Theses and Dissertations

2017

A Critical Analysis of the Effects of Language Policy, Curriculum, and Assessment on Arabic L1 Student Performance in an Esl 1 Classroom

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A CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF THE EFFECTS OF LANGUAGE POLICY, CURRICULUM, AND ASSESSMENT ON ARABIC L1 STUDENT PERFORMANCE IN AN ESL 1 CLASSROOM

by

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Bachelor of Arts
Drew University, 2013

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements

For the Degree of Master of Arts in

Anthropology

College of Arts and Sciences

University of South Carolina

2017

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DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my Mom and Dad. No accomplishment in my life has been absent of your presence and I am blessed one million times over for it. You are my everything.

This thesis is also dedicated to the students represented in the following chapters. I hope my work will be a small contribution to making your world a more safe, productive, and progressive place to live.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

First and foremost, thank you to my family. Mom and Dad, this thesis is for you. To my Aunt Avie and Grandma, you have helped me more than I will ever have time to thank you for. A big thank you as well to my Aunt Denise and Uncle Joe, who allowed me to stay with them during my fieldwork. I am so lucky to have all of you in my life.

To my cohort and fellow anthropology students, especially my academic big sister and mentor Tiffany Jones and my work wife Mattie Atwell, I am blessed to have shared my laughter, tears, and copious amounts of wine with you. I do not believe this life is possible without the kind of solidarity and support we found in one another and I thank you for each moment.

Thank you to Dr. Sherina Feliciano-Santos and Dr. Jennifer Reynolds without whom this thesis, and all my work at the University of South Carolina would not be possible. In addition, thank you to my other committee members, Dr. Drucilla Barker and Dr. Caroline Nagel – your support and patience has been integral to this process.

A special thank you to the school district, faculty, and the administrators who allowed me to conduct this research.

And my absolute final acknowledgment goes to the tiny light of my life, Luna. Your breath is as bad as my love for you is strong. You will never read this, because you are a dog, but Mommy loves you with the fire of one thousand suns.

ABSTRACT

This thesis offers a preliminary analysis into looking at the ways in which Arabic-speaking ESL students are inadvertently marginalized by state standardization, curriculum, and dominant forms of classroom interactions in a NJ recovery program. Specifically, this analysis addresses the absence of orthographic training and a reliance on teacher-fronted, textbook based classroom exercises as a problematic structure that limits opportunities for Arabic-speaking students to participate successfully in an ESL 1 classroom. This data was collected during six-weeks of preliminary research during the summer of 2016 in a Jersey City, NJ ESL classroom. Using transcriptions of recorded data from lessons that typify the types of exercises that were used in this classroom, this research identifies how ESL strategies can be deployed in effective ways for some ESL students while simultaneously working to marginalize others. This work contributes to broader consideration of ESL classroom strategies, and calls for further research into the linguistic practices and academic needs of a growing Arabic-speaking student population in the New Jersey/New York area. Even more broadly, this work allows for future research on the ways in which these microinteractional processes contribute to ideas about belonging, citizenship, and identity for students from minoritized linguistic groups.

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LIST OF SYMBOLS

<word>   Lengthened speech

>word<   Condensed or rapid speech

[word]   Simultaneous speech

-   Sudden cut-off

(.)   Brief pause

(( ))   Gesture or my remarks

=   Latching (no pause between turns)

°word°   Indicates lowered volume

<u>word</u>   Underline indicates emphasis

⇑   Rising intonation

.   Natural end of sentence

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

"I feel dont want come to summer school.
I dreams about being a doctor.
I fears of school"
- *From "My Bio-Poem" by Emi Nagi 2016*

In New Jersey, students from non-English speaking homes constitute at least 23% of

the school population. Spanish is the most common language spoken by students from

non-English speaking homes followed by Arabic (NJDOE). Whereas there is a growing

body of literature on certain (English Language Learner) ELL communities, like those

from homes in Spanish-speaking immigrant communities, comparatively little research

has been done on the more recent increase in students from Arabic-speaking homes

(Collins 2009, 2012; Lyster 2001; Orellana and Reynolds 2008; Ramos-Zayas 2007;

Zentella 2005). As the number of Arabic-speaking families continues to increase,

specifically in northern urban parts of New Jersey, school districts must work to meet the

academic and cultural needs of its Arabic-speaking students.

The impact of culture and language on academic success and experience has been

studied by linguistic anthropologists in multiple communities of linguistic minority

students in the US (Chun 2013; Mangual Figueroa 2010; Reynolds and Orellana 2009;

Wortham 2004). Especially in the classroom, where language ideologies are reflected in

how students learn to act, behave, and speak, classroom talk for ESL students becomes

more than simple conversation. Often, it can also reveal complex social processes of

marginalization,

resistance, and identity (Báquedano-López and Mangual-Figueroa, 2012). Questions about proficiency and success academically are complicated by the role language plays in what it means to speak "good English," what it means to belong in a new place, and through what medium success as both a new citizen and a speaker is evaluated (Reynolds and Chun 2013).

In New Jersey, "success" in an ESL classroom is evaluated at the state level by the ACCESS for ELLs 2.0 test administered at the end of each school year. Historically in urban areas of New Jersey, ELLs have underperformed on standardized tests though some districts have made significant positive changes to their bilingual and ESL programs. Nonetheless some still struggle to raise their graduation and proficiency rates (Kirp 2016). Many of the reform initiatives for urban ESL programs focus on Latino communities; they and have increased numbers of Spanish-speaking ESL teachers and provided diversity training specific to Latino communities (Kirp 2016). While these initiatives have proven successful for Latino communities, Arabic-speaking populations are largely overlooked.

During the summer of 2016, I conducted fieldwork at a summer credit recovery program in an urban part of Northern New Jersey. Students in the ESL 1 class of the program (i.e. introductory level) had failed the course during the regular school year and were required to take credit recovery to advance to the next grade in September. For six weeks, I observed and participated in the introductory ESL classroom of 16 students. Within this classroom, 8 students spoke Egyptian Colloquial or Yemeni Arabic as a first language while the rest primarily spoke varieties of Spanish specific to the Dominican Republic. I used participant observation, unstructured interviews, and many hours of

audio recording to collect daily classroom management, student-teacher and student-student interaction, and personal narratives on learning English in the US. My purpose was to observe how the needs of Arabic-speaking students were handled by the district as well as in the classroom during this short semester.

Drawing from research in linguistic anthropology and education, I specifically addressed questions regarding issues of language standardization, student assessment, and classroom talk. Originally, I was interested in only looking at classrooms as a marginalizing institution but through my ethnographic data, my focus shifted to interactions and organizations of the classroom that contribute to indirect marginalization of Arabic-speaking students. The questions this thesis will seek to answer are:

1. What forms of evaluation are used for ESL students during a summer credit recovery class? How do students perform within these forms? Are there other ways that Arabic-students might show growth and fluency in the classroom that go unevaluated?

2. How does the teacher respond to the constraints of national and state standardized mandates in the classroom? Are teaching strategies equitable in assessing growth and proficiency for all students in the classroom? Are there alternative ways that Arabic-speaking students could be evaluated without changing existing classroom practices?

3. How does the institution contribute to the challenges presented to both the teacher and the students in the classroom? Are there implicit disadvantages built into the curriculum and how are they contextualized within a broader history of language policy?

4. What broader impacts does my analysis suggest for the future of Arabic-speaking students and ESL programs in New Jersey?

Drawing up data collected during my fieldwork I was able to address my first two research questions through a critical analysis of how Arabic-speaking ESL students were evaluated. In general, they were evaluated in two ways: (1) Through formal measures such as scores on written homework assignments, quizzes, and exams and (2) Through forms of participation in classroom exercises and lessons that were principally mediated via English print-media in the form of textbooks and worksheets.

Using conversation analysis to parse turns-at-talk to discern tacit yet nevertheless negotiated institutional norms for organizing participation, I identified frequent forms of verbal interaction that typified how the teacher conducted lessons in ways that served as informal evaluations of student performance. I then addressed how Arabic-speaking students were not only less willing to participate but faced hidden constraints when it came to asking for clarification, especially where lessons were based on textbook exercises. Alternatively, I was able to show how Spanish-speaking students were more willing to participate in these forms by bidding or volunteering to answer. This analysis led me to argue that willingness to participate is at least in part supported by Spanish-speaking student's ability to draw from the teacher's bilingual abilities. More importantly, I argue that the lack of attention to specific linguistic challenges for Arab-ESL students (such as their difficulties in acquiring literacy) at both a structural (i.e. standards at a state level) and classroom level (i.e. the reliance on textbook work) works to delimit how their proficiency is assessed and marginalizes their needs as a linguistic minority.

Unlike Spanish-speaking students, Arabic-speaking students enrolling in these programs often lack training in writing Latin script, coming from countries that use Aramaic writing systems. Writing is a critical focus in New Jersey standards for ESL curriculum that encourages exposure and practice with Latin script, but does not require basic mastery of characters. Therefore, Arabic-speaking students begin at an undifferentiated level that presupposes orthographic knowledge, without any basic instruction in Latin script. As my analysis will demonstrate, this oversight in instruction created challenges for Arab-ESL students in formal evaluations as well as in classroom exercises that conflated literacy with speaking fluency.

My third research question focuses in depth on the issues of literacy as it affects Arabic-speaking students. I am particularly critical of the overrepresentation of textbook exercises during lessons and written exams or homework as the sole metric of proficiency. Both the use of textbooks and written evaluations played a significant role in the evaluation of ESL students, yet their ability to read Latin-script was never taken into consideration.

To support my argument that students were inadvertently marginalized by specific classroom interactions, I end my analysis by exploring forms of interactions where Arabic-speaking students were more successful in the target language. Usually, these moments occurred when students were not asked to perform exercises from the textbook. Unfortunately, as I point out, these forms of interaction often went publicly unevaluated by the teacher and oral fluency was never used as a variable of proficiency.

In conclusion, I will argue through my analysis that Arabic-speaking ESL students in New Jersey are constrained by a long historical trajectory of language policy and

curriculum that has yet to address their specific academic and linguistic needs. Oversights of the particular linguistic needs of Arabic-speaking students at the state and national levels have, through my observation, created challenges for teachers and students that play out in everyday interactions. Especially as it concerns future considerations for language policy makers and curriculum development, research into the academic outcomes and experiences of Arabic-speaking ESL students is worthwhile and will become increasingly necessary. As such, this thesis will build on existing literature in linguistic anthropology and education that is concerned with immigrant populations, Arabic-speaking youth populations, and language policy.

1.1 Thesis Layout

Coming from a background in historical research, I find it imperative to orient this study within a context that addresses certain challenges within my research as synchronically linked to broader immigration history. The second chapter of this thesis will focus on contextualizing Arabic-speaking students within a history of immigration in New Jersey as well as a history of language policy. New Jersey has been a center of immigration for over 200 years, shifting geographically, economically, and politically with each new wave of people it welcomes. In trying to understand the institutional and social constraints my participants faced, it is important to acknowledge that that they do not live in a cultural vacuum but within a community that has seen multiple iterations of immigrant communities settling into the area.

There is also a fraught history of language policy that is bound up in the experience of immigrant populations and is equally important for understanding how students in my research are affected by local interpretations of national and state policies concerning language education. This section will outline a general history of language education,

while also addressing some of the major national debates and movements that have affected ESL education and the classification of ESL students.

The third chapter will present literature from linguistic anthropology and education that my research is grounded in. I focus on literature that intersects with linguistic anthropology and education in studies of immigrant populations that explores how language standardization practices work to marginalize immigrant students and how students negotiate these fraught terrains through quotidian language practices (Phipps and González 2004; Rosa 2016; Suárez-Orozco et. Al. 2008). I also present studies that have specifically focused on Arabic-speaking immigrant populations living in areas such as Spain, Sweden, and Dearborn Michigan, and France (Cekaite and Aronsson 2004; García-Sánchez 2013; Sarroub 2005; Tetreault 2013). These studies address some of the more nuanced cultural issues Arabic-speaking communities face. Finally, I present some of the most relevant pieces on literacy that are critical of the ways in which literacy is often conflated with fluency, especially in ESL classrooms (Heath 1982; Fender 2008; Tollefson 2002).

My fourth chapter will discuss my data and my analytic methods. Using Susan Philips' participant structures, unit of analysis that provide a way to group the organization of classroom talk into categories based on who can talk, through what turns, and in what contexts, I show that Initiation-Reply-Evaluation sequences (see Mehan 1979) are the most frequently utilized form of turn-taking within and across participant structures favored by the teacher (Philips 1993, 2011). This section will also outline the major sources I draw from in transcribing data using conversation analysis.

Chapter five provides an ethnographic description of the school district, the credit recovery program, and the classroom I worked in. This chapter will be critical for orienting my analysis within the historical and theoretical backgrounds laid out in chapters two and three. Through this description, I show how broader challenges to low-income school districts and ESL programs play out in my field site, especially in the classroom. I also provide detailed descriptions of the teacher and the Arabic-speaking students I worked with to breathe life into the analysis that follows.

Chapter six will be an analysis of typical interactions in the classroom that highlight the ways in which textbook based lessons deployed within IRE sequences delimit, overlook, or challenge Arab-ESL students' performance. These moments are highlighted by interactions with Spanish-speaking students where their ability to more easily participate in these IRE sequences is present in their frequent bidding or volunteering. Furthermore, I show through my analysis that although the teacher, Ms. Santos, is using proper ESL evaluation strategies for Arabic-speaking students, her ability to evaluate as well as provide repairs for Spanish-speaking students' trouble sources is not only facilitated by their varying orthographic knowledge but by Ms. Santos' bilingual abilities.

Taking into consideration that evaluation for students only occurs within limited written tests and text based classroom exercises, I provide options for other forms of participation that Arab-ESL students might engage in by showing successful interactions outside of the type typically deployed, such as group work or off-script conversation.

