Language Ideologies, Identity Construction, and Educational Barriers:

Teaching and Being Students From Refugee Backgrounds in Arizona

by

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ABSTRACT

In this three-article dissertation study, I examine the educational experiences of students from refugee backgrounds (SRBs) and the teachers that serve them in an urban high school in Arizona. Through a year-long ethnographic study, I attempt to contribute to the existing literature by exploring three salient issues that mediate experiences for participating teachers (n = 3) and SRBs (n = 32) in three classrooms. The participating SRBs came from a wide variety of home countries and spoke a combined 15 different home languages.

In the United States, where the instruction of SRBs is generally framed by language policies, English as a second language (ESL) teachers play an crucial role in SRBs' schooling. In the first article, I examined how teachers' language ideologies shaped their implementation of structured English immersion (SEI), the authorized language policy in the state of Arizona. Findings describe how the teachers enacted agency to appropriate authorized language policy and create new, unauthorized policies that met the perceived needs of SRBs in their classrooms.

I also examined the identity construction of SRBs in figured worlds of resettlement. Once resettled, SRBs are legally tied to their status as refugees, which may operate as a mechanism of oppression in the host country. These individuals are often stripped of all identities but one—that of being a refugee—which essentializes their vulnerability and perpetuates deficit-oriented perspectives that may limit learning opportunities for SRBs. Findings describe how participating teachers constructed SRBs' identities and how SRBs constructed refugee-ness for themselves, highlighting the strength and resiliency of this student population.

Finally, I used phenomenology as a methodological frame from which to interpret SRBs' experiences with SEI and the policy-related barriers they described as negatively impacting their education. As refugees flee their countries of origin, educational systems in their countries of resettlement have struggled to provide quality education to their children. Themes summarizing participants' collective experiences highlighted specific challenges related to SEI policy mandates, including SRBs' isolation, limited opportunities to interact with English-speaking peers, and low graduation rates.

DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my family.

Alison, this dissertation is also yours. Thank you for pushing me when I wanted to quit and tolerating me throughout the entire process. You were the driving force behind my doctoral program, I could not have done it without you. I love you.

Luca, I am so grateful to be your dad. I hope my graduation will teach you about persistence. Find your passion in life and go for it! I am excited to make up for all the weekends and evenings I couldn't spend with you while writing this dissertation. Ti amo.

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Finally, I want to thank the participating teachers and students at Downtown High for welcoming me into your classrooms and sharing your experiences with me. Your compassion and strength are inspirational.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

In this introductory chapter, I present the three articles that comprise this dissertation study on the education of students from refugee backgrounds (SRBs) in a U.S. resettlement context. In the time since I started this dissertation study, the educational context for SRBs has drastically changed. Prolonged conflict, a lack of funding, and misguided policies have made education in countries of asylum and origin extremely challenging (Piper et al., 2020). The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated the situation, as more refugee children face interrupted schooling in addition to isolation, discrimination, neglect, violence, and abuse (United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization [UNESCO], 2020). Before providing a synopsis of each article, I contextualize the overarching study by describing the current education crisis for refugees around the world, the language policy landscape in Arizona, the background to the topic and my entry into it, and my positionality related to the topic and study.

Framing the Study: SRBs in Resettlement Contexts

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) defines a refugee as "someone who is unable or unwilling to return to their country of origin owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group, or political opinion" (2010, p. 3). At the end of 2020, an estimated 26.4 refugees had registered with the UNHCR worldwide, more than half of whom are school-aged children (UNHCR, n.d.-a). Although most refugees live in nations surrounding their country of origin (Dryden-Peterson et al., 2016), individuals whose life, liberty, safety, health, or human rights are at risk in their country of asylum

may be selected for third-country resettlement in host countries including Canada, Sweden, Norway, and the United States (UNHCR, 2011).

Historically, the United States has led the world in refugee resettlement; however, admissions decreased between 2016 and 2020 under the Trump administration, which resettled a record low 11,814 refugees in 2020 (Migration Policy Institute, n.d.). The Biden administration pledged to reverse this trend and increased the refugee resettlement limit to 62,500 as of May 2021 (Monin et al., 2021). President Biden also stated he plans to increase that number to 125,000 in 2022 (Monin et al., 2021), as his administration also seeks to revise immigration policies to allow more Afghan refugees to enter the United States (U.S. Department of State, 2021). In light of these changes in U.S. refugee resettlement, educational systems around the country are preparing for thousands of Afghan SRBs to enroll in schools over the coming months (Ferlazzo, 2021; Lambert, 2021).

The UNHCR is meant to help refugees rebuild their lives after fleeing their country of origin, which includes ensuring resettled children have access to education (UNHCR, 2011). However, educational systems in SRBs' countries of resettlement have struggled to provide them with quality education (Donato & Ferris, 2020; McBrien, 2005). Data suggest these challenges increase as SRBs progress to higher levels of education. In 2018, only 24% of SRBs worldwide were enrolled in secondary education and 3% were enrolled in postsecondary education (UNESCO, 2020). Research suggests this trend may be due to a lack of training for teachers and school administrators on how to properly support SRBs (UNESCO, 2020).

In light of these global migration and educational issues, the field of refugee

education research has grown considerably in recent years. Scholars have drawn from anthropology, sociology, psychology, and linguistics to analyze SRBs' educational experiences, identity construction, community building, and language acquisition pre- and post-resettlement. Although a wide variety of approaches, conceptual models, and theories have been used, refugee education remains understudied in the existing literature, particularly in the United States (Moinolnolki & Han, 2017) and in relation to teachers working with SRBs (Newcomer et al., 2021; Roxas, 2011a). As such, there is a pressing need for educational research that addresses the needs of SRBs and the teachers that serve them. In the United States, where SRBs are typically enrolled in English as a second language (ESL) courses upon resettlement (Mthethwa-Sommers & Kisiara, 2015), there is also a need for language policy research that examines how authorized policy mandates mediate the experiences of teachers and SRBs in U.S. schools.

Language Policies

Policies serve two primary purposes in education: (a) the organizational function of establishing standards, specifying instructional practices, and providing guidance to teachers (Gandal & Vranek, 2001; Schmoker & Marzano, 1999); and (b) the sociopolitical role of assigning value to certain types of participation in the learning process (Anderson, 2017). As dynamic, sociocultural processes, language policies mediate the experiences of all teachers and students, especially those classified as English learners (ELs) (McCarty, 2004). Labels used to characterize students in language policies, such as EL or refugee, relate to ideologies that work through the policy implementation process and set limits for certain groups of students (Levinson et al., 2009). For example, English-only language policies require all instructional materials to

be in English and restrict the use of students' home languages to support their academic growth (Bal & Arzubiaga, 2013). In 1974, the landmark case Lau v. Nichols established a legal mandate for providing language services to all ELs (Hornberger, 2005), yet some scholars allege language policies have continued to reinforce monolingual language ideologies that marginalize ELs (including SRBs) in the United States (e.g., Menken, 2008; Rosa & Flores, 2017). In the subsequent section, I describe the policy context in Arizona, where structured English immersion (SEI) is the authorized language policy that frames instructional models for ELs (and thus most SRBs) throughout the state.

SEI

Over the past 3 decades, students in U.S. schools have become more linguistically and culturally diverse (Minkos et al., 2017). However, scholars allege language policies have become more restrictive, prioritizing standardized test scores over learning opportunities for SRBs and other ELs (Bal & Arzubiaga; 2013; Koyama & Bakuza, 2017). Following more multilingual approaches in the 1960s and 1970s, attitudes toward linguistic diversity began to shift in the mid-1980s, culminating in the passage of English-only language policies in 23 states by 2001 (de Jong, 2008).

As monolingual language ideologies gained support across the United States, English-only policy advocates championed ballot initiatives in California, Arizona, and Massachusetts (Wiley & Wright, 2004). After English for the Children (Proposition 227) was passed in California, which required districts, schools, and teachers to provide English-only instruction to ELs, similar laws were passed in Arizona (Proposition 203) and Massachusetts (Question 2; de Jong, 2008). In 2000, Arizona selected SEI as the authorized language policy for ELs (Jimenez-Silva et al., 2014). In 2007, the state

adopted a 4-hour model of SEI, which required ELs be educated separately from their "English-proficient" schoolmates for at least 1 academic year to prioritize English language development (Gándara & Orfield, 2012).

Since that time, the language policy has been extensively criticized in the existing literature for poor student achievement (García et al., 2012; Hopkins, 2012), low graduation rates (Lillie et al., 2012), and othering (Gándara & Orfield, 2012) experienced by ELs in separate ESL classrooms. In 2019, the language policy was revised to allow school districts more flexibility in selecting a SEI model and reducing the mandated English instruction time from 4 hours per day to 2 hours per day (Martínez, 2020). Although data collection for these articles occurred prior to this change, the findings continue to have relevance as Arizona school districts transition to alternative models of SEI.

Personal Interest in Topic

In 2014, after nearly a decade teaching ESL abroad, I returned to the United States to accept a position as an instructor in an English language program in the Pacific Northwest. During my time in Italy, South Korea, and Vietnam, I gained valuable experience teaching English to young children, teenagers, and adults. I taught kindergartners the English alphabet, tutored college students to take standardized language exams, and designed business English courses for many companies. However, I had never taught students from more than one language background in the same classroom. In my new position, I would teach in a classroom in which a variety of home languages were spoken, without the ability to support the entire class with at least a minimal knowledge of the students' home languages.

Students in the English language program came from around the world to improve their English language skills before matriculating to degree-granting academic programs at the university. Many students brought families and children with them. At the time, my family and I lived on campus, in dormitories reserved for visiting professors and students with families. It was a welcoming community, and we established friendships with many of the families of students in the English language program, some of which are maintained to this day. At the playground, my son had the fortune of playing with other children from countries including Brazil, Saudi Arabia, China, Japan, Syria, and Libya. The school-aged children attended the public schools in the community, and nearly all of them were enrolled in an ESL support program. In these contexts, I began to wonder how English language teachers work with students from multiple cultural and language backgrounds in public schools.

During the same time period, civil war in Syria contributed to what many described as the most significant refugee and displacement crisis of this generation (British Broadcasting Corporation News, 2014). Conflict displaced more than half of Syria's population and created such a dramatic exodus of refugees to neighboring countries that it overstretched their public institutions, including the educational systems (Culbertson & Constant, 2015). As a result, fewer than half of Syrian refugees who fled to neighboring countries were enrolled in formal schooling (UNHRC, n.d.-b). The crisis in Syria also caused millions of refugees and migrants to seek refuge in Europe, often overwhelming school systems that did not have enough qualified teachers or educational resources to provide SRBs with access to quality education (Katsiaficas, 2016).

As I read about the increasing number of refugees being resettled in the United

States, particularly from Syria, I became more interested in how the U.S. educational system would support SRBs. In 2016, the United States resettled nearly 85,000 refugees, an increase from roughly 70,000 resettled each of the previous 2 years (Migration Policy Institute, n.d.). The Trump administration resettled nearly 54,000 refugees in 2017 (Hauslohner, 2017), bringing the 4-year total of refugees admitted to the United States to approximately 279,000. Since more than half of these individuals were school-aged children (UNHCR, n.d.-a), one could assume more than 139,000 SRBs enrolled in U.S. schools from 2014–2017. Given my background as an ESL teacher and my interest in refugee resettlement, the education of SRBs in the United States became my primary research interest as a new doctoral student in Fall 2015.

After the 1st year of my doctoral program, I began volunteering with a local resettlement agency to learn more about the educational needs of SRBs. Over the following 2 years, I continued to volunteer and work as an assistant caseworker with the agency. Some of my responsibilities included conducting intake interviews with families as they arrived in the United States, conducting home visits, implementing a child watch program, teaching adult ESL classes, enrolling teenagers in high schools, and working at a summer camp for refugees. It was in this role that I became familiar with Downtown High School (pseudonym), an urban high school known for serving SRBs. After discussing my research interests with the resettlement agency's education and learning program manager, she introduced me to the ESL instruction leader at Downtown High School and I began volunteering at the school, which would eventually become my dissertation research site.

Positionality Statement

Aligned with the ethnographic tradition, I consider researcher positionality as key to data collection and analysis of participants' meanings (Quantz, 1992). All interpretations of data reflect my own ontological, epistemological, and methodological stances and my positionality as a White, heterosexual, cisgender, middle-class, male U.S. citizen. Guided by an interpretivist approach, through which individuals are seen to construct realities based on interactions with other social actors (Crotty, 1998), I was interested in participants' interpretations and sensemaking of social interactions. By employing ethnographic methods, I attempted to minimize the distance within the researcher–participant relationships in the study to better understand participants' interpretations of their experiences (Karnieli-Miller et al., 2009).

I am cognizant of my privilege in the United States and recognize I cannot fully understand the complex experiences of SRBs in U.S. schools. I am also aware my presence in the classroom, as both a researcher and an authority figure, impacted the classroom dynamic and could potentially influence the social practices of teachers and SRBs. The identity I performed during classroom observations was not that of a passive observer, but an assistant teacher who was active and invested in classroom activities. I approached the research from a pro-multilingual perspective, having spent most of my adult life working as an English language teacher abroad in Italy, South Korea, and Vietnam. I have also been a language learner myself of Italian, Spanish, Vietnamese, and Korean. Finally, I recognize I came to this research as an advocate for refugees, having spent considerable time in the preceding years working with resettled SRBs inside and outside of schools.

The Three Articles That Comprise This Dissertation Study

The first article, "Teaching Students from Refugee Backgrounds: The Link Between Teachers' Language Ideologies and Policy Appropriation," is grounded in the following research questions:

- How are language ideologies performed in these teachers' articulated stances on SRBs' home languages?
- How do these teachers' language ideologies shape their implementation of SEI with SRBs?

At the onset of my dissertation study, the teachers' implementation of SEI was my primary focus. As a volunteer who had seen these teaches in action, I wanted to better understand how they supported and advocated for their SRBs while implementing a language policy many described as restrictive. Ultimately, I wanted to identify positive practices in working with SRBs so that other teachers might be inspired to appropriate policy to meet the needs of their students. In the first article, my data collection and analysis focused on interviews with participating teachers and classroom observations.

Restrictive language policies, like SEI in Arizona, are shaped by monolingual ideologies that idealize White, middle-class language practices and contribute to the systemic marginalization of ELs (Bacon, 2020; Rosa & Flores, 2017; Menken, 2008). Through their appropriation of authorized language policy, three teachers shaped unauthorized policies to support their students, even in the face of potentially restrictive mandates (Spillane et al., 2002; Stritikus, 2003). The participating SRBs (n = 32), who made up at least 60% of the selected classrooms, came from a wide variety of home countries and spoke a combined 15 different home languages. Findings describe how,

despite differing stances on their SRBs' home languages, all three teachers enacted agency in the policy implementation process to appropriate authorized policy and support their students. Although their appropriation occurred in a multitude of ways, it most commonly manifested in three important areas: home language use in the classroom, orientations to required testing, and deviations to the mandated curriculum.

In the second article, "The Silent Passenger: Identity Construction and Figured Worlds of Students From Refugee Backgrounds," the research was grounded in the following two questions:

- How do the participating teachers construct SRBs' identities?
- How do SRBs construct refugee-ness for themselves in figured words?

In the initial states of my dissertation study, SRB identity construction was not the focus of my research. However, the more I talked to the SRBs, the more I was convinced examining their educational experiences required studying their identity construction. As an artifact of their life experiences, their refuge-ness mediated—and was mediated by—their experiences at Downtown High School. To better understand their identity construction processes, I focused on interviews I conducted with 30 SRBs, particularly questions related to their refugee identities.

In resettlement contexts, identities of SRBs are often essentialized (Bauman, 2004), which perpetuates deficit-oriented perspectives that may limit learning opportunities for them. Scholars often conceptualize SRBs' identities as ahistorical and inevitable, which typically functions to explain either personal difficulties they experience or structural barriers they face in U.S. schools (Bal & Arzubiaga, 2013). Through the use of *figured worlds* (Holland et al., 1998), I attempted to describe the

complex identity construction processes participating SRBs had in resettlement contexts. This framing facilitated an analysis of how SRBs constructed dynamic identities by merging what they brought into and what they found in U.S. schools, specifically regarding contexts to which they were exposed. Findings include a summary of five themes that cut across participating SRBs' descriptions of what constitutes refugee-ness. The excerpts presented and my interpretation thereof also highlight the strength and resilience of SRBs, which teachers can harness to focus on strengths and assets SRBs bring to their classroom.

Finally, in the third article, "'Left Behind': Language Policy Barriers to Academic Achievement Identified by Students From Refugee Backgrounds," I attempted to answer the following research questions:

- How do SRBs experience SEI in this particular research setting?
- What barriers do SRBs describe as negatively impacting their educational experiences with SEI?

The existing literature has documented many of the challenges SRBs face in U.S. schools, including high dropout rates, behavioral issues, and poor academic performance (McBrien, 2005; Moinolnolki & Han, 2017; Mthethwa-Sommers & Kisiara, 2015). Oftentimes, scholars attribute these challenges to issues related to their refugee status, such as experience with trauma (Ballantine & Hammack, 2009). During interviews with participating SRBs, the narrative of the vulnerable refugee did not describe the challenges they faced at Downtown High School. Instead, SRBs described a language policy that did not support their academic or social development in resettlement contexts. I used phenomenology as a methodological frame from which to interpret their experiences with

SEI and highlight barriers they described as negatively impacting their education. Findings include three themes that cut across participating SRBs' descriptions of their experiences with SEI and represent barriers they identified as limiting their academic and social progress. These student-identified barriers include SRBs feeling isolated and being bullied at Downtown High School, SRBs not learning English from interactions with their general-education peers, and SRBs not graduating because of policy mandates. The findings have implications for teachers and schools serving SRBs and may provide a framework to districts and policymakers in designing language policies informed by lived experiences of a subset of SRB ELs in Arizona.

Each of the articles is presented separately in Chapters 2, 3, and 4. In Chapter 5, I summarize the findings of the articles and offer final thoughts. Finally, I provide appendices that include the observational and interview protocols used in the study and lists of codes that were applied to data collected from teachers and students.

CHAPTER 2

TEACHING STUDENTS FROM REFUGEE BACKGROUNDS: THE LINK BETWEEN LANGUAGE IDEOLOGIES AND POLICY APPROPRIATION

Coming from a wide variety of cultural and linguistic backgrounds, often with traumatic life experiences, students from refugee backgrounds (SRBs) represent a distinct segment of the English learner (EL) student population in the United States. Schooling in resettlement contexts can provide a sense of stability to SRBs, while also helping them to become more familiar with their host country (Nicolai & Triplehorn, 2003). Scholars have suggested education provides a protective factor for children who have experienced conflict and instability (e.g., Bromley & Andina, 2010; Pigozzi, 1999), while also playing a significant role in shaping how they adapt to and identify with their new host society (Stewart, 2011). Teachers, in particular, may serve as dependable representatives of a host country through aiding SRBs in cultural and institutional navigation (Hones, 2002). In the United States, where SRBs are typically placed in English as a second language (ESL) programs upon enrollment, English language teachers greatly influence their educational experiences (Mthethwa-Sommers & Kisiara, 2015).

Although a handful of studies have examined the cultural and pedagogical missteps of teachers working with SRBs (e.g., Birman & Tran, 2015), there is a lack of research that examines language policy as a dynamic, sociocultural process that plays a pivotal role in the experiences of SRBs and their teachers (McCarty, 2004). Teachers, among all of other responsibilities they have in classrooms, mush reconcile their pedagogical choices with their own ways of knowing, seeing, and being (Cohen & Ball,

1990). In implementing authorized policy texts, teachers can, therefore, mold policies to meet the perceived needs of their students, even with potentially restrictive policy mandates (Spillane et al., 2002; Stritikus, 2003). In this ethnographic case study, I examined three high school teachers' enactment of structured English immersion (SEI), the authorized language policy in Arizona, in classes with high percentages of SRBs. The study was guided by the following research questions:

- How are language ideologies performed in these teachers' articulated stances on SRBs' home languages?
- How do these teachers' language ideologies shape their implementation of SEI with SRBs?

There is a lack of research on the experiences of SRBs in U.S. resettlement contexts (Koyama & Bakuza, 2017), and less has been written about the teachers that serve them (Newcomer, 2021; Roxas, 2011a). Few studies have focused on teachers' perspectives on working with SRBs (de Jong, 2008), and more research is needed to account for how teachers shape the policy implementation process to support their SRBs in positive ways. This is especially relevant for Arizona, where anti-immigration movements and monolingual ideologies have shaped restrictive language policies that stigmatize ELs, including SRBs, and the use of their home languages in schools (Heineke, 2015; Valdés, 2005). In subsequent sections, I outline the history of monolingual ideologies in the United States and describe the design and authorization of SEI in Arizona. These sections allow me to describe the policy context relevant to SRBs in Arizona schools and draw connections between language ideologies and the implementation of SEI.

SEI in Arizona

Throughout U.S. history, shifts in educational policy have been linked to debates about immigration and attitudes toward linguistic diversity (English & Varghese, 2010). Language policies, in particular, are shaped by language ideologies, which may be "articulated by users as a rationalization or justification of perceived language structure and use" (Silverstein, 1979, p. 193). Restrictive language policies, like SEI in Arizona, are constructed through monolingual ideologies that idealize White, middle-class language practices and contribute to the systemic marginalization of ELs (Bacon, 2020). Such policies prioritize ELs' rapid transition into English proficiency as measured by standardized exams and hold ideological, practical, and legal implications for teachers and students (Combs et al., 2011). Levinson et al. (2009) argue ideologies work through the policy design and implementation processes to set limits for students in specific sociocultural groups (e.g., EL, refugee). These socially constructed boundaries define what is educationally expected or valued, advance the interests of those in power (Johnson & Freeman, 2010), and contribute to the marginalization of students who do not conform to certain monolingual norms (Alim, 2016).

