

After my requests were either denied or ignored for interviewing BBSA's refugee clients, BBSA's Refugee Resettlement Chair, and / or an additional ESL instructor so my results could be broadly comprehensive for this organization. I expanded my research to interview other individuals connected to refugee resettlement, and to learn if others were teaching English to refugees in Metropolis.

### **Purple Sage Social Assistance: Interview with Amy Burns.**

I e-mailed Amy Burns, the Resettlement chair at Purple Sage Social Assistance, and she promptly responded that I could meet with her. Amy Burns is female, bilingual, and unknown if bicultural. Please see Appendix D for the questions I asked Amy Burns. In our interview, she thoroughly answered my questions, and set up opportunities for me to work with other members of PSSA. At PSSA, I observed a lobby filled with clients (PSSA provides many forms of social assistance, not solely for refugees), refugee client counselors speaking with refugee clients after they had moved from the initial lobby, and a very busy office of many different individuals bustling to meet the needs of their clients.

Currently, PSSA's refugee clients come from Iraq, Burma, Bhutan, Afghanistan, Somalia, Sudan, Sierra Leone, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Burundi, Cuba, and Colombia. 680 clients are coming to PSSA in 2009. The average length of time to process a refugee is seven to ten years, however a few



refugee groups, such as many Iraqis, are being processed within three to four months. Refugees have widely ranging language backgrounds. The language needs change frequently, and as the groups change, so do the language needs. Once PSSA have staffing for a particular language, they may or may not continue to need someone on staff who speaks this language. Refugees are coming from very rural areas, and some may only speak a rare tribal dialect. PSSA seeks to hire former refugees as staff, as former refugees can help meet different language needs, as well as fulfilling their goal of promoting self-sufficiency with refugees becoming employed. PSSA currently has speakers of 22 to 24 languages on staff. Sometimes PSSA elicits help from local ethnic communities or local universities for translation and interpretation purposes. Another way to translate for a client is to utilize a language line, yet sometimes they do not have speakers of uncommon dialects or languages, and it costs \$45 per phone call. Former refugees also help bridge cultural differences, as they can serve as a guide and resource for others on staff regarding different people groups. Important reasons for refugees learning English include, obviously, “the more English you speak, the better advanced you’ll be in terms of job opportunities, and being able to navigate through the system” (A. Burns, personal communication, April 13, 2009), as well as being able to go independently to access services, to advocate for themselves, advance with employment, have more meaningful employment after a period of time, and pass the citizenship exam, which is in English. The citizenship exam is important

because “if your goal is for individuals to become productive members of our society, citizenship is one of the goals” (A. Burns, personal communication, April 13, 2009). Once the refugees pass the exam, the refugees have “the final and full protection . . . once they’re citizens, they have the full protections as anyone else who is a US citizen” (A. Burns, personal communication, April 13, 2009)

Though I knew there are multiple ways to define *self-sufficiency*, I had not realized this is something that is negotiated and defined by the client counselor and the refugee client. When I asked what happens if a refugee does not become self sufficient, Burns responded that it depends how I define self-sufficiency, as most families *do* become self sufficient, it is simply a matter of when. She noted that typically self-sufficiency is defined in terms of employment, and being able to care for themselves independently. This is written in the plan between the client counselor and the refugee client. However, she shared an example of another way of defining self sufficiency: if the person has a medical illness, part of the plan “might be being able to manage their care independently . . . going to the doctors independently, accessing the services independently” (A. Burns, personal communication, April 13, 2009) If a person is employable, their goal is to be employed by 180 days. In 2007, it typically took 30 days to three months; now in 2009 it takes two months to six months to become employed. Refugees need to have all of the information

as early as possible *in their language* so they understand the importance of gaining citizenship as quickly as possible, and [need to] go to ESL as quickly as possible. . . . It's not just about we want you to learn English but it's also . . . this is part of what needs to be done in order for you to take care of yourself and . . . for those that are dependent on the services...the reality is it will be lost after seven years (A. Burns, personal communication, April 13, 2009).

Housing, employment, and learning English are the top three priorities for refugees. The refugee must have a safe place to live upon arrival, they must become employed as soon as possible so they can afford their housing, and "If you don't speak English, your chances of getting a higher paying job are fewer, so the more English you speak, the more you can advance with your employment" (A. Burns, personal communication, April 13, 2009). Housing is provided immediately, and the client receives their ESL referral within seven days of arrival to the United States. The Department of State pays the first thirty days of rent. Then the client is either enrolled in the Matching Grant program, which helps with rent for the next three months, or the client goes on TED/TANF assistance, which is only \$298-317 for a family of four. One of the client counselors quoted the assistance as being \$275 per month. A one-bedroom apartment is \$550, including utilities. Whether the cash assistance is \$275 or \$317, it is simply *not* enough. The amount was last adjusted in 1992, and the cash assistance was recently cut by

20%. Often the families also are eligible for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)—which is commonly known as food stamps—as well, and this provides nicely for their food, as a family of four receives approximately \$500 per month for food. The resettlement agency pays the difference for rent, yet there is an urgency to address this crisis as the agencies have limited funding (A. Burns, personal communication, April 13, 2009)

PSSA is funded by the Department of State for their Reception and Placement program, the Department of Homeland Security for their Cuban/Haitian program, the state of Takora for their employment services and long-term case management, the ORR via their national VOLAG for their Matching Grant and preferred communities grant, and through RRI via a subcontract through the state of Takora for their mental health services. Any refugee may access PSSA's counseling program and receive counseling. Each resettlement agency must have a contract with the Department of State to resettle refugees, through the R&P program, though each of the four agencies also may provide services that all refugees can access. PSSA has mental health services, and the Cuban/Haitian program. RRI has a financial enterprise and micro-enterprise program. BBSA has the ESL program, and women's artwork and a women's project going. (A. Burns, personal communication, April 13, 2009)

A Reception and Placement (R&P) client counselor has 30 to 70 cases at PSSA, and each case has between one and eight family members. R&P client

counselors handle the case for the first 180 days, and then the case is moved to their Adjustment program, if they still need services. The client counselors responsible for clients in the RP, or Adjustment program, have cases that are opening and closing for six months to five years.

Burns was the first person I spoke with who emphasized and stressed, “These are adults we’re working with, so they have the right to self determination and right to choose their own decisions” (personal communication, April 13, 2009). Once they land in the United States, they are essentially free to move, and free to accept or refuse services. People will always be moving in and out of state, or no longer requesting services. Sometimes it is very difficult to know what is happening with refugees after 180 days, unless they seek assistance from the agency. Sometimes they want or need assistance, yet other times they want to make their own decisions. Refugees are semi-involuntary clients:

They don’t have a choice about being a refugee; they don’t have a choice over which country they will go to, which state they go to. They don’t have a choice about which agency resettles them, they don’t have a choice who their case manager is, they don’t have a choice where they live.

They’re not given any of these options. . . . They were forced out of their country of origin. . . . They can only go to the agency that serves them. In a sense they have a choice, but in a way they don’t. If they say I don’t

want to work with PSSA, that's fine, but RRI or PPSA can't take the case (A. Burns, personal communication, April 13, 2009).

And yet, even with so little choice, they are not helpless or dependent. Burns continues,

They're adults, they're free to make their own choices. And sometimes, they aren't in what we would consider their best interest, but for some reason or another, the refugee defines that choice in terms of his or her best interest, and you have to let them make that decision. Sometimes it works out, and sometimes you have to let them make that mistake (personal communication, April 13, 2009).

Amy Burns respects the individual person, honors the dignity of each person, and truly seeks to meet the client where they are at to find a way to work *with* them as they resettle in Takora. "It's that respect for the individual and self-determination. You always have to respect that" (A. Burns, personal communication, April 13, 2009). And she does.

***PSSA and ESL, specifically VESL.***

Because the state and federal policy state services cannot be duplicative, it was interesting how Burns answered my question concerning teaching English. I asked, "Does [PSSA] provide English instruction?" She responded, "We do not. English instruction for the refugees is served via a grant through our state refugee program, and that's awarded to [Blue Bonnet Social Assistance], and they're

required to provide the free ESL classes for newly arriving refugees in [Nalenga] county” (personal communication, April 13, 2009). Yet when I asked from a slightly different angle moments later, I said, “Does [PSSA] provide any form of tutoring or ESL?” This time she responded by saying, “We do provide some vocational ESL classes, in addition to those that [BBSA], for our clients that are a little behind. Our employment team provides some additional job and vocational ESL training” (personal communication, April 13, 2009). The classes are an hour long, two to three times a week, covering job ESL. The classes are mandatory for their Matching Grant clients, and for those that are not Matching Grant clients, they are encouraged to go as well.

Burns: “It’s pretty much mandatory for everyone to attend.”

Kielczewski: “For all [PSSA] refugees to attend?”

Burns: “For most of them.”

I am unsure of the total number of refugees attending. Perhaps Burns meant that everyone who is not yet employed is expected to attend class. I attended three classes, two of one section and one of another section.

***Meeting Isabella Valdez, assisting with her classes.***

Immediately after our interview, Burns introduced me to Isabella Valdez and Sue. Isabella Valdez is the Vocational coordinator for PSSA. She is responsible for helping clients become employed Sue is the refugee volunteer organizer, and she gave me a quick screening so I could be approved to volunteer and interact

with refugees. I filled out an application, she ran a background check and called a couple of references, and I was approved. Isabella teaches ESL to refugees through the Matching Grant program.

Classes typically last six to eight weeks, and she gave me an outline of four weeks of Level One and four weeks of Level Two. Week one covers personal communication for employment (such as greetings, the alphabet, numbers 0-10, job applications), week two covers money (identifying the currency and using the money), week three covers job readiness (such as the concept and importance of time, filling out job applications), and week four covers budgeting. Levels One and Two cover the same topics: the difference is the English level of the clients. This material is aimed at immediate employment (Gage and Prince, 1982). There are four locations, with a Level One and a Level Two at each location. There are between six to eight classes total, as sometimes the levels are merged together. The classes are sixty minutes, all occurring between 10:30 and 2:30pm. In addition to Isabella, there are two other ESL instructors (Jessica and Azure). Isabella and Azure are female, bilingual, and bicultural. Isabella is also a former refugee. Jessica is female, and it is unknown whether she is bilingual or bicultural. There is a vacant intern position that ought to be teaching some of the classes as well, so the other three instructors are currently filling this void. Teaching the vocational English class seemed secondary to, or only one component of, their primary job of assisting with refugee resettlement. As it is taking longer for refugees to become



employed, Isabella is continuing her classes beyond eight weeks, and covering other topics as well. (I. V., personal communication, April 13, 2009)<sup>20</sup>

Valdez also encourages PSSA clients to attend Big River Community College (BRCC), because they offer free English for Speakers of Other Languages classes. The refugee simply needs to show proof of legal status. The classes are Monday through Thursday, with four different time blocks. There are five or six different levels of instruction. However, it takes four weeks to process registration with the English classes at BRCC. Regarding PSSA's vocational English classes, Valdez said I could interview her, observe the classes, help with the classes, and interview refugees (personal communication, April 13, 2009).

I went on Tuesday, May 5<sup>th</sup>, yet there was no class. The class had recently switched from Tuesday/Thursdays to Monday/Wednesdays, and I was not aware of this change. I went on Wednesday, May 6<sup>th</sup>, intending to observe. I arrived and saw twelve students waiting outside the classroom door. I called Isabella's cell phone and PSSA's main number, succeeded in reaching Jessica, and she shared with me how to begin the class. And so, class commenced. I smiled, greeted the students, and we went around the room practicing saying:

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<sup>20</sup> I learned this information through an informal conversation with Isabella Valdez, with the intention to conduct a formal interview later. I did not take detailed notes, nor did I bring a list of questions. Isabella informally shared with me about PSSA's employment program for their refugees, and our conversation focused on the English component of their program. We were unable to have a formal interview at a later date.

A. "Hello, how are you?"

B. "I'm fine, thank you."

A. "What is your name?"

B. "My name is \_\_\_\_\_. What is your name?"

A. "\_\_\_\_\_. Nice to meet you."

B. "Nice to meet you, too."

Once Isabella arrived, she slowly read through a brief story about "My Home", which she had written. Much information was packed in this story: where "I" live, what I *do*, hygiene, and items and locations of things in the home. The story held information about norms when living in the United States, such as only eating at the table in the dining room. She asked the clients questions about where they live, and then asked them to raise their hand to answer, and she demonstrated raising her arm. During another part of class, the students answered her questions collectively first, and then she called on the students one at a time. The students were prepared to answer individually, because they had first answered the questions together as a class.