The seventh chapter of this thesis will start with a conclusion and discussion about the future and pertinence of this research. I believe this work is a stepping stone into a field site that has critical implications for the future of ESL education in New Jersey. It has the

possibility, if considered at a doctoral level, to be looked at from multiple perspectives in linguistic anthropology and education. There are trajectories of research available in both fields that look at how institutional constraint, played out in the classroom, contributes to students' ideas about citizenship, belonging, and identity. Given the opportunity to do this research long term, I believe this field site could offer similarly robust discussions.

Taking these pieces into consideration, the outcome of this thesis will ultimately be to provide an introductory glimpse into how a qualitative approach to interactional strategies in the classroom can inform teaching strategies specific to Arabic-speaking populations. As such, this thesis will end with what I believe to be the most important component. Through my communication with the teacher I worked with, I present what her thoughts are on how ESL programs can be improved to help teachers and students from Arabic-speaking homes have better communication and ultimately a better academic experience.

1.2 On Reflexivity, IRB and Informed Consent

As the medium and the ultimate tool for data collection, anthropologists are critically aware of how their own prior experiences in combination with the various ways they are positioned vis-à-vis other participants in their field sites shape their research. Reflexivity is broadly defined as the researchers' awareness of how their cultural bias plays into research (Miller 2015). In addition, it is also an awareness of the unique ways their position is interpreted by their community. My position was unique in this setting in ways that both helped and hindered my research. As a female working in an education setting, I found that I was easily able to gain access and rapport on the administrative level. The teachers and other faculty members I spoke to were more concerned with my position as a researcher in the classroom. While I took the necessary steps through the University of

South Carolina to get IRB approval for my work, I found that the approval process for the school district was far more restrictive. When minors are involved, institutional IRBs take precautions to assure that the proper consent forms are provided, as well as assent forms for the children. The administration not only required my consent forms but rejected my original forms three times before finally approval. They initially found my use of video and audio recording problematic, and wanted a total elimination of that data collection method from the project. It was understandable that their first concern was the safety of the students as well as their reputation as a school district but I needed to collect certain data to complete my research. It was clear to me that the school was aware of outside researchers, even a master's student, could be a liability if information was collected or used in any way that could jeopardize them legally or financially.

In the end, my proposal was approved with some major changes to the informed consent process as well as my data collection methods. I was asked to not use video recording in my study unless I could obtain consent forms and assent forms from each guardian and every student in the classroom. The school also required consent forms to be handed out at the beginning of my study on the first day, before the students could thoroughly understand what my purpose was. Unfortunately, I was unable to get consent and assent forms from all 16 children. Thus, much of what I recorded or could have recorded was unable to be used in the final analysis.

To conduct this research ethically, I completed the CITI (Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative) training for human research subjects prior to going to the field. As mandated by the University of South Carolina, my research proposal was also submitted to IRB and approved. Considering the nature of my work involving children within the

public-school system, my entry process to the summer program was complicated from the beginning and continued to be so throughout the research project. The school district had its students' safety in their best interest and required consent forms for students, teachers, and more detailed consent forms for those students I chose to use as case studies. Video-taping was not expressly prohibited, but it was discouraged. In addition, consent forms were sent home to every student but rarely returned, making much of my audio and video unusable. It was my express concern that I conduct my research in a way that would expose my participants to the most minimal amount of risk possible. To do this, all names mentioned in the ethnographic portions of this thesis have been changed and no faces will appear in any photos or videos.

Although I met the required protocols for the IRB and the school district, I found it problematic that these measures were considered sufficient to let me use classroom work and personal stories. I knew the students and their parents would only have a superficial understanding of ethnographic work unless I approached consent and assent as an on-going process. In the most recent update to the AAA (American Anthropological Association) ethics code, consent is not simply gained after one form is signed but is an ongoing process (Clark and Kingsolver 2000). Therefore, I felt it necessary as an anthropologist to go beyond the consent required by IRB and the school. At the end of my study, when I had built a better relationship with the class, I asked students like Emi, who appear frequently in my data, to sign another assent form as well as give me verbal consent to use their school work in my data. By doing this, I felt more confident in the process of obtaining informed consent.

It is also important for me to note here that there are certain students who appear more frequently in the data than others. Because of the issues with absenteeism and late arrivals, I was only able to get consistent recordings from a few students in the classroom throughout the course. Emi, one of my main participants, was also the only student I was able to get extended consent from.

There is something that also has to be said regarding the way I was racially and ethnically indexed by both the teachers and the students. "Indexing" is a term that I will utilize throughout this research to indicate the way language use and appearance become racially and ethnically categorized, valued, and assumed in social contexts. More broadly, "indexing" refers to relations of co-occurrence, where signs directly or indirectly link to socially constructed construal. For this research, I specifically use it to refer to the phenomena of how physical characteristics and speech are categorized by socially constructed presupposed notions of race, language, and ethnicity (Hill 1998). My olive complexion, dark hair, and dark eyes, have often been treated as of Mediterranean, Middle Eastern, or Latino heritage. During my research, I only spoke to Ms. Santos, the teacher I worked with, about my national identity as Italian-American. Coming from an area that is already racially and ethnically diverse, it was common for students to ask me where I was from. Although I refused to identify myself and attempted to redirect the conversation when asked, many of the students assumed me to be either Middle Eastern or Latino. Often, I found that the Spanish-speaking students indexed me as Latino while the Arabic-speaking students indexed me as Middle Eastern. The faculty that I worked with also indexed me as Middle Eastern. Although never explicitly stated, the indexing of

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me as somewhat ambiguous within this school may have allowed me to gain rapport with them.

1.3 Notes on Ethics and Sentiments

One challenge in conducting this involved separating myself from the personal connections I made to the students, teachers, and staff members in the school community. I felt this was necessary because I often had to critically observe what went on in class and at an administrative level. Sometimes, the students I felt closest to made poor behavior decisions in the classroom or their perspectives ran counter to my own. Other times, the teacher misunderstood her students and often perpetuated certain language ideologies that were problematic for teaching Arabic-speaking ESL students. As an outsider, I also saw issues at the administrative level such as issues in staffing and testing protocols that are easy to critique (such as the omission of "speaking" tests from exams) but are ultimately indicative of larger issues in the education system of which the teachers, students, and administrators have no control.

It is for this reason that I preface this thesis by emphasizing that the people I worked with were extraordinary and had a profound impact on the way I view education. Due to their low scores on school performance reports, school in this district are largely considered failing and undesirable. A New Jersey newspaper report from recently published a list ranking New Jersey schools from "best to worst" based on annual testing scores. William McKinley High School, the magnet school my fieldwork site of this study, ranked within top 10 in the state, while Monroe and Arthur, where all the students I worked with went to school during the regular year, ranked around 250th and 300th out of about 370, respectively (Davis 2016). Teachers at the credit recovery program, as well as other teachers I knew personally from the district, often lamented about the challenges

of working in one of these public schools, but many of the outstanding educators I encountered were also devoted to trying to create something better. Many significant interactions noted in my fieldwork happened day-to-day, in the little moments that an insider might never acknowledge. I saw the principal greet every student individually with a smile on his face after he had already spent hours meeting with parents and putting out exhausting administrative fires. I saw faculty take time out of their class to make sure each student received their free breakfast, even if it meant starting class late. There were multiple times I saw disciplinary issues that could have escalated into physical harm deescalated with an elegance and sensitivity that only comes from years of practice. In the classroom, I watched the teacher I observed work endlessly after school to scaffold new lessons for her struggling students while she herself was still working on another degree. I was humbled by her passion for teaching and the genuine concern she had for each student. In the worst moments of class, like when a student broke down over issues at home that no child should have to encounter, I watched her transform into a mother, a friend, and a hero all at once without missing a beat and still have energy to go home and complete her masters' degree work.

As for the students, I witnessed kids from different backgrounds share their stories and support one another with openness and tolerance. The camaraderie some built even in their short time together was rare to see among high school students and often came before acknowledgement of their linguistic and cultural differences. That is not to view them through rose-colored class – there were certainly moments where neither camaraderie nor tolerance could be felt – but the moments I did get to witness were stunning.

When I set out to do this fieldwork, I wanted to make sure that the voice of my community was not lost. Unfortunately, I do not feel it is my place to speak for them yet but I can only hope that by completing this thesis, I will open up more possibilities to work with them and continue to bring their voices to the fore in my work. As for the work I need to do here, it is important to first understand that this community is situated within a history deeply affected by the arrival and departure of immigrant communities. In the next section, I will go through the history of immigration in New Jersey and then situate the Arab immigrant experience within this relevant context.

I want to thank the administrators and faculty of my field site for allowing me to conduct this research, especially those administrators who facilitated my placement in the school. I would also like to thank the students and Ms. Santos for allowing me to become part of their classroom community for the summer. This thesis and the work I hope will come from it someday, would not be possible without you. أنت في قلبي دائما

CHAPTER 2

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The history of immigration in New Jersey is inextricable to the formation of its cultural and physical landscape. The area of New Jersey in which I conducted my fieldwork in has over two centuries of international immigrant history, dating as far back as the 18th century. An important part of this history is the ways in which the social reception and flows of immigration impacts national and state policies regarding bilingual and ESL education. Often, backlash against immigration is reflected in the reforms and initiatives of education policies. While this section will discuss the unique forms of discrimination Arabic-speaking students experience broadly, Arab-ESL students in New Jersey are equally affected by national trends of bilingual education reform that are closely related to the state's immigrant history.

As a fourth-generation Italian-American in New Jersey, my family has its own connection to this history. In the early 20th century, my great-grandmother was kicked out of school for speaking Italian during a time when bilingual or second language education did not exist. One-hundred years later, policies on immigration and language education have changed drastically but are still fraught with contradictions that at the same time demand inclusion while implicitly marginalizing non-English speaking citizens.

This section will explore the interrelatedness of immigration and language policy history as it relates to New Jersey, with particular focus on how national and local ideologies on immigration affect how language policy has developed and changed

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. This section will also focus on the ways in which Arab populations into the United States have been made vulnerable, and how this history of immigration and education policy contributes to the current atmosphere in New Jersey as it concerns Arabic-speaking ESL students.

2.1 History of Immigration in Northern New Jersey

Due to its proximity to New York, northern parts of New Jersey have been settled by many different waves of immigrants and each wave has invariably been met with backlash on national and local levels. Immigration policies on a national level, and exclusionary policies on a local level are cyclically linked to socially rooted anti-immigrant sentiment. In education, policies regarding children of immigrants are often similarly linked to local and national responses to the reception of international immigrants.

New Jersey historian Douglas Shaw marks three significant waves of immigration to New Jersey that impacted the social and historical landscape: (1) Old immigration, (2) New immigration, and (3) Third wave immigration (1994). Old immigration refers to some of the earliest groups, primarily consisting of industrial revolution Irish and German natives between 1840 and 1860 (Shaw 2004). While German immigrants came for economic opportunities with favorable skills in an industrializing economy, Irish immigrants (who did not arrive great with economic or social capital) were met with resistance. During this time, 75% of Irish immigrants in New Jersey were pushed into unskilled labor, mostly taking day-labor or construction jobs. Being largely excluded from the economic prosperity other immigrant groups like the Germans were afforded, many remained poor and the divide between immigrant groups grew, leading to clashes between working class immigrants, and middle class native born residents (Shaw 2004).

Nationally, bilingual education prior to the 20th century was an unexplored option in policy reform and schools imposed the use of English on all non-native English speaking groups (Nieto 2000). In New Jersey, most children of immigrants would have been similarly forced into English-only public schools except for German immigrants who had the social and economic capital to open private German speaking schools (Shaw 2004).

Similarly, second wave immigration (1880-1920) was marked by tensions between those born in New Jersey, and the unprecedented numbers of Irish, Polish, Italian, and Russian Orthodox and Jewish immigrants (Lurie and Veit 2016). In previous years, certain counties in New Jersey were predominantly populated by immigrants but this era changed the geographic and social makeup of the entire state. Throughout the 1880's the population of New Jersey rose from 20% to 26% non-native-born residents (Shaw 2004). There were also a significant number of second-generation children from the first wave of immigration, such as those of German descent, who had worked to preserve both their cultural and linguistic identities.

Italian immigration paralleled the early Irish immigrant experience where economic prosperity and social elevation seemed less accessible due to strong anti-Catholic sentiment from native residents. This kind of marginalization pushed not only Italians, but many Polish, Jewish, and Irish communities into ethnic enclaves where safety and family could act as a barrier against anti-immigrant sentiment (Lurie and Veit 2016; Shaw 2004).

Increasing xenophobic sentiment and fear of job loss throughout the United States eventually led to a series of major immigration laws. In 1917, the Literacy Act (also known as the Asiatic Barred Zone Act) was passed as the first major act restricting

immigration. The provisions of this law restricted entry for people over the age of 16, requiring them to able to read "30-40 words" in English or their own language (Powell 2009). While this act did restrict numbers, Congress felt it was still too liberal and in 1924, the Johnson-Reed Immigration act was passed, restricting numbers on immigrants, especially those from countries considered "undesirable" (Cannato 2015; Shaw 2004; US Office of the Historian 2016). Southern and Northern European immigrants were primarily targeted as "undesirable" drastically decreasing the influx of European immigrants (Shaw 2004; Cannato 2015). While this law all but entirely ceased immigration from Europe, the provisions did not restrict immigration from North and South America, allowing immigration from the West to continue.

Similar to the immigration acts of 1917 and 1924, education reform at this time reflected deep anti-immigrant sentiment. At the turn of the 20th century, the influx of immigrants and a growing national population also forced governments to reconsider policies on education and language. These policies often forced assimilation through mandatory mastery of English, the most significant being the Nationality Act of 1906 which designated English as the only language to be used in schools (Nieto 2000).