Following the passage of Proposition 203 in 2000, most instructional programs serving ELs in Arizona were dismantled and replaced with a SEI model many teachers considered complicated and poorly designed (Davenport, 2008). In 2006, an English Language Learner Task Force developed a 4-hour model of SEI that would become the authorized language policy for ELs throughout the state (Lillie et al., 2012). One central feature of the 4-hour model was it required ELs be educated separately from their "English-proficient" schoolmates for a minimum of 1 year to accelerate "English

language development and linguistic preparation for grade-level academic content" (Clark, 2009, p. 43). In 2019, the Arizona state legislature passed a bill that reduced the daily English language instruction requirement from 4 hours per day to 2 hours per day (Martínez, 2020). The bill provides school districts more autonomy to design their own research-based instructional programs but continues to allow for the segregation of ELs.

Existing language policy research has critiqued SEI for poor student achievement (García et al., 2012; Hopkins, 2012), low graduation rates (Lillie et al., 2012), and othering (Gándara & Orfield, 2012) experienced by ELs in ESL classrooms. Research has also suggested SRBs are further segregated in ESL classrooms, where their EL peers may socially exclude them and teachers are often unprepared to work with them (Dávila, 2012). Yet, there is a lack of research focused on the role of teachers and their instructional practices on the impact of the language policy (Heineke, 2015). Scholars writing about teachers' implementing SEI have typically focused on how teachers are appropriating authorized SEI mandates to serve Spanish-speaking ELs. Although these studies have improved our collective understanding of the relationship between macrolevel policy decisions and teachers' use of languages (Combs et al., 2011), teachers' interactions in study groups (Heineke, 2015), and instructional practices with Latinx students (Lillie et al., 2012), it has not informed our understanding of the experiences of teachers working with SRBs in SEI classrooms.

Conceptual Framework

Ricento and Hornberger's (1996) metaphor of policy implementation as an onion described various agents across macro- and micro-contexts that interact in various ways throughout the design and implementation of policies. From this perspective, policy can

be described as a dynamic social practice that stretches across time, sociocultural contexts, and engaged actors, and is both top-down and bottom-up, authorized and unauthorized (Johnson, 2009; McCarty, 2011). Authorized SEI policy frames teacher–student interactions and establishes rules for instruction, with incentives and consequences based on adherence to policy mandates (Levinson et al., 2009). For example, guidelines for the current SEI model stipulate all instructional materials and subject matter instruction be in English to accelerate English language acquisition (Hoffman, 2020). Unauthorized policy is created spontaneously, apart from the bureaucratic agencies responsible for making official policy. Examples might include teachers allowing students to discuss difficult vocabulary words in their home languages or supporting them in languages other than English. As Johnson and Freeman (2010) stated, language teachers are not mere "implementers" of authorized policy. Policy implementation is played out through a dialectic process that involves societal and individual factors. Regardless of the context, teachers play a vital role in this process and act as the final decision makers for policy implementation in classrooms (Johnson & Freeman, 2010). As they implement authorized language policy and adjust their instructional practices to reflect their language ideologies, they create new, unauthorized policy to meet the perceived needs of their students (Levinson et al., 2009).

Guided by an interpretivist approach through which individuals are seen to interpret their realities based on interactions with other social actors (Crotty, 1998), two concepts are central to my conceptual framework: (a) *language ideology*, which describes "beliefs about the superiority/inferiority of specific languages" (Kroskrity, 2004, p. 497) that can shape what counts as acceptable language use in and out of classrooms (Rosa &

Flores, 2017); and (b) *appropriation*—teachers' enactment of policy to fit their sociocultural contexts (Levinson et al., 2009; Levinson & Sutton 2001).

Though much of the existing literature used the terms belief and ideology interchangeably, the latter may be better understood as systems of belief entrenched in historical, political, and sociocultural contexts (Bacon, 2020). To examine the participating teachers' language ideologies, I analyzed their attitudinal stances collected through interviews and classroom observations highlighting the "discursive construction of policy problems, solutions, what is seen as possible, or the production and positioning of subjects (e.g., individuals, groups)" (Anderson & Holloway, 2020, p. 16). SEI, as an authorized language policy, positions ELs as linguistically inferior and perpetuates a monolingual language ideology (Flores, 2020; Johnson & Johnson, 2015). Alternatively, policies that value and support linguistic diversity promote multilingual language ideologies (Bernstein et al., 2021; Fitzsimmons-Doolan, 2014). The language ideologies of teachers work in conjunction with authorized policies (e.g., SEI) to shape policy implementation in classrooms (Fitzsimmons-Doolan, 2018), where they are performed, appropriated, or resisted by teachers (Warriner, 2007). Language ideologies should not be considered fixed characteristics reflective of an individual's core identity, but rather as performative orientations that vary based on individual, contextual, and historical factors (Bacon, 2020). Evidence of such performance comes from, in part, how teachers ascribe value to SRBs' home languages and rationalize their implementation of authorized policy.

The term appropriation refers to teachers' instructional practices with SRBs, which are framed by authorized SEI policy text, but with space for teachers to exercise

agency in their classrooms (Levinson & Sutton, 2001). When teachers appropriate (or resist) authorized policy mandates, they create new, unauthorized policy (Levinson et al., 2009). As powerful actors at the heart of the policy implementation process, teachers are not solely recipients of official policy texts, but engaged professionals with the responsibility of implementing or appropriating policies to support their students (Creese, 2010; Skilton-Sylvester, 2002). Hjelle (2001) argued through policy appropriation, teachers may "challenge the ideological aspects of their cultures that serve to maintain their subservience, including questioning of reflecting on, and taking action against the dominant culture in such areas as competition, sexism, racism, stereotyping" (p. 25). Teachers' agency may be especially impactful on language policies, such as SEI, since ideologies about language are "played out interactionally between teachers and students, students and their peers, and schools and communities" (Warriner, 2007, p. 346).

Research Methodology and Design

Ethnographic language policy research offers a means of slicing through the metaphorical onion to examine societal beliefs about languages and policy design processes on the outside, and microlevel policy interpretations, implementations, and appropriations at the center (Ricento & Hornberger, 1996). Through spending an extended period of time in these classrooms with the participants of this study, I aimed to "move beyond top-down policy constructs to the level of teachers' practice where policy actually takes shape" (McCarty, 2011, p. 17). Ethnographic traditions also call for minimizing the distance between and recognizing asymmetrical power in researcher–participant relationships (Karnieli-Miller et al., 2009). To encourage the co-construction

of knowledge in this study, participating teachers had a significant role in the research design and reconstruction of their classroom experiences.

Defining the Case

This particular case was set in three classrooms at a high school serving a large SRB population in Arizona. It was selected as an intrinsic case, which Stake (1995) defined as having unusual interest and inherently worthy of description. I used a single-case, embedded design to analyze the experiences of students and teachers in three different classrooms, which included the interrelationships between the participants and the educational contexts. I chose an embedded design to focus on differences and similarities between the units of analysis set within the sociocultural context of the research site.

Research Site

Downtown High School (pseudonym) is a comprehensive high school in Arizona, which ranked sixth among all U.S. states in the number of refugees resettled in 2016 (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees [UNHCR], 2017), and seventh in 2017 (UNHCR, 2018). The 9th–12th grade school is located in a diverse, metropolitan area and served over 100 full-time teachers and over 2,000 students. According to the data posted on the school district's website during the time of the study (2017–2018 academic year), the student population was 66% Hispanic, 14% Black, 7% White, 5% Native American, 5% Asian, and 3% Other. In addition, nearly 90% of students qualified for free or reduced-price lunch, and over 12% of the student population were classified as ELs. Seventy-four different languages were spoken by the student population, and 55% of students spoke a language besides English at home.

I became familiar with Downtown High School while working as an assistant caseworker for a refugee resettlement agency. One of my responsibilities at the agency included registering newcomers for school, and I visited Downtown High School on multiple occasions in this role. Downtown High School was known for being one of the main schools for SRBs in the area. In fact, several local television stations and newspapers have reported on its inclusive environment, with one article claiming the school had over 70 SRBs enrolled in 2017–2018.

Research Participants

Teaching and learning are processes done jointly between teachers and students (Cohen & Ball, 1990). To gain more insight into this sociocultural process, I recruited both teachers and students for the larger study out of which this article grew. In June 2017, the resettlement agency's education and learning program manager introduced me to the ESL instruction leader at Downtown High School. To become more familiar with the research context and gain some insight into teachers' experiences, the ESL instruction leader suggested I volunteer in SEI classrooms during the 2017–2018 academic year. She recommended volunteering with two teachers, Ms. Bivall and Ms. May (all names are pseudonyms), for their outstanding work with SRBs. I volunteered as an "EL teacher assistant" in each of their classes every Friday for the entire academic year. My extended participation in this educational context informed not only the theories I drew upon but also the methods I used to collect and analyze data.

Teachers

I selected a purposeful sample of teachers (n = 3) for inclusion in this study through relationships forged at the local refugee resettlement agency and volunteering at

Downtown High. Ms. Bivall and Ms. May both agreed to participate in this study at the end of the 2017–2018 school year and had considerable input on all interview and observational protocols. Ms. Bivall also recommended another teacher, Mr. Baker, who also agreed to participate in the study in September 2018. All three teachers had more than 4 years of teaching experience, master's degrees in education, and various teaching endorsements (see Table 1 in Appendix A for information about teachers' professional experience, qualifications, and experiences learning languages).

Students

I also used criterion-based sampling (Ravitch & Carl, 2016) to recruit SRBs (n = 32) in the aforementioned teachers' classes to participate in the study. To have diversity in the sample in terms of gender, age, and country of origin, I recruited as many SRBs as possible. All student participants held refugee status and had been resettled in the United States through the UNHCR's Resettlement Programme. They were 15–21 years old and originally from a variety of home countries, including Syria, Myanmar, Somalia, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. They spoke 15 different home languages including Tigrinya, Karenni, Kinyarwanda, Dari, Swahili, Somali Bantu, and numerous other languages, many of which were learned in refugee camps in countries of asylum. All but a few of the students reported speaking three or more languages. Although I was not able to obtain official data related to students' refugee status from the school administration, my extended participation in the classrooms and conversations with teachers allowed me to identify which students might be appropriate for recruitment in the study. All participants confirmed their refugee status in the informed consent/assent process.

Data Collection Methods

One key feature of case study research is the intent to form an in-depth understanding of the case or cases (Stake, 1995). To accomplish this goal, I employed multiple ethnographic data collection methods to bridge the gap between myself and my participants. Classroom observation was one of my primary data collection methods. For the entire 2018–2019 academic year, I observed approximately 6 hours of classroom instruction with each teacher per week. Each observation was audio-recorded so that I could listen to key interactions during analysis. Using an observational protocol, I recorded details of teacher–student interactions, teachers' implementation of SEI, and student-posed questions during observations (see Appendix B for classroom observation protocol). The protocol was written primarily to serve as a tool to aid in the collection of data to answer my research questions concerning teachers' language ideologies and appropriation of authorized SEI policy. Although the experiences of all ELs in the selected classrooms served as a backdrop to observations, data collected in field notes focused solely on research participants and their classroom experiences during observations. Most of my field notes (approximately 400 hand-written pages) were descriptive; however, I also made an effort to reflect on my experiences as a participant–observer (Bogden & Biklen, 2006). During breaks from observations, I used a voice recorder to talk through important interactions and try to make sense of my observations. I transcribed and analyzed the voice memos along with all other data.

I also conducted multiple semi-structured interviews with all teachers, and at least one interview with all but two student participants in the study (due to the attrition mentioned previously). In total, I was able to conduct 17 interviews with teachers and 36

interviews with SRBs (see Ambroso, in progress, for analysis of students' perspectives). Before the outset of the study, I drafted two separate interview protocols for teachers and students (see Appendix C for teacher interview protocol and Appendix D for student interview protocol). Ms. Bivall and Ms. May reviewed the protocols, and both gave input on the questions. Interviews with teachers lasted approximately 1 hour and focused on their implementation of SEI and their experiences with SRBs. All interviews were transcribed using an external transcription service, then checked and refined by me.

Data Analysis Methods

Data analysis occurred continuously throughout this study, with insights driving the direction of future analysis (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). The first phase of data analysis involved reading through field notes and transcripts, taking notes on salient topics I identified in the data. I then uploaded all data to the qualitative coding software NVivo 11.4, which helped me organize the process of conducting multiple rounds of open, inductive coding to both (a) examine each participant's unique experiences and (b) cut across all participants' observed practices and interview responses in comparative and contrastive ways (Mason, 2017; Saldaña, 2015). Data reduction was also a critical part of my data analysis, during which I both eliminated data and selected data I considered representative of the corpus (Smagorinsky, 2008). In the next section, I outline the steps I took in my open-coding process.

Open Coding

In the first round of coding, I read through all of the data and my notes holistically, examining each field note, interview, and memo separately. While reading, I labeled the text with descriptive codes, which I used to organize the data into categories

relevant to participants' background information and my research questions concerning teachers' language ideologies, interactions with SRBs, and implementation of SEI. Examples of descriptive codes include teachers' stances on SRBs' home languages or descriptions of instructional practices related to SEI. This phase of coding was iterative, with revisions to the coding structure occurring repeatedly throughout the process. It also included identifying data that disconfirmed my preconceived assumptions about participants and shaped subsequent directions of data analysis (Smagorinsky, 2008).

Using NVivo's query feature, I then downloaded all data associated with each descriptive code as separate Word documents. I carefully examined these data, making notes in the sidebar and highlighting data across sources I thought could be related. After going through text labeled with each code, I took stock of my notes and highlighting before developing a set of pattern codes to regroup data into more meaningful units based on themes. These second-level codes allowed me to identify patterns across data sources and participants and served as tools in the development of meaning statements about major themes and interrelationships in the data (Saldaña, 2015). Examples of pattern codes include teachers' implementation/appropriation of authorized SEI policy. After developing the pattern codes, I created new documents for each descriptive code to group data by the themes I developed.

Finally, I created a set of axial codes to identify important links between my first- and second-level codes (Saldaña, 2015). Throughout this stage of coding, I focused on descriptive and pattern codes that specifically addressed my research questions and analyzed links between each. Axial codes for the study included how teachers' performed language ideologies influenced their teaching practices and advocacy for SRBs. This

stage of coding allowed me to progress from a descriptive form of analysis to a more interpretive analysis (see Appendices E and F for outlines of my coding schemes).

Researcher's Role as Participant-Observer

Aligned with ethnographic tradition, this research study took researcher positionality as key to data collection and analysis of participants' meanings (Quantz, 1992). All interpretations of data reflect my own ontological, epistemological, and methodological stances and my positionality as a White, heterosexual, cisgender, middle-class, male U.S. citizen. I am cognizant of my privilege in U.S. society and realize I will never be able to fully understand the complex experiences of SRBs in U.S. schools. I am also aware my presence in the classroom, as both a researcher and an authority figure, may have impacted the classroom dynamic and could have influenced the social practices of teachers and SRBs. The identity I performed during classroom observations was not that of a passive observer, but an assistant teacher who was active and invested in classroom activities. I approached the research from a pro-multilingual perspective, having spent most of my adult life working as an English language teacher abroad in Italy, South Korea, and Vietnam. I have also been a language learner of Italian, Spanish, Vietnamese, and Korean. Finally, I recognize I came to this research as an advocate for refugees, having spent considerable time in the preceding years working with resettled SRBs inside and outside of schools. Some of my experiences with local refugee populations include conducting intake interviews when families arrive in the United States, conducting home visits, caring for young refugee children at the resettlement agency, enrolling older children in local schools, and teaching middle- and high-school students at a summer camp for refugees.

Findings

In this section, I present excerpts to illustrate (a) how teachers perform language ideologies in their articulated stances on SRBs' home languages and (b) how those language ideologies shaped their appropriation of authorized SEI policy. In particular, I analyzed teachers' articulated stances on the value of certain languages, especially those spoken by SRBs. I then highlighted instances during which the articulation of language ideologies was expressed as justifications for implementing SEI in certain ways.

Teachers Articulate Stances on SRBs' Use of Home Languages

Throughout interviews, teachers articulated stances about the value of certain languages 21 times. Although these statements varied, they could generally be characterized as either (a) pro-multilingualism, which places value on SRBs' home languages; or (b) pro-monolingualism, which idealizes White, middle-class language practices (Bernstein et al., 2021; Fitzsimmons-Doolan, 2014). Although no teacher expressed exclusively pro-multilingual or pro-monolingual stances, they each tended to align with one of these ideologies. Ms. May and Mr. Baker most commonly expressed pro-multilingual stances. For example, when asked to describe her SRBs, Ms. May said:

> I love language. I love my students. They are colorful. They are coming from all kinds of backgrounds. They are all different levels of learning. They're hungry. They want to learn. They have real actual issues that they're dealing with, and the curriculum doesn't matter so much in that point in time because this is an actual real human being. . . . They are engaged. They are engaging. I'm blown away at the work ethic and how hard they're working and performing.

In this excerpt, Ms. May described her appreciation for other cultures and languages, which she attributed to her experiences living abroad and learning other languages. She also acknowledged many of her SRBs had issues related to trauma they

may have experienced before resettlement that may have affected their learning; however, she described them as hardworking and engaged, capable of learning and overcoming the challenges they may have faced as a result of their past. She discussed their grit and their ability to achieve their goals through hard work and intelligence.

Similarly, when asked about SRBs speaking different languages in his class, Mr. Baker said the following:

> I think part of me thinks that's part of who they are, and, I mean, for an instructional way, I think they help each other in their own languages. Also, I don't want them to forget their languages because I do think it's an asset, too. So, if I'm discouraging them speaking their language, I think I'm discouraging what could be a strength for them in the future. The way I looked at it, I don't want them to forget it either.

In this excerpt, Mr. Baker described valuing his SRBs' home languages as both identity markers and educational resources. He referenced the sociocultural connection between language and identity, implying, as a language teacher, he did not want to break that connection. He also talked about his SRBs using their home languages to supplement and support his English language instruction. Finally, Mr. Baker suggested home languages could be "a strength" for his SRBs in the future, possibly referring to linguistic skills that could be valued in the job market.

During interviews, Mr. Baker described himself as a partner, someone who put himself at the students' level and was respectful of their experiences and opinions. He offered his students a great deal of autonomy in his classroom. Apart from spending an extra minute or two to stretch their legs, the students did not seem to abuse those privileges. Mr. Baker positioned his SRBs as mature as a result of challenges they had already overcome. He said:

> When I was in high school, I was immature, I didn't understand the world. I feel like once I met these kids. They know more than I do about some things, and they're a heck of a lot more mature. I try to teach them like adults because I feel like they are because they've already been through so much. I imagine they were to see themselves as adults. I've learned that every student has their own opinion and their own voice. They're very intelligent in their own way and if you give them an opportunity to kind of express themselves individually.

In these excerpts, Mr. Baker contrasted his own experiences as a teenager with those of his SRBs and determined his SRBs had a greater understanding of the world than he did. Mr. Baker said his SRBs probably saw themselves as adults. He emphasized their voice and intelligence and commented on lessons he could learn from his SRBs.

In contrast, the following excerpt highlights an articulated stance that adheres to monolingual language ideologies. Speaking about her SRBs' home languages, Ms. Bivall said:

> The language is an issue. You have to learn English to survive here, to make a living, to be on your own. And all of us want a good job, right? What if you're going to do this job and I'm going to pay you $5 an hour if you speak your language. And I'm going to give you $10 if you speak English. But I'm going to give you $20 if you speak your language and you speak English. I try to tell them if they learn English, they're going to be that much more ahead.

Through making these statements, Ms. Bivall performed a monolingual ideology that attributed more appropriateness and value to English than other languages (Flores & Rosa, 2017). Specifically, she expressed a common monolingual stance that students must speak the English language proficiently to survive and have a career in the United States. During interviews, Ms. Bivall also spoke about challenges she expected her SRBs to face when they finished or left school, noting:

> I know that this is going to be the best time of their life. As far as the realities of what they're going to face after this high school experience, I think they're very naïve, I think that it's going to be very difficult. You know, it's going to be a hard

> road. . . . The real world is going to eat them alive for some of them. Their options are going to be very limited.

As highlighted in this excerpt, Ms. Bivall described difficulties she expected her SRBs to face related to their English language proficiency. This was a common stance taken by Ms. Bivall, and the belief she was preparing her SRBs for a difficult world was repeated in her justifications for certain instructional practices.

Ms. Bivall's pro-monolingual stance does not mean she is an uncaring teacher, but quite the contrary. Throughout 2 years of observing her classroom, I personally witnessed Ms. Bivall's passion for teaching and advocacy for her students. Like the other teachers in the study, Ms. Bivall fiercely defended her SRBs and pushed back on what she described as the school's neglect of her students. On many occasions, Ms. Bivall spoke about requesting additional support for her SRBs, who she claimed, "don't even get close to the services that are given to gen-ed kids," and, at times, she openly circumnavigated the administration to secure educational services for her SRBs. She shared:

> I always try to be an advocate for my students. They may not have the language or the vocabulary to kind of tell me what they need, but I'm going to know, because that's my job; is to build a relationship with these kids. . . . I'm going to do everything that I can to provide them with any services they may need.

Ms. Bivall's tendency to perform monolingual ideologies caused her to implement authorized SEI policy differently from her two colleagues. Although this was most obvious when related to SRBs' home language use in the three classrooms, all three teachers' language ideologies were also evident in their rationalizations of other SEI policy mandates.

Teachers' Implementation of SEI

For teachers to implement educational policies, they must not only come to terms with their own pedagogical practices, but they must also consider students' perceived abilities and learning practices (Cohen & Ball, 1990). Research has suggested there is a link between language ideologies, which frame how teachers perceive their students in ESL classes, and implementation of authorized language policies (Fitzsimmons-Doolan, 2018; Stritikus, 2003). In this case, all three teachers engaged in practices that appropriated or simply ignored mandates of an authorized SEI policy they collectively described as "setting the kids up for failure" and constructed new, unauthorized policy in their classrooms. Although this appropriation of authorized policy occurred in a multitude of ways daily, it most commonly manifested in three important areas: home language use in the classroom, orientations to required testing, and deviations to the mandated curriculum.