Not only was she teaching the material, she was also teaching how to learn, how to be a student, and explicitly making the connections between the classroom and their lives. At the end of class, her two minute conclusion held very important information: study and learn together, it is very important to become friends, you need to know each other, you need to talk together, and make sure you go to the

night class, the one offered by BBSA. And then she handed out homework, different worksheets for the students depending on their English ability level. Isabella asked if I would be comfortable teaching the following two classes.

The following Monday, May 11<sup>th</sup>, I taught the class by myself. We reviewed the material from Wednesday, and covered the parts of the body, based on simple illustrations drawn by Isabella. I planned to teach on Wednesday, May 13<sup>th</sup>, yet I was running late. I called PSSA, requested they call the class site (held at another local nonprofit agency), and have someone put a note on the door to alert the students I would be late. Once I arrived, there was no note on the door, and no students outside. PSSA relayed the message, yet I could not find anyone at the class site to learn why there was no note on the door. I returned to PSSA, and helped Jessica pick up some food for a female client and child who had just moved out of their home due to domestic abuse situation. I returned the following day, Thursday May 14<sup>th</sup>, to observe and assist Jessica teaching at a different site. This was my final class with PSSA, as I was preparing to move out of state.

**Refugee Resettlement, Inc.; three interviews, ESL workshop  
observation**

I contacted Refugee Resettlement, Incorporated (RRI), a third nonprofit refugee resettlement agency in Metropolis, and asked if I could interact with their staff and refugees, to learn how they are addressing the linguistic needs of their clients. I emailed Mary Suncloud, the president of the local office of RRI, and she

responded promptly, denying my request as they were in the midst of moving their office. I persisted and asked a second time. This time she granted me permission to interact with her staff and refugees. I subsequently learned that she asked her staff to go out of their way to assist me with my research. Though everyone was very busy, I toured RRI, learned about their refugee resettlement program, learned of the ways they address the different literacies and needs of their clients, interviewed two client counselors, and attended their literacy workshop, which is English tutoring solely for their clients from a particular sub-Saharan African country. This agency exemplified compassion, willingness to assist, and utilizing creative ways to meet the needs of the individuals they serve.

Through RRI, I saw several different aspects of the refugee settlement process. I saw a broad encompassing overview of all the services, I heard the detailed specifics from two client counselors who are meeting the needs of clients *after* the initial R&P, and I saw the details of one of their projects: providing English tutoring to a very specific group of refugees, from one country in sub-Saharan Africa.

Taylor, the visitor guide, proudly showed me around their new office space. She is a female, and unknown whether bilingual and bicultural. She was quite gregarious, welcoming, and happy to share with me the ways that RRI addresses the needs of refugees as they resettle in Metropolis. I observed client counselors addressing client needs in the lobby, and subsequently moving behind

closed doors as the conversation became more private. I learned of the ways their agency is addressing medical literacy, financial literacy, and other literacies. By adding *literacy* to a topic, they are acknowledging the breadth and depth of knowledge surrounding each topic, and seeking to educate their clients so they can independently meet their needs in these areas. I learned how they are addressing human trafficking. Taylor pointed out the artwork that has been created by refugee children, as they process the experiences of being a refugee. Taylor had set up two interviews with client counselors, and an interview and observation with their English Language workshop coordinator.<sup>21</sup>

***RRI: Client counselor interviews.***

Client counselors are known as *the* busiest people within the refugee resettlement community. They are constantly dashing between client homes, meetings, and their office, juggling much and coordinating many pieces of an intricate puzzle to best meet the needs of their clients. Two graciously permitted me to interview them, yet even so, one of these interviews was cut short to meet a client's needs. Please see Appendix E for the questions I prepared for my client counselor interviews. Heather is an American, and Nilo is a former refugee.

Heather is a female, and unknown whether bilingual or bicultural. She is responsible for RP clients after the initial R&P program. She also specializes with

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<sup>21</sup> On April 30, 2009, Taylor gave me a tour of RRI and introduced me to two client counselors, and we had an informal conversation, not a formal interview. I did not ask her a list of prepared questions, take detailed notes, or record our conversation.

handling cases of clients with medical needs, as their needs are unique, specific to their situation, and filled with bureaucratic red tape. Nilo is male, bilingual, and bicultural. He is from the Near East. He is also an RP client counselor, responsible for clients after the initial R&P program. Nilo has 117 cases, which range between one to eight people. He is currently responsible for managing the cases of approximately 200-250 people. He meets with the clients on an as needed basis, some weeks he meets with as little as two clients, other weeks he meets with fifteen clients. Nilo shared the following.

It depends. Mostly I see people between six months to two years, and during six months to a year, I see clients a lot. I follow up with clients who have been here 2-3 years, only if they come in. I'll close the case because the clients are working. Then at two years, they may have trouble, such as they lost their job, they received an IRS tax letter, school trouble with their children, etc. They come in, fill out an application for service, and see [Heather] or me. We'll guide them, meet one or two times, and show them where to go / what to do. Or at six months, if they're still having trouble and need help, they're transferred to me, and we work with the needs. It depends, if they're a more recent arrival, they have more issues; if they've been here longer, they have less issues (personal communication, April 30, 2009).

Regarding English, refugees learn the basic words and concepts very quickly: food, work, appointment, doctor, direction, and time, specifically related to clocks and calendars. The greatest obstacle to Heather with working with her clients is communication. It is not always possible or necessary for an interpreter to be present. Even though on RRI's staff are individuals who can meet the needs of approximately 100 languages, in the moment of a specific meeting, it still can be difficult to overcome the challenges and nuances of language barriers. One barrier to learning English is the community: either when the client is a part of a close-knit community, the client does not feel an urgency or need to learn English, or when the client remains at home and feels isolated, and does not have others with whom to practice using English. Barriers to attending English class are childcare and work. Heather has found the language needs of refugees are to become self-sufficient, to adapt, to adjust, and to become a citizen. To meet language needs, RRI has literacy coaches who volunteer and go to the clients' homes. Regarding the BBSA classes, they are easy to get to, in a variety of locations, yet Heather has not seen her clients excel in these courses.

In theory, it should help . . . [yet] almost all of the clients I talk to say they don't learn anything. I direct all of my clients to [Big River]. It's four days a week and free. . . . They're going and learning fast. It'd be interesting to talk with Samantha at BBSA, I'm not sure why it doesn't help" (personal communication, April 30, 2009).

When I asked if there is follow up regarding whether or not a client attends a class, Heather responded they send a certificate when the client successfully completes a class. Though Heather is not in contact with the ESL Administrator, she mused aloud which one of her coworkers she thinks is in contact with Samantha. I am skeptical regarding the follow through between the client counselors and the liaisons at each of the resettlement agencies, though I have no further information regarding the communication concerning refugee client participation between client counselors and the appointed liaison at each agency (H., personal communication, April 30, 2009).

Regarding further education, when there is a will, there is a way. The ones who want to learn plug away and ask for more resources. If they have money they enroll in one of the local community colleges. If they do not have money, they attend Big River Community College, which is free, or receive grants for other types of education. Clients who have no formal education must learn *how* to learn, and how to process thoughts (H., personal communication, April 30, 2009)

Nilo shared once refugees arrive here, they find there is a big wall in front of them: language. It is a big issue. The main reasons to learn English include: finding jobs, understanding cultural issues, and navigating the system, the paperwork, and reading their mail. Many refugees are personally suffering. They have the ability to work; yet they do not know English, and they must go back to the beginning to learn English. Often once they know English, they find their



diploma from their home country is not enough, and they must start again. They are a doctor in their own country, yet they cannot be one here if they do not speak English. And simply with looking for a job, if they know English and have a little bit of literacy, they can walk down the street and see a help wanted sign (N., personal communication, April 30, 2009).

Nilo shared where he sends his clients for English instruction: sometimes to BBSA, and sometimes to Big River Community College. He began by saying that we, client counselors, refer our clients to BBSA for English instruction.

But personally, if my clients know nothing, I refer them to BBSA. If they speak some English, then I refer them to college: go have a test in the learning center, find out your level, then see an adviser to select your classes. Most refugees know some English, and most of the community colleges have an ESL program. . . . They know about financial aid, so they get financial support. They also get credits for the future if they want to continue their studies. Then they're used to college, and motivated to work and to study (personal communication, April 30, 2009).

Regarding the factors that help or detract from learning English: finding, making, and socializing with American friends helps them learn English, and immediately beginning their studies helps them learn English. Some detractions are feeling too old, preferring to rely on their child to translate for them, believing it is more important to find a job than attend class, or feeling that “English doesn't fit

my family” (N., personal communication, April 30, 2009). When the client shares these reasons, the client counselor emphasizes the importance of passing the citizenship exam, as a way to stress the importance of learning English.

### ***English at RRI.***

The only specific English tutoring provided by RRI is solely for refugees from a particular sub-Saharan country, as RRI has received a grant funding a weekly English Language workshop. I interviewed Leah, and volunteered and observed the class on Saturday, April 11, 2009. Please see Appendix I for the interview questions I asked Leah. She coordinates the class, though she has no formal training with teaching ESL. She previously volunteered with an organization that helped individuals become literate. The clients have a very low English proficiency, and are not literate in their first language.

Leah asked others for recommendations and searched for a curriculum for pre-literate ESL students. She found *Literacy Plus A*, by J. Saslow and T. Collins, published by Longman. *Literacy Plus A* is “for students who are pre-literate in their own language and know no English” ([Description of the textbook *Literacy Plus A* by J. M. Saslow & T. Collins], (n.d.), para. 2). From Longman’s website, the curriculum is a “comprehensive standards-based course [that] helps students make daily progress on the path to literacy and oral communication. It also helps them to learn the expected social behavior of their new culture” ([Description of

the textbook *Literacy Plus A*, by J. M. Saslow & T. Collins]. (n.d.), para. 2), and the material covers “survival English” and “basic literacy”.

Transportation and childcare are not obstacles, as Leah drives to their home, picks up the clients, and brings them to the RRI office. Children come, too. Typically ten adults and fifteen children come every Saturday for two hours. American volunteers from the local community go through the curriculum with the students, and other volunteers play with the children. Oddly, when I asked her about other places her clients could learn English, she mentioned Big River. I do not think she was aware of BBSA’s classes. I am not sure what her primary job is with RRI, as coordinating the literacy workshop and tutoring the refugees seems secondary to her primary role (L., personal communication, April 11, 2009).

Though I had permission to interview the students in the class, their English level was extremely low. I assisted with preparing handouts for the students, helping pack a few boxes for the upcoming move, and then I turned my attention to joining a table. The volunteers seemed very comfortable with the clients, as they meet weekly and have developed a relationship with one another. There were three to five round tables, with one to three volunteers and three to six refugees at each table. Though I kept whittling my questions down to become more and more basic English, the questions still seemed too difficult for the English level of the students. I could not bring myself to ask my questions to any

of the clients. Instead, we labored through the exercises in the book together, and smiled hello to one another.

Another individual marginally connected with English is Isis, and she has an Interpretation and Translating project. She is seeking to put much information into the native languages of the refugees. She is also the woman Heather mentioned might be the liaison between BBSA's ESL program and the RRI.

### **Others Involved with Refugee Resettlement in Metropolis**

I did not contact E. Owl Social Assistance, the fourth and final nonprofit agency responsible for resettling refugees in Metropolis. I spoke with the president of Friends of Refugees (FoR), who shared with me the ways their organization supports and complements the work of the resettlement agencies. This non-profit agency does not resettle refugees, yet they work closely with connecting the community with refugees, connecting refugees with resources, and advocating for the needs of refugees. One example of a way FoR is working with refugees is they have created a community garden with the refugees. Also, FoR has compiled a list of all services and resources available in the community for refugees. They have an interactive map on their website with these resources, though oddly enough BBSA's classes are not listed. This is *not* simply an oversight, as I alerted the president, who alerted the map-maker, who contacted me, who I directed to Samantha Smith in April 2009. In September 2010, the classes have still not been added. FoR has realized many individuals and

organizations are working very hard to meet the needs of refugees, and some individuals feel isolated, as though they are the only ones addressing these needs. FoR has attempted to decrease this “silo effect”, to increase collaboration so all can benefit from one another’s efforts.