By the 1960's, a third wave of immigrants arrived made up of predominantly Puerto Rican, and Cuban immigrants (Ramos-Zayas 2007; Shaw 2004). Different from the middle and upper class Cuban immigrants fleeing post-revolution Cuba, Puerto Rican immigrants left the island as US citizens to seek seasonal low wage work in manufacturing and agriculture (Ramos-Zayas 2007). In 1965, President Lyndon Johnson signed the Hart-Celler act, which reversed many provisions of the 1921 law limiting immigration based on place of origin (Kammer 2015). Hart-Celler also gave priority to

relatives of US citizens, which meant 2nd generation immigrants could assist in relocating family members. However, while the law no longer used racial and ethnic criteria to determine immigration, racialization processes still operated in ways that restricted access to resources such as housing and employment. As Ramos-Zayas notes in her work, Puerto Rican and Brazilian immigration to the US coincided with post-industrialization as many cities in northern New Jersey became limited in employment opportunities. This, as well as increasing "white supremacist discourses" surrounded the urbanization of post-industrial cities dramatically affected immigrants who continued to seek housing and employment outside of New York (2007: 86). Many moved into low-cost housing projects that were that were culturally identified as "black neighborhoods," denying them the same kind mobility into "whiteness" that other immigrant groups had previously been afforded. This alignment of Puerto Rican immigrants with "blackness" is also a racialized construct of the poor economic circumstances and limited employment opportunities that were exacerbated by government assaults on social services during the administrations of the 1970's and 1980's.

The 1960's were also a time of significant education reform movements, many following Brown vs. Board in 1954. Along with desegregation, bilingual education and the protection of non-native English speakers became mandatory for the first time in the United States (Nieto 2000). As will be discuss in the next section, the latter half of the 20th century following Brown vs. Board was marked by policies that vacillated between progressive and regressive reactionary reform. Today, language education reflects this tumultuous and controversial history, with many schools adopting different state-based standards on ESL and bilingual education.

New Jersey specifically has reflected this struggle between immigration and bilingual education, being one of the most ethnically and linguistically diverse states in the nation. In 2006, the New Jersey branch of the ACLU found that one in four schools in New Jersey illegally collected social security numbers to reveal immigrant status for incoming students, effectively barring them from entry. Most recently, two charter schools near the site of my fieldwork were accused of segregation by civil rights organizations in the state for the exclusion of minority groups in enrollment (Hutchinson 2017). Despite these issues, New Jersey prides itself on progressive language education reform, claiming that five out of six schools have developed ESL programs that offer a "range of programs including full-time bilingual, dual language, bilingual tutorial, bilingual resource, sheltered instruction, ESL, and ELS" (NJDOE 2016). New Jersey has also offered programs to recruit ESL teachers, some districts even lowering the education requirements to fast-track teachers to fillable positions (Clark 2017).

Still, gaps between socioeconomic groups and continued anti-immigration rhetoric make it difficult for districts to adequately provide reform in cities like northern New Jersey. It is within this pervasive tension that Arabic-speaking immigrants in New Jersey enter the school system, compounded by their own unique history of discrimination following the era of the "War on Terror" during the past two decades.

Historically, Arabic-speaking immigrants from places like Syria, Lebanon, Egypt and Morocco are present in the east coast immigration record during what Shaw refers to as the "Second wave" but are overshadowed by the large number of immigrants from European ethnic groups (Said 1972; Shaw 2004). Additionally, many of the immigrants from these areas came with higher social capital (e.g. high education, higher

socioeconomic class) than most and assimilated easily into suburban areas (Said 1972**).**

Small numbers of Arabic-speaking immigrants coming to the US remained relatively

stable until the last half of the 20th century. Since then, large scale political and cultural

crises in countries like Egypt, Lebanon, Palestine, Afghanistan, and Syria have forced

people from their homes, seeking refuge in Europe as well as the US. New Jersey

currently has one some of the largest groups of Egyptian, Palestinian, Lebanese and

Syrian immigrants in the country, especially in northern (and often low income) urban

cities (de La Cruz 2008).

Although similar in their shared history of contributing to the diverse landscape of

New Jersey, immigrant populations often face different challenges politically, socially,

and culturally. While Italian and Irish immigrants have been afforded a certain level of

social mobility other immigrant populations, such as those from Puerto Rico, remain

constrained by the economic and social climate they arrived into. Arabic-speaking

populations face equally diverse sets of challenges, especially in a post 9-11 world where

immigration (especially from places associated with the "Middle East") became linked to

terrorism in the national consciousness. This next section will discuss the ways in which

Arab populations have increasingly become targets of discrimination in a post 9/11 world

and how this discrimination has made Arabic-speaking populations more vulnerable than

ever.

2.2 Arab Immigrants and New Jersey

Xenophobia and discrimination are issues that have affected immigrant communities

historically and continues to affect new waves of immigrants in the US. New Jersey has

seen multiple iterations of the immigrant experience, which more recently includes

people from predominantly Arabic-speaking countries. In addition to being in an area

with a fraught history for immigrants, Arabic-speaking populations experience particularly vehement discrimination and exclusion from the national collective on a national scale.

Islam, Arabic, and the Middle East are three categories that are frequently conflated as contiguous and associated with terrorism. Political movements and initiatives such as the Patriot Act of 2001, which gave officials the authority to track and deport anyone suspected of terrorist links (Rodriguez 2007), codified what terrorism looked like. Anyone that could be indexed as "Middle Eastern" became a target of profiling and suspicion. In New Jersey, thousands of Arab immigrants as well as native-born citizens of Arab descent were detained and questioned by law enforcement under the Patriot Act (Rodriguez 2008) in the weeks immediately following 9/11. Furthermore, the Patriot Act brought immigration policy from outside the citizens' realm to becoming localized within it. "See something say something" became a slogan encouraging everyday people to report suspicious activity to law enforcement, and law enforcement was encouraged to work with federal investigators on immigration. Where immigration policy had previously been controlled from the outside in, immigrants, especially those indexed as Arab or Muslim, based on racialized notions of language and appearance, were under surveillance from the inside. In one major city, immigrant communities of Arab descent were targeted so frequently, that they began to refer to the area as "Terror City" (Din 2004).

Since 9/11 and especially the recent election of 2017, hate crimes towards people indexed as "Muslim," "Middle Eastern," or "Arab" has risen dramatically. In 2008, research suggested that hate crimes towards Arabs or Muslims had risen "17-fold" in the

wake of the September 11 terrorist attacks (Abu-Bader and Abu-Ros 2008). More recently, researchers from California State University released a report quoting a disturbing 78% increase in hate crimes directed at Arab or Muslim Americans and immigrants in 2015 (Grisham and Levin 2016). A quick search on most mainstream news sources also shows multiple stories involving discrimination targeted at Arabs or Muslims. Although the conflation of "Arabs" and "Muslims" is erroneous, speaking Arabic in public is one of the primary ways individuals are targeted. Just last year, Khairuldeen Makhzoomi, a UC Berkeley student was kicked off an airplane after meeting with members of the UN for speaking to his uncle over the phone in Arabic (BBC 2016). His story is not unique, nor is the pervasive xenophobic and prejudice ideology that undergirds many similar stories of discrimination.

Discrimination specific to Arab populations in a post 9/11 world has been looked at critically by researchers for its implications in areas like health and employment. For example, one study showed that pregnant women in California with names that were indexed as "Arab sounding" received worse medical treatment, suffered higher levels of prenatal stress, and had a higher number of issues during delivery following the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001 (Lauderdale 2006). Another study also revealed that employers are less likely to hire applicants with Arabic sounding names, regardless of their religious affiliation or qualifications (McCandless and Ngo 2008).

Although early Arabic-speaking immigrants could achieve a certain level of social and economic prosperity, the political and social unrest of the late 20th century dramatically changed the experience many encountered upon arrival. Perhaps more than most ethnicities, those who identify as Arab or Middle Eastern face high levels of anti-

immigrant and anti-Muslim sentiment. While other linguistic minorities face daily challenges, hate-crimes towards people indexed as "Arab" or "Muslim," and people who speak Arabic has increased at least 6% 2016 (Lichtblau 2016).

In addition to a rise in news stories concerning hate crimes and every day acts of discrimination towards Arabic-speaking populations, studies showing the links between "Arabic sounding names" and using Arabic in public is not only dangerous, but affects their treatment in institutional settings. Although my research was not focused on overt discrimination and hate crimes towards Arabic-speaking students, it was a variable in how students were treated as "others" in the classroom. During Ramadan, Muslim Arabic-speaking students could not drink water during class when temperatures rose above 85 degrees. After Ramadan ended in June, free breakfast and lunch provided by the district did not observe halal dietary restrictions, also limiting what Muslim students could eat. On another level, certain students dealt with bullying from non-Muslim and non Arabic-speaking students which at one point escalated into physical violence between two male students. These overt instances of "othering" are only a few examples of how Arabic-speaking students were culturally marginalized within the school system and while these challenges are unique to their ethnic group, it is reflective of how new immigrant populations have historically faced discrimination in New Jersey. For Arabic-speaking populations, this discrimination is also linked to a broader national trend of exclusion.

2.3 Language Policy

Discrimination toward immigrant populations not only affects their ability to settle and acclimate; it also impacts language policies that affect the children of immigrant families as they enroll in public school systems. In 2008, 20% of students in

the US were from immigrant homes and by the year 2040, it is expected that 1 out of 3 students in the US will come from an immigrant family (Suárez-Orozco et. al. 2008). Understanding the movement and experience of immigrant populations in New Jersey, and Arabic-speaking populations in the US more broadly, is important for understanding the complex social world in which my research takes place. Another aspect of contextualization pertinent to this research is understanding the role of language policy in the United States as language education policies are often understood in relation to broader social policies and ideologies as they concern minority groups (Tollefson 2002).

At the turn of the 20th century, increasing immigration from Europe was met with resistance by several laws that restricted the number of people allowed to enter the US from certain countries. For those that did arrive, education was not a guaranteed right until 1948. At this time, schools also implemented English-only instruction policies and did not provide any support for non-English speaking students (Nieto 2000).

It was not until the rise of the civil rights movement of the 1960's that linguistic minority students were given the right to equal education and protection from discrimination, sparking a new era of education reform for second language learners. The 1968 Bilingual Education Act (BEA) mandated an allocation of federal funding for non-English speaking students under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) and coined the first term for non-English speaking students as Limited English Speaking Ability (LESA) (Stewner-Manzanares 1988). Importantly, this act began as a recommendation specific to Spanish-speaking communities but eventually expanded to include 37 bills that would become the final Title VII of the ESEA.

While monumental, the BEA was flawed in what schools were required to provide for LESA students. In general, the provisions only gave students the *right* to an equal education and *encouraged* schools to develop programs to teach children English but did not require formalized language education programs (Stewner-Manzanares 1988). This was eventually challenged in 1974 by the *Lau vs. Nichols* Supreme Court case, where the San Francisco school district was sued for failing to provide adequate English language education to 1,800 Chinese students. The ruling of this case led to a series of mandates known as the *Lau Remedies* that required schools to not only provide equal, desegregated access to education for LESA students, but also required schools receiving Title VII funding to develop comprehensive language programs (Stewner-Manzanares 1988). Between 1974 and 1984, the Lau Remedies worked to improve language education policy but also began to create challenges for areas with increasingly heterogeneous linguistic groups. Under the *Lau Remedies*, schools were required to provide bilingual instruction in "native languages," but some areas (like New Jersey) had districts with up to 20 different linguistic groups (Stewner-Manzanares 1988). Funding for these areas simply did not cover the cost of such expansive language education and ultimately led to a backlash and deregulation of the Lau Remedies by the conservative politics of the 1980's. The result of this deregulation still required funding for those who were now considered LEP (Limited English Proficiency) students but left states to decide individually what programs would look like according to their needs (Stewner-Manzanares 1988).

Amendments to the original 1968 BEA have attempted to respond to the changing demographic of immigrant communities but the regressive movement and rollback of

bilingual education during the 1980's still persists in how states decide to allocate Title VII funding (Stewner-Manzanares 1988; Tollefson 2002). States like Arizona have been a battleground for debates surrounding bilingual education, with far-right movements pushing for English-only language policy against predominantly Spanish-speaking districts (Sanchez 2002). In New Jersey, language education policy has taken initiatives to improve education for ELLs, but as stated previously many of these initiatives are aimed at improving language education for Spanish-speaking populations, who currently remain the largest linguistic group of ELLs in the state.

The history of language education policy in the United States is as complex as the continuously changing and heterogeneous immigrant populations it is meant to serve. Some scholars even argue that these policies have done more to marginalize non-English populations than they have to create inclusion in education (Gandara 2004).

In the article "Legacy of Brown: Lau and Language Policy in the United States" Education scholar Patricia Gandara looked at the parallel trajectories both the Brown and Lau court rulings have taken in failing to adequately overcome the covert structural inequality within American education, specifically as it applies to bilingual education (2004).

The ruling of Lau in 1974 broke ground in addressing civil rights and mandates that followed were meant to correct issues in the original BEA by prohibiting discrimination based on language, and ensuring that appropriate education be provided for ELLs. However, Gandara argues that the ambiguities regarding what resources are mandatory, and what counts as discrimination in the legislation of Lau vs. Nichols was and continues to contribute to its undoing, particularly in its inability to prohibit indirect

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discrimination to ELLs (2004). In its original form, the BEA and its subsequent amendments have pushed for getting children to English fluency as fast as possible – what Gandara classifies as a "language as problem" outlook. As opposed to a "language as right" or "language as resource," where the primary language is considered a valid and valuable tool to achieving fluency in English, most programs under BEA disregard primary language. This is an important oversight, as research especially in ESL education as well as linguistic anthropology suggests that a lack of incorporation of a primary language into ELL pedagogy puts students at a direct disadvantage (Menken 2010).

Linguist Kate Menken (2010) addresses the more recent impacts of policies such as No Child Left Behind (NCLB) and the replacement of the original BEA with Title III, the English Language Acquisition, Language Enhancement, and Academic Achievement Act. NCLB required across the board compliance of standards for all students, but Title III specifically mandated that English Language Learners (ELLs) must also meet specific standards annually to receive the allocation of federal funds (NJDOE). Menken analyzed a series of state-issued standardized tests that qualify schools for funding and found that tests administered to ELLs were exceedingly complex, testing students to comprehend words they had never encountered. Furthermore, she found that ESL students were more likely to attend schools in low income areas. Therefore, as students failed to meet the complex standards of standardized tests, a disproportionate rate of low income schools were penalized for failing to meet NCLB requirements.