Home Language Use

The authorized model of SEI in Arizona requires students to receive language development services in an English-only setting for a minimum of 4 hours per day for the 1st year they are classified as an EL. Although research indicated teachers overwhelming enforced the English-only mandate in SEI classrooms, multiple studies have also provided examples of teachers appropriating authorized SEI policy to allow home language use in their classrooms (e.g., Dávila & Linares, 2020; Johnson & Freeman, 2010; Lillie et al., 2012).

Similar appropriation was evidenced in the classroom of Ms. May and Mr. Baker, who altered or simply ignored these policy mandates to offer SRBs instructional support

in their home languages. Both teachers not only allowed SRBs to speak other languages in class, but they encouraged it. Ms. May and Mr. Baker regularly grouped students according to home languages during activities and asked those who were more proficient in English to help newcomers. In reading activities, Mr. Baker regularly instructed to check or highlight any words they did not understand and use their phones to look them up in English or their home languages. During one grammar exercise I observed, Ms. May made connections to French, Italian, and Spanish to help explain capitalization rules. In another lesson, Ms. May asked a student named Babar to play Kibembe music to demonstrate the present progressive. When several students stood up to dance, she asked them what they were doing. "I am dancing," the students replied, smiling. Ms. May said:

> I think I put myself in their shoes and it's like I've been fully immersed where I didn't understand the words that were going on around me. . . . And so, yeah, I don't have a problem with them speaking and clarifying their home language, especially for kids that are just so new.

In this excerpt, Ms. May rationalized her appropriation of the English-only mandate by expressing pro-multilingual stances related to her SRBs using their home languages. In doing so, she suggested SRBs' home languages may be educational resources, especially when students are newcomers. She also expressed empathy for her SRBs language-learning experiences. For Ms. May, these stances were often rooted in her own experiences as a language learner while traveling and living abroad.

Ms. Bivall, on the other hand, maintained a strict English-only policy in all of her classes. Speaking about her enforcement of the English-only mandate, Ms. Bivall said:

> I think that for refugee students, it's a lot harder. I think with refugee students, even getting places, like transportation, they're not as comfortable. . . . Whereas your Hispanic kids, you're not seeing that as much. That goes back to language. It's easier to speak Spanish here and get by your total day speaking Spanish. You

> can do it here in [redacted]. You're not getting by with Swahili or Kinyarwanda. I do think providing only English materials in my class, I do that specifically because that's the rule. Some teachers have dictionaries. Some people are taking out the dictionary to talk to them in their language. I don't do that. I don't even speak to my kids in Spanish unless it's super important or it's behavior. That's it. I do not provide the kids support in their language.

Ms. Bivall's stance on the inappropriateness of SRBs' home languages is repeated in this excerpt. Again, she described the challenges she expected SRBs to face, this time contrasting their experiences with her Spanish-speaking students. She articulated more value to the Spanish language, but said she did not even provide Spanish-language support in her lessons (although she is fluent in Spanish). These stances reflect a monolingual ideology that prioritizes complete immersion in the target language for ELs.

Testing

Another way the teachers appropriated SEI policy concerned testing requirements. To push back on testing regulations they considered inappropriate, all three teachers constructed unauthorized policy in various ways, including giving students the exact questions they expected to see on the exam, lobbying the administration to alter testing policies, altering grading procedures, and choosing not to administer required tests. Authorized policy mandates state teachers are required to administer at least one pretest and one posttest every quarter. According to SEI guidelines, each instructional unit should be preceded by a pretest and followed by a posttest. During interviews, all three teachers described appropriating this policy, with Mr. Baker saying, "That's a difficult requirement because it takes away from time in the classroom. And it's not just it takes away time from the classroom, I think the kids get discouraged by it, too." Similarly, Ms. May commented on skipping required tests to have more instructional time with her

SRBs. She said, “We’re supposed to do one, a pretest and a posttest every quarter. Then for some classes, there’s two pretests and posttests in a single quarter. Those, I don’t do as much.”

Ms. Bivall took a different approach with the testing requirements. Although she was a vocal critic of the content and frequency of the tests, she administered all tests to her students as required. During interviews, she talked about changing the grading requirements to meet the needs of her students:

> I try to be flexible as far as grading. I don’t really care about their grades. I think grades are pretty B.S. because it’s really not showing what they know or their effort levels and their attendance. I mean, they’re trying their hardest but asking them to interpret text when they’re hardly able to read, and then articulate that out. They’re not at that level. It’s kind of like, you know, you have to dot your i’s and cross your t’s when you need to. So, I’m doing what I need to do when someone goes into my computer, my name, they look at everything that I’m doing, “Did she pretest them? Did she posttest them?” I’m doing it. What am I doing with it once they take it? I’m putting it on a shelf over there and I didn’t even put it in the gradebook.

The teachers’ articulated stances on testing were consistent with the language ideologies they most often performed. Ms. May and Mr. Baker, who tended to express pro-multilingual stances, appropriated testing requirements to make more instructional time for topics they perceived as more important for their SRBs. This finding is further explored in the next section on curriculum deviation. In her comments about appropriating testing requirements, Ms. Bivall articulated a pro-monolingual belief her SRBs were not capable of performing well on the tests. To support their learning needs as she perceived them, Ms. Bivall altered mandated grading procedures to reward her SRBs’ effort rather than their exam scores.

Curriculum

Authorized SEI policy requires ELs to have 4 hours of English language instruction each school day, with 1 hour devoted to each of following: reading, writing, conversation and academic vocabulary, and English grammar. Although none of the teachers in this study completely disregarded this policy mandate, they all reported appropriating authorized policy by adapting the curriculum to fit their SRBs' perceived needs.

Ms. May frequently took class time to talk to her SRBs about topics she thought were important for their lives. During one lesson, an SRB from Afghanistan asked, "Why is English spoken everywhere? Why is there no Pashto in American schools?" These questions led to a great conversation about languages, politics, and global issues driven by the students' curiosity. In another instance, she decided to skip an entire unit because her students did well on the unit pretest and she thought there were more important things for them to learn. During an interview, she spoke about deviating from the curriculum to teach her SRBs lessons she considered more valuable:

> I get up and I'm going to teach all these grammar rules that they're going to have a difficult time applying and yeah, this is insane. What I'm doing is literally insane. I'm beating my head against the wall. Have they learned something? Yes, but I think the true learning comes when they get really frank with me and they're like, "Ms. May, what does this mean?" Or, "How do I say this?" Or, "How do I use that?"

Mr. Baker sculpted his lessons within policy guidelines to focus on English skills, while presenting content that made his students think critically about social justice issues. Throughout the year, I observed SRBs in Mr. Baker's class engaged in numerous debates and discussions about topics relevant to them, including racism, the Bill of Rights, and

voting. In one writing activity, his students had to write topic sentences about immigration. In another lesson, Mr. Baker facilitated discussions on civil liberties and policing in the United States. Mr. Baker shared the following when I asked about his decision to bring these topics into his language lessons:

> I've worried about bringing up those topics just because there's always. . . . You almost don't feel like you have the right to talk about some of those topics just because I don't know what a refugee would go through. But, I find that if I kind of admit that I don't have a lot of information, or I don't understand, that they are much more willing to kind of give me their opinion, and it almost seems like they enjoy giving me a perspective about an issue that I can't possibly understand.

In justifying their instructional choices, Ms. May and Mr. Baker both expressed pro-multilingual stances about the importance of SRBs learning relevant topics over mandated English language instruction. Ms. May described prioritizing her students' questions and learning about issues in their lives. Mr. Baker's pedagogical choices are supported by research that highlights the need for critical approaches in the ideological practice of English language instruction (Bacon, 2017). His instructional practices also reflect an inclusive teaching style Symons and Ponzio (2019) called *spacious teaching*, in which teachers engage in shared meaning-making processes and position their students as the knowledge holders. Although Mr. Baker's willingness to not know took a great deal of vulnerability as a teacher, it reinforced his SRBs' inherent dignity and created space for their identities, cultures, and languages to develop alongside their content area knowledge.

During interviews, Ms. Bivall also described being frustrated by the curriculum mandates handed down by the state and district. She said she is required to teach certain material, but many of her students, especially the newcomer SRBs, need to learn more

basic grammar and vocabulary. Rather than advancing through the curriculum as prescribed, Ms. Bivall devoted instructional time to practicing target language she described as being more suitable for her SRBs. Ms. Bivall's lessons were always structured differently. She constantly changed the grouping of students—from pairs to small groups to the entire class—and developed dynamic, fast-paced lessons, in which students had to move around and rotate between stations. The directions were always clear and simple, and activities were typically short, instructional practices she said were learned from trainings with the local resettlement agency on how to work with SRBs. In one memorable lesson, I helped Ms. Bivall facilitate a game of "trashketball" in an English-grammar class, in which students had to answer trivia questions and shoot a ball into the trashcan for points. The students were able to practice their language skills in a very structured way while remaining active, engaged, and smiling throughout the entire activity. They continued to ask to play trashketball for the remainder of the semester.

Discussion

In this article, I have explored how language ideologies are performed in three teachers' articulated stances on SRBs' home languages and how those language ideologies shape their implementation of SEI. Through their performance of language ideologies, the teachers in this study enacted agency in the policy implementation process to create new, unauthorized policies that framed interactions with their SRBs. Their language ideologies worked through the policy implementation process to establish limits for their SRBs and define what was educationally valuable for this group of students. Although their stances on their SRBs' home languages differed, all three teachers appropriated authorized SEI policy to support their students.

The findings highlight a tension for teachers, who enact agency to shape policy to meet the needs of the students in their classrooms, but must still operate within educational institutions bound by macrolevel ideologies related to language and immigration (Dávila & Linares, 2020). Monolingual ideologies are so dominant and permeating in U.S. educational contexts, even the most caring, passionate teachers can deploy ideological mechanisms that work through the policy implementation process and contribute to the marginalization of their SRBs (Metz, 2018). Ms. Bivall, who, unlike her colleagues, most commonly performed monolingual language ideologies, appropriated policy mandates based on her perceptions of SRBs' needs in her classroom. Her appropriations of authorized SEI policy, although somewhat different from the other teachers who articulated more pro-multilingual stances, also made space for advocacy and support of her students.

The findings presented in this study have implications for school districts, schools, and, most importantly, teachers working with SRBs in their classrooms. In Arizona, where teachers are currently operating with more flexibility in terms of authorized SEI policy, the descriptions of the participating teachers' articulated stances on their SRBs' home languages may cause other teachers to examine their own language ideologies and, thus, their instructional practices. Findings related to the teachers' appropriation of policy may shed light on how teachers perceive the needs of SRBs in their classrooms and inform how policymakers design authorized policy at the district or state levels. Hopefully, the descriptions of these three excellent teachers appropriating authorized SEI policy might also provide inspiration or comfort to other teachers,

especially those in the beginning of their careers, who may feel pressured to adhere to policy mandates to keep their jobs.

This qualitative case study also fills a methodological gap by examining how language ideologies shape teachers' instructional practices throughout the policy implementation process. Ethnographic language policy research that involves prolonged work alongside teachers with their SRBs can help move past postpositivist conceptualizations of teachers as mere implementers of educational policies to portray them as complicated, caring individuals who must negotiate between following authorized policy mandates and supporting the perceived needs of their students (Dávila & Linares, 2020). Not only does it elucidate how language ideologies shape expectations and set educational and linguistic boundaries for SRBs, but it also describes how these boundaries get operationalized in interaction or are problematized in ways that work to contribute to and dismantle marginalization for SRBs' in resettlement educational contexts.

The research does, however, have certain limitations. Teachers' language ideologies may offer a lens with which to examine their implementation of an authorized SEI policy, but they do not present the full case. Additional studies might also analyze how teachers' political affiliations or stances on immigration might influence the policy implementation process. Another limitation to this study is it relies on data collection from just one school out of thousands that serve SRBs. Additionally, as a researcher who does not speak any of the home languages of the participating SRBs (other than conversational Vietnamese), I understand I was almost certainly viewed as an outsider by the students in their classes. Despite these considerations, my experiences volunteering

with local refugee communities and in Downtown High School provided me with a basic contextual understanding, and my length of time in the field allowed me to build trust with participants. Future research could also address more specific questions about SRBs' gender dynamics, racial and ethnic identities, linguistic backgrounds, or previous experience with trauma.

Conclusion

In conclusion, it is vital studies continue to center teachers' voices in research on language policy, particularly those working with SRB populations. Despite their unique circumstances in resettlement contexts, studies on SRBs in U.S. resettlement contexts have not differentiated their experiences from those of other ELs. According to Taylor and Sidhu (2012), the "invisibility of refugees [sic] in policy and research has worked against their cultural, social, and economic integration" (p. 4). Additional research is needed to highlight the strength and resilience of this student population and the teachers that support them.

CHAPTER 3

THE SILENT PASSENGER: IDENTITY CONSTRUCTION AND FIGURED WORLDS OF STUDENTS FROM REFUGEE BACKGROUNDS

Since 2012, an unprecedented number of people have been forcibly displaced from their homes by war, violence, and (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees [UNHCR], 2021). Individuals who cross international borders for asylum are required to register with the UNHCR as a refugee, which the office defined as "someone who is unable or unwilling to return to their country of origin owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group, or political opinion" (UNHCR, 2010, p. 3). At the end of 2020, there were approximately 26.4 million refugees worldwide, over half of whom were school-aged children under the age of 18 (UNHCR, 2021).

Fewer than 1% of refugees are selected for third-country resettlement, which provides them access to social supports in their host countries (UNHCR, 2011). Once resettled, individuals are legally tied to their status as refugees, which may operate as a mechanism of oppression in the host country, especially in social institutions (Strekalova-Hughes et al., 2018). Bauman (2004) argued individuals selected for resettlement are typically stripped of all identities but one—that of being a refugee—which essentializes their vulnerability and erases all other aspects of their individuality. To foreground the variability of these individuals' experiences as refugees, I adopt the term students from refugee backgrounds (SRBs) in this article to highlight that variation and avoid deficit or monolithic constructions of their supposed refugee-ness (Strekalova-Hughes et al., 2018).

In recent years, educational research has started to devote more attention to SRBs in U.S. educational settings; yet, much of the discourse has perpetuated deficit-oriented perspectives by emphasizing what these students lack rather than what they bring to schools and classrooms (Shapiro & MacDonald, 2017). When SRBs enter U.S. schools, they bring strengths and educational resources that can be harnessed to support them, in addition to benefiting their U.S.-born peers (Phillips, 2014; Wells et al., 2016). Lerner (2012) suggested studying the SRB experience in U.S. schools necessarily involves examining issues of identity, as schools play a vital role in the construction of an identity in a host country, which can either help or hinder students' performance in school. Based on that objective, this ethnographic study examined the identity construction of 32 SRBs in three classrooms at Downtown High School (pseudonym), a large, urban high school in Arizona. The research is grounded in the following two questions:

- How do the participating teachers construct SRBs' identities?
- How do SRBs construct refugee-ness for themselves in figured words?

In the next sections, I review the literature on identity construction, writ large and for SRBs. I then identify gaps in the existing literature before introducing my conceptual framework. These sections allow me to describe how this study may contribute to existing literature on SRB identity construction.

Existing Literature on Student Identity

Lee and Anderson (2009) provided an overview of how the concept of student identity, specifically that of students from marginalized groups, has been examined from a variety of perspectives in educational research. Brown (2004) described identity as discursive categories constructed based on shared perceptions, categories, and lived

experiences, allowing for the analysis of classroom interactions as identity construction practices. Similarly, Nasir and Saxe (2003) described identities as affiliations constructed over time through repeated use in social interactions. Others have examined how identities reflect power dynamics stemming from sociopolitical status and ideology (e.g., Bucholtz & Hall, 2004, 2005). Norton (2000) focused on students' agency, development of competencies, and negotiation of identities in various social worlds. Gee (2000) broke down identity into four overlapping categories—nature identity, institution identity, discourse identity, and affinity identity—allowing the concept to be understood along different dimensions of social interaction. These are just a few examples of how the concept of identity has been explored in relation to students.

Given educational practices and policies are designed based on understandings of who learners are or should be, student identity determines much about which learning opportunities children are provided in schools (Lee & Anderson, 2009). For example, scholars have suggested students of color are often viewed as less capable than their White peers (e.g., Rojas & Liou, 2018; Yosso, 2005), which contributes to deficit-oriented instructional practices (Rist, 2000) and more disciplinary interventions in school (Wallace et al., 2008). These forms of negation have led students of color to be treated differently and provided inequitable learning opportunities in school (Leonardo, 2013). Multiple scholars have also posited links between identity and policies that restrict learning opportunities for English learners (ELs; Alim, 2016; Levinson et al., 2009; Lillie et al., 2012; Rosa & Flores, 2017). Although educational researchers have written relatively little about SRBs in the United States (Koyama & Bakuza, 2017), the concept of SRB identity construction has similarly been framed in several ways.

Existing Literature on SRB Identity

Scholars have examined various aspects of identity construction among students in country of first asylum or resettlement contexts, primarily conceptualizing SRB identity as (a) a socially constructed concept, (b) shaped by a psychological process, or (c) an integrative concept that bridges social and psychological approaches. I now discuss each of these approaches in turn.

Social Constructionist Approaches

Educational research adopting the conceptualization of identity as a social construct primarily examines how SRBs' identities are formed in relation to complex political, cultural, and discursive influences in their resettlement contexts (e.g., McCall & Vang, 2012). For example, Guerrero and Tinkler (2010) explored the sociocultural identity construction of SRBs in their study of a cross-cultural photo project conducted at secondary schools in San Diego and Bogotá, Columbia. Framed by Gee's (2000) theory of identity as constructed through social interaction with others, they investigated the relationship between assigned identities SRBs inherit when they arrive in schools and contested identities they construct through social and discursive interactions. Coughlan and Owens-Manley (2006) explored "refugee" as a socially constructed identity resulting in SRBs' stigmatization in their countries of resettlement. They claimed individuals labeled as refugees are often defined by some major trauma that forces them to seek refuge in another country, overshadowing important aspects of their "former" identities.

Bernstein (2014) drew upon Davies and Harré's (1990) postructuralist positioning theory of identity to highlight SRBs' continuous positioning by others as a certain kind of person. This conceptualization focuses on how identity is a "shared social achievement,

negotiated, or perhaps battled over, through language and interaction" (Bernstein, 2014, p. 14). In the case of one SRB, their socially constructed identity as a successful student prevented them from taking risks with the English language and engaging more with teachers. Findings of the study described how positioning SRBs as certain types of students can afford them different learning opportunities, which may impact their learning outcomes.

Common to these and other studies has been a focus on identity construction in the social contexts SRBs inhabit, causing tension between social identities they may have been associated with previously (i.e., in their countries of origin or asylum) and negative stereotypes they face in new educational contexts. Many constructionist studies of identity thus frame SRB education in relation to SRBs' adaptation to their new surroundings, the reflection of their cultures in academic content, and their relationships with teachers and peers (Due et al., 2016; Uptin et al., 2016). These studies shed light on struggles students may face as they encounter socially constructed identities that position them in their new educational contexts and demonstrate the need to account for identity when designing strategies to promote SRB engagement and belonging in schools.

Psychological Approaches

In contrast to constructionist studies, research drawing more heavily on the discipline of psychology has emphasized SRBs' agency and individual factors related to identity construction (as opposed to the foci on political, cultural, and discursive influences in social constructionist approaches). Studies examining the psychological construction of identities have generally examined personal beliefs, values, experiences, and aspirations of individuals in relation to vulnerability and negative perceptions they

may have experienced in their countries of first asylum or settlement. Strekalova and Hoot (2008) claimed SRBs often struggle in making sense of their own identity and their relationship to others surrounding them, such as classmates or teachers. This tension may cause them to form and display different identities depending on the context (e.g., school, home, community), resulting in psychological, social, and cultural tension. Other studies have suggested SRBs may develop resilient identities as coping mechanisms in response to bullying (Mthethwa-Sommers & Kisiara, 2015) or negative teacher perceptions (Tadesse et al., 2009).

Although studies that have used a psychological approach comprise only a small part of the SRB education literature, they contribute to the understanding of psychological factors that influence identity construction for SRBs in countries of first asylum or resettlement. Existing research has described how experiences with interrupted schooling and trauma may result in disengagement and behavioral and psychological problems for SRBs in U.S. schools (e.g., Birman & Tran, 2015; Stewart, 2011). Refugee education literature focused on psychological factors has primarily examined the identity construction of SRBs and defense mechanisms they adopt to cope with the transition to new communities, especially in response to bullying and harassment in educational settings.

Integrative Approaches

A third swath of studies worked to bridge the gap between social constructionist and psychological approaches to offer theoretical frameworks and findings that describe the complex identity construction of SRBs and their families in countries of first asylum or resettlement. For example, Koyama and Bakuza's (2017) ethnographic study described

how parents of SRBs were provided limited opportunities to be involved in their children's education due to perceived cultural and linguistic differences between schools and parents. School policies positioned teachers as experts and parents as subordinates. This socially constructed positioning diminished parents' abilities to share their concerns or ideas. The authors built upon Das Gupta's (2006) principle of identity staking to describe how parents of SRBs navigated school policies and practices to advocate for their children and take parental action. As parents encountered negative effects of their socially constructed identities, Koyama and Bakuza (2017) argued they were able to exert agency and "draw on community and cultural resources to develop their own authority in their interactions with schools" (p. 318). Through this process of agentively reconstructing identities, the parents mediated their relations with teachers in different ways and to different ends. Armed with increased confidence and self-efficacy afforded by their reconstructed identities, the parents were able to work with teachers and community members to establish more inclusive policies and practices that benefitted their children.