Another group that is seeking to bring together the many different individuals and organizations is the Takora Refugee Advocacy Group (TRAG). This is a large group with community members, client counselors, refugee resettlement directors and chairs and coordinators, and leaders of NGOs, and the state director of refugee services from TED. Members come from Nalenga and Kantena counties of the state of Takora. I attended a meeting, in which a guest speaker shared how his organization addresses homelessness and helps individuals to get back on their feet. Though English acquisition is one of the most pressing issues, it lurks in the background behind housing and employment. This meeting was devoted to addressing the housing issue. The twenty or so participants went around the room and introduced themselves, and afterwards everyone mingled and networked. Another meeting I attended was hosted by the RRI, and it was held monthly between individuals connected with schools and refugees. RRI is seeking to help teachers, school counselors, client counselors, and refugee parents work together to better address the educational needs of the students. Again, English acquisition lurked in the background of the meeting. These meetings help the providers of social services to be more effective with helping refugee children with

their educational needs (McBrien 2005). The final gathering I attended was a memorial service, remembering the refugees who have died as well as the ones still in camps. This gathering had refugees and their families, members of the resettlement agencies, and community members. Parts of the service were in English, and other parts were held in the native languages of the refugees.

### **Reflection, Analysis, and Discussion**

Among the refugee resettlement agencies, many individuals are providing ESL instruction: the official BBSA ESL program, the ESL tutoring classes at PSSA and RRI, and informal meetings between volunteer tutors and clients. Some of the instruction is teacher centered, and some is learner centered. The instruction at BBSA seemed driven by the curriculum. Some of the teachers were able to adapt the material to relate it to their students' lives. The material used by PSSA and RRI seemed to better reflect the "unique needs and characteristics of learner communities" (Guth, 1993, p 535). Of the three curriculums, the *New Interchange* may work well for "typical" ESL learners, but does not seem very relevant to refugees' lives. *Literacy Plus A* seems designed precisely for where the refugee clients are at right now with their lives, yet it may be emphasizing too much "survival" and not giving the refugees tools for thinking critically and upward mobility, as per Warriner (2003) and Benesch (1993). The curriculum used by Isabella Valdez is specific to her learner needs, as she has written and pulled the material together herself. I am unsure what has informed her selection of materials,

perhaps her own experience of being a former refugee, as well as conversations with her clients. Further analysis of each curriculum would be necessary to discern the “hidden agenda” of each. All of the instruction is one or two hours in length, once or twice a week. This is less than four hours of English instruction each week. The language instruction is not intensive (Lanphier, 1983, p. 29), and thus, not very effective. Again, please refer to Table 1 on page 25, as it discusses the successfulness of different quantities of English language instruction per week.

Yet, it is difficult to measure when the goal of learning English has been achieved. Wright notes the difficulty within refugee resettlement with measuring “its objectives and defining when the goals have been met” (1981, p. 160). When are they proficient in English? When are refugees “self-sufficient”? Is it when the refugee has passed the citizenship exam? Is it when the refugee has moved beyond minimum-wage employment? All agree learning English is important.

Yet, when pressed concerning the accountability of the clients, and measuring their precise level of English, and tying this level with employment and their socioeconomic status, this is difficult to quantify. Haines (1988) highlights the problems of quantifying the results of English language training programs and measuring self-sufficiency, as the moment he tied English proficiency with employment, it is unclear how much English classes affects employment. Individuals succeed with becoming employed without knowing English, and for

the ones who learn English, their socioeconomic status is not much higher with an increased proficiency in English.

### **Does proficiency in English equal employment?**

Though English proficiency is a significant variable regarding employment patterns, increasing ESL classes is not noted as a way to improve employment. Perhaps this is splitting hairs, but it seems English proficiency is an asset refugees bring with them and certainly helps their employment prospects (and many researchers are in agreement on this point), yet it cannot be clearly measured and quantified the way ESL courses contribute to employment rates. This is where it becomes murky. And because of this murkiness, this is part of the grey area of refugee resettlement. English is one of the three most pressing needs of refugee clients, yet always present in the background behind housing and employment, and not as easily quantifiable. English proficiency is important; yet, if we are emphasizing economic self-sufficiency, there are not the funds, hours, resources, and time allowed for refugees to truly become proficient in English as they must become rapidly employed. And so though classes exist, teachers and students alike are frustrated with the inability to successfully and easily acquire English.

### **Greatest language challenge: Communication.**

Communication is the primary challenge and greatest barrier for refugees. Perhaps this is too obvious, and yet, at the most basic and elemental level, communication is a problem. Whenever there was trouble, it could be traced to



problems with communication. It seemed everyone meant well, and was trying very hard, but too many people seemed to be working in isolation, and without tapping in to the benefits and expertise of others. And this is even with the four refugee resettlement agencies having leaders that make a point of working together to assist refugee clients, rather than competing with one another as sometimes happens in other parts of the United States. And though Mark Gilmore, TRAG, and FoR are working to connect individuals and groups together, at the most basic level, individuals do not know what others are doing. BBSA will not put information of their English classes on FoR's map of resources available to refugees. Leah did not seem aware of BBSA's ESL program. I do not believe Daisy was in contact with client counselors who are also assisting refugee clients with the naturalization process. BBSA instructors seemed dependent on refugees showing up for class, without knowing which refugees actually lived in the apartment complex.

Though beneficial that classes occurred in the apartment complexes so most of the refugees did not have far to travel, a drawback is a lack of cohesion between the classes. It felt as though the instructors and classes happened in isolation, rather than within the context of working with others in the program. The instructors mentioned Smith's support, but there did not seem to be a sense of community between instructors, and between instructors, client counselors, and others involved with refugee resettlement. Maybe there is a community that exists

between the organizations at upper levels, but I am unsure how involved the individuals with the most contact with refugees—ESL instructors, client counselors—were with this community, as it was difficult to see how the ESL instructors fit into this structure.

Regarding the elective classes: how do the refugees learn of these classes? Will other vocational ESL classes be added to the ESL program, so other clients may attend? As a part of closing out a client's file, do client counselors urge students to attend the citizenship class? Will a client contact a client counselor for help completing naturalization forms at least four years after their case has closed?

Client counselors must be able to get the necessary information to their clients quickly, as clients face the daunting task of rapidly rebuilding their lives in a new and unfamiliar place. Clients need to access services, read mail, search for employment, and ask questions when they have a question. Often counselors can assist them, yet language can be a barrier between the clients and counselors who are working together to solve problems. Though Smith stressed and praised the importance of communication with her instructors, liaisons, and others involved with refugee resettlement, I question how well they can communicate with one another given the expansive number of clients they are seeking to assist. And, even though Smith praised the importance of communication, there were clearly times in our conversation she was evasive and not forthright.

Also, due to problems with communication, I missed a class, students did not show up for a class, and students questioned if a class would occur. How many students have tried to attend a class and missed a class, due to problems with communication? Students arrived and departed at various times during some of the classes. Were they unaware of the stated start and end time? Were they unaware of the importance of adhering to these times for class? Students did not know why there was no class on a day I was late. It is very difficult to get information to the students. In person is always the best way to communicate, though sometimes this is not feasible.

Gate-keeping obstacles, lack of transparency, and working in silos are other problems. Instructors show up, and teach the class. Sometimes, they wait for their students to arrive, never knowing who will show up each class. They do not know how many clients live in the apartment complex, nor do they know the levels of the students in the complex. Some students do not know which classes are offered when, or feel uncomfortable going to a class because they perceive the class as being too advanced. The client counselor must relay the message about the class to the client, and recommend the client attend the class. The instructor and client counselors do not work together, yet each has the most consistent contact with refugees. The English instructor is relying on the client counselor to encourage the client to show up.

I believe client counselors' opinion of the ESL classes are *the* single most important determiner of whether or not clients will attend class. The counselors have never been to the class, nor do they know what actually occurs during each class. They rely on the information their clients share with them, and the results they see from their clients who attend. Of the two client counselors I spoke with, neither has seen clients succeed with BBSA's ESL program. Both have seen clients succeed with ESL classes through Big River Community College. So, though BBSA is the official provider of English classes to refugees and client counselors are responsible for "referring" clients to attend ESL classes, some counselors prefer to encourage their clients to attend Big River Community College.

### **Conclusion**

I observed many individuals providing English instruction to refugees, and spoke with many about the ways they are helping refugees learn English as they are resettling in Takora. Sometimes what I saw was in accordance with what I heard; yet other times there were discrepancies between my interviews and my observations. "But then there's life..." (S. Smith, personal communication, February 23, 2009) There are the hopes, aims, and goals of the administrators, and then there are the messy realities of what occurs in the classroom. There is the goal and the vision the administrators are striving for, and the easy answers to tell an interviewer, and then there are the realities of teaching tired students who are

struggling to learn English while juggling the demands of work and their families. All are working very hard, though I have questioned the effectiveness and success of some of their efforts. I have learned refugee resettlement is an extremely complex process, and many individuals are diligently working to help refugees succeed as they begin their lives in Metropolis. Achieving self-sufficiency is much easier when language barriers are removed. Interestingly, the Oxford English Dictionary defines “sufficiency” as being “1. c adequate provision of food or bodily comfort; 2. The condition or quality of being sufficient for its purpose or for the end in view; adequacy; 3. (A) sufficient number or quantity *of*; enough”. I suppose this is where the difficulty comes in: when and what is truly adequate or enough? I believe if one can meet their basic needs and live in a place they feel safe, work in a place they feel fulfilled, and are an active part of their community, this is enough. Being proficient in English certainly helps the refugee with achieving enough, as knowing the language makes it much easier to become a productive and participating member of society.

## Chapter 6

### **Conclusion**

The local community *is* addressing the linguistic needs of refugees. One refugee resettlement agency has the contract to provide English language instruction to refugees, and offers multiple classes throughout the community for refugee clients. Other nonprofit refugee resettlement agencies provide supplementary English classes and tutoring for refugee clients as well. All classes are aimed at helping refugees learn basic English, or “survival” English, so they can better navigate the community on their own. The English classes support the federal goal of refugees becoming “self-sufficient”, which is measured by being employed at 180 days. If the refugee is employed, they are deemed “self-sufficient”.

### **Research Study Summarized**

I interviewed a sampling of individuals connected with refugee resettlement, to learn about what they do, the ways they resettle refugees, and the language needs of their clients. I observed English classes, as well as several meetings connected with refugee resettlement. I examined the federal law, noted the ways this law is implemented through federal regulations, traced it to the state level and saw the way the state agency responsible for refugee resettlement uses these regulations to inform their expectations for the nonprofit agency to whom they contract out English language instruction. Throughout my research, either the

need or the assumption of the need for refugees to become proficient in English was present: At times the need was explicitly stated and explicitly addressed, yet other times it was simply present in the background. Often if the need for English proficiency was not stated, other goals could not be fulfilled without addressing the need for proficiency with the English language. The goal of the United States Refugee Resettlement program is: We will resettle refugees, yet refugees must become economically “self-sufficient”. And to become “self-sufficient”, refugees must become employed.

The U.S. government considers acquiring English to be essential to becoming employed. All of the provided social services are aimed at promoting the refugee’s *self-sufficiency*. If everything is pointing towards achieving self-sufficiency, the definition and measurement of self-sufficiency must be questioned. Being employed by 180 days? No longer qualifying for public assistance? It is unlikely that fulfilling these two qualifications deems one truly self-sufficient. Notably, most refugees *do* become self-sufficient, according to this definition. Long-term studies have found refugees surpass this minimum benchmark for self-sufficiency. The question becomes how many refugees surpass this goal, and what happens to the refugees who do *not* become self-sufficient. Or, truly how “sufficient” are refugees who marginally pass the benchmark of economic self-sufficiency, as measured by the United States federal government? Thankfully, though achieving self-sufficiency by becoming employed and no

longer receiving public assistance is the explicit goal, if one is unable to become employed, client counselors and refugee clients do succeed in defining self-sufficiency in other ways. It is also interesting to note the role of English proficiency with regards to self-sufficiency.

Being proficient in English does not have a neat and tidy correlation with self-sufficiency. Some become economically self-sufficient without being proficient in English. Of course, the more proficient one is, the easier it is to become economically self-sufficient. And yet, simply being proficient in English *is not enough*. I found results similar to those in Warriner's dissertation (2003). Though the women in Warriner's case study are successful graduates of an ESL program, they still face numerous obstacles with achieving their dreams. Though the ESL program Warriner examined laudably succeeds with teaching English to many refugees and in preparing them to enter the work force, the English is only at the basic level and often their first language is sacrificed, and the jobs are dead-end and minimum wage jobs. English is necessary and important to succeeding in America, yet English is not enough. The refugees also need financial resources, community connections, and cultural knowledge to achieve their dreams. The English program needs to teach the refugees to think and read critically, practice speaking and writing in authentic situations, and better connect with other resources so the refugees can achieve true self-sufficiency and socioeconomic mobility. Also, the role of theories, ideologies, and policies plays a powerful role,



which is starkly demonstrated by the difference between what is said, what is believed, and what is actually done in the classroom. (Warriner 2003)

Most of the research I found solely focused on linguistic research in the classroom, studies of a particular ESL program, or even longitudinal studies concerning the use or effects of English; or the research focused specifically on aspects of refugees' lives within refugee resettlement, or broad research on theories and the implications of different emphases when resettling refugees. As none of the research tied together the different pieces of these elements, my thesis has addressed a void by looking at the ways multiple agencies in a local community are addressing the linguistics needs for refugees who are resettled in the United States, as well as tracing the implementation of the federal laws and regulations, and the state contract with the agency responsible for providing English language instruction.