Unlike English speaking natives who might acquire another language in school as an elective, immigrant students are expected to not only master English as compulsory to academic and social success, but they are expected do so largely without the help of their

primary language because of the later iterations of the BEA which excluded requiring

instruction in a primary language. Research in both linguistic anthropology and

education has found that the reality of language education as it stands today rarely

provides the proper support for students – even those from Spanish linguistic minority

groups who were the genesis of the 1968 BEA (Siegel 2006; Suárez-Orozco et al. 2008;

Tollefson 2002.

In a 2008 study, authors Suárez-Orozco, Suárez-Orozco, and Tordova studied

immigrant student populations from a clinical-anthropological and psychological

perspective to track the longitudinal data of academic success in salient immigrant groups

within the Boston and Chicago area. Their longitudinal data, spanning the course of five

years, helped them to understand the shifting contexts and circumstances of immigrant

students that contribute to their ultimate outcomes. Like Menken's study, the authors

found that students were overrepresented in low-income schools with a lack of resources

necessary to support them and their families as they navigate the complicated terrain of

US education.

The authors also found that learning English was a particularly fraught area for many

of the students in their study. Overwhelmingly, students felt that learning English was the

most important factor to their success in America, but many experienced a decline in

GPA over the course of their ESL studies. The authors argue that ESL programs,

although varied across districts, often failed to address the practical needs of students

struggling to acquire English, allowing them to slip through the cracks in more advanced

classes (Suárez-Orozco et al 2008). Along with economic and social impact factors

existing outside of the classroom, this study critically attempts to bring awareness of how

immigration laws and education policies work to create spaces where immigrant students are positioned for academic failure and misunderstood regarding their academic needs and challenges (Suárez-Orozco et al. 2008).

In an article that acknowledges these issues and seeks to promote awareness about the use of primary language in the classroom, Linguist Jeff Siegel (2006) lays out the dominant language ideologies that work to disadvantage speakers of non-standard English in educational instruction. Siegel notes that the idea of "egalitarian pluralism" assumes that all language varieties are equal, yet, he argues, as Gandara similarly does, that there are still widely-held distinctions in terms of which varieties are deemed appropriate. Often, variations in judgments of sociolinguistic appropriateness are associated with differences in social and economic advantage. For example, African American English (AAE) is socially indexed as being appropriate in more informal out of classroom settings, while variations of white middle class English are adopted as the formal language of institutions. Therefore, middle class children entering the school system are at an advantage in a space where they learn about and learn through their own language practices whereas speakers of other varieties must assimilate to these different language practices (Heath 1982; Siegel 2006). Instead of approaching ESL policy from a place of what Gandara called "language as problem," Siegel uses his own ethnographic account to explore the ways that incorporating primary language into the curriculum benefits students both academically and socially.

Language education policy and its fraught history has in many ways reflected national ideologies and politics on immigration and language (Tollefson 2002). New Jersey is an archetype of the nation's immigrant history, including its efforts to change and reshape

language policy in public schools as new communities settle. Having only recently taken initiatives to develop better language education programs for large Spanish-speaking population, New Jersey schools now find themselves faced with the challenge of accommodating an increasing number of Arabic-speaking students. This challenge to develop programs that meet the needs of Arabic-speaking students is complicated by a national trend of rising anti-immigrant and anti-Muslim sentiment, and regressive language policies.

To understand the historical link between language policy and immigration, and the political, economic, and cultural movements that have shaped this relationship, is to understand the overarching cultural tensions in which my research functions. The credit recovery program I studied was almost entirely made up of minority students from "failing" schools in the district. These schools, and the reputation of students in this school as the "bad kids" are in part a product of how the nation has responded to immigration and migration into and out of urban areas, as well as the political and economic changes that restricted resources and access to immigrants and people from poor urban areas.

In the next chapter, I present a review of literature from the fields of linguistic anthropology and education that have studied how these contentious cultural and political climates, especially concerning anti-immigrant rhetoric, get taken up and played out in the classroom. More specifically, I discuss research that looks at immigrant youth populations in educational contexts as well as Arabic-speaking immigrant youth populations internationally (Cekaite and Aronsson 2004; García-Sánchez 2013; Sarroub 2005; Tetreault 2008, 2009). This chapter will also present a brief discussion of how

literacy studies have identified challenges Arab-ESL students face in the classroom. The findings of research in literacy studies on Arabic-speaking students provides support for my analysis of classroom talk and my critique of the limited ways in which Arab students were evaluated and assessed in the credit recovery program.

CHAPTER 3

LITERATURE REVIEW

The classroom, seen as an institution that directly reflects and reinforces a society's political, economic, and moral values, offers a robust site of observation for how knowledge is culturally mediated through everyday processes of talk and interaction (Bourdieu 1970). From this perspective, students are not just seen as novices regarding academic knowledge, but as cultural novices or as some scholars refer to them as "citizens in training" (Chun 2013; Sterponi 2010).

As schools reflect deeper social ideologies, they tend to do so by valuing privileged varieties of language, which can be seen in dominant language standardization practices (e.g. "English only" instruction in schools) and language education policies (Menken 2010; Rosa 2016). The research here considers how the work schools do in training students to become communicatively competent, bolstered by politicized and racialized language ideologies (beliefs and attitudes regarding languages and language use), impacts not only the academic outcomes of immigrant students but their sense of self and belonging within a given community.

Linguistic anthropology offers a unique analytical perspective for looking at how talk is structured and culturally saturated. For this thesis, units of analysis that focus on participant structures and classroom sequences offered methods of isolating turn taking in action that allowed me to compare how classroom interactions were specifically fraught for Arabic-speaking students in ways that were not for Spanish-speaking students. The

literature presented here also provides theoretical understandings for why these differentiated positioning occurred and how they influence the way students do or do not engage in the classroom.

3.1 The Overt and Covert Social Work of Classrooms

Scholars from multiple fields acknowledge that academic learning is only one aspect of the goals of schools and that within the process of learning knowledge, ideas about citizenship, language, behavior, and social class are learned and reconstructed (Apple 1975; Anyon 1980; Aronowitz 1973; Bourdieu 1970; Giroux 1983; Lecompte 1978; Wortham 2004). One of the main ideas to come out of this work is the "hidden curriculum," or the reproduction of social power dynamics through overt curriculum and classroom instruction (Giroux and Penna 1979; Jackson 1968). The phrase "hidden curriculum" was introduced in Phillip Jackson's 1968 *Life in Classrooms*, where he examined the social and psychological context of schools from the constraining and contrastive effects of time regulation, movement, space limitation, evaluation, and order on learning. Jackson presents students as stuck in an institution and life similar to that of the factory worker where they are made to "labour and wait," having their personal desires and needs dictated by highly regulated and constraining system (1968: 43).

From this literature, other scholars like Giroux and Bernstein (1977) expanded the idea of the "hidden curriculum" as not only constraining and limiting but a system that inherently reproduces social class through its regulation of bodies and character. Giroux and Penna argued that an "intimate relationship between the institution of the school and the nation's economic and political institutions" existed through the "hidden curriculum" (1983). Through socializing practices like classroom rituals, understood hierarchies, and rules, students not only receive cognitive knowledge but are molded into citizens fit for

the work force. Stanley Aronowitz addressed how the hidden curriculum specifically teaches working class students how to function in an industrial environment (1973).

The negative side effects of the hidden curriculum have been acknowledged as pervasively tracking students into social classes through this direct link between instruction and cultural knowledge. In 1980, Jean Anyon directly identified how this tracking works through an observation of five schools from distinctly different socio-economic neighborhoods. Anyon found stark contrasts in classroom management and curriculum between working-class, professional-class, and middle-class schools that reflected the kind of social class "tracking" previous scholars identified. For example, the management of bodies in the classroom for working class schools was far more restrictive and regulated than in professional-class schools where children were encouraged to move around or make independent decisions about where to sit (Anyon 1980).

In an ESL classroom, the hidden curriculum has been looked at in regard to the kind of language students learn, and the mediums through which this knowledge is provided. Auerbach and Burgess argue that the "survival" aspect of ESL, which assumes that students only need to know language necessary to get through daily tasks, not only tracks them into subservient positions but is often provided through texts that do not take into account the socio-economic and cultural realities of immigrants (1985). Textbooks that offer pictures and examples about largely middle class white families offer an image of the "American Dream," and works to socialize students into American values but in doing so directly "others" them.

In my research, I often noticed the hidden curriculum at work. One example, which will be transcribed and analyzed in Chapter 6, is from a textbook exercise on "rooms in the house." The page in the book displayed a two-story home with three bedrooms, two bathrooms, landscaping in the front, and a beaming Eurocentric white family with two children, a mother, and a father. Beyond the undertones of race and ethnicity, many of the students in the class were from lower socio-economic groups and lived in multi-family apartments – some with as many as ten siblings living together.

Although she never discussed it with me directly, Ms. Santos was implicitly aware of these discrepancies and would often insert statements into her lessons that covertly challenged them. During the "rooms in the house" exercise, for example, she noted that there were two bathrooms in the house but immediately follows it by saying "How many people have only one bathroom? That's ok – not everybody has two bathrooms."

While I do not address the hidden curriculum directly in my analysis, this literature contributes to the social dimensions and negative effects of curriculum that I explore in my analysis, especially when considering how and what kind of students are made visible or invisibly in the education narrative.

3.2 Immigration Studies in Linguistic Anthropology and Education

Chapter 2 in combination with the introductory section of this chapter focused on how language policy has complicated immigrant students' academic outcomes. In the following section, I consider literature that looks at how these policies play out in the classroom. The work in this section critically examines how institutional ideologies get taken up and reinforced through every day practices that influence how immigrant

students see their own academic success, as well as their understanding of difference and belonging.

This research emerged from the subfield of language socialization (LS) in linguistic anthropology, the cornerstone theory that argues that the process of language learning is culturally mediated. In other words, LS argues that as children acquire the grammar of languages they are socialized into, they also gain cultural knowledge and tacit norms for when, where and how to talk and with whom. In sum, linguistic competence co-occurs with communicative competence (Ochs and Schieffelin 1984). This field of work laid the foundation upon which other scholars would apply the same theory to L2 learners (Ochs and Schieffelin 1984; Wortham 2002).

By acknowledging the complexities of ideas about language and language use within immigrant populations, scholars have examined when children choose to use certain forms of talk, with whom they use different forms and how their position within a marginalized community affects how they make language choices (Chun & Lo 2015; García-Sánchez 2013; Hill 1998; Reynolds & Orellana 2009; Tetreault 2015; Uricuoli 1995). Linguistic Anthropologist Jonathan Rosa's 2016 article critically examines what happens when students fail to meet the expectations of English that are pervasive in US school ideologies, and how prescriptive language practices in schools are often racialized in ways that delegitimize the linguistic practices of minority students (2016). He argues that standardized language practices provide an opportunity for social and academic mobility for students who are capable of mastering English while limiting or entirely negating the bilingual (or sometimes trilingual) capabilities of students from minoritized linguistic groups. In this fieldwork, teachers regularly referred to Spanish L1 ELLs as

"bilingual" as a derogatory euphemism, meaning that they were "language deficient" or not yet "fluent" in English by institutional standards. Rosa argues here that the idea of bilingualism is afforded different (negative) value for minority language students than it is for white middle class English speakers, for whom being "bilingual" in a foreign language is an asset (Rosa 2016:169). These racialized ideologies that place value on certain languages through institutional talk (i.e. the value of being bilingual in Spanish vs. English) delimits the how linguistic groups are perceived institutionally and works to negatively impact first generation and second generation immigrant students by framing them as "language deficient" (Rosa 2016:169).

Within the past two decades, scholars have had opportunities to not only look critically at how language policies, ideologies, and practices work to marginalize immigrant populations, but also to how these populations react to, reconstruct, and negotiate their experiences (Guttiérez and Rogoff 2003; Mendoza Denton 2008; Talmy 2008).

Importantly, immigrant populations must be looked at from local perspectives as opposed to being generalized within their identity as second language learners. Education scholar Kris Guttiérez and developmental psychologist Barbara Rogoff argue that while there has been a push to broaden cultural understandings of immigrant student populations, they have often been approached as monolithic within their linguistic groups. Regarding education, ignoring the complex ways in which participation is a process in constant flux overlooks the nuanced negotiations that take place on interactional day-to-day levels between immigrant populations (Au 1980).

Sociolinguist Norma Mendoza-Denton's (2008) groundbreaking work on Latina female gang identity examined how positionality is negotiated and solidified through certain language registers between Chicano youth. She was particularly interested in how talk mediated peer groups that aligned themselves as American born natives against newer Mexican immigrants. One of her main findings was that peer groups often used different linguistic registers to align themselves in direct opposition to homogenizing ideologies that positioned Chicano youth as a monolith (2008).

Her work disrupts the mainstream narrative of immigrant or minority homogeneity, where individuals are made to negotiate their individual identity against widespread ideologies that subvert the reality of heterogeneity within their community. By creatively using language practices to deconstruct this imposed homogeneous identity, they reconstruct what it means to be citizen within the context of their speech community.

In another article on ESL classrooms in a Hawaiian high school, Linguist Steven Talmy (2008) shows that the nuanced processes of socialization are bi-directional. They at once work to socialize "novice" speakers into new forms of communicative competence while also presenting spaces where students negotiate, contest, and reconstruct their identities as novices. Through his interactional analysis of classroom talk, Talmy shows the ways in which high school students contest and reconstruct their positions as ESL students in the classroom as they gain new forms of communicative competence.

A common goal of the literature presented here is to apply the foundations of language socialization (which assumes that learning to talk is mediated by sociocultural knowledge) to explore how talk (i.e. codes, registers, and modes of expression) is a

means of inclusion and exclusion among minoritized communities within classrooms and peer groups. This work speaks to my own research, as I found similar processes through which Arab-ESL students were "othered" by moments of disjuncture with institutional practices (e.g. teacher fronted question-answer) that were built on a curriculum that was constructed under homogenizing presumptions regarding ESL students.