Bigelow and King (2015) examined how identities and positioning of Somali SRBs were gradually constructed through repeated classroom practices. They described how socially constructed, discursive notions of what it means to be a good student or Muslim, in this case, intersected with students' internal identity construction. Through a focus on previous life experiences, identity models, and interactions with teachers, the authors illuminated how SRBs were able to co-construct identities that shape how they see themselves as certain types of students (Bigelow & King, 2015). Bigelow and King's (2015) integrative framework importantly highlighted how students' identity construction

processes have implications for their engagement and learning opportunities in classrooms due to their agentive identity construction mediating new opportunities for engagement. Similarly, Chao (2019) took a poststructuralist approach to examine the identity construction of Bhutanese refugee youth in a 2-year ethnographic study. Findings highlighted SRB identity construction as a complex process framed by social interactions and constituted by students' internal navigation of ways of being, becoming, and imagining. Integrative approaches like the three described in this section provide rich theoretical frameworks from which to explore both social and psychological influences on the complex process of identity construction.

Figured Worlds as an Integrative Approach

Several scholars have reconciled the tension between social constructionist and psychological views of identity by constructing their frameworks around Holland et al.'s (1998) cultural-historical theory of identity and figured worlds (e.g., Bal, 2014; Bal & Arzubiaga, 2014; Zengaro et al., 2016). Bal and Arzubiaga (2014) drew upon the theory of figured worlds (which I discuss in detail in the Conceptual Framework section) to examine the relationships among identity construction and SRBs' academic achievement, mental health, and social adaptation in the United States. Through a figured worlds perspective, Bal and Arzubiaga (2014) also engaged with teacher education literature, encouraging teachers to recognize SRBs' varied identities to develop cultural competence. Similarly, Zengaro et al. (2016) made use of Holland et al.'s (1998) figured worlds to argue "agency in schools prevents or affords personal and social spaces from which adolescents form academic identities" (p. 2) and students' academic identities are inseparable from cultural norms and social perceptions that exist in schools. As such,

concepts such as being “smart” or “dumb” are constructed not only through academic performance but also by others’ assumptions and expectations. Zengaro et al’s (2016) examination of identity construction of Kurdish and Somali SRBs and culturally relevant pedagogy allowed them to comment on how teaching methods that do not value SRBs’ cultural practices negatively impact their identity construction. Findings in their study indicated two different figured worlds emerged for the Kurdish and Somali SRBs based on learning opportunities they were provided and their perceived acceptance by the school community. The Somali SRBs had a particularly difficult time establishing a sense of identity and belonging in their school because they felt their Muslim faith and culture were not respected. The Kurdish SRBs, in contrast, were given space to practice their Muslim faith and encouraged to take advanced placement courses. The SRBs’ educational experiences shaped their identities at their school, which either helped or hindered their academic performance.

SRBs represent a distinct segment of the EL student population in the United States. Their complex life experiences often include death, persecution, and trauma that may affect how they interact with teachers and peers at school. Integrative approaches to identity construction provide scholars the ability to bridge the gap between social constructivist and psychological approaches to describe the complex experiences SRBs have in new educational contexts. These approaches draw on anthropology and psychology to describe SRBs’ social positioning and psychological processes that shape and are shaped by their transitions to new school communities. In the following section, I outline gaps I identified in the existing literature before discussing how I used an

integrative framework built around figured worlds (Holland et al., 1998) to examine SRBs' identity construction at Downtown High School.

Gaps in Existing Literature

Much of the existing research on SRBs' educational experiences in the United States has equated their experiences with those of other ELs. This trend may be due, in part, to the pathway to legal permanent residence that accompanies refugee resettlement (Felix, 2016). The U.S. government removes the notation of refugee status on official documents after refugees receive their new status as legal permanent residents. Schools and teachers typically lack important information about SRBs' refugee status or previous educational experiences. As a result, little is known about SRBs' identity construction in U.S. schools (Bal, 2014). According to Taylor and Sidhu (2012), the "invisibility of refugees [sic] in policy and research has worked against their cultural, social, and economic integration" (p. 4).

Although the experiences of SRBs' may have some similarities to those of other migrant student groups in the United States, there are key differences. Many immigrants come to the United States for better economic opportunities, whereas refugees are most often forced to leave their country of origin for political reasons, war, violence, or persecution (Coughlan & Owens-Manley, 2006). In addition, refugees typically need to flee their countries of origin suddenly, without organizing support systems in their destination country (Tadesse et al., 2009). Felix (2016) argued their forced migration experiences fundamentally distinguish them from other immigrants coming to the United States.

In addition, most existing studies on SRBs have focused on specific countries of origin or regions of the world. For example, King et al. (2017) examined the experiences of resettled high school students from East Africa. Shapiro and MacDonald (2017) explored how a SRB of Somali Bantu heritage employed linguistic resources to make sense of his educational experiences in a resettlement context. McCall and Vang (2012) analyzed teacher preparation to meet the needs of Hmong SRBs. Given the limitations of the existing body of literature, one purpose of this dissertation study was to extend the base of knowledge about SRBs from a wide variety of backgrounds interacting in public school classrooms. As such, there is a demand for theoretical conceptualizations from which to analyze SRBs' complex experiences with identity construction in U.S. schools (Bal & Arzubiaga, 2014; Dávila, 2015).

Conceptual Framework

Guided by an interpretivist approach through which individuals are seen to interpret their realities based on interactions with other social actors (Crotty, 1998), two concepts were central to my conceptual framework: (a) *identity*—a dynamic, co-constructed phenomenon that is in constant flux and performed through social interactions (Holland et al., 1998; Urrieta, 2007b); and (b) *figured worlds*—how individuals enact agency to position themselves in relation to others across various social contexts (Holland et al., 1998).

As detailed previously, the identity construction of SRBs has been examined in the existing literature, with most relevant studies framing SRB identity as socially constructed or shaped by a psychological process. The conceptualization of identity as a social construct allows for the examination of how political, cultural, and discursive

influences shape SRB identity construction in resettlement contexts. Psychological approaches help us understand internal processes that influence identity construction for SRBs in countries of resettlement. The use of figured worlds as an integrated approach can bridge the gap between social constructionist and psychological approaches on identity construction to describe the complex experiences SRBs have in their new educational contexts. Drawing from cultural-historical psychology and sociocultural theories, Holland et al. (1998) posited that identity is a dynamic social construct, which is constantly being reconstructed. For SRBs, education is a key factor in their resettlement process (Bromley & Andina, 2010); yet, research has suggested schools continue to perpetuate inequities based on race, gender, language, and ethnicity by ascribing value to certain identity traits in classrooms (Artiles, 2003). Studying SRB identity construction helps to shed light on how SRBs' identities are continuously produced as cultural artifacts that mediate—and are mediated by—their educational experiences (Bal, 2014) with implications for access and equity.

Central to Holland et al.'s (1998) theory of identity is the belief individuals exercise agency in the identity-making process through participation in *figured worlds*, which they described as a "socially and culturally constructed realm of interpretation in which particular characters and actors are recognized, significance is assigned to certain acts, and particular outcomes are valued over others" (p. 52). Framed by models of behavior found in cultural worlds, identities are improvised expressions of agency, "embedded in a collective past and produced in practice through life experiences" (Urrieta, 2007b, p. 119).

Within figured worlds, people (a) make sense of who they are and who they aspire to be (Urrieta, 2007a) and (b) perform these identities through practices and in relation to others (Alexander et al., 2005). Throughout this process, individuals enact agency within historically contingent models of the world that are widely shared by members of a society. As they continuously develop understandings of themselves, they often orient their identities around particular issues, such as religion, language, or music, that reflect their understandings and agency in the process of identity construction. For example, Urrieta (2007b) described how, through participation in local Chicana/o activist figured worlds, 24 teachers reported a shifting of self and began to produce Chicana/o activist identities. Many participants reported performing these identities through actions such as displaying the Mexican flag, changing their clothing style, or altering their language practices. These types of improvisations "from a cultural base and in response to the subject positions offered *in situ*, are, when taken up as symbol, potential beginnings of an altered subjectivity, an altered identity" (Holland et al., 1998, p. 18), which frame future interactions.

SRBs come from a variety of cultural and linguistic backgrounds, but they share a collective past, which includes at least minimal experience with fear or persecution in countries of origin or asylum. In that collective past are models of behavior that frame their identity construction in figured worlds of resettlement. Through social interactions in figured worlds, SRBs improvise and enact agency to perform various identities. Given the need to examine SRB identity construction in U.S. schools, figured worlds serve as a lens through which to examine how the SRBs' identities mediate and are mediated by their interactions with others at Downtown High School. This framing facilitates an

analysis of how SRBs construct dynamic identities by merging what they bring into and what they find in U.S. schools, specifically in regard to contexts to which they are exposed.

Research Methodology and Design

Downtown High School is a large, inner-city high school in Arizona, serving over 2,000 students in Grades 9–12. Data published by the school district during the design of the study (2017–2018 academic year) described the student population as 66% Hispanic, 14% Black, 7% White, 5% Native American, 5% Asian, and 3% Other. Nearly 13% of the student population was classified as EL and approximately 90% qualified for free or reduced-price lunch. According to the district website, 74 different languages were spoken by the student population. The district was not able to provide information about students' refugee status.

While working as an assistant caseworker for a local refugee resettlement agency, I often visited Downtown High School to enroll newcomers. During these trips, I typically brought the student(s), family members, and an interpreter to the front office, where they worked with the office staff to provide the necessary paperwork and receive information about Downtown High School. I went to the school so often I became acquainted with some office staff and administrators, which was known for being one of the primary schools for SRBs in the area. As was the case at Downtown High School, refugees are typically resettled in segregated, low-income neighborhoods and enrolled in underresourced, understaffed schools (McWilliams & Bonet, 2016).

Research Participants

Through connections made at the refugee resettlement agency, I was able to recruit teachers, and eventually students, to participate in the larger ethnographic study out of which this article grew. After speaking with the resettlement agency's education and learning program manager about my research interests, she connected me with the English as a second language (ESL) instruction leader at Downtown High School. In July 2017, I met with the ESL instruction leader, who suggested I volunteer in ESL classrooms to become more familiar with the research context. She specifically recommended observing two teachers, Ms. Bivall and Ms. May (all names of teachers and students are pseudonyms) because of their extensive work with SRBs. Throughout the 2017–2018 school year, I volunteered as an EL teacher assistant 1 day per week.

Teachers

Ms. Bivall and Ms. May both agreed to participate in this dissertation study the following school year. Additionally, they both reviewed and provided feedback on interview and observational protocols. Another teacher, Mr. Baker, and the instruction leader, Mr. Rio, also agreed to participate in the study. All teachers (including Mr. Rio) had graduate degrees in education, multiple teaching endorsements, and over 4 years teaching experience.

Students

During the 1st week of the 2018–2019 school year, I used criterion-based sampling (Ravitch & Carl, 2021) to recruit SRBs (n = 32) in each of the teacher's classes. Student participants varied in terms of gender, age, and country of origin, but all had been resettled in the United States through the UNHCR's Refugee Resettlement Programme.

The students reported coming from a variety of countries of origin, including Afghanistan, Myanmar, Syria, Eritrea, Somalia, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Collectively, they spoke 15 different home languages, including Kibembe, Arabic, Vietnamese, Tigrinya, Karenni, Kinyarwanda, Dari, Swahili, and Somali Bantu. All but a few of the students spoke at least three languages. After multiple attempts, I was unsuccessful at obtaining data related to their refugee status from Downtown High School administration. However, my experience working with teachers and students in classrooms allowed me to identify students who could potentially qualify for inclusion in the study. During the informed consent/assent process, all student participants confirmed their refugee status.

In Table 2 (see Appendix A), I provide some basic information about participating students. I lost two student participants to attrition, as one student moved before I could interview them, and another dropped out (both marked by an asterisk).

Data Collection Methods

To form an in-depth understanding of the research context, I used multiple ethnographic data collection methods. Using separate interview protocols to loosely guide my questions, I conducted at least one semi-structured interview with each of 30 SRBs and multiple semi-structured interviews with participating teachers (see Appendix D for student interview protocol and Appendix C for teacher interview protocol). Interviews with students lasted approximately 30 minutes and focused on their educational experiences at Downtown High School. Interviews with teachers lasted around 1 hour and focused on teaching methods they used to support SRBs in their classrooms. I also conducted focus groups (n = 6) with SRBs in each class, during which

I asked broad questions to generate conversations among SRBs (Flick, 2014). Each focus group included five to eight student participants. I found several SRBs seemed more comfortable speaking in focus groups than in individual interviews. As SRBs are often distrustful of authority figures due to previous traumatic experiences (McBrien, 2005), I hypothesized many of them felt safter speaking to me while surrounded by other SRBs. In total, I conducted 36 individual interviews and six focus groups with SRBs and 17 interviews with teachers (see Ambroso, under review, for analysis of teachers' perspectives). Audio from interviews and focus groups was transcribed using an external transcription service, which I subsequently reviewed and refined.

Throughout the 2018–2019 academic year, I also observed students and teachers in each classroom for approximately 6 hours per week. I recorded details of interactions using an observational protocol, which I drafted to aid in the collection of data related to my research questions (see Appendix B for classroom observation protocol). In total, I had approximately 400 hand-written pages of field notes, which were included in the analysis. Observations were audio-recorded so that I could replay key interactions during analysis. In addition, I used the audio to reflect on my experiences as a participant–observer (Bogdan & Biklen, 2006).

Data Analysis Methods

Data analysis occurred recursively throughout each step in this study, with new insights dictating the direction of future analysis (Ravitch & Carl, 2021). As I collected data, I read through transcripts, listened to interactions during observations, recoded my own voice memos, and identified topics I considered relevant to my research questions in the data. I used the qualitative coding software NVivo 11.4 to examine the data in

different chunks and organize the process of open, inductive coding. Throughout the coding process, my intent was to both (a) examine participants' unique descriptions of identity construction and (b) cut across all participants' responses in comparative and contrastive ways (Mason, 2017; Saldaña, 2015). During the analysis, I also engaged in data reduction to eliminate data I considered irrelevant and selected data I considered representative of the corpus (Smagorinsky, 2008).

My first step in open coding involved reading through the data in NVivo and labeling the text with descriptive codes according to categories based on my research questions concerning refugee identity construction (see Appendices E and F for outlines of my coding schemes). As I progressed with analysis, I repeatedly revised the descriptive codes drafted in the first phase of coding. Examples of descriptive codes include SRBs' country of asylum, previous schooling, and refugee identity. In conjunction with labeling the text with descriptive codes, I also identified data that disconfirmed my preconceived assumptions about students' identity construction (Smagorinsky, 2008).

Prior to my second round of coding, I downloaded data associated with each descriptive code using NVivo's query feature. While examining these data to look for patterns, I made notes in the sidebar and highlighted excerpts I thought could be related. I then read through my notes and highlighting before labeling the text with pattern codes, which allowed me to further organize the data into more meaningful units based on patterns across data sources and participants. Using the pattern codes, I then drafted meaning statements about themes I identified in the data (Saldaña, 2015). Examples of

pattern codes include SRBs describing violence, war, or persecution when defining what it means to be a refugee.

In the final phase of open coding, I drafted axial codes to label connections between my first- and second-level codes (Saldaña, 2015). In this last phase, I examined descriptive and pattern codes related to my research questions and identified links between them. Axial codes for the study included how SRBs used certain words to define different aspects of refugee-ness.

Findings

At the onset of this study, SRB identity construction was not meant to be my research focus; however, the students' constructions of refugee identities were reflected in (and, at times, overshadowed by) their educational experiences at Downtown High School. Their refugee-ness was produced as an artifact of their life experiences that mediated—and was mediated by—their experiences at school. It shaped the learning opportunities and resources the SRBs were provided. It influenced their interactions with teachers and other groups of students. As much as some of these students wanted to escape their refugee identities, it was omnipresent in their student lives. As such, the concept of SRB identity construction was necessary for me to investigate to learn more about their educational experiences.

In this section, I present excerpts to illustrate how (a) participating teachers constructed SRBs' identities and (b) SRBs constructed refugee-ness for themselves in figured words. Through data analysis, I identified five themes that cut across participating SRBs' descriptions of what constitutes a refugee. These themes represent the complexity of SRBs' identity construction process that continuously produces cultural artifacts that

mediate—and are mediated by—their collective past as refugees and experiences in U.S. educational contexts.

Teachers' Construction of SRB Identity

One of the first things I realized at Downtown High School was the administration did not share information about students' refugee status with teachers or visiting researchers (i.e., me). After repeated requests for these data, a school administrator said she had "no way of knowing how many of the EL students are refugees" (personal communication, January 23, 2018). In fact, all three teachers participating in this study told me there were major issues with information they received about SRBs. For example, one said many SRBs had reported birthdays of January 1, and determining their actual age had been an issue. In one instance, a SRB who had been enrolled as a sophomore was transferred to a nearby middle school after it was determined he was much younger than was originally reported.

None of the participating teachers reported having official records detailing their SRBs' prior education abroad or resettlement experiences. Not even Mr. Rio, in his capacity as leader of the ESL department, was aware of students' refugee status, which often caused problems supporting new students in the department. When asked what percentage of the ELs at Downtown High School were SRBs, Mr. Rio said the following:

> I don't know. I think with all the students that I see that are from Central Africa I'd probably say 50/50. I don't know actual numbers. I'm just estimating. I don't know who has answers for me, but I always try to find out. I feel as if I should know the answer to this because I'm the instructional leader, but [redacted] I don't deal with a lot of records directly.

Teachers described how they came to understand students' refuge-ness through interacting with them in class. "The school does not tell us any of that information, so

whether they have legal status or don't, we have no idea," said Ms. Bivall. "Only by the kids telling us would we know that," she continued. Though their country of origin might have provided the teachers an indication of their refugee status, it was often through casual conversations they learned about SRBs' previous education and resettlement experiences. One such instance occurred in a lesson I observed in Ms. Bivall's class. During the grammar lesson, Avdar, a 16-year-old sophomore, casually told the class his father had died "in the war" in Syria. None of the students responded to the comment. Ms. Bivall, after looking across the room at me with a shocked expression, continued with the lesson about superlative adjectives. It was in these fleeting moments, between grammar exercises and reading comprehension checks, these teachers learned about their SRBs' life experiences and constructed their identities as refugees.

With the lack of knowledge about their students' backgrounds, it was often difficult for teachers to know how to best support them in class. As they continuously developed understandings of their students, they described orienting their teaching methods around particular issues they perceived as challenges for SRBs, such as remembering details or staying focused. The teachers spoke about implementing strategies to mitigate the effect of these issues they learned from trainings with the local refugee resettlement agency. For example, to keep SRBs' attention, Ms. Bivall designed learning activities that were short and allowed them to move around the classroom. To combat issues she perceived SRBs had with anxiety, Ms. May gave her students peppermint candy and led them through meditation exercises. Mr. Baker kept snacks in his desk drawer and handed them out to his students when they were hungry.

All of them, including Mr. Rio (the ESL instruction leader), said it would be helpful to have more information about their SRBs' background, especially if they had experienced trauma before resettlement. Voicing this desire, Ms. May said:

> We are not communicated with as a team at all, as to prior education, prior trauma. When we reach out, we generally don't get a lot of information. Or sometimes, we don't even know who to reach out to, to get the information. As a teacher it'd be helpful to know if a student were retained in their own country. Or they've been in a refugee camp for 10 years. . . . Just knowing those things, knowing that they have seizures, posttraumatic stress syndrome. None of that is communicated to us, and then so a student, imagine all that I've said and more, because I haven't said all that they've been through, suddenly arrives in a whole new country. That's a huge transition in and of itself, much less all the baggage that a student carries with them. And then we don't know anything. The teachers, they just throw them in our room with zero communication.

Ms. May's suggestion is supported by existing research indicating educators in resettlement countries are often unaware of their students' educational backgrounds and underprepared to deal with trauma many refugee students have experienced (Brenner & Kia-Keating, 2016). It is concerning given the link between academic performance and identity development for refugee students (Birman & Tran, 2015) and highlights the need for additional professional training that prepares educators in resettlement countries to support SRBs (Roxas, 2011b).

Teachers at Downtown High School did not have a clear understanding of their students' refugee-ness. They were not provided information about previous life experiences or official refugee status from school administration. Instead, teachers relied on comments made during interactions with students to inform them about SRBs' identities. Participating teachers reported using this information, along with lunchtime trainings with the refugee resettlement agency, to make instructional decisions and design support systems for their students. As understandings of SRBs' identities shape their

educational experiences, however, the teachers and students would benefit from more information. In the following section, I describe how participating SRBs constructed refugee identities for themselves.

Students' Construction of Refugee-ness

During interviews with 30 SRBs, I asked the same series of questions: "Are you a refugee? What is a refugee? What does it mean to be a refugee?" These questions elicited a variety of responses, but in nearly every interview they produced some sort of physical reaction from the students. In some cases, the SRBs furrowed their brow. In other cases, they sat up or scooted back in their chairs. After answering general questions about their educational experiences at Downtown High School, it seemed as if this line of questioning related to their refugee status made them think or identify differently. Research has suggested teachers are often discouraged from talking to SRBs about their past, and many avoid asking them questions about their families or previous life experiences (Dávila, 2015). To that point, in my 2 years working with SRBs at Downtown High School, only once did I hear a teacher directly talk to students about being a refugee, and that was to introduce me and my research. Perhaps the SRBs were surprised to hear me ask about refugee-ness so bluntly in interviews. Perhaps their refugee identity was a silent passenger that accompanied them throughout their educational journey but was rarely acknowledged by others at Downtown High School, especially those in authority. Whatever the case may have been, the SRBs reacted physically to my questions about their refugee-ness and typically responded carefully, as if they did not want to give the wrong answer.