### **Limitations and Possibilities for Further Research**

Though I was unable to interview a representative sample of participants connected with ESL classes for refugee clients, such as administrators, faculty, and students, I succeeded in gaining a broad understanding of the ways many different individuals at different agencies are addressing the linguistic needs of refugees. Perhaps an unexpected blessing of being initially thwarted was being forced to utilize the separate and somewhat disjointed resources I could access, as I uncovered surprising results: the significance of the perception of the client

counselor concerning the English classes, and the discovery of Big River Community College's ESL program, as many individuals involved with refugee resettlement find these classes to be quite successful with refugees learning English.

A clear limitation of my study is that I only spoke with two RP client counselors, and both work with clients after the initial R&P program. It would be extremely important to discover the opinions of other client counselors, and to study the impact of client counselors' recommendations on whether or not clients attend classes. I wonder what other client counselors think about the role of English proficiency and the success of BBSA's ESL program with their clients. Do R&P client counselors have a different perspective as they focus on the initial 180 days? Do they find different results with their clients? Do opinions and perceptions differ by agency, perhaps depending on the relationship Samantha Smith has with each liaison, and depending on the relationship between the liaison and fellow client counselors at each agency?

A limitation of my study is my inability to quantify the results of my interviews and observations. The interviews were semi-structured, as I had some questions I used in every interview, yet most of the interviews flowed in a conversational manner: I was interviewing individuals with much experience with refugee resettlement, and what they shared dictated the direction of the interview. I can qualitatively share what I have learned. Yet a significant drawback is my

difficulty with comparing the interviews, and finding common trends and themes. In retrospect, the interviews I conducted serve as a useful preliminary step to a more in depth research study.

In truth, my research serves as an illuminative pilot study. I have uncovered many noteworthy phenomena, yet I do not know which events were single occurrences, and which happened frequently. Some examples are different types of class disruptions, trouble with attendance and transportation, the way assessments of students are administered, the teaching style of instructors, the dissemination of information concerning the ESL class schedule, the perception of Big River Community College ESL classes versus Blue Bonnet Social Assistance's ESL classes, and communication between individuals at the different agencies. An in-depth study is necessary to discover which of these instances are indicative of a pattern, and which are isolated incidents. Were I to conduct subsequent research, I would examine the same community from different angles to fully explore the intersection of linguistics, refugees, and the way the local community is addressing refugee resettlement.

Gatekeeping and time obstacles were limitations that need to be overcome. It would be very useful to gain the trust of Blue Bonnet Social Assistance, to observe a representative sample of classes, interview more instructors, learn of their teaching credentials, analyze the material to discover the "hidden curriculum", and most importantly, listen to the students and graduates of the

program to learn how well their language needs have been met, how proficient they are in English, if they have fossilized with language acquisition and have been unable to progress with learning English, and how well prepared they are for integrating into the society. What are their needs? Have these needs been met? Do they have further language learning goals, and how are they seeking to achieve these goals? Are they *self-sufficient*? How do they define and measure *self-sufficiency*? However, in my current position I doubt I would overcome the gatekeeping difficulties surrounding Blue Bonnet Social Assistance. Too many individuals demonstrated a lack of trust and an unwillingness to be forthright with me—an outsider to their organization.

I did not encounter gatekeeping troubles at the other organizations, though I did encounter limitations due to time. Even though I was initially denied access to Refugee Resettlement, Inc, once the president of the local branch approved my requests, so many individuals went out of their way to assist my research. My time constraints significantly limited my collection of data. Had I more time, I would have conducted an in depth analysis of Purple Sage Social Assistance or Refugee Resettlement, Inc. As the program is relatively brief for PSSA, I would have volunteered with the refugee clients for several months. I would have gained an understanding of the program by joining the present cohort of clients, and then I would have been prepared to track the progress of the subsequent cohort. The program typically lasts for six to eight weeks, and so it would be very interesting

to assess the clients' abilities at the beginning of the cycle, observe the classes for eight weeks, assess their knowledge at the completion of the classes, and then once the students "graduate" and succeed with finding employment, study how well-equipped the students are for their respective jobs. I would anticipate having some difficulty finding translators to translate and back-translate my questions, though I think this would not be too difficult to overcome. I would also need to acquire a functioning audio recorder or video recorder, as I would anticipate being more of an active participant than a passive observer. Recording all of our encounters would free me from feeling pulled between these two roles. At PSSA, Amy, Sue, Isabella, and Jessica were so willing to speak with me, that I believe this is indicative of the support and assistance I would have with PSSA, were I to conduct a research study examining this program.

Were I to focus on Refugee Resettlement, Inc, I would either volunteer with the weekly English Language workshop to learn more about the clients and the success of curriculum, or I would see if I could interview more individuals at RRI, to learn how others are seeking to address the language needs of their clients, and if it is through alternative means than the official BBSA ESL program. It would be illuminating to learn of others' perceptions of BBSA's ESL program and the BRCC ESL program.

Many individuals shared with me that they would suggest to their clients that they attend English classes at one of the local community colleges. This

warrants further study. Interviews, observations, and an analysis of what the community college is doing so well, or perhaps comparing the community college classes against BBSA's classes, or learning more about the perceptions and opinions of refugee resettlement staff concerning the two programs would be important. It would be worthwhile to see if I could interview faculty and staff at Big River Community College, and observe some of these classes, to see how they compare against BBSA's program. Of course, on the surface it is easy to see some of the stark differences: BRCC courses occur in two and a half hour time blocks, four days a week; yet BBSA's courses last for two hours only twice a week. It would be interesting to learn if BRCC addresses the frequently noted constraints of childcare, transportation, and employment schedules. And if BRCC does not address these challenges, how consistently do the refugee students attend class, and what percentage of students that matriculate complete the program?

With all of my research, in a subsequent study I believe it would be essential to somehow gain access to refugee clients, to hear *their* voice as they share their needs, their opinions of the provided services, and their goals for the future. It would be best to speak directly with refugee clients to learn of their experiences with each program, as they are the recipients of the instruction: at the BBSA ESL program, with the PSSA VESL classes, with RRI's English Language workshop, and concerning BRCC's ESL program. It would also be important to

learn the perception of the refugee clients about who said what regarding which classes would be the most beneficial for becoming proficient in English.

### **List of Recommendations for Refugee Resettlement Service Providers**

With what I have learned through my reading of legal material, and through my interviews and observations, there are definite ways the English language instruction can be improved in Metropolis, Takora. English instruction could be so useful to many more refugee clients, and it behooves the providers to find a way to better coordinate instruction, and better meet the linguistic needs of refugees.

- Addressing isolation: The ESL instructors need to collaborate with client counselors, as the individuals with the most contact with refugee clients need to work together. Relying on the communication of their superiors is not effective.
- More development: Instructors need to be certified, and need professional development workshops that address their deficiencies. Rote memorization, emphasis on grammar is *not* effective. Instructors need training with addressing challenges specific to preliterate students, how to best meet the needs of students who have dealt with trauma and torture, and better understanding of refugee clients' backgrounds. Though Samantha said instructors are certified, none mentioned their certification when pressed about their background.

- Proactively seeking students: The instructors passively wait in the classroom, hoping students will show up. If the students are not required to attend, something or someone could compel the students to attend class. The instructor could know which students actually live in the apartment complex, and could knock on their doors soliciting they come to class.
- Better communication: The refugees need information available at a central location. Though information is posted in lobbies, it is not necessarily up to date, nor do the refugees continually go to resettlement lobbies. There needs to be a website with information about *all* ESL courses and tutoring, with a contact name, email, and phone number. Either the specifics of the class times, or at least someone to contact for further information needs to be on each resettlement agencies website, FoR's website, TRAG's website, *and* TPRR's website.
- Assessment of opinions of BBSA ESL program: A survey or questionnaire asking for the perspective of the BBSA ESL program needs to be sent to *every* individual connected with refugee resettlement. I spoke with many that do not know about the program or do not believe it is effective. Do others believe this? Why do many have this opinion of the BBSA ESL program? What could change their perspective?
- Comparison between BBSA and BRCC: The ESL instruction provided by these two programs must be assessed and compared.



- More volunteers and interns: The resources of local higher educational institutions must be tapped into, as Linguistics, Education, and English programs have students who are eager to gain experience teaching English. This would cost very little, and would yield great returns. Also, Refugees integrate best into the new community through relationships, and more volunteers need to be paired with refugee students. Tutors and volunteers could be utilized, and a conversation club could be started.

At a minimum, these recommendations ought to be seriously considered or implemented by Mark Gilmore, Samantha Smith, and other leaders involved with refugee resettlement in Metropolis, Takora.

### **Concluding Remarks: It is Sufficient**

However—all of the strength and all of the weaknesses of each of the programs—I am confronted by what Fass said. Fass is a policy analyst who wrestles in “Through a glass darkly: Cause and effect in refugee resettlement policies” (1985) with the relationship between cause and effect, specifically with the federal government assisting refugees becoming employed between 1960 and 1985. Fass presents a compelling case that perhaps the best route is to concede ignorance. I cannot concede ignorance, as I believe the English language instruction can be improved, though I acknowledge BBSA is putting forth effort with their program. So often refugee resettlement agencies are doing the work they do, yet researchers are quick to propose something else that might be “better”. Fass

argues one cannot with certainty say if something else would truly be “better” or “worse”. Immigrants, specifically refugees, arrive in the United States and integrate into the American society and economy over varying periods of time. The federal government spends a great deal of money, yet it is arguable if this money and the actual assistance makes a measurable difference. Fass reflects,

I am not sure that there is a problem in resettlement that requires address.

The refugees seem to be getting on reasonably well compared to their predecessors. What is lacking is evidence to suggest that this outcome is or is not associated with federal efforts. There is, therefore, nothing particularly irrational in continuing government expenditures on behalf of refugees. (567)

It seems Fass argues for the resettlement agencies to “keep on keeping on”, as it is almost impossible to know if there is a “better” way to resettle refugees. Fass certainly concludes by requesting analysts to cease making recommendations that are not necessarily “better”, and instead change the focus of their analyses. What refugee resettlement agencies are doing helps refugees. Yet are there problems? Yes. Could they do it better? Yes. Yet would these proposed changes actually make it better? That remains unknown. As a researcher, it is difficult to read Fass’ article, as I have seen problems that I would like to see addressed, and yet Fass clearly makes the point that it is uncertain if removing these problems would improve the ESL programs. Perhaps Blue Bonnet Social Assistance, Purple Sage

Social Assistance, Refugee Resettlement, Inc., Friends of Refugees, the Takora Refugee Advocacy Group, the Big River Community College, and the other organizations connected with refugee resettlement *are* doing enough, and that is sufficient for addressing the linguistic needs of refugees in the city of Metropolis in the state of Takora. Yet is the English language instruction meeting the minimum definition of sufficiency, or are the resettlement providers seeking to provide English language instruction that truly *is* sufficient, and actually fulfills the linguistic needs of refugees? I argue my list of recommendations needs to be implemented, to better address the linguistic needs of refugees and to address the communication obstacles that I encountered with my research.

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APPENDIX A

E-MAIL RECRUITMENT SCRIPT

Dear \_\_\_\_\_,

I am a graduate student under the direction of Professor Karen L. Adams in the Department of English (Linguistics) at Arizona State University. I am writing my thesis on the ways non-profit agencies address the language learning needs of refugees. I am interested in examining the ways policy - at the federal, state, and local level - is put into practice.

I would like to interview members of your organization to learn about the ways you serve the language learning needs of your clients. Is there someone who is responsible for overseeing the refugees learning English, as they are being resettled in [Metropolis]? Also, may I interview two caseworkers and two refugees? The interview will take approximately thirty minutes. I will audio record the interview, and will transcribe the data for my research study. Their responses will be confidential. When I transcribe the interview, I will remove any identifiers from the data. The audio file will be erased once I have transcribed the interview.

Will you allow members of your agency to take part in my research study?