3.3 Cross-Linguistic Studies on Arab Immigrant Youth & Peer Group Language Use (in and out of schools)

Although there has not been much research done on Arab-ESL groups in New Jersey, scholars in education as well as anthropology have studied Arabic-speaking communities in the US and internationally. This research provides a source of observed challenges and issues within Arab immigrant communities that I could look for within my own research.

Linguistic anthropologist Inmaculada García-Sánchez's research on Moroccan Muslim students in Spain focused the quotidian ways that political and social ideologies get taken up and reproduced in the classroom through classroom talk. Grounding her theory in the contentious historical relationships between Castillian speaking natives and immigrants, she identifies how membership, belonging, and identity are constructed and contested through forms of distinction, authentication, and authorization between students and teachers (491). She argues that despite the school's assumption that they were inclusive, these forms inadvertently contributed to the erasure and marginalization of Arabic-speaking students as outside of the national culture and collective. Furthermore, she notes the frequent oversight of pedagogical moments available to the teacher within these interactions.

Although her work takes place outside of the US context, García-Sánchez's work sets up a productive model for exploring issues of belonging and difference in the classroom

that integrates conversation analysis with language ideology and marginalization theory from linguistic anthropology. My current analysis focuses on how forms of instruction work to marginalize certain linguistic groups but García-Sánchez's work offers opportunities to expand this interactional research for future studies into how these processes encode ideas about belonging and difference in a US context.

Asta Cekaite and Karin Aronsson looked at Arabic-speaking immigrant populations in Sweden. Their work showed the ways humor is played with in forms of repetition and recycling within interactions among Arabic-speaking students. Within this framework, students displayed unique forms of competence that worked to align them socially with their peers in the classroom (2004).

Youth in Arabic-speaking communities face unique challenges in balancing their identities at home and in the classroom. Especially for students from Muslim majority countries, they must constantly make negotiations in identifying as both citizens of a new nation and citizens of their religious or ethnic communities. While some scholars find that Arabic-speaking communities choose to assume new national identities that align more closely with their new community (Di Lucca and Pallotti 2008), others find that the balance can be more difficult (Sarroub 2005). As other work on immigrant populations has shown, academic experiences play a large role in the process of understanding belonging, citizenship, and national identity for Arab immigrants (Chun 2013; Ramos-Zayas 2007; Rymes and Pash 2001; Willett 1995).

Education scholars Lucia Di Lucca and Gabriele Pallotti examined the changing language ideologies and characterizations of Moroccan Arabic-speaking immigrants in Italy. Their findings show that as students advanced and were socialized into the school

system, they became straddled between languages and cultures. As their native language of Moroccan Arabic was confined to the house, Italian became the language used in most other parts of social life. Through this process, di Lucca and Pallotti found that rather than cherishing the "myth of return" or "opposition to assimilation of Italian cultural values" that earlier waves of immigrants tended to project, these students began identifying as bi-culturally Italian and Moroccan (2008: 68). Furthermore, the authors found that schools became the locus for constructing these ideologies, where multilingualism was not restricted but local language ideologies and practices that favored Italian became a fast and easy way for Moroccan students to assimilate.

Linguistic anthropologist Chantal Tetreault's work with Algerian teenagers in the cites (low-incoming housing areas) of France observes how their language indicates unique forms of resistance and identity. She found that adolescents often use forms or impoliteness or transnational language ideologies to recreate their own identities within a community that challenges their status as French citizens. She argues that, more so than solidifying group membership, "communicative styles provide adolescents the means to express, re-imagine, and sometimes subvert social hierarchies of age, class, race, and gender" (2009: 66). Through these every day practices, youth can be acknowledged as active participants in the way they are constructed socially but also in how they creatively construct identities of citizenship against and through these social constructions.

Education scholar Loukia Sarroub's (2005) longitudinal ethnographic work in Dearborn Michigan focused on the home and school experiences of Yemeni Muslim teenage girls. Through her fieldwork, Sarroub found that cultural and religious tensions between home life and school life contributed to how Yemeni girls conceptualized their

own sense of identity and belonging in spaces where they were constantly confronting issues of gender, ethnicity, and religion.

From these studies, researchers have found that political and social tensions, religion, and language have contributed to the complex ways Arab immigrants identify themselves as citizens in a new country. Furthermore, this research has shown that both global and local issues contribute to how Arab youth become "othered" institutionally through classroom experience. What is not addressed, and where I see my own research contributing, is how within a US context there is an oversight of linguistic groups in state standards and also sociocultural dimensions that are interrelated in the ways Arab-ESL students become marginalized at instructional levels.

3.4 Literacy Studies

One of the underlying problems specifically overlooked for Arab-ESL students is the presupposed orthographic knowledge embedded within the state and school curriculum. Literacy challenges for Arabic-speakers have been documented by studies in ESL (Fender 2008; Ryan and Meara 1991), which was formed out of a movement that linguistic anthropology was a foundational part of.

Up until the 1980's, literacy studies had been dominated by research on pedagogy and the psycholinguistic aspects of reading and writing (Baynham and Prinsloo 2009). In 1982, Shirley Brice Heath's *Ways with Words,* written during a time teachers genuinely sought to learn from newly integrated populations, introduced a new era and agenda for studying literacy that focused more on the social contexts through which children acquire and practice literacy. In "What No Bedtime Stories Means: Narrative Skills at Home and School", Heath provides an abridged version of the full-length *Ways with Words* which

shows how literacy, like other aspects of language, is a socialized process that does not emerge as a monolith across cultures. She argued that literacy is practiced and taught differently, even within different English speaking variations, but that schools tended to reflect the literacy practices typical of middle class white communities. Like Susan Philips work on how talk and participation is socialized differently across cultures, Heath acknowledged that students socialized into literacy practices outside of dominant institutional practices were at risk of performing poorly in mainstream schools. This social turn has allowed researchers to focus on issues of literacy in second language acquisition as they emerge in different linguistic groups and there is a body of research that acknowledges the challenges Arab students specifically face in acquiring English literacy (Fender 2008; Nassaji and Geva 1999; Ryan and Meara 1991).

I see my work contributing to this existing literature in multiple ways. First, linguistic anthropologists like García-Sánchez and Rosa are chiefly concerned with politically and socially rooted disparities that emerge institutionally for minoritized linguistic groups (2013; 2016). In my research, I found that part of the disjuncture Arab-ESL students dealt with in the classroom was similarly rooted in the contentious nature of language policy that has historically affected minoritized groups. Others, like Tetreault, Mendoza-Denton, and Gutiérrez are not only concerned with how these groups are minoritized but with deconstructing the myth of heterogeneity across migrant populations from a linguistic perspective. Similarly, there are strengths and weaknesses that Arab-ESL students have in contrast with those of Spanish-speaking groups in the credit recovery program. Rather than positioning these differences as a hindrance, I find them critical for the future development of better classroom instruction that benefits Arab-ESL

students. I also find my work intersecting with literacy studies like Heath's which acknowledge the ways that institutional practices in literacy can overlook and marginalize students are socialized into non-dominant reading practices. For Arab-ESL students, their instruction in literacy presupposes orthographic knowledge and overlooks the different literacy practices students arrive with from non-English and non-Spanish linguistic groups, which are then exacerbated by the reliance on textbooks and written tests in the classroom.

In the next chapter, I present the data I collected and the linguistic anthropological methods through which I analyzed interactions to show how instruction (shaped by state standards and an oversight of Arabic specifically) cause disjuncture in Arab-ESL student's ability to perform and be evaluated in the target language.

CHAPTER 4

DATA AND METHODOLOGY

4.1 Data

Between the summer months June-August of 2016, I was a participant observer in one ESL 1 classroom during a credit recovery course located in New Jersey. I employed a host of ethnographic methods typical of cultural and linguistic anthropological inquiry. In addition to participant observation I conducted interviews, wrote ethnographic field notes, made audio and video recordings, and drew diagrams/maps of classroom activities. I attended class 2-3 days per week for the two-hour class period over the course of six weeks. During each class period I collected audio and video recordings using a handheld audio recorder and an iPhone camera. I also conducted unstructured interviews with students as well as the teacher that were documented from memory after each session in my field notes. With students, my questions centered around their life history and experience in US schools. With the teacher, Ms. Santos, I was more concerned with discussing her experiences with Arab-ESL students and her perspective on how they were institutionally handled academically. In addition to these methods, I made diagrams of the room to record where activity and movement was centrally located.

Each day I attempted to document a page of field notes, especially during the first week when I chose to not video or audio record. From these field notes I was able to identify which recurring issues were present in the classroom such as the classroom exercises. This is where I began to develop an idea of how to code my eventual audio

and video. I chose three classroom exercises to offer in the analysis for a few reasons. First, these were days that most of the students were present. Absenteeism was an ongoing problem so sometimes as few as half of the students were present. I also chose these excerpts as they were representative of almost every exercise I documented in my field notes. They also mark a little over half of the way through the course and the end of the course, giving a better contextualization of progress and ability over time. Finally, these excerpts were pulled from days that I was not asked to assist other students, nor were there any significant gaps of disruption from Ms. Santos being pulled out of the classroom to translate or deal with student issues.

I coded audio and video recordings using discourse-centered and conversation analytic approaches, focusing on salient forms of teacher-student interaction and how turn taking (Sacks, Schegloff, and Jefferson 1974) and repairs (Lyster 2001) were negotiated. I also identified recurring clarification questions (O'Malley et. al 1985; Rubin 1981), as well as student-student interactions in group work (Waring and Wong 2010). Specifically, I am combining units of analysis offered by conversation analysis (which reveals the organization of social interaction) (Schegloff 1992) with analytical approaches in education from Susan Philips work on participation structures and Hugh Mehan's work on IRE sequencing. This integration of analytic forms became useful in showing (1) how talk in this classroom is institutionally bound by default patterns of interaction and evaluation that overlook the variance in Arab-ESL student literacy and fluency compared to other ESL students in the classroom (2) how these oversights delimit opportunities for Arab-ESL students to interpret themselves as successful English speakers and (3) how state mandated curriculum and assessment play a role in these

processes and further contribute to the inadvertent marginalization of Arab-ESL students in the classroom.

4.2 Conversation analysis and IRE Sequences

Conversation analysis was developed out of sociology during the 1960's by Harvey Sacks, Emanuel Schegloff and Gail Jefferson to reveal the underlying social organization, rather than linguistic aspects, of interaction (Duranti 1997; Goodwin 1990; Schegloff 1992). In response to movements in other fields of language such as the "cognitive revolution" forged by Noam Chomsky. Conversation Analysis (CA) rebuked the notion that conversation was irrelevant to analyze at an interactional level. Schegloff, Sacks, and Jefferson put forth the idea that conversation was in fact the level of analysis at which shared meaning, understanding, and coordination was observable (Goodwin 1990).

CA uses techniques to see how participants use talk as a resource in the interaction order to negotiate social organization and that these tacit understandings can be recovered by undertaking a sequential analysis of turns at talk. In other words, it offers a systematic way to show how participants manage interaction moment-to-moment to accomplish specific actions and the expectations and assumptions that inform participation (Goodwin 1990; Wooffitt 2005). In educational studies, conversation analysis has been used to show the ways in which classroom talk is organized and managed as a bidirectional process between students and teachers (Koole 2012). For my research, conversation analysis became a way to show how classroom talk was partially institutionalized with turns pre-allocated by the teacher, which then allowed me to more critically observe disjunctures in how these forms were negotiated by Arab-ESL students.

The three-part Initiation-Response-Evaluation (IRE) (sometimes referred to as Initiation-Reply-Feedback) sequence has been the most commonly identified form of interaction in classroom settings (Koole 2012). Hugh Mehan's work on the IRE sequence has been foundational in looking at how teachers manage talk and turn-taking in the classroom. He found that classrooms were patterned from opening to close using a specific sequence of interaction (1979). This sequence solicits known information from students through a first position initiation by the teacher, which is responded in the second position by a student, and that response is then evaluated (or repaired) by the teacher.

The basic structure of an IRE sequence begins with the "Initiation" – a question, statement, or directive that can either be directed at a particular student, or the entire class. Then, the "Reply" is provided by a student and is "Evaluated" by the teacher. The following is an example of a basic IRE sequence:

Table 4.1- Standard IRE Sequence

Initiation	Reply	Evaluation
Teacher: If there are four girls and five boys at the party, how many guests do I have?		
	Student A: Nine Students	
		Teacher: Correct

Unlike a basic question-answer adjacency pair format where the answer to the question is not presupposed, the Initiation position in the IRE sequence can take several

forms and is unique in its solicitation of "known information." Mehan addresses the

kinds of IRE elicitations as follows (Mehan 1979: 43-46):

1. Choice Elicitation – An initiation that requires agreement or disagreement from the respondent.
   T: Is this play a comedy?
   S: Yes
2. Product Elicitation – An initiation that requires a "factual response"
   T: What color is the sky?
   S. Blue
3. Process Elicitation – An initiation that requires the respondent's opinion or interpretation.
   T: Jon, what do you think?
   S: The story is a comedy.
4. Metaprocess Elicitation – An initiation that requires the respondent to display their logical arrival to a thought.
   T: How did you know the story was a comedy?
   S: There were multiple weddings.

Below is an example from my data of a *product elicitation* between the teacher and an

Arabic-speaking student as well as an example of a *product elicitation* between the

teacher and a Spanish-speaking student. The lesson Ms. Santos is conducting centers on

a vocabulary exercise from the textbook. The goal of the exercise is to have students

correctly identify what room in the house certain activities are typically conducted in.

Table 4.2 - Teacher/Arabic-Speaking Student Basic Product Elicitation

Name	Initiation	Reply	Evaluation
Ms. Santos	Sara, you ok? (.) Number three, Sara.		
Sara		°I cook in the kitchen°	
Ms. Santos			I cook in the kitchen.

Table 4.3 - Teacher/Spanish-Speaking Student Product Elicitation

Name	Initiation	Reply	Evaluation
Ms. Santos	Number one is I watch TV in the what?		
Maria		=In the <u>liv</u>ing room	
Ms. Santos			In the living room.

In both examples, the sequence follows standard IRE format where the first position is the teacher soliciting specific information from a student, the second position is the reply from the student, followed by the third position in which the teacher evaluates the answer to either confirm it as correct, or initiate a repair if the answer is incorrect.