In answering my questions, SRBs' often recalled their own lived experiences and oriented their responses around certain actions, such as moving, dressing a certain way, or receiving financial support. I identified five themes in their descriptions of what it means to be a refugee. Table 3 provides a summary of these findings (see Appendix A). For each theme, I provide illustrative interview or focus group excerpts, italicizing especially salient words. Data from student interviews or focus groups could also be associated with multiple themes, which occurred three times in my analysis. I next discuss each theme in detail, from the most to least prevalent.

Avoidance

Several SRBs either said they did not know the meaning of the word "refugee" or refused to talk about it during interviews. Kamanzi, a typically playful student from the Congo, froze up when I used the word, stating he did not want to talk about his past. Faven, who had recently received a track scholarship from a 4-year university, said she did not like the word. When I asked her to elaborate, she referenced the financial support refugees receive but would not say more. Babar, a popular student who was part of the varsity soccer team, politely declined to define the word refugee, saying he did not have an answer.

A few SRBs also said they wanted to stop being identified as a refugee (see Table 4 in Appendix A). Kesi talked about how she planned to "leave that refugee someday" to become American. She associated the transition with changes in the way she dressed, stating she did not have certain types of pants in Africa. Similarly, Kabali suggested people did not know he was a refugee because of the clothing he wore. "I wear nice stuff and they think I'm fly," said Kabali. These acts of avoidance, though sometimes

disguised with fashion or humor, were all improvised expressions of agency some SRBs used to push back on being ascribed refugee identities. Although often related to certain material acts such as receiving financial assistance or wearing certain types of clothing, the students' identity construction influenced how they interacted with other students and teachers at school, which had implications for their academic achievement. For example, Kabali seemed to imitate some of the behaviors many SRBs' associated with their "American" peers, one of which was skipping class. His habitual absenteeism affected his academic performance and threatened to delay his graduation. When I asked Kabali about his frequent absences, he said sometimes he just liked to "hang out" with his friends. Though he claimed not to have "American" friends "because of the way they live," his imitation of a behavior many SRBs characterized as "un-refugee" could be viewed as an attempt to distance himself from the socially constructed refugee identity.

Trauma

The very nature of being a refugee means implies a transitionary lifestyle with a great deal of uncertainty. Schools are often the most influential social system for refugee children in their host country (Stewart, 2011). Yet, SRBs who experienced war or persecution before or during resettlement may suffer from trauma, which can be described as an emotional response to an event such as extreme violence or a natural disaster (American Psychological Association, n.d.).

When asked to define the word refugee, many SRBs described war, violence, persecution, or poverty, highlighting their collective past of traumatic experiences as an identity marker (see Table 5 in Appendix A). These comments were made in various ways, and often referenced personal or familial stories about trauma participants had

experienced in their country of origin. Sagar, who was on the cross-country team at Downtown High School, spoke about many people, including some family members, dying in his country of origin. He also said he was scared and nervous in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and he needed to go to another country to be safe. Several SRBs used words like fighting, shooting, killing, die, and war to describe what a refugee flees before arriving in their country of asylum and eventually being resettled. Others mentioned poverty, needing to work, or human suffering. Duc, a talkative SRB from Vietnam, described some hardships he went through, including going without food, water, or shoes. Of the 11 SRBs who connected their refugee identity with trauma, more than half spoke about it in first person, describing their personal experiences escaping war, violence, and death.

Migration

Many SRBs mentioned the physical act of moving as the defining characteristic of a refugee (see Table 6 in Appendix A). Ziba, a quiet SRB who Ms. May described as one of the strongest students in her class, described a refugee as a person who comes from another country. Skylar added to that definition to say refuges are students who travel to another country to go to school. Malik, a love-struck Syrian who frequently talked to me about his relationship problems, spoke about his own migration to the United States. His identity construction included his personal experience of things refugees often must leave behind when they flee their country of origin: their country, home, family, and friends.

As they oriented their identities around the act of moving, SRBs used verbs such as come, leave, and move to describe a person who resettled to the United States from a different country. Several also used the word “different” to refer to where refugees come

from before being resettled in the United States. The SRBs articulated different aspects of moving, with several speaking about leaving their homes and loved ones, whereas others emphasized coming to a country that is not "theirs." Of the 10 SRBs who described the act of moving as the defining characteristic of a refugee, only four spoke about their own personal experiences.

Hope

Three SRBs referenced being hopeful for the future or starting a new life (see Table 7 in Appendix A). Badru, who often spoke about joining the football team at Downtown High School, said it was hard to be a refugee, but it was also good because the educational and work opportunities in the United States were better than those in his country of origin. He emphasized the importance of education for refugees, stating they should educate themselves to get better jobs and contribute to their countries of origin. He described a refugee as someone who comes from a different country for a better life. Badru's identity construction based on hope influenced his academic achievement in classes I observed. He was often the first student to raise his hand to volunteer for classroom exercises, and he was typically one of the most vocal students in group activities. When I asked Badru about these instances during interviews, he told me he wanted to get a good education so that he could find a good job and make money for his family.

Similarly, Faid stated a refugee is someone who moves to another country for safety and a better life. Jammas was a smiling SRB from Afghanistan. He often spoke to me about working at a local coffee shop after school and how the interactions he had at

work helped him learn English. When asked to define a refugee, Jammas suggested refugees start a new life after resettlement. Through these responses, some SRBs looked to the future and described who they aspired to be. Whether they aspired to bring commerce to their country of origin or start a completely new life in the United States, all three referenced the opportunity they saw in their host country and the better life they aspired to have.

Pride

Another positive response shared by SRBs in response to my questions was pride. Three students mentioned feeling proud of being a refugee (see Table 8 in Appendix A). Shema, an introspective student who often sat next to me during my observations, said he was proud of himself and of the United States as his host country. He also mentioned being proud of his family who he said helped him get to the United States from Rwanda. He talked about his identity as a refugee and how education would allow him to find work and be himself. He explicitly mentioned his own process of identity construction, along with his desire to know himself and his dreams. During his interview, Shema spoke in a tone I understood as resistant to his situation (or naysayers) and might limit his opportunities. Shema was insistent his refugee status would not hold him back and he was determined to construct his own path, his own identity.

Bullying was a common topic discussed by SRBs during interviews. Research has suggested SRBs may experience bullying due to their status as an EL or different customs and traditions they display while at school (Mthethwa-Sommers & Kisiara, 2015). Duc mentioned being proud to be a refugee in relation to other students insulting or bullying him because of his refugee status. He talked about not choosing the difficult life he had

experienced and “letting go” of people who treated him badly for being a refugee. In one of the focus groups, two students shared different emotions when asked how it felt to be a refugee at Downtown High School. When Faven said it was embarrassing to be a refugee, Sae, who was usually very quiet, loudly insisted he was proud. In particular, he mentioned being proud of the diversity of refugees, referencing the collective past through which their refugee identities had been produced.

Discussion

In this ethnographic study, I sought to better understand how refugee identities are constructed for and by SRBs in U.S. resettlement contexts. My extensive experience as a caseworker, volunteer teaching assistant, and observer at Downtown High School provided me with a rich understanding of the research context and familiarity with study participants. One limitation of the study was I, myself, do not identify as a refugee. I also do not speak any of the SRB participants’ home languages (other than conversational Vietnamese). I also recognize as a White, heterosexual, cisgender, middle-class, male U.S. citizen, I will never be able to fully understand the complex experiences of SRBs in the United States. After 2 years of interacting with many of the same students, however, I believe they trusted me and provided me with insights into topics that were challenging for them to discuss.

By using Holland et al.’s (1998) concept of figured worlds, I attempted to bridge the gap between social constructivist and psychological approaches to describe the complex identity construction processes of SRBs. Although identities of SRBs are often essentialized to focus on their vulnerability or skills they lack (Bauman, 2004), these monolithic constructions of their supposed refugee-ness do not capture the complexity of

their being. Findings of this study highlighted nuances of the identity construction processes of participating SRBs at Downtown High School. Although several described their refugee-ness in relation to trauma they had experienced in countries of origin or asylum, this was not the sole characteristic that defined them. In fact, many SRBs pushed back and tried to distance themselves from the vulnerable refugee narrative. When asked to define the word "refugee," several SRBs politely refused. Others spoke about their hope for a better life in the United States or pride in their ability to survive unimaginable challenges in their past.

SRB identity construction by these participants did not follow a pattern in a singular figured world. Urrieta (2007b) argued identity construction is a complex process that may vary from individual to individual. The students in this study did not fit neatly into the five themes I identified, there was no rigid pattern in their processes. Instead, themes in students' responses, which I drew out to illuminate specific aspects of their identity construction in light of mediating features of their schooling experiences, varied with the conversation and discursive context. For example, the same student (Duc) spoke about resisting his refugee identity before describing the pride he felt in being a refugee and overcoming significant obstacles. In describing or defining refugee-ness, many SRBs spoke in first person to offer insights into their own personal stories. These excerpts offer glimpses into a collective past associated with refugee-ness and illustrate how SRBs enact agency to construct their own identities in resettlement contexts.

The examples presented and my interpretation thereof also highlight the strength and resilience of SRBs, which teachers can harness to focus on strengths and assets SRBs bring to their classroom. The participating teachers in this study positioned SRBs as

certain types of students based on their interactions with them in classrooms and information that had been made available to them. This information included insights from trainings offered by a local resettlement agency on how to support SRBs, who may exhibit disengagement or behavioral problems due to experiences with trauma. The teachers altered their teaching practices to design lessons and support systems based on their perceived notions of refugee-ness. Whereas teachers' actions demonstrated the great effort they made to care for their SRBs, students' descriptions of refugee-ness suggested teachers' notions often failed to capture the full complexity. By no means is this a critique of the participating teachers or Downtown High. The teachers and administrators operated in an educational system that left them without important information they could use to connect with and support their SRBs.

Students constructed and performed their own identities by exerting agency and improvisation during interactions with peers and teachers. In their responses to interview questions, SRBs described making sense of who they were and who they aspired to be in their host country. Often, this identity construction was associated with specific actions, like moving or dressing a certain way. Other times, it was related to their hopes and dreams for the future. Given the connection between identities and learning opportunities (Bernstein, 2014), a deeper understanding of SRBs' identity construction may result in improved learning outcomes for this unique student population.

Conclusion

Research has shown SRBs, particularly those in high school, continue to be underserved in U.S. schools due to a lack of resources to support their linguistic and academic needs (Bal, 2014; Greenberg Motamedi et al., 2021; Moinolnolki & Han,

2017). Resources alone will not alleviate challenges of this student population. Teachers and administrators in the U.S. educational system must model genuine concern for SRBs as human beings. Although financial resources are important, an act of caring by a teacher or principal can often make the biggest difference in a student's educational experience (Zengaro et al., 2016). Through creating spaces where SRBs can openly discuss their refugee-ness, teachers can position themselves in an empowering manner and allow their SRBs to construct identities that challenge deficit perspectives of refugees in schools (Karam, 2018).

Stewart (2015) suggested, "the onus of the challenge should not be the immense academic gains the students need to make but educators' preparedness to learn from and with them" (p. 150). In being aware and addressing the identity construction of SRBs, teachers can use their life experiences as resources for instruction and design authentic, transformative learning opportunities that support their academic progress. Yet, findings from this study supported literature that claims teachers are often unaware of their students' refugee status and, thus, unprepared to offer them support they need at school. Whereas scholars have warned against essentializing or stereotyping members of marginalized student communities (e.g., James, 2012), others have argued learning is inseparable from identity and failing to address identity issues can do significant harm (Ibrahim, 1999).

CHAPTER 4

"LEFT BEHIND": LANGUAGE POLICY BARRIERS TO ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT IDENTIFIED BY STUDENTS FROM REFUGEE BACKGROUNDS

The field of refugee education has grown considerably in recent years to account for a global education crisis spawned from long-lasting conflicts in the Middle East, Africa, and other parts of the world (Culbertson & Constant, 2015; Demirdjian, 2012; Shapiro & MacDonald, 2017). As refugees flee their countries of origin, educational systems in their countries of resettlement have struggled to provide quality education to their children (Bal, 2014; McBrien, 2005). As such, scholars have examined social, individual, integrative, and reciprocal factors that influence, often negatively, educational experiences of students from refugee backgrounds (SRBs). Much of the literature has focused on how SRBs' experiences before resettlement may lead to issues including posttraumatic stress disorder, mood disorders, and suspicion of authority figures, such as teachers (Amthor & Roxas, 2016; McBrien, 2005; Sinclair, 2001). Research has also described how SRBs may be subjected to bullying or mistreatment in school at the hands of their peers (Mthethwa-Sommers & Kisiara, 2015).

Although the existing literature has highlighted these issues, which often manifest in high dropout rates, behavioral issues, and poor academic performance (McBrien, 2005; Moinolnolki & Han, 2017; Mthethwa-Sommers & Kisiara, 2015), their dominance in the extant literature may contribute to practitioners and scholars attributing challenges faced by SRBs to missing capabilities based on their refugee status (Ballantine & Hammack, 2009; Roy & Roxas, 2011). Largely absent from the literature are studies of SRBs

describing their educational experiences in resettlement contexts, including barriers to their academic and social well-being. Thus, there is a pressing need for educational research that moves beyond deficit perspectives to generate intersubjective theorizations from the lived experiences of SRBs (Lems, 2018).

In this qualitative, ethnographic case study, I examined how 32 SRBs described their experiences at an urban high school in Arizona. Specifically, I used phenomenology as a methodological frame from which to interpret their experiences with structured English immersion (SEI), the authorized language policy in Arizona. Educational policies have primarily focused on two purposes across academic settings: (a) the organizational function of establishing standards, specifying instructional practices, and providing guidance to teachers (Gandal & Vranek, 2001; Schmoker & Marzano, 1999); and (b) the sociopolitical role of assigning value to certain types of participation in the learning process (Anderson, 2017). As such, educational policies necessarily mediate SRBs' schooling experiences, especially language policies, which can determine much about how English learners (ELs), such as SRBs, interact with their teachers, peers, and communities (Warriner, 2007). The study was guided by the following research questions:

- How do SRBs experience SEI in this particular research setting?
- What barriers do SRBs describe as negatively impacting their educational experiences with SEI?

Traditionally, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR; n.d.-a) has recommended three durable solutions for refugees after fleeing their country of origin: voluntary repatriation, local integration, and resettlement to a third country. To

contextualize the educational landscape SRBs encounter after fleeing their countries of origin, I first describe the barriers SRBs face in countries of asylum and resettlement. I then provide some contextual information about the language policy in Arizona before introducing my conceptual framework.

UNHCR Durable Solutions

The 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees provided the defining characteristics of refugees and established international norms concerning their rights (Dryden-Peterson, 2016b). In 1967, the Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees extended this definition to include individuals outside of Europe and removed geographic barriers for those who could apply for refugee status. Since 1950, the UNHCR has worked to help refugee rebuild their lives after fleeing their country of origin, which includes ensuring they have access to education (UNHCR, n.d.-a). However, research suggests educational systems in SRBs' countries of asylum and resettlement have struggled to provide them with quality education (Donato & Ferris, 2020; Dryden-Peterson, 2017; McBrien, 2005).

Local Integration

Accessing quality education in countries of first asylum can be challenging due to overstretched public institutions. Nearly 90% of refugees live in developing nations surrounding their country of origin, which typically face challenges including overcrowded classrooms, teacher shortages, and limited educational resources (Dryden-Peterson et al., 2016). For example, civil war in Syria created such a dramatic exodus of refugees to neighboring countries that it overstretched their public institutions, including the educational systems (Culbertson & Constant, 2015). As a result, fewer than half of

Syrian refugees who fled to neighboring countries were enrolled in formal schooling (UNHRC, n.d.-b). The crisis in Syria also caused millions of refugees and migrants to seek refuge in Europe, often overwhelming school systems that did not have enough qualified teachers or educational resources to provide SRBs with access to quality education (Katsiaficas, 2016).

Resettlement

The most vulnerable refugees, whose safety, liberty, or health is at risk in their countries of first asylum, may be presented by the UNHCR to possible resettlement countries (UNHCR, 2020). Although an abundance of literature has examined refugee students' experiences in resettlement countries such as England and Australia, educational research about refugee students in the United States has been severely lacking (Bal & Arzubiaga, 2014; Moinolnolki & Han, 2017).

Resettlement in the United States

Although resettlement trends under the Trump administration (2016–2020) were discouraging, the United States has historically been the world's most prominent resettlement country, resettling more refugees than the rest of the world combined for the second half of the 20th century (Tran & Lara-García, 2020). Between 2014 and 2017, approximately 279,000 refugees were resettled in the United States (Migration Policy Institute, 2017). Over half of these individuals were children who entered the U.S. educational system (UNHCR, n.d.). Given these circumstances, one could assume roughly 139,000 SRBs enrolled in U.S. schools from 2014–2017. Yet, scholars have written little about the educational experiences of SRBs in U.S. resettlement contexts

(Koyama & Bakuza, 2017), where they are typically placed in English as a second language (ESL) programs upon enrollment (Mthethwa-Sommers & Kisiara, 2015).

In Arizona, the official language policy is SEI, which has been condemned in the existing literature for poor student achievement (García et al., 2012; Hopkins, 2012), low graduation rates (Lillie et al., 2012; Mitchell, 2017), and othering (Gándara & Orfield, 2012) experienced by ELs. Following recent policy changes in California and Massachusetts, the only remaining state that requires the instructional model be used with ELs is Arizona, where districts are transitioning to a less restrictive version of the language policy (Martínez, 2020). Examining the lived experiences of SRBs in Arizona's 4-hour SEI model may inform Arizona districts in future language policy decisions. Findings also offer relevant insights to state and local educational agencies as they address the challenges SRBs have traditionally experienced in U.S. resettlement contexts. As the Biden administration seeks to increase the resettlement numbers, particularly in response to the crisis in Afghanistan, language policies that improve SRBs' educational opportunities are critical (Reston, 2021).

SEI in Arizona

In 2000, the Arizona Department of Education prescribed SEI as the official model of instruction for ELs (Jimenez-Silva et al., 2014). Baker and de Kanter (1983) first used the term *structured English immersion* to describe a method of teaching language-minority students based on successful French immersion programs in Canada. Johnson and Swain (1997) summarized the main principles of those programs as the following:

- The second language (L2) is a medium of instruction.

- The immersion curriculum parallels the local first language (L1) curriculum.
- Overt support exists for the L1.
- The program aims for additive bilingualism.
- Exposure to the L2 is largely confined to the classroom.
- Students enter with similar (and limited) levels of L2 proficiency.
- The teachers are bilingual.
- The classroom culture is that of the local L1 community.

Arizona's SEI model differs from the Canadian model in two important ways. One notable difference is the criteria for success. The stated goal of the Canadian SEI model is full bilingualism, whereas the stated objective of SEI in Arizona is to achieve English proficiency (Ramírez et al., 1991). Another difference is the Canadian model was completely voluntary. Students could opt into these programs at three different stages of their education: early immersion (usually kindergarten), middle immersion (Grades 4 or 5), or late immersion (Grade 7; Cummins, 1998). On the contrary, Arizona's model of SEI requires any student determined to be nonproficient in English receive at least 4 hours of English language instruction for a minimum of 1 year (Gándara & Orfield, 2012).

Separated from mainstream classes, SRBs in Arizona have few opportunities to interact with their "English-proficient" peers, which contradicts much of the existing literature on second language acquisition (Hopkins, 2012) and limits SRBs' abilities to connect linguistically and socially to other groups of students (Moinolnolki & Han, 2017). Though existing literature has contributed to our understanding of how SEI shapes experiences of Latinx students (e.g., Combs et al., 2011; Heineke, 2015; Johnson &

Freeman, 2010; Lillie et al., 2012), less has been written to inform our understanding of experiences of SRBs in SEI classrooms. Research on experiences of SRBs is limited, and there is little understanding of the lived experience of refugee children described in their own words (Karr et al., 2020).

After years of controversy and criticism in language policy research, the SEI requirements in Arizona were altered in 2019 to allow school districts more flexibility in their implementation of the language policy. The revised policy, based on SB 1014, reduced the mandated English language instruction from 4 hours per day to 2 hours per day, but continues to allow for the segregation of ELs (Martínez, 2020). Observations and interviews conducted in this study occurred before the language policy was changed, but continue to have relevance as Arizona school districts transition to alternative, evidence-based models of SEI.

Conceptual Framework

To understand SRBs' direct experiences, I used phenomenology to interpret their descriptions of high school education in Arizona, framed by SEI. Phenomenology is a methodological approach that emphasizes first-person experiences and includes a set of tools and concepts for analyzing the structure of those experiences (Nuñez & Yoshimi, 2017). Specifically, phenomenology seeks to understand phenomena from the vantage point of how they are experienced by individuals in a specific situation (Lems, 2020). Phenomenological research methods typically involve examining a phenomenon relative to a specific group of people, and data collection tends to include interviews (Ravitch & Carl, 2021). Phenomenology also encourages the researcher to be acutely aware of their positionality and try to minimize their own assumptions about phenomena (Rehorick &

Bentz, 2008). Phenomenological studies often describe what participants have in common as they experience a phenomenon, focusing on what they experienced and how they experienced it (Creswell, 2013). A researcher then develops a composite description of lived experiences from persons who have experienced the phenomenon.

In describing their educational experiences with SEI, SRBs in the present study often identified barriers that hindered their academic and/or social development. These barriers can be considered in light of what Creswell (2013) called the "universal essence" (p. 76) of how participating SRBs experienced SEI as a language policy. For students often marginalized in education systems, policies can facilitate or hinder their development, establishing barriers to learning and exclusion from the educational community (Sánchez et al., 2019). Educational barriers, which have been studied by numerous authors (e.g., Gabrielli & Impicciatore, 2021; Sánchez et al., 2019) can occur at various levels of the schooling process. They may include attitudinal, organizational, contextual, and physical barriers (Sánchez et al., 2019). For the purposes of this study, I conceptualized *barriers* as any obstacles SRBs describe as negatively impacting their academic or social experiences and possible futures in the 4-hour SEI model.