If you have any questions concerning the research study, please call me at (602) 717-5461.

Thank you,

Sarah-Anne Kielczewski

APPENDIX B  
INFORMATION / CONSENT LETTER

## INFORMATION LETTER-INTERVIEWS

### **Refugees Learn English; Non-Profit Agencies Assist Refugees**

Date

Dear \_\_\_\_\_:

I am a graduate student under the direction of Professor Karen Adams in the Department of English (Linguistics) at Arizona State University. I am conducting a research study to examine the factors affecting refugees learning English, as well as consider the ways non-profit agencies address the language learning needs of refugees learning English.

I am inviting your participation, which will involve a sixty-minute interview about refugee concerns, learning English, and English language instruction, as well as the ways that non-profit agencies seek to address the language learning needs of refugees. You have the right not to answer any question, and to stop the interview at any time.

Your participation in this study is voluntary. If you choose not to participate or to withdraw from the study at any time, there will be no penalty, as it will not affect your relationship with the non-profit volunteer agency. You must be 18 or older to participate.

Although there is no benefit to you, possible benefits of your participation include sharing your insights that may bring more awareness to the language learning needs of refugees. You will receive two hours of assistance from me, either as an English tutor or volunteer with your agency, as compensation for participating in the interview. There are no foreseeable risks or discomforts to your participation.

Your responses will be confidential. When I transcribe the interview, I will remove any identifiers from the data. I will code the data with pseudonyms to protect your identity. The results of this study may be used in reports, presentations, or publications but your name will not be known used. Results will only be shared in the aggregate form.

I would like to audiotape this interview. The interview will not be recorded without your permission. Please let me know if you do not want the interview to be taped; you also can change your mind after the interview starts, just let me know. I will store the audio recording locked in Dr. Karen Adams office on ASU's Tempe campus until I have transcribed the interview. After I transcribe the interview, the audio recording will be erased and destroyed.

If you have any questions concerning the research study, please contact the research team at: (480) 965-3013 (Dr. Karen Adams) or (602) 717-5461 (Sarah-Anne Kielczewski). If you have any questions about your rights as a subject/participant in this research, or if you feel you have been placed at risk, you can contact the Chair of the Human Subjects Institutional Review Board, through the ASU Office of Research Integrity and Assurance, at (480) 965-6788.

Sincerely,

Sarah-Anne L. Kielczewski



APPENDIX C

IRB APPROVED INSTRUMENT:

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR

MARK GILMORE, DIRECTOR OF REFUGEE SERVICES,

TAKORA ECONOMIC DEPARTMENT

### Questions for [Mark Gilmore]

- What are the language needs of refugees?
- What is your vision for the English language instruction program for refugees in [Takora], and what informed you as you created this vision?
- What government policies shape the decisions you make, in regards to refugees learning English?
- Did different theories of English language acquisition shape and inform your vision?
- How do you seek to meet these goals?
- What is the Scope of Work that [BBSA] has with the State of [Takora]?
- How did you select the entities that would deliver English language instruction to refugees?
- What does English language instruction look like for refugees in [Nalenga] county, and what does it look like in [Kantena] county?
- How do the two programs compare?
- What do you monitor in the ESL classroom, and how?
- Do you include feedback from refugees, if they are happy and satisfied with the instruction they receive?
- Do refugees learn English similar to, or different from, other English Language Learners?
- What obstacles do refugees face?
- How do you seek to meet the refugees' need of "self-sufficiency", with regard to language?
- What is the [Takora Program for Refugee Resettlement]?
- What is the "typical" timeline for a refugee to:
  - Learn English?
  - Become employed?
  - Become "self-sufficient"?
- If there were no obstacles in the world, how would you like to see a refugee learn English?
- What would you advise me to do, to interview refugees, to learn about their language needs, and if and how these needs are being met?
- Can you help me get to refugees, to interview them?

APPENDIX D

IRB APPROVED INSTRUMENT:

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR  
AMY BURNS, RESETTLEMENT CHAIR,  
PURPLE SAGE SOCIAL ASSISTANCE

### **Interview questions for [Amy Burns]**

1. Where do the refugees come from?
2. What is the language background of the refugees?
3. What is the language background of the refugees?
  - a. How do you assess the language skills of the refugees?
4. What are the language needs of refugees?
5. How is [PSSA] seeking to address these needs?
6. What obstacles do refugees face? How are these related to language?
7. How have pre-literate refugees, who have never attended school, done with learning English and with becoming "self-sufficient"?
8. How do you seek to meet the refugees' need of "self-sufficiency", with regard to language?
9. What happens to a refugee who does not become self-sufficient?
10. The refugees' immediate needs are: Housing, Employment, and Language acquisition.
  - a. How do you address these needs, as you resettle your refugees?
11. What is the "typical" timeline for a refugee to:
  - a. Learn English?
  - b. Become employed?
  - c. Become "self-sufficient"?
12. How long do you provide services?
13. How are you funded?
14. Do you track your refugees?
15. How do you keep up with your clients, as time passes?
16. Do you work with the other NGOs? How so?
17. Do you provide different services to the refugees?
18. Does the City of [Metropolis] / [Takora] / the federal government provide support and / or funding?
19. Do you share resources with other refugee resettlement agencies, in other parts of [Takora] / the United States / other countries?
20. Where do you turn, for support, assistance, and guidance?
21. If there were no obstacles in the world, how would you like to see a refugee learn English?
22. What is the most rewarding aspect of working with refugees, and helping them learn English?
23. What is the most challenging aspect of working with refugees, and helping them learn English?
24. What motivates the refugees?
25. What does not motivate the refugees?
26. Can my research help you?

THANK YOU!!!!

APPENDIX E

IRB APPROVED INSTRUMENT:

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR

HEATHER AND NILO, CLIENT COUNSELORS,

REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT, INC.

### **Interview questions for [client counselors]**

1. How many refugees / families / clients do you have?
2. How frequently do you meet? When does this meeting schedule change?
3. What is your background?
4. What are the language needs of refugees?
5. How do you find out what these needs are?
6. How is the [RRI] seeking to address these needs?
7. What factors affect the refugees as they are learning English?
8. What helps, and what detracts, from learning English?
9. How do you “refer” for ESL classes?
10. Is there follow up regarding whether or not the client attends?
11. What if the client chooses not to go?
  - a. Are the refugees under any obligation to attend ESL classes?
  - b. Are there sanctions or negative repercussions?
12. Are you in contact with the ESL coordinator?
13. What is attendance like with refugees?
  - a. Sometimes it seems they go intermittently, or arrive late or leave early, who expresses expectations for attending classes?
14. What obstacles do refugees face? How are these related to language?
15. How do you seek to meet the refugees’ need of “self-sufficiency”, with regard to language?
16. What happens to a refugee who does not become self sufficient?
17. How have pre-literate refugees, who have never attended school, done with learning English and with become “self-sufficient”?
18. How do you create your plan with your client? May I see a sample plan?
19. Will you list the priority for immediate needs: Housing, Employment, and Language acquisition.
  - a. How do you address these needs, as you resettle your refugees?
20. What is the “typical” timeline for a refugee to:
  - a. Become employed?
  - b. Learn English?
  - c. Become “self-sufficient”?
21. How long can you provide services? Is there a legal or funding limit?
22. What happens at the 90day mark, the 180day mark, the five year mark, and the seven year mark?
23. How do you keep up with your clients, as time progresses?

24. Who gets the information to the refugee, re: ESL classes, getting a job, and becoming a citizen?
25. How do the different pieces of the Refugee Resettlement Puzzle fit together?
26. Where do you turn, for support, assistance, and guidance?

THANK YOU!!!

APPENDIX F

[TAKORA PROGRAM FOR REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT]

ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE SCOPE OF WORK CONTRACT



## **SCOPE OF WORK**

### **English as a Second Language**

#### **1.0 [TED] Mission and Vision Statement**

1.1 **[TED] Mission:** The [Takora Economic Department] mission statement promotes the safety, well-being, and self-sufficiency of children, adults, and families.

1.2 **[TED] VISION:** Every child, adult and family in the State of [Takora] will be safe and economically secure.

#### **2.0 Purpose**

2.1 The purpose of this solicitation is to purchase English-as-a-Second-Language Training, hereinafter known as English Language Training (ELT) for individuals who meet the definition of a "refugee". This service is to be provided in only [Nalenga] County.

2.2 Authority: Pursuant to section A>R>S> § 41-1954 (A)(6), the [Takora Economic Department]/Community Services Administration ([TED]/DAAS) has the authority to contract and incur obligations within the general scope of its activities and operations. Pursuant to section 412(c)(2)(B) of the Immigration and Nationality Act, 45 CFR Part 400, and the [Takora] Gubernatorial Designation of Authority, the [Takora Economic Department (TED)], [Takora Program for Refugee Resettlement (TPRR)] makes funds available to provide services in [Takora].

2.3 Projected Need: For State Fiscal Year 2006 9July 1, 2005 through June 30, 2006) [TPRR] served 965 refugees in English Language Training. He [sic] Department anticipates serving 600-800 refugees in ELT for the State Fiscal Year 2007 (July 1, 2006 through June 30, 2007).

2.4 Projected Awards: It is the intent of this solicitation to make one award for this service for [Nalenga] County. The anticipated start date is November 1, 2006. The intent is to establish the contract with an initial contract term of eleven (11) months with extension options.

2.5. Fund sources that support the service include Formula Social Service and Targeted Assistance Grant funding from the U. S. Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR), and other funding sources as available. Funding for [Nalenga] County will be approximately \$225,000 per twelve (12) month period.

#### **3.0 Service Description**

3.1 Taxonomy Definition – A service that provides instruction in practical English language skills.

3.2 This service is to provide ELT to refugees with an emphasis on English as it relates to obtaining and retaining employment including identifying and assessing the instructional needs of eligible refugees needing to become conversant and literate in the English language, and reporting the results to DAAS/[TPRR].

3.3 A refugee is eligible for service if they are 16 years of age or older and not a full time student in elementary or secondary school.

#### **4.0 Background**

4.1 The Office of Refugee Resettlement makes funds available to States to provide services directly to refugees or to purchase services from public or private service providers. The State must use its formula grants primarily for employability services designed to assist refugees to achieve economic self-sufficiency as soon as possible after their arrival in the United States. A State may provide English language instruction, with an emphasis on English as it relates to obtaining and retaining employment.

## **5.0 Performance Measures**

5.1 ELT will improve refugees' ability to communicate within the work environment and/or community as measured by client testing and/or confirmation from an employer and/or Voluntary Agency (VOLAG) staff.

5.2 ELT will improve refugees' likelihood of securing, retaining or enhancing employment as measured by a sampling of individual and family self-sufficiency plans maintained by VOLAGs.

5.3 Refugees will acquire essential reading, writing and spelling skills as measured by follow-up testing and the number of refugees advancing at least one or more levels of ELT or successfully exiting ELT.

5.4 ELT will prepare refugees to satisfy English language and civics requirements for the United States Naturalization Exam as measured by the number of refugees who pass a USCIS sample Naturalization Exam.

## **6.0 Administrative Requirements:**

6.1 The Contractor shall:

6.1.1 Include the following on publications:

*"This project was funded by the [Takora Economic Department], Community Services Administration, [Takora Program for Refugee Resettlement]. Points of view are those of the author and do not necessarily represent the official position or policies of the Department. Under the Americans with Disability Act, (name of organization) must make a reasonable accommodation to allow a person with a disability to take part in a program, service, or activity. For example, this means that if necessary, (name of organization) must provide sign language interpreters for people who are deaf, a wheelchair accessible location, or enlarged printed materials. It also means that (name of organization) will take any other reasonable action that allows you to take part in and understand a program or activity, including making reasonable changes to an activity. If you believe that you will not be able to understand or take part in a program or activity because of your disability, please let us know of your disability needs in advance if at all possible. Please contact (name of contact person)."*

6.1.1.1 Exceptions may include items that are very small. Requests for exception must be directed to the [TED]/Division of Aging and Adult Services (DAAS) Contract Specialist.

6.1.2 Communicate with DAAS Contract Specialist electronically through email to convey Microsoft based text and spreadsheet documentation.

6.1.3 Utilize computer backup/recovery systems and procedures to ensure no loss of data required for DAAS/[TPRR] reports, and to ensure that there is no disruption or degradation of services provided.

6.1.4 Utilize a computer-based tracking system from which reports provided to DAAS/[TPRR] may be generated.

6.1.5 Notify the [TED]/DAAS Contract Specialist within seven (7) calendar days of any changes in key staff.

6.1.6 Maintain documentation that key staff has received appropriate training or hold appropriate certification/licensure in accordance with their job descriptions.