These examples are illustrative of "known information" elicitations where the teacher's initiation question is meant to produce a specific display of knowledge already held by the teacher. Therefore, evaluation of the reply is dependent on the student correctly replying with the teachers intended response. Classroom talk heavily engages this kind of evaluation- based exchange of known knowledge question/answer sequence, and was the most frequently occurring in my own data as well. Given that these are ESL IRE sequences, the teacher repeats verbatim what the student replied with downward intonation. This was a typical form of affirmation of a correct answer whereby the ESL teacher uses repetition not to target a trouble source in need of repair, but as another opportunity to model correct linguistic forms.

The second example is also illustrative of a common sequence identified frequently throughout this analysis that some literature refers to as a designedly incomplete

utterance (DIU) or more simply, a "fill in the blank." Within the DIU sequence, the first initiated position by the teacher contains an utterance to be completed by the student. In the second example, the initiation position is marked by Ms. Santos providing an incomplete utterance to be completed in the reply position by the student. Here, evaluation is based on Maria's ability to correctly fill in the missing piece of Ms. Santos' initiation utterance. Mercer's 1995 work on learning has identified this kind of exchange as a "guided construction of knowledge," where learning is scaffolded through talk sequence (1995). Ms. Santos provides "I watch TV in the what?" to which Maria replies "in the living room," correctly filling in the "slot" setup by Ms. Santos' first position initiation.

This type of turn is frequently used in classrooms and can be effective for building knowledge but some literature warns against its overuse and its tacit ability to evaluate learning. The argument here is that the initiation response sets up and determines too much of the answer, leading the student almost directly to the correct response rather than soliciting their existing knowledge or, alternatively, appropriately identifying a trouble source (Margutti 2010; Mercer 1995).

Although this critique is targeted at a specific type of IRE turn, similar arguments have been made regarding the general pervasiveness of IRE sequences. The main argument of these critiques revolves around the idea of what counts as "learning" or the display of learning as it regards the Evaluation position. IRE sequences can also limit the active contribution of the student (Mercer 1995). For example, in each sequence provided, both students have appropriately replied to the initiation setup by Ms. Santos, and therefore "learning," in this case the acquisition of the target linguistic forms, is assumed by their

correct reply. In the context of ESL classroom management and other pedagogical strategies, this sequence has appropriately tested and evaluated student knowledge.

4.3 Participation Structures

Turns in education research (e.g. the turn in literacy studies mentioned in Chapter 3) from the quantitative and psycholinguistic to the social (Baynham and Prinsloo 2009) allowed for research to approach classroom talk as a socially mediated process. Parallel to Heath's study on literacy events and socialization, Susan Philips argued that the organization of participation (i.e. who can participate, in what ways and in what contexts), differs cross culturally (1993; 2011). In her work at the Warm Springs Indian Reservation school, Philips attempted to find an explanation as to why students from the reservation performed poorly in class relative to their non-Indian counterparts.

By observing interaction in the classroom at home and in school, she found that classroom talk was not just sequenced into structured forms of participation between teacher and student (acknowledging Mehan's IRE structure) but that multiple structures emerged across these forms that were contextually dependent. In other words, although the structure of participants stayed the same insofar as the teacher remained the addressor (or initiator) and the student addressee (or respondent), how participation was structured (i.e. who can talk and when) changed within different social contexts.

For example, teachers can initiate an elicitation by asking a question to the entire class with the expectation or invitation that one student will raise their hand and answer. Alternatively, the teacher can address one student directly at their desk to ask the same question. Although the roles in each remain the same, the expectations of participation (who is invited to speak and when) changes.

Like Heath (1982), Philips found that these changes in "participant structures" was a socialized process. Furthermore, she found that Warm Springs students were socialized to participate differently within their own communities than they were expected to in the classroom. Teachers frequently defaulted to forms of participation (such as engaging the whole class to volunteer, or calling on an individual student) that Indian students were not inherently socialized into. For example, the idea of learning from making mistakes is one that the teacher assumed was beneficial, whereas the students did not want to perform until they felt they had mastered the forms. They thus experienced these public displays as shaming (Philips 1993; 2011).

Although I was not able to compare participation structures used at home versus the classroom in my research, Philips units of analysis of participation structures became a robust way for me to show how certain interactions were not only overused but that where other forms of participation emerge, Arab-ESL students "performed" better in the target language but were not evaluated in the same way their performance in other structures was evaluated. Furthermore, I show that in structures where Arab-ESL students were frequently expected to perform and be evaluated, their performance was more constrained than their Spanish-speaking counterparts by the reliance on textbooks and their inability to ask for clarification.

In her research, Philips (1993; 2011) identifies four basic structures of participation that are frequently used in the classroom:

Participant structure 1: The teacher engages the whole class or an individual student. Students may either be called on or volunteer answers by calling out or raising their hand.

Participant structure 2: The teacher interacts with a few students in a small group setting, such as a reading group.

Participant structure 3: Students work independently at their desks but the teacher may still be available to answer questions.

Participant structure 4: Students are divided into small groups that they run independently

Within my data, Participant Structure 1 is not only the most frequently used, but it is consistently deployed using the default IRE structure recognized by Mehan. Out of 48 identified participant structure interactions across three 25 minute exercises, the IRE sequence was used 39 times. In those 39 instances, the teacher called on Arabic-speaking students 16 times.

Although infrequent, only occurring a handful of times throughout the data, participant structures 2 and 4 proved to be moments where Arabic-speaking students in particular were able to produce more utterances in English than within IRE sequences. It is also important to note here that these moments frequently occurred outside of lessons where textbook exercises were relied on for elicitation.

Finally, I used a variation on Participant Structure 3 to identify moments when Arabic-speaking students exclusively used English to engage with the teacher in a one on one interaction. In my own assessment of this arrangement, desk-work was not the significant characteristic and instead, students used the target language to receive help from or engage in conversation with the teacher. I found this to be a useful category of participation as it illustrated moments when students used the target language in interactions where they were (1) not being evaluated for their performance in the target language and (2) not responding within a textbook based IRE elicitation sequence. Drawing from ESL research that acknowledges these moments as having the potential to build fluency in English, I have labeled them "off-script" moments.

In the next two chapters, I use rich ethnographic accounts to frame the forms of participation and evaluation I witnessed followed by micro analysis across these different participant structures to elaborate on the variance in teacher-student interaction between Arab-ESL and Spanish-ESL students while also addressing the specific ways in which state standardization contributes to these forms.

CHAPTER 5

ETHNOGRAPHIC CONTEXT

5.1 Arrival Story: Introducing the Site of the Credit Recovery Program

It's 8:30am on a hot Friday morning in June and I am stuck in traffic on the New Jersey turnpike. My GPS has relentlessly added time to my delayed arrival by the minute, and the local NY radio station expects "major delays" at the Lincoln tunnel. From my vantage point, I can see the exit I need to take through heat waves radiating off cars and trucks in front of me. From behind me, a driver honks their horn, as if the sound will perform a biblical miracle to part the sea of cars stretched as far as my vision will allow. Rolling my eyes, I take a sip of iced coffee, respond to the honk with a flourishing New Jersey hand gesture, and sigh in defeat. Even having left the house unusually early to make it on time, I am still destined to be late on my first day of fieldwork.

I call the contact number given to me and let them know I will be running late for my meeting with Mr. Ortiz, the summer academy principal I was scheduled to meet at 8:00am. At 9:30am, I finally make it out of traffic. Turning onto Blossom Street, the urban city landscape and anxiety inducing traffic falls away and everything is quiet. Suddenly, I'm in a serene neighborhood of brownstone apartments surrounded by iron gates and sidewalks neatly lined with tall trees. I find McKinley Academic High School, its brick and concrete façade spanning two blocks of the neighborhood, fitting in neatly among the upscale brownstone apartments. I hear no noise coming from the building and there is not a soul around as I press the intercom at the front door.

When the front desk attendant buzzes me in, the atmosphere immediately changes. I am greeted by makeshift security stations with metal detectors and sounds of a gym teacher's booming voice. He appears to be leading a warm up that seems more like boot camp exercise than gym class. I also hear students walking down the hall speaking in at least three different languages, as the school resource officer heckles them to get back to class.

At the front desk I meet Mr. Ortiz, who seems confused by my presence until I clarify that I'm researching ESL students for my master's thesis. He quickly registers who I am and takes me into the teacher's lounge which has been converted into a temporary principal's office. Mr. Ortiz, a subject high school teacher during the year, has taken on the job of "head teacher," a pseudo principal for the district's summer credit recovery program. He sits down at his computer and asks if I mind waiting for a moment while he deals with a "student issue". I say "of course" and open my folder to make sure that the background check, consent forms, and approval letter from the school that I brought with me are all present. I look around the room and notice that the long table I'm sitting at, which I assume is usually for teachers to relax, has been converted to work stations for other acting administrators of the summer academy. When Mr. Ortiz is done, I remind him that I need to provide consent forms and he generously makes copies for me before taking me down the east corridor towards the ESL classroom he says has "most of the Arab students."

He leads me into a small room with desks crammed together into two rows at the middle of the floor and makeshift desks placed randomly against the bare walls and empty bookcases. A white board covers the front of the room, half of which is blocked by

a dormant Smart Board projector, while the other half is covered in what looks like a grammar lesson on past tense. All the windows at the back of the room are open but the heat is palpable and I realize that I have been placed in a room with no air conditioning.

Looking around, I am greeted by sixteen confused faces as Mr. Ortiz tells the students in English why I will be part of their class for the next six weeks. I am also introduced to Ms. Santos, who welcomes me kindly and then quickly returns to her lesson. As I seat myself at the only available chair in the back of the room near a round table piled with textbooks and a sign in sheet, one student raises her hand and asks, "Who is she?" in Spanish. Ms. Santos repeats in Spanish what Mr. Ortiz said as the front row of students listen attentively.

In the back of the classroom, I notice seven more pairs of eyes continue to stare at me in confusion as they whisper quietly to one another instead of paying attention to Ms. Santos. The tiniest student, a small girl with big brown eyes wearing a teal blue hijab and black air Jordan sneakers over her maroon Monroe High School shirt speaks rapidly to the others and I acknowledge that they are listening to her speak in Arabic. I try to listen in but realize quickly that my limited training in Egyptian colloquial might not be enough to understand their fast-paced speech. I instead look down at the sign in sheet and notice that some of the names are barely legible, spilling outside of the college ruled lines, some letters written backwards or crossed out entirely.

"Tell them your name again, please?" Ms. Santos suddenly switches back to English as she turns towards me. For a moment, my brain struggles to process the three languages being spoken all at once and I pause. "My name is Juliane" I finally say, focusing on the

back row as the tiny girl in blue looks at me fiercely but with a smile, "Nice to meet all of you."

5.2 Summer Credit Recovery Academy 2017

The northern New Jersey city my fieldwork took place in an area that has undergone major transformation throughout the past few decades. As wealthy millennials working in the city move into developing parts of the neighborhood to avoid Manhattan housing prices, lower income families from ethnically divided neighborhoods have been pushed further to the outskirts of an area that has been their home for generations.

Like many low-income cities across the US, gentrification has slowly made its way to this previously low-income urban area, populated primarily by black and immigrant communities. Independently owned businesses, once the cornerstone of development in immigrant neighborhoods, are increasingly being bought out to make room for corporate owned coffee shops and high-end artisanal boutiques. Bodegas, Kosher delis, and Italian food markets that now seem crowded and out of place, fight to be seen against the veneer of refurbished brownstone apartments and brunch cafes.

Seated adjacent to a pristine park and some of the priciest apartments in the city, William McKinley high school straddles a divide between the old and the new. From the outside, pillared entryways, intricate stonework and well-manicured trees line the sidewalk. An entrance above the foyer door reads "William McKinley Academy: US Newsweek's Top 50 US Schools". McKinley, a STEM magnet charter school, is considered the best in the district and ranks top ten across the state. They require a rigorous application process and top testing scores for admission. According to the New Jersey Department of Education, McKinley exceeds expectations on all levels in

statewide assessments (NJDOE 2016). The reputation of McKinley extends to its students, considered to be the city's best and brightest – almost guaranteed college placement with funding.

McKinley Academic High School is also where the district's summer credit recovery academy was housed. Students from two nearby schools, Monroe and Arthur, were eligible to enroll in the eight-week credit recovery program if they had failed a class or had an extended interruption in instruction during the regular year. To pass a credit recovery class, students were required to achieve a passing grade (C or above) in the class.

Classes ran Monday-Friday from 8:30am until 2:00pm, with two-hour class periods and a lunch break. Unlike a normal school year, students only had to stay for the classes they were required to take so while some stayed the duration of the school day, others were free to leave once their class ended. Credit recovery was available in every academic area required to graduate, including technology and Physical education. Teachers from the district could apply to either teach for a maximum stipend of $5,000 in their intended field, or apply as a "head teacher" for a higher stipend.

5.3 Ms. Santos

Born and raised in this part of the city by a Puerto Rican immigrant family, Ms. Santos was an elementary ESL teacher during the regular school year but had applied to teach ESL for the summer credit recovery program. She returned to school after raising her own children to pursue a master's degree to work in positions requiring highly qualified ESL teachers. On the first day of my study, Ms. Santos confided in me that for the past few years, the district had given her Arabic-speaking students in her ESL class, assuming

her training would be sufficient. However, she expressed that she often felt they stuck Arabic-speaking students with her as a last resort, not having any institutional plans for these incoming students. As the summer progressed, I could tell that even as someone with extensive training in ESL, she struggled to address Arabic-speaking students' specific academic needs. More than once she reported working late hours trying to differentiate lessons in a way that might benefit her Arabic-speaking students but not having the pedagogical or cultural training she felt was required.