Methods

Through employing ethnographic methods in a phenomenological study, I aimed to describe the intersubjective, educational experiences of SRBs classified as ELs at a high school in Arizona (Lems, 2018). From a phenomenological perspective, I sought to better understand SRBs' experiences with SEI and how they described the language policy as impacting their academic and social development. Ethnographic methods offered a means of examining both societal beliefs about language and policy design, and

the lived experiences of SRBs at my research site (Ricento & Hornberger, 1996). Through spending an entire academic year in three classrooms with participants in this study, I developed an ethnographic understanding of their schooling experiences. Not only was I acutely aware of participants' English language needs, but I also came to know them personally, including their extracurricular interests, resettlement stories, and family situations.

Research Site

Downtown High School (pseudonym) is a large high school in Arizona, serving over 2,000 students in grades 9–12 . The high school is located in a culturally, racially, and linguistically diverse area and employs more than 100 full-time teachers. The student population was 66% Hispanic, 14% Black, 7% White, 5% Native American, 5% Asian, and 3% Other. According to a district website, 74 different languages were spoken by students at Downtown High at the time of the study.

In the years preceding this study, I volunteered and worked an assistant caseworker for a refugee resettlement agency near Downtown High School. During that time, I supported the establishment of a refugee childcare center, completed intake forms as refugees arrived at the agency, and taught English language lessons. One of my primary duties at the agency was to help recently resettled children enroll in school. This task typically involved completing necessary forms at the resettlement agency, taking the child and their family to a school, and coordinating with the front office to enroll the SRB. It was in that capacity I became familiar with Downtown High School, as it was one of the few high schools in the metropolitan area that would accept refugee students in

the middle of a semester. During multiple visits to Downtown High School, I became acquainted with several administrators and staff working in the front office.

Research Participants

In June 2017, I was introduced to the ESL instruction leader at Downtown High School, who served as head of the department. With the help of the ESL instruction leader, I met with two teachers in July 2017 to discuss volunteering in their SEI classrooms during the 2017–2018 academic year. The two teachers, Ms. Bivall and Ms. May (all names are pseudonyms), were recommended for their exceptional records of teaching SRBs. To become more familiar with the research context, I volunteered as an EL teacher assistant in their classes once per week for the entire academic year.

Teachers

I recruited a purposeful sample of teachers ($n = 3$) to participate in this study. Ms. Bivall and Ms. May both agreed to participate and took time to review all interview and observational protocols, offering feedback to ensure my questions were relevant to the educational context. Ms. Bivall also introduced me to another teacher, Mr. Baker, who agreed to participate in the study at the start of the 2018–2019 school year. Per Arizona's SEI instructional model, ELs are grouped into English language classes based on four levels of English proficiency: preemergent, emergent, basic, and intermediate. Ms. Bivall and Ms. May both taught preemergent classes, and Mr. Baker taught intermediate classes. The participating teachers all had more than 4 years of teaching experience, master's degrees in education, and various teaching endorsements. Ms. Bivall and Ms. May had SEI and ESL teaching endorsements, and Mr. Baker had only the SEI endorsement.

Students

Because the phenomenon being studied was SRBs' experience with SEI, I used criterion-based sampling (Ravitch & Carl, 2021) to recruit student participants (n = 32) in the aforementioned teachers' classes. The students reported coming from nine different countries of origin: Eritrea, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Syria, Afghanistan, Somalia, Sudan, and Vietnam. Collectively, they spoke 15 different home languages, including Arabic, Tigrinya, Karenni, Kinyarwanda, Dari, Swahili, Somali Bantu, and Kibembe. The SRBs ranged in age from 15–21 years old, and many spoke about having part-time jobs outside of school. Because freshmen through seniors were mixed in SEI classes according to their English proficiency levels, I did not establish recruitment criteria based on age or grade-level classification. All student participants held refugee status and had been resettled in the United States through the UNHCR's Refugee Resettlement Programme. Though I was not able to obtain official data related to students' refugee status from the school administration, I held multiple conversations with teachers and students, which enabled me to identify which students had been resettled in the United States as refugees. All student participants confirmed their refugee status in the informed consent/assent process.

Data Collection Methods

To develop a composite description of how SRBs' experienced SEI (Creswell, 2013), I employed multiple data collection methods. Throughout the year, I conducted at least one interview with 30 student participants (two were lost to attrition). I also conducted multiple semi-structured interviews with Ms. Bivall (n = 6), Ms. May (n = 6), and Mr. Baker (n = 4). In total, I conducted 36 interviews with SRBs and 16 interviews

with teachers (see Ambroso, under review, for analysis of teachers' perspectives). During interviews, I used protocols drafted for each participant group (see Appendix D for student interview protocol and Appendix C for teacher interview protocol). Student interviews lasted approximately 30 minutes and focused on their direct experiences with SEI. Teacher interviews typically lasted around 1 hour and focused on their perceptions of student experiences in SEI. Recordings of interviews were transcribed using an external service provider and subsequently checked and refined by me.

I conducted focus groups with students (n = 6), which allowed me to generate conversations among SRBs to gain insights into their lived experiences (Flick, 2014). During focus groups, I asked general questions to start conversations and allowed SRBs to discuss their experiences, probing only when necessary. In focus groups, SRBs were able to speak directly with each other about challenges they identified with SEI policy mandates. Several SRBs seemed to speak more freely in focus groups than in individual interviews. I hypothesized having other SRBs around them in focus groups gave some of these students more confidence to speak to me about their experiences.

Finally, I observed 6 hours of classroom instruction with each teacher per week for the 2018–2019 academic year. For each observation, I used an observational protocol, which enabled me to record details about student–teacher interactions, conversations between students, and noteworthy incidents that occurred in the classes (see Appendix B for classroom observation protocol). I used a voice recorder to record the obersations and reflect on my experiences as a participant–observer (Bogdan & Biklen, 2006). My field notes (approximately 400 hand-written pages) focused solely on student and teacher participants and their classroom experiences during observations. While writing field

notes, I was careful not to record details about interactions involving students who were not participants in the study.

Data Analysis Methods

I repeatedly analyzed data at every stage of the study, and used insights to determine next steps for data collection and further analysis (Ravitch & Carl, 2021). I analyzed all field notes and transcripts with the help of the qualitative coding software NVivo 11.4, which I used as a tool for data organization and coding. In the following section, I describe my open-coding process. Outlines of my coding schemes are also provided in Appendices F (for student data) and E (for teacher data).

Open Coding

While reading through data transformations in NVivo, I labeled excerpts of data with descriptive codes, which I used to organize the data into buckets that facilitated further analysis. The descriptive codes were specifically related to my research questions concerning SRBs' experiences with SEI and descriptions of barriers to their education. As noted previously, all phases of data analysis occurred iteratively, as I continuously revised the coding structure as I understood more about participants' experiences. In this first phase of coding, I also engaged in data reduction to identify data I considered representative of the corpus and set aside data I deemed irrelevant (Smagorinsky, 2008).

After labeling data with descriptive codes, I downloaded data associated with each descriptive code through NVivo's query feature. I then read through these data, making notes in each document and using a color scheme to identify patterns in the data related to SRBs' experiences and barriers to their education. With some refinement, these notes became my pattern codes, which helped me organize the data into more meaningful

units based on themes. The second-level, pattern codes facilitated my analytical process of comparing and contrasting across data sources and participants and allowed me to draft meaning statements about major themes and interrelationships in the data (Saldaña, 2015; e.g., students describing feeling isolated or trapped in SEI classes). During the second round of open coding, I created new documents to group data by the pattern codes I had developed, which included meaning statements and examples of each pattern I had identified.

In the final phase of open coding, I drafted axial codes to label connections between my first two levels of coding (Saldaña, 2015). Axial codes for the study included how barriers described by SRBs shaped their experiences at Downtown High School. This phase of qualitative analysis allowed me to move beyond a descriptive form of analysis to a more interpretive process.

Researcher's Role as Participant–Observer

Like others using phenomenology to shed light on participants' own perspectives and experiences, I employed methods of participatory observation (Lems, 2020). During observations, I acted as a complete participant to establish rapport with SRBs and teachers in the study (Creswell, 2013). As a former ESL teacher with an Arizona teaching certification and ESL endorsement, I was qualified and eager to work with the teachers and students. However, I realize my presence in the classroom influenced both the classroom dynamic and experiences of students in their SEI classes. I am also aware my privilege as a White, heterosexual, cisgender, middle-class, male U.S. citizen, prevents me from fully understanding the complex experiences of SRBs in resettlement contexts.

In addition, I recognize my own biases as a former caseworker for resettled refugees influenced all aspects of this study, from research questions to data analysis.

Findings

Through data analysis, I identified three themes that cut across participating SRBs' descriptions of their experiences with SEI. These themes represent barriers they identified as limiting their academic and social progress at Downtown High School. Student-identified barriers included SRBs feeling isolated and being bullied at Downtown High School, SRBs not learning English from interactions with their general-education peers, and SRBs not graduating because of policy mandates.

SRBs Isolated and Bullied

Prior research has indicated ELs' isolation in the greater school context negatively impacts their socioemotional well-being (García et al., 2012) and reduces their sense of belonging at school (Nguyen & Stritikus, 2009). This may be especially true for SRBs at Downtown High School, who, compared to Spanish-speaking ELs, typically found fewer classmates from similar cultural and linguistic backgrounds in ESL classes. During my individual interviews with 30 SRBs, only four of them reported having "American"[1] friends at school. Of those four, only one said he met American friends at Downtown High School. The other three students described meeting American friends through extracurricular activities, work, or schools they had attended previously.

The vast majority of SRBs participating in this study reported having difficulty establishing friendships with American students, and several described feeling alone, embarrassed, and isolated at school. Atan, a student of Afghani-origin in Ms. May's

[1] Although many of the students at Downtown High School came from countries other than the United States, my interview participants typically referred to them as Americans. For consistency, this term is throughout the manuscript to reference students not in ESL classes at Downtown High School.

class, said, “It feels for me very bad because I come to new, I don’t speak English, I don’t know how to find friends, to talk to people.” During a focus group, several SRBs in Mr. Baker’s class spoke about the social gap they experienced between themselves and American students:

> **Me**: Most of you said that you don’t have a lot of American friends. Why?
> **Kabali**: Because of the way they live and stuff.
> **Badru**: Our struggles are different.
> **Duc**: In America, you can live in a house. You can grow up poor and rich, but to us, we live in a valley. We live in a poor country. We come to America for reason. That’s why we have that difference between us. We don’t understand each other. They don’t understand where we come from.
> **Sagar**: I think it’s because we have a lot of ESL classes, and we don’t get to know them in those classes. We don’t get them in one of our classes so it’s hard for us to make friends with them because we are not sharing classes with them.

As Sagar clearly articulated, many of the SRBs voiced frustration with the 4-hour model of SEI and identified it as the primary reason they had difficulty connecting with American students. They also described a cultural and experiential divide between themselves and their “English-proficient” peers; however, several expressed a desire to bridge the gap and have more communication with American students. When asked what he would like to tell American students about refugees, Avdar, an energetic, Kurdish-speaking student in Ms. Bivall’s class, said the following:

> I would tell them that refugees look like you, just different about them. They are just from other countries. But everything else look like you. You have eyes and they have eyes. You have a head, they have a head, but just different language and different behavior and different way of living in this country.

According to participants, many SRBs at Downtown High School also became targets for bullying by other students. This trend was corroborated by Ms. Bivall, who said, “When they [American students] come in, they tend to laugh at the refugee kids. They tend to ridicule. They don’t have any interaction at all. It’s kind of sad.” Many

SRBs spoke about negative feelings due to bullying in interviews and focus groups. During one interview, a Burmese SRB named Soe wept as she described the torment she experienced due to wearing a hijab and speaking English with an accent:

> I'm alone at school. So, they just do to me like that. And they warned me, "If you say the teacher, then I'm going to bully you next time and everything." And I was like, "Okay, I'm not going to tell the teacher, but please don't bully me again and everything." And they say, "Yes." But they just keep doing it again and again.

Various studies have documented isolation (Gándara & Orfield, 2012) and bullying (Mthethwa-Sommers & Kisiara, 2015) SRBs often experience in U.S. schools. Findings of this study contribute to the existing literature, as SRBs described those experiences in their own words. Furthermore, several SRBs described how the SEI-mandated 4 hours of English instruction negatively impacted their educational experiences by isolating them in ESL classrooms and preventing them from making social connections at Downtown High School.

SRBs Not Learning English From General-Education Kids

SRBs often described feeling isolated and inferior due to their segregation into separate classrooms for language instruction at Downtown High School, which they said affected their ability to learn English and make academic progress. SRBs in SEI classrooms are provided little opportunity to co-construct their linguistic and cultural knowledge with peers, both of which are strongly associated with development of self-esteem, confidence, social skills, identity, and linguistic and academic achievement (García et al., 2012). In all six focus groups with SRBs, participants articulated their desire to have more interaction with American students so that they could learn more

English. I present excerpts from focus groups in all three classes. The following is an excerpt from a focus group with Mr. Baker's students:

> **Me:** Would you like to have more classes with the American students?
> **Duc:** Yeah. When you wanna get confidence with English and want to get out there, you're stuck in ESL for like, life. When you go to college or university, there's people out there that you don't know. Their words are new to you. You can tell the way they are using their language.
> **Kabali:** When you mostly hang out with American and Spanish friends, your English will improve.
> **Me:** Do you think if you had more classes with American students your English would improve faster?
> **Sagar:** Yeah, of course. We get to speak with people who have the same experience we do, it's hard for us to improve.
> **Faven:** Those four [SEI] classes aren't helping. If you take one class, it's enough. But with more classes with American people, we can improve our English. We are all like ESL students.
> **Kabali:** They should not have ESL classes. If we have it, we would just stay with the people that do not really speak English. But when we communicate, it would be very hard. We won't improve. But if we had regular classes and do some homework or projects to communicate with each other, we would learn new words. I think it's better if we don't have ESL classes.

These SRBs described how English language classes mandated by SEI were preventing them from learning English. Several said they would improve faster by having more opportunities to collaborate with American students. Duc, a SRB originally from Vietnam, spoke about "being stuck in ESL for life" and not understanding the nuances of how American students use colloquial English.

In another focus group with SRBs from Ms. Bivall's class, the students repeated this desire to interact more with American students to learn the English language:

> **Me:** Would you like to have more classes with the American students?
> **Jammas:** Yes. I agree with this 100%
> **Me:** Why?
> **Neza:** Because you learn different things from them.
> **Me:** From the students?
> **Mugisha:** Yeah.
> **Neza:** And from the teacher, too.
> **Me:** Jammas, you were saying something. You said you agree 100%, but why?

Jammas: Because you are not from United States. They are from the United States. You learn from them what you need to like faster and more better.
Me: What do you think Mugisha? Would you like to have more classes with American students?
Mugisha: Yeah.
Me: Why?
Mugisha: Because. Because you can learn something from them.

In this excerpt, an Afghani SRB named Jammas said they could learn faster and better if they were able to have more interaction with students from the United States. Although there is extensive research suggesting language learners should not study a target language in isolation, separate from native speakers of that language (e.g., Krashen et al., 2012; Rios-Aguilar et al., 2012, descriptions like this coming directly from SRBs are not common in the extant literature.

Finally, SRBs in Ms. May's class also spoke about wanting to have more opportunities to learn with American students. An excerpt from a focus group with four students (one did not talk during this excerpt) that starts with me asking them to describe their classes is as follows:

Me: Can you tell me about your classes at Downtown High?
Ziba: Yeah. Four English classes is too long.
Me: Tell me about that. You said that four English classes is too much.
Ziba: Yes.
Me: Why?
Ziba: It's because listening, growing is so important.
Me: What do you mean by that?
Skylar: Teacher, when you don't speak the same language as people that speak it, you have to learn it. You can take like two classes and then three English and then Arabic and then Math and Science. Students don't change classes, the teacher changes class.
Me: Would you like to have more classes with the American students?
All: Yes.
Me: So, all of you said yes, why?
Skylar: Teacher, because if you have one class with American students, they can make you learn, they can just speak to you in English. You can learn more things that you don't know before.

> **Babar:** If you have school, the same students with the same language, you're not going to be learning. You're just going to be speaking the same language as you used to speak. We came here to learn English, not to talk in different languages.
> **Ziba:** Teacher, we can talk in different languages, but not in school.

In describing her experience in SEI classes at Downtown High School, Ziba, a Dari speaker from Afghanistan, shared having four English language classes was too much. When asked to clarify, she said listening and growing with native English-speaking students was important for her to learn English. Sklyar, originally from Sudan, and Babar, a quiet, introspective student from the Democratic Republic of the Congo, then elaborated on why they viewed their separation from American students as a barrier to their education. Skylar explained, to learn another language, you must interact with people who speak it. Babar claimed they are not at school to speak in other languages (besides English), but, in the 4-hour model of SEI, they are grouped with other students learning English and have few opportunities to interact with English-dominant students.

Sociocultural theorists have defined learning as a dynamic, social process embedded in sociocultural contexts and everyday practices, and distributed across persons, tools, and activities (Johnson, 2006; Rogoff, 2003; Vygotsky, 1978). From a sociocultural perspective, learning takes place when the learner can perform tasks with the help and guidance of a teacher or in collaboration with more capable peers (Ormrod, 2011). Through interaction, peers who have more experience with the English language could serve both as guides and collaborators for SRBs at Downtown High School. However, the SEI-mandated separation of SRBs from their American peers prevented them from having valuable interactions that could facilitate their English language development.

SRBs Not Graduating

The SRBs I worked with for this study also described the mandated 4-hour block of English instruction as problematic for their requirement to pass standardized writing and content-based exams required to graduate from high school. Although these students were in classes for 4 hours per day with English instruction, they were being excluded from core academic areas of math, science, and social studies, which put them at a disadvantage on standardized exams (Gándara & Orfield, 2012). Studies have attested to the educational disadvantages SEI policy mandates present for ELs' motivation and interest in school, consequently reducing their chances of graduating and going to college (e.g., Callahan, 2005). In addition, practices surrounding SEI negate well-established theory and empirically based findings showing language development is interdependent with cognitive growth (García, 2005) and well-being (Newcomer et al., 2021). During an interview, Mr. Baker spoke about his frustration with the model:

> One thing I don't think works with the SEI model is it requires the kids to be with an English teacher for four periods. So to put them into four classes and try to get all their graduation requirements by the end of 4 years I think is unfair. I think there should be some way of either shaving the classes down or adjusting it so they're not . . . so a refugee student doesn't have to go to summer school and have a 0 hour and a 9th hour their junior year and senior year of high school.

Mr. Baker argued SRBs unfairly have to attend summer school to graduate. His comments about 0 hour, which is an extra course before the regular school day, and 9th hour, which is an extra class after the regular school day, were especially pertinent. Most of the 30 SRBs interviewed in this study reported having to attend 0 hour, 9th hour, and summer school. Although none of these extra classes were required for "English-proficient" students in mainstream classes, ELs in SEI tracks spoke as if they were

required to take them to graduate. Ironically, when asked if they expected to graduate from Downtown High School, few SRBs said yes. During an interview, Ziba described feeling sad she would not be able to graduate as a senior, demonstrated in the following excerpt:

> **Me:** Ziba, tell me why you think it's [school is] boring.
> **Ziba:** Because this year I don't graduate.
> **Me:** How do you feel about that? Are you angry? Are you sad?
> **Ziba:** Yeah, I'm sad.
> **Me:** You're sad? Why can't you graduate this year?
> **Ziba:** I don't have enough credits.
> **Me:** Why don't you have enough credits?
> **Ziba:** I didn't come in summer school.
> **Me:** Do you have a 0 hour?
> **Ziba:** Yes.
> **Me:** A 9th hour?
> **Ziba:** Yes
> **Me:** Can you graduate next year?
> **Ziba:** Yes.
> **Me:** Are you going to continue next year?
> **Ziba:** I don't know. I'm not sure.
> **Me:** Are you going to drop out?
> **Ziba:** Maybe.
> **Me:** If you drop out, what will you do?
> **Ziba:** I will work outside. I work at McDonald's.

In this excerpt, Ziba clearly voiced her frustration of not being able to graduate as a senior. She talked about attending both 0 hour and 9th hour and still not having enough credits to graduate. She also spoke about the possibility of dropping out of high school. When asked what she would do if she dropped out, she mentioned working at McDonald's—this statement being from a student Ms. May repeatedly described as one of the brightest, most motivated students in her classes.

SRBs in Mr. Baker's class also described the 4-hour SEI block as a barrier to graduation when speaking to me in a focus group. In one of the most engaged, passionate conversations I had with students during my 2 years at Downtown High School, six

intermediate students described their experiences in the 4-hour SEI model, which they said prevented them from graduating and advancing academically:

> **Me:** What would you like to tell teachers about your classes?
> **Duc:** It's better if we have less ESL classes.
> **Faven:** Yeah, maybe two classes.
> **Kabali:** The regular classes, it's better for us to graduate.
> **Me:** Tell me more about that. I want to learn about this.
> **Badru:** We waste 4 hours a day, then we have to take 9th hour to graduate. It's not fair.
> **Duc:** We have 15 to 20 [course credits], they are not actual credits. We still have around 12. You have to take regular classes. You have to regular to get full credit, ESL it's like election doesn't count towards your credits. That's what we waste our time on.
> **Me:** Faven, what did you say?
> **Faven:** We need more class than electives.
> **Me:** So you think your ESL classes should count as credits?
> **Faid:** We are still doing work here; as long as we pass the class, we should get credit.
> **Kabali:** That's good, too. But we should have two [English language] classes.
> **Me:** You should have fewer ESL classes and they should count as credits?
> **Duc:** Yes. And we should get different work in there. Like you said, always the same paper every year, we should learn something new. We should learn more words instead of the same words. Same article. And I been through that thing for 4 years, and nothing. And you would not be able to learn nothing new because your mind is thinking, I've already learned this. You will not get active.
> **Me:** Sae, you were going to say something.
> **Sae:** I was going to tell you about my old school. We take all regular classes, and they act just like a regular student.
> **Me:** And you think that was better?
> **Sae:** Back there, I don't know any English. But now I feel left behind.