6.1.7 Ensure that key staff attends training required by [TED]/DAAS/[TPRR].

6.1.8 To the maximum extent feasible, provide services in a manner that includes the use of bilingual/bicultural women on service agency staff to ensure adequate service access by female refugees, and that is culturally and linguistically compatible with refugees' languages and cultural backgrounds.

6.1.9 Participate in [TED]/DAAS/[TPRR] evaluation studies, if any.

6.1.10 Provide all personnel, supervision, equipment, materials and supplies necessary to meet the requirements of this service.

6.1.11 Provide services that are appropriate to the language, culture and geographic location of the refugees.

6.1.12 Ensure that women have the same opportunity as men to participate in services.

- 6.1.13 Maintain and utilize secure storage space for confidential refugee and personnel information.
- 6.1.14 Maintain ongoing, individual, confidential case records for each refugee containing at a minimum an individual service plan, a copy of the USCIS Form I-94 or other USCIS documentation that verifies client eligibility and documentation of services provided.
- 6.1.15 Maintain and utilize a policy and procedure manual that includes, at a minimum, a description of population served, program description and requirements, fingerprinting requirements, non-discrimination policy, and confidentiality requirement.
- 6.1.16 Consult no less than two (2) times annually with VOLAGs, Mutual Assistance Associations (MAAs), and other key community service providers to solicit input on refugees' English language needs.
- 6.1.17 Consult with [TPRR] on the reasonableness and feasibility of implementing services to meet the refugees' ELT needs and implement upon direction of [TPRR].
- 6.1.18 Notify [TED] in writing of any subcontracts it intends to enter into, and/or any intended additions or deletions of facility locations. Such notification shall be made prior to subcontractor performing any services under this contract and prior to any change in the facility location is implemented. In no event shall a subcontract or facility location change or expand the service area covered by the contract award.
- 6.1.19 Comply with [TPRR] requirements as may be amended.

## **7.0 Service Requirements**

7.1 The Contractor shall:

- 7.1.1 Identify and assess the instructional needs of eligible refugees needing to become functionally conversant and literate in the English language.
- 7.1.2 Provide ELT to refugees in the following order of priority, except in certain individual extreme circumstances:
  - (a) All newly arriving refugees during their first year in the U. S., who apply for services;
  - (b) Refugees who are receiving cash assistance;
  - (c) Unemployed refugees in need of services to retain employment or to attain economic independence;
  - (d) Employed refugees in need of services to retain employment or to attain economic independence.
- 7.1.3 Provide ELT in group or individual settings such as classrooms or communal/agency settings that are conducive to learning English, and group instruction at a training or employment site that is conducive to learning English.
- 7.1.4 Provide ELT to the fullest extent feasible outside normal working hours in order to avoid interference with refugee employment.
- 7.1.5 Provide ELT concurrently with employment or other employment-related services such as job search activities or job counseling.
- 7.1.6 Under the supervision of a person who holds a Master's Degree in teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (MATESOL) or English as a Second Language (ESL), provide ELT through a person who meets, at a minimum, one of the following criteria for teaching English to speakers of other languages:
  1. A Bachelor's Degree in teaching ESL or teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL).
  2. A Bachelor's Degree in education, English, linguistics, applied linguistics, or bilingual/bicultural studies; and [a Takora] Adult Education Certificate in ELT/ESL/ESOL.
  3. A Bachelor's Degree with a major other than those specified in paragraph (2) above; and one year of experience in teaching ESL in an accredited institution; and [a Takora] Adult Education Certificate in ELT/ESL/ESOL.

4. Possession of [a Takora] Adult Education Certificate in ELT/ESL/ESOL instruction with three years of progressively responsible experience in a program of language instruction for non-English speakers.

7.1.6.1 A trained ELT/ESL/ESOL volunteer may provide one-on-one volunteer instruction/tutoring in English for Speakers of Other Languages and in Basic Literacy for such special needs as instruction to homebound individuals, citizenship seekers, etc.

7.1.7 Correlate job-related English language instruction with daily work tasks and orientation that will enable the refugee to enter the job market and/or that will lead to greater job potential.

7.1.8 Submit ELT progress documentation for active participants to their respective VOLAG no less than quarterly.

7.1.9 Assure that ELT instructors receive a minimum of ten (10) hours of professional development annually to expand upon their ELT techniques and skills.

#### **8.0 Reporting Requirements**

8.1 The Contractor shall provide:

8.1.1 Quarterly Reports that includes client statistical information (Exhibit 1) and a narrative describing activities that occurred during the quarter (Exhibit 2).

8.1.2 Provide an annual qualitative and quantitative analysis with indicators of the effectiveness of the ELT.

8.1.3 Other reports as requested by [TED]/DAAS/[TPRR].

8.1.4 The Contractors Monthly Invoice (FW-110).

8.1.5 Final Invoice shall be submitted no later than the thirtieth (30th) day following the end of the contract period. The Final Invoice shall include all adjustments to prior invoices submitted for the contract period.

8.2 Reports shall be submitted to:

[Takora Economic Department]  
Contract Management Unit – [Program for Refugee  
Resettlement]  
P. O. Box [5555] – Site Code [123B]  
[Metropolis, TA 55000-1234]

04 09 [Nalenga] County

APPENDIX G

IRB APPROVED INSTRUMENT:

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR

SAMANTHA SMITH, ESL ADMINISTRATOR,

ESL PROGRAM,

BLUE BONNET SOCIAL ASSISTANCE

### **Administrator / ESL Coordinator questions:**

#### English Language Training Program

- What is the English Language Training program?
- What is the contract [BBSA] has with the [Takora Program for Refugee Resettlement]?
- What classes do you coordinate?
- Did you create the program?
- Did you design the curriculum?
  - How did you determine what to include and use in your program?
- Do you work with other NGOs? Which ones? How do you work together?
- Do other NGOs teach English? Why / why not?

#### Thesis Questions

- What are the language learning needs of refugees in [Metropolis]?
- What factors affect the language learning needs of refugees?
- What helps refugees learn English?
- What detracts, or pulls away, from refugees learning English?
- How does [BBSA] address these needs?
- How does literacy / illiteracy affect students when they are learning English?
- How does gender affect students learning English?
- How does the level of formal education affect students learning English?

#### English Classes

- What are the classes?
- How many levels of English class?
- Any “electives”?
- When are the ESL classes?
- How frequently are the classes / cycles offered?
- Where are the classes offered?
- How did you decide when to offer the classes?
- How did you decide where to offer the classes?
- What materials are used? Who provides the materials?
- What is the curriculum? Who determines the curriculum?
- Who instructs the classes?
- What is the training / educational background of the instructors?
- Are there issues with staffing the classes?
- Does the instructor conduct a survey at the beginning, to learn about the students’ background and what motivates each student to come?
- How do you advertise and recruit refugees to attend the classes?

## Refugees and English Classes

- Do the refugees need to pay for the class?
- Are the refugees under any obligation to attend?
- (Matching Grant)
- (Gaining citizenship)
- Can all refugees attend, or is there a time limit for how long they can participate in [BBSA] services?
- What is attendance like with the students?
- Do they have trouble traveling to / from the class?
- Do you provide transportation for the students?
- Is childcare provided?
- What other issues keep the students from attending?
- What is participation like with the students?
- Are the classes filled with mixed level students?
- Do the students have different educational backgrounds?
  - Are some formally educated? How does this affect the class?
  - Are some illiterate and with no formal education? How does this affect the class?
- What are the students' goals with learning English?
- Do the students have different goals with learning English?
- How are these goals met?
- What are your (end) goals for each student?
- What are your expected outcomes?
- How do you measure success?
- How do you assess progress?

## Reflective questions

- What is the most rewarding aspect of working with refugees? Helping refugees learn English?
- What is the most challenging aspect of working with refugees Helping refugees learn English?
- What are the pressures you receive from above and below you?
- How do you respond to these pressures and to these needs?
- What motivates the refugees?
- What does not motivate the refugees?
- What would be your ideal language learning setting / opportunity?
- How can my research help you?

- The English Language Training program has been happening for two years. Could my research help you with examining this program?
- What questions do you have?
- What other questions should I ask?
- Any other thoughts about refugees? Being in [Metropolis]? The English language? Teaching English? Learning English? Studying and education?
- What else would you like to share with me?

Thank you!



APPENDIX H

IRB APPROVED INSTRUMENT:

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR

ANTHONY, DAISY, AND RYAN, ESL INSTRUCTORS,

BLUE BONNET SOCIAL ASSISTANCE

## Interview Questions for Teachers

### Background of students

- Who are your current students?
- What is the language background of your students?
- How do you assess the language skills of your students?

### Logistics of classes

- What do you teach?
- What materials do you use?
- What is your background?
- How long have you taught ESL?
- Do you work with others to teach the students?
- What kind of support network exists?
- What is attendance like with the students?
  - How many students attend each class?
  - How consistently do students attend class?
  - What happens to the students who only come a few times?
  - How commonly does this happen?
    - As a teacher, what do you do?
  - What other issues keep the students from attending?
  - What is participation like with the students?
    - How do the students participate?
- How does the different educational backgrounds affect the class?
- How do you find out what your students' needs are?
- What are your goals when teaching your students?
- What is your end goal?
- Do the students have different goals with learning English?
- What are their goals?
- How are these goals met?
- How do you measure success?
- How do you assess and measure progress?
- When teaching English, what do you focus on?

### Reflective questions

- What are your students' language learning needs?
- What factors affect the acquisition of English?
- How do you address their language learning needs?

- How do you help the students to become “self sufficient”?
- What is the most rewarding aspect of teaching refugees?
- What is the most challenging aspect of teaching refugees?
- How is teaching refugees different from or similar to teaching other ESL classes?
- What would be your ideal language learning setting?
- What motivates the refugees?
- What does not motivate the refugees?
- What questions do you have?
- What other questions should I ask?

Thank you!

APPENDIX I

IRB APPROVED INSTRUMENT:

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR

LEAH, ENGLISH LANGUAGE WORKSHOP COORDINATOR,

REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT, INC.

**Interview questions for [Leah].**

1. What is English instruction like at the RRI?
2. Do you work with other NGOs? Which ones? How do you work together?
3. What helps refugees learning English?
4. What detracts, or pulls away, from refugees learning English?
5. How did you decide when to offer the classes?
6. Did you design the curriculum?
  - a. How did you determine what to include and use in your program?
7. What materials are used? Who provides the materials?
8. What is the curriculum? Who determines the curriculum?
9. Who instructs the classes?
10. What is the training / educational background of the instructors?
11. Are the refugees under any obligation to attend?
12. Can all refugees attend, or is there a time limit for how long they can participate in [BBSA] services?
13. What is attendance like with the students?
14. Do they have trouble traveling to/from the class?
15. Do you provide transportation for the students?

Background of students

16. Who are your current students?
17. What is the language background of your students?
18. How do you assess the language skills of your students?

Logistics of classes

19. What do you teach?
20. What materials do you use?
21. What is your background?
22. Do you work with others to teach the students?
23. What kind of support network exists, regarding administration, training, evaluation and feedback?
24. What is attendance like with the students?
25. What is participation like with the students?
26. How do you find out what your students' needs are?
27. What are your goals when teaching your students?
28. Do the students have different goals with learning English?
29. How are these goals met?

30. How do you measure success?
31. When teaching English, what do you focus on?

Reflective questions

32. What are your students' language needs?
33. What factors affect the acquisition of English?
34. How do you address their language learning needs?
35. How do you help the students to become "self sufficient", in regards to English?
36. How is teaching refugees different from or similar to teaching other ESL classes?
37. What would be your ideal language learning setting?
38. What motivates the refugees?
39. What does not motivate the refugees?

Thank you!

APPENDIX J  
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD  
HUMAN SUBJECT APPROVAL FORM



**To:** Karen Adams  
LL

**From:** Mark Roosa, Chair  
Soc Beh IRB

**Date:** 02/13/2009

**Committee Action:** **Exemption Granted**

**IRB Action Date:** 02/13/2009

**IRB Protocol #:** 0902003671

**Study Title:** Refugees Learn English; Non-profit Agencies Assist Refugees

The above-referenced protocol is considered exempt after review by the Institutional Review Board pursuant to Federal regulations, 45 CFR Part 46.101(b)(2) .

This part of the federal regulations requires that the information be recorded by investigators in such a manner that subjects cannot be identified, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects. It is necessary that the information obtained not be such that if disclosed outside the research, it could reasonably place the subjects at risk of criminal or civil liability, or be damaging to the subjects' financial standing, employability, or reputation.