5.4 The Row in the Back: Student Descriptions

Although this data was collected from only one classroom, it was representative of what an average class looked like in the credit recovery program. Most of the students in the school spoke Spanish or English, as did many of the faculty members. Ms. Santos, a bilingual Spanish teacher, was one of many I met working at the credit recovery program. In my interviews with Ms. Santos and other administration members, I was frequently told that ESL teachers specifically were primarily bilingual in Spanish – Arabic bilingual teachers in any discipline were rare to nonexistent in the district. The teachers I spoke to noted that this lack of bilingual faculty was an increasing concern, as the number of Arabic-speaking students in the school system has increased substantially over the past few years. In Ms. Santos' classroom, there were seven students who spoke Arabic as a first language. Given the nature of this research, I want to introduce each of these students individually to give their personalities more nuance as they emerge in my analysis.

Emi
Emi, a 15-year-old Yemeni native, was the small girl I mentioned at the beginning of this chapter. When I met her, she was living with her parents and brothers in the

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neighborhood most dominated by Arab immigrants. She was a tiny figure, barely reaching 5-foot-tall, with a personality bigger than the entire room. Emi had a sharp tongue and a quick wit in English, and an even feistier personality in Arabic. In my field notes, I often referred to her as the "leader" of her peers and even once joked that she was the "mayor of the classroom." A maestro of conversations, she often arrived early to class and would spend the extra time moving between the desks of her Arabic-speaking peers, changing her tone with each person like a skilled politician. During these interactions, Emi spoke primarily in Arabic but would also make small conversation in English with Spanish-speaking students.

Gesturing with sweeping hand motions and an expressive face, she would banter with Omar, a male Arabic-speaking student, before sitting down to talk softly with the more quiet and timid students, Sarah and Miriam, about their weekend. If Ms. Santos needed someone to broker for another student, Emi acted as the default translator. While she lacked confidence in interactions during lessons, Emi was verbally the most fluent in English among the other Arabic-speaking students, having been in the US for more time collectively (approximately 2years) than the others.

Emi's time in the US and her English abilities seemed misplaced in the Level 1 ESL classroom. After living in the US for two years, her family had returned briefly to Yemen for a period of roughly six months. When she arrived back to the US, she was placed in ESL 1 by the school district. As I came to discover, Emi, like many of the other students, performed poorly on exams and quizzes, despite her verbal fluency.

Given that the ESL 1 classroom was one of the only spaces in which she practiced English, Emi was self-aware that Speaking, (one of the four major categories of skill and proficiency identified across ESL pedagogy) was her strongest skill but often conflated her low test scores and her difficulty in reading as a marker of being bad at English. She told me that she wanted to be a doctor but believed her "bad English" would keep her from getting into college.

On a self-evaluation sheet Emi filled out, she wrote down that on a scale of 1-4 from "Not Improving" to "Improving" she believed her Speaking and Listening were at a 3, but her Reading and Writing were at a 1. On the same evaluation, she circled in a set of key words that her work in ESL was "Too hard" and "Not interesting" and that the subject she needed help with the most was "English."

I grew closer to Emi than any of the other students. She took joy in testing me on my Arabic and laughed appreciatively as she corrected me when I stumbled over pronunciation and I would constantly praise her on her ability to use English so casually in conversation. If I accomplished nothing else during my time at McKinley, I truly hoped that my many conversations with Emi about her future and her above average English did something to increase her confidence as a student.

Omar
Omar was 16 and his family was from Egypt. Unlike Emi, Omar was reserved both in Arabic and in English. He had a strong bond with Emi and Aaron, a Hindi-speaking student from India. In their group together, Omar frequently switched between speaking Arabic with Emi to English with Aaron. As a student, Omar was consistently reluctant to participate and showed constant physical signs of disengagement. He kept headphones

and put his head down during lessons, only raising it when directly instructed by Ms. Santos. Try as he might have to convince the class otherwise, Omar performed very well on tests and was much more fluent in English than he let on. While he actively tried to avoid participation, he responded to classroom talk

Omar was also the only male Muslim student in the classroom, which made him the recipient of some unfortunate discrimination from Spanish-speaking male students. On one day, I had my back turned to the class when I heard desks move and verbal commotion only to find Omar standing with his fist pulled back, ready to hit another student. Immediately, I stepped in between them and only found out later that the other student had called Omar a religious slur. If he had been reticent before, this even made Omar retreat even further into his shell.

The only time I saw Omar smile was during my first week of observation. I had not spoken in Arabic to any of the students yet but they were aware of what I was doing in the classroom. One day, when Omar came in to sit down, I greeted him with a standard Arabic greeting "*Sabah al-khair*" (Good morning). His eyes lit up with a smile and responded, "*Sabah al-noor!" (*Common response to *sabah al-khair*) then asked me in English "You speak Arabic?" to which I replied "*Shewaya*" (A little). From that morning on, I tried to greet him in Arabic and he would respond in kind.

Sara
Sara was a 16-year -old student who had recently arrived from Egypt earlier in the year but late enough to need credit recovery to move on. I never knew if it was in outright defiance or if she had special permission but Sara was the only student who never wore the school uniform. Instead, she always opted for t-shirts with rhinestones or graphics in

English, cargo capris, and flip-flops. Sara was closest to Miriam, another Egyptian student who had only arrived a month before the school year ended. Despite her own limitations in English, Sara was Miriam's primary broker in the classroom and often completed writing assignments for her, as Miriam could not write in English script.

Miriam

Miriam was the oldest student in the class at 17 and had only arrived in the US a month before the school year was over. Her struggle with English was exacerbated by the fact that she had not yet been taught to write the English alphabet so her ability to ask questions, perform on tests, and participate in lessons was deeply inhibited by the lack of instruction she was provided. One example of how this became incredibly problematic is detailed in the next chapter. Despite her limitations, Miriam was incredibly sweet and was grateful for anything I did to provide her with assistance. I purchased a copy of *Lord of the Flies* for her in Arabic and she thanked me multiple times during the class and even connected with me on Facebook after I left.

The Botros Siblings

The last of the Arabic-speaking students I worked with were three siblings from Egypt. I had the least contact with these three students, as they were frequently absent or arrived very late in the day. The brother, Youssef, was the most advanced English speaker of his siblings, who he often brokered for in the classroom. Farah was the oldest of the group, while their sister Aya was the youngest. The three stuck together during all group work so that Youssef could assist them. Of all the students, the Botros siblings relied the most on technology to translate, often using translation apps on their phones to complete work or translate what they did not understand.

5.5 Classroom Environment and the Affective Filter

When I arrived at the classroom each day at around 8:15, some students like Emi, Miriam, and Sara were already seated and eating breakfast but many barely made it to the last bell at 8:30am. The Botros siblings, for example, were at least twenty minutes late every day of my observation. Students who were late multiple times throughout the program were marked down and were in danger of receiving even lower marks for repeat offenses but this did not seem to be a consequence they were concerned about. I wondered why so many students were late or did not care about being late until one day on my route home, leaving the school long after the period had ended at 10:30, I saw students walking down a residential street more than two miles from the school. A large majority of students lived outside of the area McKinley academy was located, so getting to school either meant finding a ride or walking the entire distance from home. On a hot summer day, walking that distance in a school uniform seemed like a task I would not have been willing to accomplish quickly.

Even when students finally made it to school, the building did not provide a comfortable learning atmosphere for credit recovery students. During the normal year, McKinley classes typically accommodate 8-10 students but most of the credit recovery classes had 16-20 students, forcing classrooms to be packed with extra desks. Ms. Santos' classroom was small and crowded with chairs that had been added to accommodate the number of students taking her class, constricting walkways and floor space. Two rows of desks were arranged facing the white board, half of which was covered by a Smart Board that was off limits for teachers in the credit recovery program.

I generally sat at a large round table next to Ms. Santos's desk at the back of the classroom, sharing space with at least three other students who could not find a desk on any given day.

The air conditioning was broken for almost the entire summer, making the crowded classroom even more unbearable during New Jersey's hottest months. In an effort to make the room cooler, Ms. Santos left a set of windows open which lined the wall behind her desk and my round table but this did little to help in this urban landscape, where tall buildings block any hope of a breeze.

The heat became an ongoing problem and a metaphor of frustration for students. Discomfort in the heat was frequently used as an excuse for why work was not being done, why a student acted out, why someone did not participate, and especially why someone needed to leave class for a cup of water. The school dress code also required students to wear polyester uniform shirts and slacks, a rule the faculty and staff brutally enforced.

On the most stifling days, students would resist by wearing their uniform shirts around their necks with a tank top or short sleeve shirt underneath, or simply not wear one and run the risk of being sent home. To make this situation worse for Muslim students in the class, the recovery program ran through June and July, which were also the months during which Ramadan took place in 2016. This meant Muslim students could neither eat nor drink anything during the day, making it impossible for them to seek relief from the heat as other students did with a cup of cold water or a snack to keep them alert. Muslim students also ran into issues after Ramadan with the free breakfast and lunch provided by the schools.
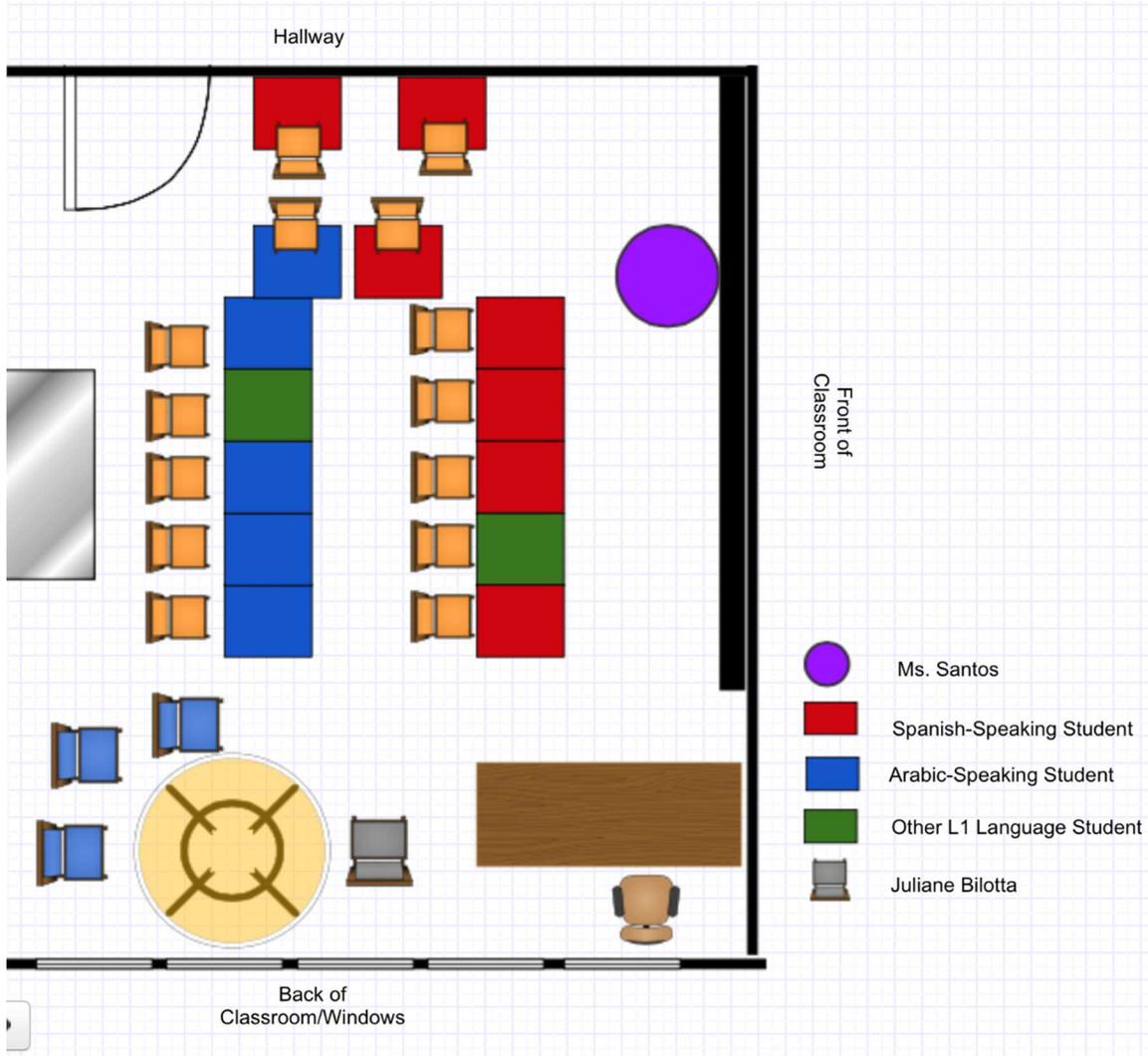
Figure 5.1 – Layout of the classroom

Additionally, on days where pork based products such as hotdogs, bacon, or even gelatin desserts were served, students would have to throw away most of what was provided.

Second language acquisition research, and most ESL strategy textbooks will mention what theorist Stephen Krashen refers to as the "affective filter" (Higgs and Krashen 1983). The affective filter is usually defined as how the learning environment and the

levels of stress a student is under affects their language retention rates. As such, many TESOL teaching strategies suggest working to lower the affective filter but there are circumstances, such as the heat and the schools' negligence of dietary restrictions, that even the most skilled teacher cannot work against. Not only does an insufficient learning environment raise the affective filter and inhibit learning, it can also foster conditions for students to act out.

5.6 "Bad Kids" and "Good Kids"

When behavioral issues arose, like the physical altercation that emerged between Omar and another student, I was surprised to hear how callous some faculty members were towards students and it seemed as if these moments were fulfilling certain stigmas of students in the credit recovery course.

Perceptions of credit recovery students seemed to stem from the localized notion that "bad kids" went to Monroe and Arthur. This was even more exacerbated by the general stigma of students in summer school programs as "failures" and the fact that no students in the program came from McKinley, which was understood by teachers and students alike as a "good school." These categories of what schools were "bad" and "good" underpinned many conversations I had with faculty members. In one conversation with a male science teacher at the program, I asked if any of the students taking a credit recovery class were from McKinley. "Oh, no. McKinley kids don't go to credit recovery." Almost all the students enrolled in the program, including those I worked with, were from Monroe and Arthur High School.