Every student in this focus group agreed taking fewer ESL courses would help them graduate from high school by making room for other required courses in their schedules. Several explicitly discussed this idea in terms of their desire to take "regular classes" to graduate and act like "regular" students. Badru, a student who often spoke about his love for American football, suggested they were wasting their time in ESL courses. He also commented on the fact SRBs have to take extra classes (9th hour) to graduate, suggesting the SEI model was not fair. Finally, Sae, a Karreni student from

Myanmar, compared his experience at another school (which I confirmed was in another state) to his experience at Downtown High School, where he described feeling left behind.

During one interview, Ms. Bivall spoke about this topic and agreed with many of the points students mentioned in the focus group. Talking about SRBs in the 4-hour SEI model, Ms. Bivall said the following:

> I think that if a student is taking English class that they should be getting credit as an English class, so that they have some chance of graduating from high school. If they are getting 4 years of English, no matter if it's preemergent English, but yet they were passing math, they are passing science, and they are passing whatever classes, great. Have I seen it? Absolutely. I have seen kids that are in preemergent English that are getting straight A's in all other gen-ed [general education] classes, but because of the 4-hour model, they're not able to get ahead in the required classes to graduate from high school.

Ms. Bivall spoke about witnessing students passing all of their content-area courses, but were not able to graduate because they were still classified as an EL under SEI. She argued her SRBs should get course credit for taking ESL courses to graduate from high school. Her opinion was supported by SRBs interviewed in this study, who often related their inability to graduate to English language instruction requirements under SEI.

This finding is supported by a report published by the U.S. Department of Education (2018), which stated Arizona had the lowest EL graduation rate (32%) in the country, compared to the nationwide 4-year high school graduation rate for ELs of 67%. In the 4-hour SEI course structure, ELs spent more than half of every school day in English language development classes. Because they did not earn course credit for these classes, many struggled to graduate from high school in 4 years. Although several SRBs

in this study reported taking extra courses before and after the regular school day, they identified the 4-hour block of English language development classes as an impediment to their opportunity to graduate. In the following sections, I discuss implications of these findings and provide a summary of how they could inform educational policy decisions moving forward.

Discussion

These findings have significant implications for SEI as an official language policy in Arizona. SRBs described their experiences in the 4-hour SEI model and identified barriers to their academic and social development. Specifically, they described feeling isolated and bullied, not learning the English language from their American peers, and not being able to graduate within the SEI course structure. These student-identified barriers were not reflective of the teachers and administrators who worked diligently to teach and care for their SRBs, but rather an educational policy that did not support their learning needs.

The teachers at Downtown High School reported encouraging SRBs to join clubs and extracurricular activities, but they also insisted the school was not doing enough to integrate SRBs or support their socioemotional well-being. Mr. Baker said:

> I've had at least a handful of issues every school year where I've had "I'm thinking about committing suicide." . . . Just that type of stuff. Yeah. Like how to help students emotionally. I think in general that's what the school system is missing.

According to these students, their isolation in separate English language classrooms for 4 hours every day limited their ability to learn English and other cultural knowledge from their American peers. Rios-Aguilar et al.'s (2012) study analyzing survey data from teachers in 29 school districts in Arizona found an alarming 85% of

teachers surveyed agreed ELs' separation from English-speaking peers would harm their learning and English development. A model featuring prolonged daily segregation and the grouping of students by language proficiency does not align with research in the field of second language acquisition or cognitive infrastructure theories associated with the development of second language learners (August et al., 2010).

Language is not learned in isolation of social interaction and content-learning experiences. In fact, there exists no body of scientifically based research that recommends isolation of ELs for 4 hours a day in English language classes, kept from participating in and benefiting from core content and cognitively rich instruction (August et al., 2010; Krashen et al., 2012). SRBs in this study identified their inability to interact with their English-dominant peers (to whom they consistently referred as "Americans") and practice using English with them as a major barrier to their English development and, ultimately, their graduation from high school.

Given the link between high school graduation and wages (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2020), the effect of SEI policy mandates on students' ability to graduate could impact their quality of life after high school. This impact could be even more significant for SRBs. Ninety days after refugees arrive in the United States, the federal government cuts off resettlement funds aimed at supporting their transition. This period is often challenging for refugee families as they look for work to support their families and repay costs associated with resettlement (McWilliams & Bonet, 2016). As reported by many participants in this study, SRBs must often find part-time jobs after school to help support their family financially. Without a high school diploma, many, like Ziba, who spoke

about working at McDonald's, could be forced to work low-paying, entry-level jobs after they stop attending high school.

Over the course of volunteering at Downtown High School for 1 academic year, observing for another year, and conducting interviews and focus groups with SRBs and their teachers, I came to know many of them quite well. I learned about their life experiences, goals, and interests. I played chess and Scrabble with them, brought them books to read, and went to see them compete in sporting events. Overall, participants voiced frustration with the 4-hour SEI model implemented at Downtown High School. Many expressed anger at being "trapped" and "isolated" in English language development classes that segregated them from other students and prevented them from graduating high school.

Conclusion

From a phenomenological perspective, I attempted to represent the lived experiences of these 32 SRBs at Downtown High School. Semi-structured interviews and focus groups enabled a nuanced understanding of how SRBs experienced education in the 4-hour SEI model. The findings also highlighted significant barriers to academic and social development explicitly identified by this relatively large, diverse group of SRBs.

The Arizona legislature recently passed SB 1014, representing a major change related to EL instruction throughout the state. Signed by Governor Doug Ducey in February 2019, SB 1014 modified the existing SEI policy to give districts more flexibility on the minimum time allotment for ELs per school day. The language policy also allows school districts to submit alternate language policies to the Arizona Department of Education for approval (Martínez, 2020). New SEI policy mandates, though preferable to

the 4-hour model, do not alleviate many of the barriers SRBs identified to their education. ELs are still segregated in English language development classes for a minimum of 2 hours per day without receiving course credit. In the new SEI model, SRBs will continue to face challenges in making connections with English-dominant students, learning English from those peers, and graduating.

Phenomenological studies such as this may provide a framework to districts and policymakers to design language policies informed by lived experiences of a subset of SRB ELs in Arizona. Understanding these students' perspectives and barriers they face in the 4-hour SEI model may also inform policy implementation decisions as schools and teachers have more flexibility in working with SRBs in ESL classes.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

In this concluding chapter, I discuss my final thoughts related to teaching and being students from refugee backgrounds (SRBs) and reflect on lessons learned in my dissertation journey. First, I offer a summary of findings from each article (Chapters 2–4) and discuss their implications for policymakers, schools, districts, and teachers. Finally, I conclude by discussing limitations of this dissertation study and suggestions for possible directions for future research on education for SRBs.

Discussion of Findings

Findings of Article 1 (Chapter 2), "Teaching Students from Refugee Backgrounds: The Link Between Teachers' Language Ideologies and Policy Appropriation," highlight the link between language ideologies and implementation (or appropriation) of structured English immersion (SEI), the authorized language policy in Arizona. Existing literature on educational policy implementation points to a link between language ideologies, teachers' perceptions of English learners (ELs), and their implementation of authorized language policies (e.g., Fitzsimmons-Doolan, 2018; Stritikus, 2003). Throughout interviews and observations, the three participating teachers in this study articulated stances on SRBs' home languages. Although their stances varied, teachers' statements generally aligned with pro-multilingualism, which places value on ELs' home languages, or pro-monolingualism, which idealizes White, middle-class language practices (Bernstein et al., 2021). These ideologies worked in conjunction with authorized policy mandates to mediate the teachers' implementation of SEI in their classrooms (Fitzsimmons-Doolan, 2018). The teachers also articulated pro-multilingual

or pro-monolingual stances to justify their implementation or appropriation of SEI. All participating teachers engaged in practices that either appropriated or disregarded mandates of the authorized SEI policy in the interest of supporting SRBs in their classes. Throughout their policy implementation process, these teachers created new, unauthorized policy they viewed as more conducive to their students' learning or socioemotional well-being (Levinson et al., 2009).

Teachers' appropriations most commonly occurred in three areas: home language use in the classroom, orientations to required testing, and deviations from the mandated curriculum. Two participating teachers ignored SEI policy mandates to offer SRBs instructional support in their home languages. The third teacher, who often expressed stances associated with monolingual language ideologies, did not offer SRBs instructional support in their home languages, but she did appropriate authorized policy in other ways to support her students. For example, all three teachers reported appropriated testing requirements they considered inappropriate for their SRBs. During interviews, they described providing students with exact test questions, altering grading procedures, and choosing not to administer required tests. In addition, the teachers all reported adapting the SEI curriculum to fit their SRBs' perceived needs.

In Article 2 (Chapter 3), "The Silent Passenger: Identity Construction and Figured Worlds of Students From Refugee Backgrounds," I describe how the same three participating teachers constructed SRBs' identities and how 32 SRBs constructed refugee-ness for themselves. Using Holland et al.'s (1998) concept of figured words, I attempted to bridge the gap between social constructionist and psychological views of identity to describe how SRBs enacted agency to position themselves in resettlement

contexts. Teachers described how they came to learn about their SRBs' identities through interacting with them in class. Teachers also expressed frustration with the lack of background information they received from the school about SRBs and suggested they could better support them if they knew more about their experiences prior to enrolling at Downtown High School. Students constructed their refugee-ness as an artifact of their life experiences that mediated—and was mediated by—their experiences at Downtown High School. In answering my interview and focus group questions about their refugee identities, SRBs often described their own lived experiences and oriented their responses around certain actions, such as moving or dressing a certain way. Through data analysis, I identified five themes that represent how they described their own refugee-ness, which included avoidance, trauma, migration, hope, and pride (see Table 3 in Appendix A).

Through the phenomenological framework taken in Article 3 (Chapter 4), "'Left Behind': Language Policy Barriers to Academic Achievement Identified by Students From Refugee Backgrounds," I interpret the 32 participating SRBs' descriptions of their experience with a language policy scholars often describe as restrictive (Gándara & Orfield, 2012). The three themes I identified through this phenomenological analysis represent policy-related barriers SRBs collectively identified as negatively affecting their education, including isolation in SEI classes, limited opportunities to interact with students not enrolled in SEI classes, and difficulties with graduating from high school. Isolation can negatively impact ELs' socioemotional well-being (García et al., 2012) and decrease their sense of belonging at school (Nguyen & Stritikus, 2009). The SRBs at Downtown High School reported difficulties in establishing friendships with students outside of their English language classes, which led to frustration and a divide between

themselves and their "English-proficient" peers, which often resulted in bullying. Authorized policy mandates also prevented participating SRBs from co-constructing their linguistic and cultural knowledge with peers, both of which are strongly associated with the development of self-esteem, confidence, social skills, identity, and linguistic and academic achievement (García et al., 2012). Finally, SRBs described how the course structure under SEI excluded them from the core academic areas of math, science, and social studies, which put them at a disadvantage on standardized exams and reduced the number of course credits they could apply for graduation.

Contribution to Language Policy Research

Traditionally, language policy research has taken a top-down approach, adopting positivist conceptualizations of language policy as formal actions or policy texts by government agencies intended to achieve a specific language change (e.g., Corson, 1991; Fishman, 1980; Kaplan & Baldauf, 1997). Early research on planning and implementation of language policies focused on top-down policies mandated by federal or state governments to fix what was perceived as a language "problem" (e.g., Fishman, 1980). Central to these early studies was the process of designing rational, objective language policies to socially engineer models of instruction (Canagarajah, 2005). These frameworks viewed teachers as what Shohamy (2006) referred to as "soldiers of the system" and language planners as rational decision makers who weigh options to find a solution to a language problem. Rational approaches have made significant contributions to existing literature, particularly in analyzing how language policies are designed. However, they have often ignored sociopolitical contexts in which policies are implemented (Johnson, 2009). Scholars contend positivist orientations in early language

policy research sought overly objective results and ignored sociopolitical and sociocultural contexts in which policies are implemented (e.g., Hornberger & Johnson, 2007; Johnson, 2009; Pennycook, 1989).

In recent years, the emphasis has shifted from official policies handed down to educators by the government to more localized orientation of policy that focuses on microsocial enactment of policies by educators in their classrooms (Canagarajah, 2005; de Jong, 2008; Johnson & Freeman, 2010). McCarty (2011) balanced these tensions by describing language policy as both "overt and covert, top-down and bottom-up, de jure and de facto" (p. 2). McCarty positioned official policy texts and actions within a larger sociocultural system to claim language policies are "processual, dynamic, and in motion . . . best understood as a verb" (p. 2).

McCarty's (2004) critical sociocultural framework not only considered official text as policy, but also the practices individuals engage in throughout the various levels of society. McCarty framed policies in this process in terms of their language-regulating power, that is the choice of which languages will be learned, by whom, and for what societal consequences (McCarty, 2011). Other scholars have joined McCarty to call for critical approaches to acknowledge everyday sociocultural practices that shape the implementation of policy and recognize schools as sites where policy implementation is actualized by those practices (e.g., Ricento, 2006; Silver & Steele, 2005). Aligned with McCarty's (2004) critical sociocultural framework, I hope to bring attention to the experiences of SRBs in Arizona's SEI and highlight their teachers as powerful change agents who appropriated authorized policy to support the perceived needs of their students.

Although existing research has highlighted the effects of SEI on students, particularly Spanish-speaking student populations (e.g., Lillie et al., 2012), little has been written about how this restrictive language policy has negatively affected the educational experiences of SRBs. Findings of this dissertation study contribute to the existing literature by describing how an extremely diverse group of SRBs experiences education in U.S. resettlement contexts, framed by a restrictive language policy that perpetuates monolingual language ideologies. Whereas most educational research in this field focuses on students from similar cultural backgrounds or fails to differentiate SRBs' experiences from those of other migrant student groups, the three articles in this study illustrate the experiences of SRBs from nine different home countries and the teachers who serve them.

The following sections describe implications of my findings for policymakers, districts, schools, and teachers.

Implications for Policymakers, Districts, and Schools

Findings from this dissertation study have implications for policymakers as they consider how educational policies they design will be implemented, or potentially appropriated, by teachers. As Ricento and Hornberger's (1996) onion metaphor of policy implementation described how agents and differing levels work throughout the design and implementation of policies, findings from this dissertation study can shed light on the complex, multilayered processes of language policy implementation to support SRBs. Although they operate within educational systems influenced by macro-level ideologies about language and immigration, teachers, who are at the heart of the policy implementation process, enact agency to shape unauthorized policy that meets the needs

of their SRBs. In response to what many have described as one of the most restrictive language policies in the United States, participating teachers appropriated policy mandates to support and advocate for their students. Even one teacher, who typically performed monolingual language ideologies, appropriated or ignored authorized SEI mandates she described as inappropriate for her SRBs.

In 2019, after nearly 20 years of education framed by a restrictive SEI policy, ELs in Arizona were provided access to dual-language programs and other forms of English language development (Kaveh et al., 2021). Legislation was approved that reduced the daily SEI requirement from 4 hours to 2 and provided school districts increased flexibility with which instructional model they adopt for their ELs (Martínez, 2020). Findings related to teachers' appropriation of authorized policy (Chapter 2) and student-identified barriers (Chapter 4) could inform districts' decision-making process related to language policies. Although the majority of ELs in Arizona are Spanish-speaking students from Central America, SRBs comprise a distinct and growing subset of the EL student population. Their description of policy mandates that impede their academic and social growth could inform policymakers on challenges all ELs might face with the authorized language policy. Barriers identified by SRBs included their social isolation in SEI classes, limited opportunities to interact with English-speaking peers, and low graduation rates. As the Arizona Department of Education works with school districts to design alternative models of SEI, these findings could inform decisions of policymakers in the policy-design process. Findings related to teachers' appropriation of SEI may also shed light on how teachers perceive the needs of SRBs, which can inform how policymakers design new language policy at district or state levels.

Implications for Teachers

Teachers are often reluctant to engage SRBs in conversations about their past due to fear of reminding them of traumatic life experiences (Dávila, 2015). Being a refugee necessarily implies a transitionary lifestyle and possible exposure to violence, death, and persecution (Lerner, 2012). Existing literature has documented how these experiences might lead to cognitive, social, psychological, or behavioral issues (Amthor & Roxas, 2016; Moinolnolki & Han, 2017; Sinclair, 2001). Studies have also suggested SRBs may be distrustful of authority figures, including teachers, and disinclined to discuss their experiences in countries of origin or asylum (McBrien, 2005).

Throughout my time volunteering and observing at Downtown High School, teachers described feeling conflicted about engaging SRBs in conversations about their past. Whereas scholars have long supported the strategy of building on students' prior knowledge to advance learning (Vygotsky, 1978), use culturally and linguistically relevant pedagogy (Ladson-Billings, 1992; Paris & Alim, 2017), and promote language learning (Nieto, 2002), teachers at Downtown High School were hesitant to do so with SRBs in their classes. Rather than use students' prior knowledge on culture, family, and geography as educational resources, teachers avoided discussing topics such as these in their lessons. During one interview, Ms. Bivall said teachers were warned to be sensitive about bringing up SRBs' past experiences in training sessions with the local resettlement agency. As teachers adapted their instructional practices to support the perceived refugee-ness of their students, not only did they miss out on SRBs' educational resources, but they may have also perpetuated deficit perspectives about their refugee-ness. Certainly, each situation is different, and teachers should carefully consider how they engage each

individual student, but findings of this dissertation study suggest teachers can use a strengths-based understanding of SRBs' identity construction to build knowledge with this student population.

The five themes I identified in SRBs' interview responses represent a range of ways SRBs' related to and identified with their own refugee-ness in the figured world of resettlement. Although many participants avoided discussing the topic, others seemed relieved to address their identities as refugees. In fact, several explicitly stated they were proud of being a refugee or hopeful for a "better life" in the United States. In relation to these findings, teachers might better understand how SRBs identify in resettlement contexts. In certain circumstances, they may also reconsider broaching personal topics with their SRBs or speaking directly to them about what they feel comfortable discussing during lessons. In these contexts, teachers can use students' refugee-ness in scaffolding their learning and take advantage of strengths and resilience they bring to the classroom.

Other findings from this study may help teachers working with SRBs examine their own language ideologies and instructional practices (Chapter 2). Descriptions of these three model teachers appropriating authorized SEI policy might also provide inspiration or comfort to other teachers, especially those in the beginning of their careers, who may feel pressured to adhere to policy mandates to keep their jobs.

Limitations

One significant limitation described in each of article (Chapters 2–4) is my own positioning as a White, heterosexual, cisgender, middle-class, male U.S. citizen. My extensive work in refugee resettlement and familiarity with the school and many students provided some level of understanding of the social context. However, I recognize my

privilege and understand I will never fully understand the complex experiences of SRBs in U.S. classrooms. As a volunteer and external researcher, I will also not fully understand the experience of the three amazing teachers who worked with these students every day. In addition, I did not speak any of the home languages spoken by my student participants (except for conversational Vietnamese), which limited my interactions with them in classroom observations, interviews, and focus groups.

Another limitation is the number of schools and participants included in the study. In the 4 years that preceded this study, nearly 16,000 refugees were resettled in Arizona (Arizona Refugee Resettlement Program, 2021). Given more than half of these individuals were thought to be under the age of 18 (UNHCR, n.d.), one could assume approximately 8,000 SRBs entered Arizona schools between 2014 and 2018. This dissertation study included only 32 student participants from one school out of many that serve SRBs. To gain a deeper understanding of teachers' and SRBs' experiences in Arizona schools, additional research is needed that examines experiences of more participants at additional schools. Future research could also address more specific questions about SRBs' gender dynamics, racial and ethnic identities, linguistic backgrounds, or previous experience with trauma.