You should retain a copy of this letter for your records.



APPENDIX K

[TAKORA PROGRAM FOR REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT]

SCOPE OF WORK FOR SERVICES PURCHASED

**Scope of Work** – This section contains the description of services E3-1 to E3-6 the [Takora Economic Department (TED)] intends to purchase under this Application.

## **1.0 OVERVIEW:**

**1.1 AUTHORITY** - Pursuant to Section 412(c)(2)(B) of the Immigration and Nationality Act, 45 CFR Part 400, [T.R.S.] §41-1954 (A)(6) and (8), and the June 30, 1999 [(Takora)] Gubernatorial Designation of Authority, the [Takora Economic Department] makes funds available to provide services to refugees in [Takora].

**1.2 FUNDING** - Social Service and Targeted Assistance Grants funding from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR) and other funding sources as available, will be pooled. Funding will approximate the following:

Refugee Program - \$1,700,000

Funds may be utilized to assist refugees who have been in the United States for more than 60 months; however, this is subject to change by federal agencies. Services may not be provided to United States citizens other than for U.S. born minor children residing in a family in which at least one parent is a refugee.

**1.3 THE [TAKORA PROGRAM FOR REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT (TPRR)]** – Based on an analysis of currently offered services in [Takora] and the availability of federal funding, group discussions with service providers regarding client needs, and a recent research study conducted in [Metropolis] and [Cityopolis], services offered by the TPRR are being restructured. The program will focus services in five broad areas: Assistance (AKA “Refugee Program”), Health, Childcare, Training, and Transportation.

The Assistance area consolidates services previously provided and referred to as “Job Development and Placement”, “Relocation Adjustment Services”, and “Case Management.” The Assistance service, now titled “Refugee Program”, will be provided to refugees by non-profit refugee resettlement agencies that have entered into Cooperative Agreements with the United States Department of State as part of its Reception and Placement program.

The Health area includes “Mental Health Services” and “Preventive Health”. The plan is to have a single service provider in [Metropolis] and a single service provider in [Cityopolis]. (Note: The same service provider could provide services in both counties.)

Childcare, Training, and Transportation areas each include a “Coordination” service. The plan is to have one service provider for each service in [Metropolis] and one service provider for each service in [Cityopolis]. (Note: The same service provider could provide services in both counties.)

While [TPRR] strongly believes that the [Takora] refugee network infrastructure must be maintained, it is also committed to funding programs that will deliver efficient, effective, and high-quality services to refugees. [TPRR] has provided flexibility in its new structure to allow service providers the opportunity to contract directly with [TPRR], or indirectly with [TPRR] as a subcontractor of a “direct” service provider.

Through research, [TPRR] recognizes that there is great potential for creative service paradigms for refugees, and encourages potential contractors to explore innovative and cooperative approaches to the delivery of seamless services.

## **1.4 DEFINITIONS**

1.4.1 Client – An individual who meets the definitions of a refugee as follows:

- **Refugees**, admitted under INA § 207
- **Asylees**, granted asylum under INA § 208
- **Cuban and Haitian entrants** as defined under 45 CFR § 401.2
- **Certain Amerasians**
- **Victims of Trafficking certified by DHHS**
  - a. sex trafficking in which a commercial sex act is induced by force, fraud, or coercion, or in which the person induced to perform such act has not attained 18 years of age; or
  - b. the recruitment, harboring, transportation, provision, or obtaining of a person for labor or services, through the use of force, fraud, or coercion for the purpose of subjection to involuntary servitude, peonage, debt bondage, or slavery.
- **Permanent Residents who had held one of the above statuses in the past**

**Others as indicated by RRP**

\*Note: Individuals who are paroled into the United States as *refugees or asylees* under INA § 212(d)(5) are also eligible for service, NOT to be confused with general parolees under § 212(d)(5), such as "Lautenberg" parolees, other "public interest parolees" and "humanitarian interest parolees".

## 1.5 REFUGEE PROGRAM

1.5.1 Service Definition – Services provide for the effective resettlement of refugees and to assist refugees to achieve economic self-sufficiency as quickly as possible. Services available include, but are not limited to: case management, English as a second language, relocation adjustment, job development and placement, coordination, consultation, transportation, program development, nursing services, dental assistance, medical assistance, unaccompanied minors service, work adjustment training, job training and community education and information.

For this application, this service includes 1) Case Management and 2) Employment Assistance

1.5.2 Program Information - Refugee Program is designed to assist clients to achieve economic independence and successfully transition to life in [Takora]. To achieve self-sufficiency as soon as possible after arrival in the United States, new client arrivals, particularly recipients of Refugee Cash Assistance and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, need specialized help to become employed and self-sufficient prior to the expiration of their public cash assistance. It is essential that they receive client-specific services that address the barriers to self-sufficiency.

### 1.5.3 Reporting Units

a) One unit of service equals one (1) hour of staff time. This includes services such as direct and indirect client contact, interfacing with employers, conducting case reviews, preparing required reports and documentation, consultations, and attending training and meetings. Portions of a unit shall be reported to the nearest whole number.

b) One unit of service equals one unduplicated client that indirectly received Refugee Program assistance.

### 1.5.4 Administrative Requirements:

The contractor shall comply with the following administrative requirements:

a) Agencies shall confer with [TPRR] before disseminating publications funded under this contract, to determine the need for [TPRR] review and approval.

b) Publications shall contain the following statement:

*“This project was funded by the [Takora Department of Economic Security], Community Services Administration, [Takora Program for Refugee Resettlement]. Points of view are those of the author and do not necessarily represent the official position or policies of the Department. Under the Americans with Disabilities Act, (name of organization) must make a reasonable accommodation to allow a person with a disability to take part in a program, service, or activity. For example, this means that if necessary, (name of organization) must provide sign language interpreters for people who are deaf, a wheelchair accessible location, or enlarged print materials. It also means that (name of organization) will take any other reasonable action that allows you to take part in and understand a program or activity, including making reasonable changes to an activity. If you believe that you will not be able to understand or take part in a program or activity because of your disability, please let us know of your disability needs in advance if at all possible. Please contact (name of contact person).”*

c) Disallow smoking in accordance with Part C of Public Law 103-227, the “Pro-Children Act of 1994” which states that smoking may not be permitted in any portion of any indoor facility owned or used routinely or regularly for the provision of health, day care, education, or library services to children under the age of 18.

d) Participate in [TPRR] evaluation studies.

e) Communicate with [TPRR] electronically through email to convey Microsoft based text and spreadsheet documentation.

f) Purchase equipment and products made in America to the greatest extent practicable.

g) Utilize computer backup/recovery systems and procedures to ensure that there is no loss of data required for [TPRR] reports, and ensure that there is no disruption or degradation of services provided.

h) Utilize a computer-based tracking system from which monthly, quarterly, and other reports may be generated.

i) Notify the [TPRR] contract specialist within seven calendar days of any changes in key staff – those with supervisory responsibility or direct contact with clients – and supply a copy of the resume for the staff replacement.

j) Maintain a policy and procedure manual that outlines tasks appropriate to the delivery of effective and efficient service to clients.

k) Maintain documentation that key staff has received appropriate training or holds appropriate credentials in accordance with their job descriptions.

l) Ensure that women have the same opportunity as men to participate in services.

m) To the maximum extent feasible, provide services in a manner that includes the use of bilingual/bicultural women on service agency staff to ensure adequate service access by female clients, and that is culturally and linguistically compatible with clients.

n) Adhere to 45 CFR 400.147 that states: services will be provided to refugees in the following order of priority: (1) all newly arriving refugees during their first year in the U.S., who apply for services; (2) refugees who are receiving cash assistance (either Refugee Cash Assistance or Temporary Assistance for Needy Families); (3) unemployed refugees who are not receiving cash assistance; (4) employed refugees in need of services to retain employment or attain economic self-sufficiency. (Note: “Refugees” in the passage should be interpreted to mean “clients”.)

o) Provide a minimum of 24 hours of training during each contract period for all funded employees and document in their personnel files. Ensure their attendance at training required by [TPRR], which may include such areas as case management, employment, health and mental health, English language training, crisis intervention, and program development.

p) Provide assistance through persons with a demonstrated ability to perform professional linguistically and culturally appropriate refugee case management and employment assistance, or through persons with a demonstrated ability to perform professional client case management and employment assistance utilizing linguistically and culturally appropriate and qualified individuals. The use of the terms “professional” and “qualified”

must include adherence to a code of ethics (e.g., National Association of Social Workers Code of Ethics, The Cross Cultural Health Care Program Medical Interpreter Code of Ethics).

q) Participate in meetings in which Coordination-Childcare, Coordination-Training, Coordination- Transportation, the [TPRR] staff, and others as appropriate, meet to discuss system-level planning and coordination.

r) Promote the service to prospective clients directly, indirectly through other refugee service providers, and through media as appropriate.

s) Provide volunteer opportunities for clients to learn new skills.

t) Conduct bi-annual point-in-time client satisfaction surveys.

u) Ensure that appropriate staff attend technical assistance training required by [TPRR].

v) Maintain a case record for each client, to include at a minimum:

1) Client contact sheet (e.g., client name, address, phone number).

2) The date, purpose, type and method of contact, action, and outcomes, efforts undertaken to assist the client in attaining social and economic independence. Such documentation must include at a minimum an accounting of all services specified in 1.5.5 Case Management Requirements and 1.5.6 Employment Assistance Requirements.

3) A copy of the INS Form I-94 or other INS documentation that verifies client eligibility.

4) Application for assistance.

5) Authority to Release Information form signed by client and staff.

6) The strategy and timetable for obtaining a family income level through employment acquisition by employable family members at sufficient wage levels to reach self-sufficiency. The strategy and timetable must include comparative wages and benefits available to client from initial to enhanced employment, full-time or part-time employment status, expected duration of employment, terms of employment, opportunities for advancement, support services offered and to be offered, and verification of 90-day employment retention status.

7) A plan of action to address employment and/or socio-cultural barriers that impede clients' ability to attain social and economic self-sufficiency.

8) A signed copy of the rights and responsibilities of the agency and the client.

#### 1.5.5 Case Management Requirements

The contractor shall comply with the following case management requirements:

a) Determine, provide, refer and track client participation, including: school registration for children and assistance with school related issues, housing and home management assistance, assistance with obtaining health information and services, training, specialized services provided for youth, elderly, or disabled, counseling, crises intervention, transportation services, interpretation and translation services, assistance with immigration matters, financial management and tax return assistance, and volunteer services. Germane services must be provided in conjunction with the availability of Coordination – Training, Coordination – Transportation, and Coordination – Childcare.

b) Conduct an in-depth assessment of client needs and prioritize needs in accordance with 45 CFR 400.147.

c) Coordinate and facilitate access to social and medical services, appeals, hearings, grievance, applications and interviews with public and private agencies.

d) Adhere to the attached Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996, "Business Associates Agreement".

#### 1.5.6 Employment Assistance Requirements

The contractor shall comply with the following employment assistance requirements:

a) Establish and maintain relationships with employers that result in clients securing appropriate employment and opportunities for advancement.

b) Assess client employment needs and capacity.

c) Develop and maintain a comprehensive Family Self-sufficiency Plan, including an Employability Plan for every employable member of the family pursuant to 45 CFR 400.79, that will help the client overcome obstacles to securing employment (e.g., limited or no

English language proficiency, demeanor, medical needs, lack of United States work history, non-transferable skills, cultural and religious practices that could affect employment, childcare and transportation), and include copies of official documents (diplomas, certificates, etc.) as available; address the family's need from the time of intake until the services are no longer provided, to include at a minimum: client's background, basic needs, barriers to the attainment of social and economic self-sufficiency, services that will be and are actively provided to address the needs and overcome the barriers, client goals and objectives, plans to address client goals and objectives, a determination of the income level a family would have to earn to exceed its public cash assistance grant and become self-supporting, performance measures and expected outcomes and benefits.

d) Comply with the employment plan.

e) Provide clients with services, including job-readiness preparation, that result in securing initial employment as soon as possible and help them to achieve durable economic self-sufficiency.

f) Coordinate interviews with potential employers.

g) Educate clients about how to market their employability.

h) Accompany clients to employment interviews, as appropriate.

i) Assist clients with employment-related networking.

j) Provide appropriate information to employers that clients cannot adequately provide, and help to establish parameters within which clients', their employers, and their coworkers can satisfactorily function in the work setting.

k) Assist clients with enhanced employment, re-certification and re-licensure assistance, and apprenticeships.

l) Adhere to the attached Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996, "Business Associates Agreement".

## **1.6 PROGRAM REPORTS**

In accordance with the Reporting Requirements of the [TED] Special Terms and Conditions, the contractor shall submit the following reports to:

[Takora Economic Department]  
Community Services Administration – [Program for Refugee  
Resettlement]  
P. O. Box [5555] – Site Code [123B]  
[Metropolis, TA 55000-1234]

a) Status Report for each client served during the month.

b) A Quarterly Report that includes at a minimum a quantitative (statistics) and narrative description of the activities that occurred during the quarter (see "Sample - Quarterly Report" Exhibit) and a description of how client volunteers were utilized.

c) By January 15th and July 15th (beginning 2004), provide results of a client point-in-time satisfaction survey.

## **1.7 FINANCIAL REPORTING REQUIREMENTS**

1.7.1 In accordance with the Reporting Requirements of [TED] Special Terms and Conditions, the contractor shall submit the following reports to:

[Takora Economic Department]  
Community Services Administration – [Program for Refugee  
Resettlement]  
P. O. Box [5555] – Site Code [123B]  
[Metropolis, TA 55000-1234]

1.7.2 A correctly completed FW-110 Contractor's Invoice and Statement of Expenditures for monthly reimbursement.

1.7.3 A correctly completed "Contractor's Equipment List", Form FES-1000AFORNA for equipment costing \$1,000 or more purchased in whole or in part with [TED]-CSA funds.

### **1.8 MATERIALS SERVICES PROVIDED BY DEPARTMENT**

The Department shall:

- a) Provide FW-110 Contractor's Invoice and Statement of Expenditures, Status Report, and Quarterly Statistical Report on disk.
- b) Provide technical assistance as determined to be necessary by [TPRR] and/or requested by contractor.

### APPENDIX L:

EXPLORING THE RESEARCH PROCESS OF THIS THESIS, AS WELL AS

OBSTACLES ENCOUNTERED

### **From the beginning**

I began my linguistic studies knowing I wanted to work with a marginalized people group. I knew I wanted to work with refugees, to intertwine my desire to pursue social justice with teaching English to a group of individuals seeking to learn English. I had



an internship with a pre-literate adult, and my experience with her fueled my interest for this study.

### **Non-governmental organizations teaching English to refugees**

#### **One example of an organization: initially helpful, then many obstacles**

I intended to fully examine all aspects of the English as a Second Language program provided by Blue Bonnet Social Assistance. I spoke with the ESL Administrator, Samantha Smith, on the phone, and she was quite willing to participate in my study. With her initial interest, I structured my IRB proposal, and submitted my application. It was approved, so I followed up with Smith with an interview. She granted me permission to observe classes and interview her instructors, though she needed to check with her boss, as he could approve or deny my request to speak with their refugee clients. He denied my request. And so, I was unable to speak with the recipients of the ESL instruction – the current refugee students and recent graduates of the program, to assess their perception of the program. I was permitted to observe three courses and interview three teachers, though neither number were a statistically significant percentage of the courses or instructors at BBSA. One instructor allowed me to record our conversation, one did not though we had a “successful” interview, though the third did not allow me to record our conversation and concluded the interview before I had finished my questions.

It is difficult to find information on the class times and locations for ESL classes for refugees. BBSA’s website continues to have *no* information on their ESL classes for

refugees. The class schedule is typed in English, photocopied and posted in various lobbies around Metropolis. I noticed it posted in the lobby at BBSA and PSSA. With the classes frequently changing, I wonder if the most current information is always available for the clients.

Friends of Refugees, (FoR) has a map of *all* refugee resources in the greater metropolitan area on their website. In April 2009 I noticed BBSA's English classes were not on the map. I pointed this out to the president, she alerted the map-maker, the map-maker contacted me asking for information about these classes, and I directed him to Samantha. As of September 2010, these classes are still *not* listed on the website.

In sum, my encounter with Blue Bonnet Social Assistance was fraught with obstacles. Though I interviewed Samantha and three teachers, and observed six ESL classes, I was unable to speak with their clients, and I was unable to interview or observe a statistically significant sample of teachers and classes, both obstacles due to gate-keeping constraints.

### **Success with other organizations**

After I realized my research needed to shift directions, I started to look elsewhere to see if there were other individuals or other organizations I could interview to learn about the ways others were addressing the linguistic needs of refugees in this community. I contacted Refugee Resettlement, Incorporated, and Purple Sage Social Assistance, two of the three other non-profit organizations that resettled refugees in Metropolis, Takora.

**One example: initially denied, yet with persistence quite helpful.**

Initially, it seemed it would be problematic working with the Refugee Resettlement, Incorporated, (RRI), yet this context proved to be fruitful, except for the language issues involved with interviewing refugees.

Refugee Resettlement, Incorporated, (RRI): I emailed the executive asking if I could interview members of her organization. She quickly responded and denied my request, as they were busy moving offices. I asked a second time. She said yes, and members of their organization bent over backwards to help me. I volunteered with one English class, and helped to pack their supplies while I volunteered. I interviewed the English class coordinator, two client counselors, and the volunteer coordinator. It was quite enlightening speaking with the client counselors. Both work with refugees after 180 days once R&P core services have concluded. They are RP client counselors, and provide care on an as-needed basis. The volunteer coordinator gave me a tour of their office, showing me the different ways they serve refugees and address different literacies, in addition to learning English, such as medical literacy and numeric literacy. They said I could interview refugees, but when I volunteered once with their English class, I was not comfortable pulling aside a random person to fumble through questions, notably because their English level was low. We smiled at one another instead.

RRI summary: After my initial difficulty in gaining access to individuals at RRI, every person I interacted with was helpful, welcoming, and willing to help with my research. Unfortunately, I began with RRI too late in my research, and could not conduct follow up interviews, as I needed to move out of state.

### **Serendipity with the final non-profit organization**

Purple Sage Social Assistance (PSSA) was welcoming, forthright, and eager to work with me. I interviewed the resettlement director, the English class coordinator, and spoke with the volunteer coordinator. I attended three classes. I drove to two other classes, but was unable to attend due to communication troubles. Of the three classes that I attended, I was actively involved and helped teach all of the classes.

PSSA summary: Every individual I interacted with was very helpful with my research. Each person answered all of my questions, and helped me gain access to other individuals in their organization. However, I also began too late with PSSA. My research was concluding at the end of May, as I was moving out of state, and there was not time to fully study PSSA. Had I started with PSSA, my thesis would have taken a different route.

### **Other interviews and observations, beyond the English classroom**

I interviewed Mark Gilmore, the Director of Refugee Services for the Takora Program for Refugee Resettlement (TPRR), under the Takora Economic Department (TED). I was quite intimidated before my interview, as many individuals had spoken of him, and I perceived him as being quite intimidating. Yet my fears were unfounded, and he was welcoming and quite willing to assist me.

I interacted with others within the refugee resettlement community, though I found these interviews, and observations of meetings and events, did not tie directly to language issues. Instead, they proved useful for understanding the greater obstacles

refugees face. I interviewed Catherine Peterson, the president of Friends of Refugees (FoR). She connected me with others who work with refugee resettlement, and it was helpful to better see the broad picture of individuals who work to resettle refugees. I attended several meetings and community events, though they do not clearly tie in to teaching English to refugees, these events brushed on language obstacles refugees encounter.

### **Obstacles I encountered**

Some of the obstacles I encountered with my project related to time constraints, schedule constraints, and refugee constraints. Once I received IRB approval, it took some time to find a time that worked with everyone's schedules. Sometimes my interviews / observations were approved or denied in a subsequent manner, so I needed to complete one interview before receiving permission from the interviewee to speak with the next interviewee. I sought to complete my project in three months. I moved out of state at the end of these three months, so I did not have additional time to conduct follow-up interviews or build relationships and establish trust with my interviewees.

Regarding scheduling constraints, one non-profit was in the midst of moving, and another non-profit was changing the days of their classes. Some of the classes conflicted with my schedule, as I needed to find childcare for my infant. Yet most significantly, I ran into multiple obstacles with being able to interview refugees. One agency denied my request to interview their refugees, as this thesis is a public document and they were concerned I could leak sensitive information about their clients. Should the wrong

information become exposed, their lives could be in jeopardy. Two other agencies granted me permission to interview refugees sponsored by them, yet I was unable to do so. The organizations did not line up a specific refugee for me to meet with, but simply gave me a blanket, "Sure you may talk with them" as I was assisting teaching their English class. I assisted one class twice and two classes once. As their language skills were low and I did not have a translator, we could barely communicate. Many smiles were exchanged instead. For IRB approval to interview in another language, I would have needed to write my questions, translate them into their language, and find an additional translator to back-translate them into English. Or, I would have needed an interpreter or someone who could interview the refugees in their language. Originally, I planned on interviewing refugees who had completed the contracted English classes, to learn their perspective of the classes and the effectiveness of the program, but I was denied permission by the organization to interview these refugees. In addition, I realized teaching refugees is not as neat and tidy as is teaching English in other educational settings. I had believed refugees began at the Basic level, consistently attended class twice a week, progressed through Low level, Mid level, and High level, and then graduated from the program. In actuality, the classes are fluid, ever changing, without a start and end date, and the clients are not required to attend. They come when they can. So identifying students who had "completed" their training was not easy.

### **Defining a research question**

Another obstacle I struggled with was having a narrow and clearly defined thesis question. Though being able to interview refugees was my most specific obstacle to my original thesis question, this struggle carried over and dramatically affected my research. My thesis, research question, and hypothesis kept changing. The IRB is very specific: one cannot contact participants until the research project is approved. I called Samantha Smith, asked if I could interview her, she said sure, and I said I would get back to her after my project was approved. I submitted my IRB application, and it was approved as an exempt study, as I would not be interacting with at-risk individuals. I wrote my interview questions and structured my project hoping I would be able to do an in-depth analysis of Blue Bonnet Social Assistance (BBSA) English as a Second Language (ESL) Program. I contacted Smith, and interviewed her. I was then granted written permission from Geoff Wiggins, Refugee Resettlement Chair at BBSA, to interview three teachers and observe their courses, though I was denied permission to interview BBSA refugee clients. So, I interviewed three teachers, and observed these teachers teach three courses. I observed one for four classes and two for one class, for a total of six classes. As I was denied permission to speak with BBSA refugee clients, who were either students or graduates of the BBSA ESL program, I knew I needed to shift my thesis topic, as it was based on interviewing participants of the BBSA ESL program, notably and specifically comparing what the graduates of the refugee ESL program said against what the instructors and administrators said. Because of gatekeeping constraints, without access to the recipients of the ESL instruction, or to the other faculty and staff, I knew my thesis topic must

change. It became a race against time, for I needed to change course midway through my research study, which was also midway through the semester, and still have usable data. I submitted an IRB modification form, which contained written consent from the agencies saying I could interview and observe individuals at their agencies; as well as modifications to my study, including change to my study title, modification of participating individuals, and modification to my interview questions. This was approved. I contacted other agencies and asked to interview key individuals, essentially anyone connected with refugees, resettlement, or ESL I interviewed these individuals with my IRB approved questions, finished interviews and observations, moved out of state, and then I sat back to look at my data. Sheepishly I admit, *at this point* I read all of the literature that I had found in the midst of data collection. In retrospect, I should have read *all* of the literature *before* I began collecting data. This would have helped me to conduct tighter interviews. I wrestled with how to change my research focus so I could still use my data. Finally and eventually, my questions changed to the following:

1. How is the local community addressing the linguistic needs of refugees?
2. What is the greatest linguistic challenge refugees face?

I knew I could no longer focus solely on Blue Bonnet Social Assistance, nor could I write a report that was statistically significant, as I was unable to interview a representative sample of ESL teachers and refugees in the city of Metropolis. So I opened up my questions, to simply share what I learned about teaching English to refugees in this Southwestern metropolis, as well as share the greatest linguistic challenges that I



observed. This has proved to be an excellent pilot study, as I have learned much about refugees, refugee resettlement, their linguistic needs, and the ways multiple organizations are addressing their needs in this community.

## BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Sarah-Anne Laster Kielczewski was born on May 16, 1982 in Charlotte, NC. She was home-schooled kindergarten through seventh grade. In the eighth grade she attended Parkwood Middle School in Monroe, NC. She attended Parkwood High School in Monroe, NC, from 1996 to 2000. She attended Randolph-Macon Woman's College in Lynchburg, VA, from 2000 to 2004, where she received her Bachelor of Arts in History, with a concentration in British and American Literature. In 2005 she began her graduate studies at Arizona State University, where she received her post-baccalaureate in Secondary Education: English in 2007, and her Master of Arts in English, with a concentration in Linguistics in 2010.