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APPENDIX A

TABLES

Table 1

Teacher Characteristics

Name	Teaching experience	Experience at Downtown High	Teaching endorsements	Teaching assignment	Language learning experiences
Ms. Bivall	10 years	2 years	SEI endorsement, ESL endorsement, bilingual endorsement	Pre-emergent	English, Spanish, Hebrew
Ms. May	14 years	2 years	SEI endorsement, ESL endorsement	Pre-emergent	English, French, Italian, Spanish
Mr. Baker	4 years	1st year	SEI endorsement	Intermediate	English

Table 2

SRB Participants' Demographic Information

Name	Age	Gender	Grade	Country of origin	Country of asylum	Home language	Other languages	Teacher
Hamid	16	M	9	Eritrea	Ethiopia	Tigrinya	Amharic, English	Bivall
Ngabo	16	M	10	Congo	Uganda	Kinyarwanda	Swahili, English	Bivall
Bisrat	18	F	11	Eritrea	Ethiopia	Tigrinya	Amharic, English	Bivall
Avdar	16	M	10	Syria	Iraq	Kurdish	Arabic, English	Bivall
Mugisha	16	M	11	Congo	Uganda	Kinyarwanda	Swahili, English	Bivall
Neza	15	F	10	Congo	Rwanda	Kinyarwanda	English	Bivall
Jammas	18	M	10	Afghanistan	Pakistan	Dari	Pashto, Farsi, Urdu, English	Bivall
Mukasa*	21	M	11	Somalia		Somali Bantu		Bivall
Malik	19	M	10	Syria	Jordan	Arabic	English	Bivall
John	18	M	11	Congo	Tanzania	Kibembe	Swahili, French, English	May
Ziba	18	F	12	Afghanistan	Unknown	Dari	English	May
Skylar	16	F	10	Sudan	Egypt	Arabic	English	May
Serina*	15	F	10	Afghanistan		Pashto	Dari, Arabic, English	May
Babar	18	M	11	Congo	Tanzania	Kibembe	Swahili, French, English	May
Tabari	15	M	9	Congo	Uganda	Kinyarwanda	Swahili, English	May
Kamanzi	18	M	10	Congo	Uganda	Kinyarwanda	Swahili, Kikongo, English	May
Atan	17	M	11	Iran	Turkey	Turkish	Dari, English	May
Abbad	16	M	10	Syria	Lebanon, Jordan	Arabic	English	May

Name	Age	Gender	Grade	Country of origin	Country of asylum	Home language	Other languages	Teacher
Bakari	17	M	11	Congo	Uganda	Kinyarwanda	Swahili, English	May
Jabori	17	M	11	Congo	Tanzania	Kibembe	Swahili, English	Baker
Farid	20	M	11	Syria	Egypt	Arabic	English	Baker
Soe	17	F	11	Myanmar	Malaysia	Burmese	Malay, English	Baker
Shema	15	M	10	Congo	Rwanda	Kinyarwanda	English	Baker
Faid	18	M	12	Eritrea	Ethiopia	Kunama	Tigrinya, English	Baker
Sae	19	M	12	Myanmar	Thailand	Karenni	Burmese, English	Baker
Kesi	18	F	12	Congo	Tanzania	Kibembe	Swahili, French, English	Baker
Badru	17	M	11	Congo	Tanzania	Kibembe	Swahili, French, English	Baker
Sagar	20	M	11	Congo	Tanzania	Swahili	Kibembe, Kinyarwanda, English	Baker
Abdul	19	M	11	Syria	Jordan	Arabic	English	Baker
Duc	19	M	12	Vietnam	Unknown	Vietnamese	English	Baker
Faven	18	F	12	Eritrea	Ethiopia	Tigrinya	Amharic, English	Baker
Kabali	16	M	11	Myanmar	Thailand	Thai	Burmese, English	Baker

Table 3

Themes Identified in SRBs' Descriptions of Refugee Identity

Theme	Frequency of theme	Description of theme
Avoidance	23	Stating they did not know the meaning, refusing to talk about it, or stating their desire to stop being labeled a refugee
Trauma	11	Describing war, violence, or poverty
Migration	10	Mentioning the physical act of moving as the defining characteristic of a refugee
Hope	3	Claiming hope for the future or starting a new life
Pride	3	Sharing sense of pride in their refugee-ness

Table 4

Constructions of Identity Related to Avoidance

Student name (country of origin)	Interview excerpts
Kamanzi (Congo)	Me: What does it mean to be a refugee? Kamanzi: *I don't want to talk about my past*. Me: You want to forget being a refugee? Kamanzi: Yes.
Faven (Eritrea)	Me: When I say the word refugee, what does that mean to you? Faven: Refugee? I don't know, *I don't like it*. Me: Why? Faven: Cause there's no like, whatever you want to do or the school, they give you free food, it's okay and they give you like, maybe 200–300 dollars and *I just don't like it.*
Babar (Congo)	Me: What does it mean to be a refugee? What does it mean to you? Babar: *Maybe to be respectful, I'm not sure*. Me: There's no right answer. I just want to know about you. Whatever you think is ok. Babar: I don't have an answer.
Kesi (Congo)	Me: For you, what does it mean to be a refugee? Kesi: I mean, I know myself. I mean, I know how I am, like, I can be a refugee, but *I'm gonna leave that refugee someday*, if it's time for like for American people to be American. I don't know how to explain this. It's like I can be a refugee but also, I can be like American. It's not like being a refugee doesn't mean like you have to be like refugee, you have to dress like Africans. Sometimes you have to dress like Americans, not like it dress Africans, be more like the pants, like that. In Africa, we didn't use to wear the pants like that. I mean, you can be a refugee but . . . the way you . . . I don't know how to explain this. *I know you can be a refugee, but the way you're acting and everything, it's not gonna show like you're a refugee*. A lot of people doesn't. They don't know if like you're from refugee. *They all know like I'm African but I'm not refugee*.
Kabali (Myanmar)	Me: How does it feel to be a refugee here? Kabali: There is people that came from a refugee camp, and came here and became rich. And other people think, *they didn't come from a refugee camp, look what they are wearing*. That's what they thought of me. Sometime *I wear nice stuff and they think I'm fly*.

Table 5

Constructions of Identity Related to Trauma

Student name (country of origin)	Interview excerpts
Avdar (Syria)	Me: What does that word mean? What is a refugee? Avdar: So, a refugee is a person who comes from another country and usually there's *something bad in that country*. Some problem like some *fighting or something like that.*
Sagar (Congo)	Me: What does it mean to be a refugee? Sagar: Refugee means a person. . . . Maybe they have a little problem, maybe they come here because *they need some money, they need to work*. But us, from another country, *we have many problems*. My country and another country, maybe *they fight, many people they die*. But I can't stay and live there. I'm *scared* and sometimes I'm *nervous*. I need to go to another country, maybe I think this is safe to me. I remember my mom told me this story about when they lived in my country. *Many of their family dead*. They have an opportunity to move in my country and go to another country where I was living. That was not bad enough, because every time, every day, *they fight in that country*. So, they got an opportunity and they say we need to move here and they go to another place.
Farid (Syria)	Me: Are you a refugee? Farid: Yes. Me: What is a refugee? Farid: Refuge it's people that's *come from the war so they don't want to die* so they come to the safety place.
Neza (Congo)	Me: What is a refugee? Neza: This is why they went to Rwanda because *in the Congo they was killing them, shooting the*m, and they went to Rwanda. This is why I go to live in Rwanda because my momma was in Congo. The refugees from Rwanda they bring us in Rwanda because *they was shooting them*.
Jabori (Congo)	Me: What does it mean to be a refugee? Jabori: When you're a refugee, you are a person who came from a place where there was *no peace, or like human suffering, no food, no water, or something like that*. So, the teacher kind of knows it's a person who is struggling. . . . The teacher can say something, and it can like, relate to, I mean to something about you.

Student name (country of origin)	Interview excerpts
Duc (Vietnam)	Me: Where are you from? Duc: Well, it's a long story where I come from. I'm a refugee, so I come from South Vietnam. It's known as a little area of *poor family*, and not that many people really looking to a government, going through it, or what's the problem in this area. So, you will see many children will be *bare-footed or don't have a home to go to*. I see all that, I have experienced through it, I have lived through it. I choose to come to America for that. The way I experience, the way I've lived without . . . . …*it's like a day without food* or not, it's like, depend on yourself. It's either you get up to go work or you just stay at home and then do nothing about it. So, I came to America afterwards.

Table 6

Constructions of Identity Related to Migration

Student name (country of origin)	Interview excerpts
Ziba (Afghanistan)	Me: We talked about your experiences as a refugee. What does that mean to you? What is a refugee? Ziba: So it's like, it's a person that *comes from a different country*, in this case to the Unites States, right?
Skylar (Sudan)	Me: What does it mean to be a refugee? Skylar: Okay, so a refugee is a student who *comes from a different country*, speaks another language, and *comes to the United States* and comes to school here
Malik (Syria)	Me: Are you a refugee? Malik: Yes. Me: What does that mean? What is a refugee? Malik: Refugee like I *leave my country*. I *leave my all home*, all my family, I leave my friends, I leave a lot of things from me.
John (Congo)	Me: What does that word mean? What is a refugee? John: Refugee mean people *from another country come to another country*. That's like refugee. Like, I *from Tanzania come to America*. I'm a refugee.
Mugisha (Congo)	Me: Are you a refugee? Mugisha: Yes. Me: What does that word mean? What is a refugee? Mugisha: Refugees are someone *from other country then they come in America*, and they are refugee.
Ngabo (Congo)	Me: What does it mean to be a refugee? Ngabo: Refugee is a person that *moves to another country to another*.
Bakari (Congo)	Me: What is a refugee? What does that mean? Bakari: Someone who *went to a country that is not his or hers*.

Table 7

Constructions of Identity Related to Hope

Student name (country of origin)	Interview excerpts
Badru (Congo)	Me: What does being a refugee mean to you? Badru: It means a kid from the different country coming to new country for a *better life*. I would say it's hard, but also it's a good thing because when talking about school-wise, the schools, buildings, businesses, the work that they have here is better than where I came from. All we got to do as refugees is *trying to get our education and get better jobs* that will pay us very good money for us to be able to *build companies back in our home country*.
Faid (Eritrea)	Me: We talked about being a refugee. What does that mean? Faid: A person who traveled, who went to another place to be safety or get a *better life*. If you're the refugee, that means where you came from was not real good. That means you moved from there and go to another place.
Jammas (Afghanistan)	Me: What is a refugee? What does that mean to you? Jammas: Refugee mean like *new, starting life new*.

Table 8

Constructions of Identity Related to Pride

Student name (country of origin)	Interview excerpts
Shema (Congo)	Me: How does it feel to be a refugee at Downtown High? Shema: No one bothers me because I'm a refugee. I feel good. Me: You feel good? Shema: I feel *proud of me* and *I'm proud of America*. Me: Why are you proud of yourself? What makes you proud? Shema: *I'm also proud of my family because they want to help me to get here* because they're the one who's answering the question, why you came here? Because when I think about myself, I know that I'm a refugee but I came here to study and get my education. After my education, do work and be who I am. *I want to be who I am, not other people who they think I am. To know myself, and to know my dreams, and everything.*
Duc (Vietnam)	Me: When I say the word *refugee*, what does that make you think about? What does it mean to you? Duc: Honestly, it depends. It depends. Because, *refugee*, you could say it in a bad word, in a bad way. Because refugees like us, we come from other states. And if a person who is an enemy, they say, "Oh, yeah refugees, you shouldn't be in America," I really wanna dig in my mind saying, "Why am I a refugee? Why was I born to be a refugee?" They making me feel like I'm down. But to those people who fight for refugees, understand refugees, and really dare to stand up to have ideas of helping refugees, I'm all in. We don't make a choice to become a refugee it's what we had to go through it's what goes there, you know? Not everybody picked their life, as I'm trying to say. And if you're a refugee, then that's your life and that's the last story you had to go to. And if people disrespect it, then there's nothing to talk about. *It's just us, and if were a proud refugee, if we're proud of who we are, that's all that matters*. That's why I don't really take refugee as the most disrespectful. . . . People disagree. *I'm proud. If they don't proud and they rude I'm gonna let them go. I'm a refugee. I'm happy. You know?*
Focus group: Faven (Eritrea) Sae (Myanmar)	Me: How do you feel to be a student from a refugee background? Faven: Embarrassing. Me: Embarrassing? Sae: No, I feel great. We are all different. Me: That's right. Everyone can have different answers. That's good. Sae: *It feels good. I feel proud. . . . It's better to see more than one color.* More than one country around you. And you hang around more folks that American, you don't know where he is from, what type of clothes they have in that country. *We all have different lifestyles and different cultures.*

APPENDIX B

CLASSROOM OBSERVATION PROTOCOL

Each classroom observation will pay specific attention towards classroom activities, teacher- student interactions, verbal and nonverbal teacher and student behaviors, and classroom arrangement. Each observation will describe the situation that surrounds teachers and student behaviors, the initiator of social interactions, the outcome, and reactions from others that surrounds the interaction (Goldenberg, 1992).

Date: _____

Teacher: _____

Number of students in class: _____

Activities:
1. What is the topic of the lesson?
2. How are the activities organized? (individual vs. group, free play vs. structured)
3. How long did each activity take?
4. What are the students' seeming levels of interest and participation in each activity?

Teacher-student interactions:
5. What is the teacher's manner of instruction (e.g., authoritative, friendly, etc.)?
6. What instructional methods does the teacher use (e.g., lecture, whiteboard, videos)?
7. Does the teacher ask questions as she goes along to check for comprehension?
8. Does the teacher call on students? Does the teacher address students by name?
9. How does the teacher redirect or correct students?
10. Does the teacher speak in any language besides English?
11. What does the teacher do when students speak in other languages?
12. Does the teacher ask students any personal questions (about life outside of school)?
13. How does the teacher support students who seem to be struggling socially and academically?
14. Describe the most interesting student-teacher interactions in the lesson (in terms of SEI implementation).
    - Did the teacher adapt the official policy to meet student needs?
    - Does the teacher make connections to other classes (e.g., English, math)?
    - Does the teacher volunteer to meet with students outside of regular class times?
15. Did anything else occur that provided insight into the teacher's implementation of SEI?

APPENDIX C

TEACHER INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Respondent: _____ **Date:** _____

Introduction

Thanks again for taking the time to speak with me and sharing your experiences working with students from refugee backgrounds. I'm particularly interested to know more about how you view the needs of your students in English language development classes and how you work with these students.

Before we start, I would like to cover some logistical items. This interview is scheduled for approximately one hour. During the interview, you can decline answering any questions that you would rather not answer. With your permission, I would like to audio record our conversation for the purpose of generating data for this research. Your identity will not be disclosed and the audio will be kept in a secure location with no identifying information included until the completion of the study. Your responses are completely confidential, and I will use a pseudonym in the report (and on all forms of data) to guarantee your confidentiality. If at any point you would like the recorder turned off, just let me know.

Do you have any questions or concerns before we begin?

Background:

1. Where did you grow up and go to school?
2. What led you to become a teacher?
3. How long have you been teaching overall, and how long have you been teaching at (NAME OF SCHOOL)?
4. What kinds of classes do you teach (subjects)?
5. What kinds of specialized training have you had—for instance in areas such as ELL, disabilities, classroom management, etc.?
6. What makes teaching enjoyable? Challenging?
7. What type of environment do you try to create in your classroom?

Experiences with Students:

8. What are the students like in this school?
9. Can you tell me about your experiences with refugee students at (NAME OF SCHOOL)?
10. How would you compare your refugee students and your other ELLs?
11. How do you support your students based on what you perceive as their needs?
12. Do you ever interact with your students outside of your classroom?
13. Can you describe one of your best successes with a refugee student?
14. Can you tell me about one of your challenges with a refugee student?

Experiences with SEI:

15. How long have you been an SEI teacher?
16. How does SEI help your refugee students learn English?
17. What are some of the biggest challenges you face because of SEI?
18. Do you ever deviate from the official policy? Can you provide examples?
19. How does the SEI (4-hour model) policy shape your classroom instruction?
20. How are you feeling with your students' achievement in language development and academics?

New Section (questions added to protocol after observations)

21. Do you feel any political pressure in your implementation of this language policy?
22. How has that pressure affected your teaching practices?
23. What kind of teacher are you? How did you become that type of teacher? Have you always been this way?
24. Describe the tension between meeting state/district mandates and supporting students in your classroom? How do you handle this?
25. Tell me about your decision to allow/not allow students to use other language in the classroom?
26. How are the needs of your refugee students different from the needs of your other students? How does that affect your instruction?
27. Could you tell me about your decision not to assign homework to students?

Closing:

21. Do you have anything else you'd like to share with me?
22. Do you have any questions for me?

Thank you for your participation!

APPENDIX D

STUDENT INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Respondent: _____ Date: _____

Introduction

Thank you for participating in this research project. The purpose of this interview is to learn from your experiences as a student at Downtown High. The interview will take about 30 minutes. During the interview, you may decide not to answer any questions that you would rather not answer. I will be audio recording our conversation for the purpose of collecting data for my research. No one else will hear the recordings— not your teacher, principal, or parents. This interview is just for my research purposes and to better understand your experiences. Your responses are completely confidential, and I will use a fake name in the research report and on all data so no one but me will know who you are. The audio recording will be destroyed once the research study has been completed. Do you have any questions before we start?

Background:

1. What grade are you in and how old are you?
2. Where were you born?/Where did you spend most of your childhood?
    a. When did you first come to the United States?
    b. Why did you leave your country of origin (home country)?
3. What is your first language? Is that what you speak at home with your family?
4. What other languages can you speak/understand?

Previous Educational Experiences:

5. Did you attend school in your country of origin (home country)?
6. Which schools have you attended since you arrived to the U.S?
    a. How long did you attend each school?
7. When did you start learning English?

Social Experiences at School:

8. Who do you spend time with at Downtown High?
9. What language do you usually speak with your friends?
10. Do you have any friends that are not in the English (or teacher's name) class?

Experiences in SEI Classroom:

I will NOT share your responses with your teacher, I am just interested in understanding your experiences

11. Can you tell me about (TEACHER'S NAME) class? What types of activities do you do in class? What type of homework do you have?
12. Is your classwork or homework challenging? How do you deal with those challenges?
13. How does (TEACHER'S NAME) help you learn English?
14. Do you ever have opportunities to read or write in (STUDENT'S FIRST

LANGUAGE)? If so, can you tell me about that?
15. How does (TEACHER'S NAME) help you outside of school (e.g., connecting with community, problems at home)?

Experiences in Other Classes:
16 Can you tell me about your other classes at Downtown High?
17. How would you describe yourself as a student?
18. How do you feel in your other classes (non-SEI classes)?
19. Are there any other people at this school who have helped you? How?

SRB Experiences:
20. What do you think a person needs to be successful in the United States?
21. What do you think about the term "refugee"? What does it mean to you?
22. How have your past experiences as a refugee impacted your experiences as a student at (NAME OF SCHOOL)?

Closing:
23. What do you picture yourself doing in 10 years?
24. Is there anything else you would like to tell me?
25. Do you have any questions for me?

Thank you for your participation!

APPENDIX E

CODING SCHEME FOR TEACHER INTERVIEWS

I. Attitudes and beliefs
    A. About immigration or refugee status
    B. About languages or culture
II. Background
    A. Experiences with languages and cultures
    B. Reason for teaching
    C. Teaching background
III. Comments about self
    A. Aspirations or goals
    B. Description as a teacher
        i. Evolution as a teacher
    C. Responsibilities
    D. Self-critique
IV. Comments about students
    A. Awareness of refugee status
    B. Comparison of SRBs to other students
    C. Description of SRBs
    D. Experiences with SRBs in class (academics, behavior)
    E. Experiences with SRBs outside of class
V. Comments about educational system
    A. Pressure from state or district
    B. Special needs support
    C. Support from district/admin/counselors
    D. Training to work with SRBs
VI. SEI
    A. 4-hour model
    B. Appropriation
    C. AZELLA
    D. Implementation
VII. Social dynamics for SRBs at Downtown High
    A. Bullying
    B. Friends
    C. Isolation
VIII. SRB challenges in SEI
    A. Not graduating
    B. Not learning academic content
    C. Not learning English from peers
IX. Teaching methods

APPENDIX F

CODING SCHEME FOR STUDENT INTERVIEWS AND FOCUS GROUPS

I. Advice for SRB newcomers
    A. Academic
    B. Family
    C. Financial
II. Country of asylum
    A. Discrimination or persecution
    B. Family challenges
    C. Good memories
    D. Previous schooling
    E. Resettlement process
        i. Application
        ii. Loss of friends/family
        iii. Reasons for resettlement
III. Country of origin
    A. Escape to country of asylum
    B. Family challenges
        i. Food
        ii. Money/work
    C. Good memories
    D. Previous schooling
    E. Trauma
        i. Death
        ii. Violence
        iii. Persecution
IV. Country of resettlement
    A. Entering school in US
    B. Previous schooling (not at Downtown High)
V. Policy issues
    A. Not graduating
    B. Not learning English from gen-ed students
    C. Too much time in ESL classes
VI. Refugee identity
    A. Avoidance
    B. Trauma
    C. Migration
    D. Hope
    E. Pride
VII. Social dynamics at Downtown High
    A. Bullying
    B. Friends
    C. Isolation

VIII. Student Comments about Teachers
    A. Negative comments
        i. Teaching methods
        ii. Discipline
        iii. Personality
    B. Positive comments
        i. Teaching methods
        ii. Discipline
        iii. Personality

APPENDIX G

IRB APPROVAL

EXEMPTION GRANTED

Katherine Anderson
Division of Educational Leadership and Innovation - Tempe
480/965-6738
kate.t.anderson@asu.edu

Dear Katherine Anderson:

On 8/16/2018 the ASU IRB reviewed the following protocol:

Type of Review:	Initial Study
Title:	Supporting Students from Refugee Backgrounds in SEI Classrooms
Investigator:	Katherine Anderson
IRB ID:	STUDY00008604
Funding:	None
Grant Title:	None
Grant ID:	None
Documents Reviewed:	• ELL Instructional Leader Letter of Support.pdf, Category: Other (to reflect anything not captured above); • Teacher Consent Form.pdf, Category: Consent Form; • IRC Letter of Support.pdf, Category: Other (to reflect anything not captured above); • Student Interview Protocol.pdf, Category: Measures (Survey questions/Interview questions /interview guides/focus group questions); • Teacher 1 Letter of Support.pdf, Category: Other (to reflect anything not captured above); • Minor Assent Form.pdf, Category: Consent Form;

	• Principal Letter of Support.pdf, Category: Other (to reflect anything not captured above); • Student (Over 18) Consent Form.pdf, Category: Consent Form; • Classroom Observation Protocol.pdf, Category: Measures (Survey questions/Interview questions /interview guides/focus group questions); • Teacher Interview Protocol.pdf, Category: Measures (Survey questions/Interview questions /interview guides/focus group questions); • Parent Permission Form.pdf, Category: Consent Form; • Teacher 2 Letter of Support.pdf, Category: Other (to reflect anything not captured above); • HRP-503a-Anderson_PROTOCOL_DOWNTOWN_HIGH.doc, Category: IRB Protocol;

The IRB determined that the protocol is considered exempt pursuant to Federal Regulations 45CFR46 (1) Educational settings on 8/13/2018.

In conducting this protocol you are required to follow the requirements listed in the INVESTIGATOR MANUAL (HRP-103).

Sincerely,

IRB Administrator

cc: Eric Ambroso
Eric Ambroso