Monroe and Arthur are in the same part of the city as McKinley but are public rather than charter schools. Both receive a significant amount of state funding and are

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categorized as "Focus" schools, which means that the state has identified them for failing in an area related to graduation rates, performance, or a combination of the two (JCBOE 2016). Speaking to both family and friends that live in the area, as well as the students and teachers I worked with, it was clear that Monroe and Arthur were culturally considered "bad schools." It was ironic then, or perhaps somewhat cruel, that these students were forced to spend their summers taking classes in a place many of them would never have access to.

Evidence of the mentality that Monroe and Arthur students were "bad" was present everywhere. Each morning, I was greeted by faculty members stationed outside of the front door of the school and was ushered to bypass a line of students being herded through metal detectors manned by SROs (School Resource Officers) at the entrance. They checked backpacks and purses, ordered hats to be removed, and uniforms to be adjusted before being granting students access to the building. A few mornings, I even saw them detain students for a pat down if the metal detectors went off.

   Disparities between McKinley, Monroe, and Arthur were visible on a demographic level as well. The school district in total includes 79 schools, collectively serving over 27,500 predominantly Latino (36%) and Black (28%) students. Over 11% of students in the district are classified as ELLs (JCBOE Vital Statistics). Continuous with the economic and social demographics of chapter two, this area has many low-income immigrant and minority families. In 2013, 65% of students in the district received free or reduced lunch and many have the option to also receive free breakfast (2013 Annual Report).

In 2014-2015, Monroe and Arthur students were identified as predominantly Black and Latino while McKinley's largest population was identified as Asian. As far as ESL student populations, the data was even more fraught. Between 2011 and 2015, Monroe and Arthur saw an increase in ELL students as well as students for whom Arabic is the primary language spoken at home (where ELL students are differentiated as those who did not pass language proficiency for mainstream education upon enrollment). Interestingly, McKinley had a similar pattern of increase in students for whom Arabic is the primary home language but showed a total of 0 ELL students in both the 2011-2012 and 2014-2015 performance report. It is relevant then to understand that although there is commensurate representation of Arabic-speaking students in each high school, the 0% of ELL students present at McKinley suggests that there are no services for ELLs.

Table 5.1 – Percentages of ESL Students at Arthur, Monroe, and McKinley

School Name	Percent Arabic-speaking 2011-2012	Percent Arabic-speaking 2014-2015	Limited English Proficient Students 2011-12	English Language Learners 2014-2015
Arthur	8.2%	8.5%	15.8%	16.8%
Monroe	4.3%	7.5%	22.6%	26.5%
McKinley	6.2%	8.2%	0%	0%

Although Monroe and Arthur provide ESL services, it begs the question of how equitable this district is for its ELLs. Both Monroe and Arthur are under performing in graduation rate and college placement where McKinley has reported 100% in both graduation and college placement. Although not within the scope of this thesis, the issues presented by

the data are consistent with critical research that shows the overrepresentation of ELLs in under-performing schools (Menken 2010, Suárez-Orozco et al. 2008).

Furthermore, the labeling of students in the credit recovery program as "bad" is in part a racialized process of low-income students from minority groups being overrepresented in schools with fewer resources. ESL programs depend on the state to allocate resources for their development. In schools like Monroe and Arthur, where resources are already constrained, ESL programs often lack the faculty and financial support necessary to address the needs of a growing and changing demographic of ELLs.

In the next chapter, I discuss how the current state standards and forms of assessment for ESL programs privilege an outdated demographic of ELLs and in so doing, set up Arabic-speaking students for failure. I then show how these disadvantages play in the credit recovery classroom, where Ms. Santos is constrained by the curriculum to default to certain forms of evaluation, which limits and disadvantages how Arab-students can perform successfully.

CHAPTER 6

ANALYSIS

On my first day in the classroom, I noticed the attendance sign-in sheet at my table with names scribbled in fractured and uneven handwriting. Letters were separated by inches or crammed together, d's and g's were backwards, and half of the names spilled outside of the blue ruler lines. Watching students sign in the next day, I saw that the distressed handwriting invariably belonged to the Arabic-speaking students, some of whom approached the task of writing their name with painstaking effort and concentration.

On my second day, I watched Miriam, only in the US for two months at the time, write her name with a ruler that had stencils of English alphabet letters cut out of the middle. Ms. Santos told me that she had provided Miriam with the ruler after she realized how far behind she was compared to many of the students. On her tests, Miriam scored lower than most students, sometimes leaving entire sections blank if they involved writing. Ms. Santos told me that many Arabic-speaking students are never properly taught the alphabet when they arrive, and that she had run into the same problem with several Syrian refugee students that had been placed in her class.

For Spanish-speaking students still struggling to write in English, Ms. Santos allowed them the option of writing answers to listening exercises in Spanish but not knowing Arabic, she was unable to afford that option to students like Miriam. Having a limited ability to read in Arabic myself, I asked Ms. Santos if I could experiment by offering

Miriam the option to respond in Arabic on a listening exercise, which she agreed to. Like me, Ms. Santos was curious if Miriam's issue with writing translated into her comprehension. When I told Miriam to write her answer for the listening portion in Arabic. She smiled and said "*Fi Araby*?" (In Arabic?) with a laugh. I nodded and said "*Naam! Fi Araby!*" (Yes! In Arabic!). Sitting two seats down from Miriam, without missing a beat, Emi looked at me and asked, "You read Arabic?!" As with most of my attempts to speak in Arabic, Emi found my limited Arabic endlessly humorous and intriguing. It was not uncommon for teachers in the district to be bilingual but there was almost no faculty that was bilingual in Arabic so students had little contact with native English speakers who were interested in, let alone attempting to learn, their own language.

After the test, I looked over Miriam's answer to the listening portion. Even in my limited language capacity, I could see that she had understood and correctly responded to the prompt. When I translated what Miriam had written for Ms. Santos, she was pleasantly surprised but lamented that more students like Miriam would continue to "fall between the cracks" without a change in how the curriculum was structured. This case study was my entre into the following analysis of other forms of oral participation in the class which were mediated by print, and inevitably impacted how Arabic-speaking students were informally evaluated.

6.1 WIDA State Standards for ESL Curriculum

In my research on New Jersey language education I found that literacy and writing skills for Arab-ESL students were overlooked in all state standards and assessments,

leaving the task up to teachers with no resources available on how to teach Latin script to non-English students.

In 2013, New Jersey adopted standards and assessment through WIDA, an organization that is federally funded to design assessments and curriculum specifically for ESL programs. WIDAs standards are based on differentiated proficiency standards that group students into a "Tier" and "Level" in Reading, Writing, Speaking, and Listening for each grade level (K-12). Students identified by a district as ELL or bilingual are initially placed into 1 of 3 tiers that overlap and are further broken down into six levels of proficiency. Teachers and administrators decide what tier and level a student belongs to based on their previous instruction or arrival to the US.

Tier A and Tier B overlap at levels two and three (Entering and Beginner). The recommendations for placement into these two tiers are as follows:

"TIER A is most appropriate for English language learners who:
- have arrived in the U.S. or entered school in the U.S. within this academic school year without previous instruction in English, OR
- currently receive literacy instruction ONLY in their native language, OR
- have recently tested at the lowest level of English language proficiency"

TIER B is most appropriate for English language learners who:
- have social language proficiency and some, but not extensive, academic language proficiency in English, OR
- have acquired some literacy in English though have not yet reached grade level literacy"

Once placed in a tier, students are categorized by skill into one of six levels. At each level, there are standards of mastery called "Can Do Descriptors" that indicate when a student is ready to move on to the next level. These descriptors are broken down, by level, even further into categories of (1) Recount: Display knowledge or narrate experiences and events, (2) Explain: Clarify the "why" and "how" of ideas, (3) Argue:

Persuade by making claims supported by evidence, and (4) Discuss: Interact with others to build meaningful and shared knowledge (WIDA Can Do Key 2016). The students in Ms. Santos' ESL 1 class were classified as Tier A and Tier B (with some having failed during the regular year while others had disrupted instruction or late enrollment) and were categorized as Level 1 (Entering) or Level 2 (Emerging).

By the end of the course, Ms. Santos was supposed to cover a range of topics to build the "Can Do Descriptors" skills for Levels 1 and 2. For example, the "Can Do" skills for "Explain" at Tier A and B, Levels 1 and 2 are listed below:

	ELP Level 1 Entering	ELP Level 2 Emerging		ELP Level 1 Entering	ELP Level 2 Emerging
READING	**Process explanations by** • Identifying key words and phrases that describe the topics or phenomena • Recognizing sequence statements and illustrations that describe phenomena	**Process explanations by** • Identifying different types of connectors that show relationships between topics and phenomena • Differentiating between technical and everyday vocabulary that describe phenomena	**LISTENING**	**Process explanations by** • Ordering events or stages of phenomena from oral statements • Identifying words and phrases related to sequence	**Process explanations by** • Sequencing steps in processes or procedures described orally • Comparing information, symbols, or icons on charts or tables described orally
WRITING	**Explain by** • Producing short responses to questions using word/phrase banks • Labeling charts, graphs, timelines, or cycles to describe phenomena	**Explain by** • Using transitions and connectors to show causal relationships or procedures • Choosing everyday or technical language to describe phenomena	**SPEAKING**	**Explain by** • Ordering events or stages of phenomena with sequential language (e.g., first, next, step 1) • Using words and phrases to identify visually supported phenomena	**Explain by** • Naming properties, characteristics or features of illustrated content-related topics • Posing and responding to Wh-questions that relate to phenomena

Figure 6.1 – Example of WIDA "Can Do" Descriptors, 2016

Miriam, from my example at the beginning of this chapter, would be classified as a Tier A student at Level 1(having recently come the US with no prior English training). At this level, WIDA standards mandate that for Reading and Writing, students should learn mastery of "words, phrases, and chunks of language" and "phrase-level grammatical structure" (WIDA 2012). Curriculum exemplars provided by WIDA reflect skills outlined in the "Can Do Descriptors" that at a beginning level suggest exercises to develop mastery of short phrase level grammar use (WIDA 2012).

The WIDA state standards of reading and literacy presuppose orthographic knowledge and insinuate a homogeneity among ESL students. In alignment with the current laws regarding ESL policy, this school district has developed its ESL program to accommodate a large Spanish-speaking population. However, they now have a larger population of diverse linguistic groups, such as those represented in my study, who have no prior instruction in English writing but are still expected to perform under the expectations of a curriculum that presupposes knowledge of Latin script.

In addition to being disadvantaged by state standards as it presupposes literacy in Latin-based orthographies, there is research to suggest that even with training, Arab-ESL students tend to struggle in acquiring reading and literacy skills (Fender 2008; Nassaji and Geva 1999; Ryan and Meara 1991). In his 2008 article, Michael Fender found that in a study of Arab-ESL students and proficiency equivalent ESL students from other linguistic groups, Arab-ESL students performed much lower on literacy tests but equal to or higher than other groups in speaking and listening. Importantly, these studies argue ESL literacy is more dependent on word recognition efficiency as opposed to oral language proficiency and vocabulary knowledge (Fender 2008). In other words, these

studies show that reading for ESL students is more dependent on being able to decode text and recognize words than it is on knowledge of vocabulary. Furthermore, this argument suggests that if oral language proficiency is not indicative of reading proficiency, then reading proficiency is also not a marker for oral language proficiency.

Arab-ESL students consistently had a perceived difficulty in participating in lessons where speaking was complicated by reading from a worksheet or a textbook. However, due to the condensed curriculum and time of the course, Ms. Santos often defaulted to these exercises. In almost every class I observed, speaking opportunities were given within the context of answering questions from a textbook or worksheet exercise. By way of example of this general pattern, here I provide a typical lesson where Ms. Santos evaluated vocabulary skills through a textbook exercise. This was during the middle of the course, at which point students had already taken their midterms. It was a rare day when almost all the students were present, which meant that a lot of side conversations took place and Ms. Santos had to reprimand them more than once to quiet down. At this point in the semester, students had segregated themselves into distinct peer groups with Spanish-speaking students always sitting together, while Arabic-speaking students (as I mentioned in the last chapter) always sat together in the back.

In the analysis which follows, I examine how Spanish-speaking students display word recognition efficiency in an exercise meant to develop vocabulary knowledge. I also show how their ability to rapidly recognize words expands the initial IRE sequence into a clarification question, which is taken up by other Spanish-speaking students as an opportunity to answer. Using a textbook illustration of a house, Ms. Santos described the name for each room (e.g. bedroom, bathroom, garage) and talked about the activities that

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go on in each room (sleeping, brushing your teeth, parking the car). The goal of the

exercise was to have students use the picture to correctly fill in an accompanying set of

fill in the blank sentences such as "I eat in the ____."

    In this excerpt, Maria answers Ms. Santos' initiation in the first position by filling in

the sentence "I watch TV in the ____" with the correct answer "living room."

Table 6.1 - Textbook Exercise 1: Ms. Santos/Maria/Lina/Ricky

1 2 3	**Ms. Santos**	So we go over here (.) on page two fifty \<seven\>, there's some question – well \<not really\> they're sentences.
4	**Maria**	=I watch the TV in the=
5	**Ms. Santos**	=Number one is I watch TV in the what?
6	**Maria**	=In the <u>liv</u>ing room
7	**Ms. Santos**	In the living room.
8 9 10		Does anybody watch TV anywhere else? (.) In my bedroom. Right? (.) In the dining room sometimes. Some people have a TV in the kitchen.
11	**Lina**	=Como se dice cocina?
12	**Ms. Santos**	[Kitchen]
13	**S-Speaking Student(s)**	[Kitchen]
14	**Ms. Santos**	[Kitchen]
15	**S-Speaking Student(s)**	[Kitchen]
16 17 18	**Ms. Santos**	Kitchen. (.1) Ok, so living room, kitchen, dining room, bathroom, bedroom, closet, and garage. Number two.
19 20 21	**Maria**	I eat dinner. Miss. Miss. ((raises hand)) I eat dinner=
22	**Ms. Santos**	=Hold on, Hold on
23	**Maria**	I eat dinner in the=
24	**Ricky**	=In the kitchen.

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25   Ms. Santos   In the kitchen? Ok.

In Line 4, Maria reads the question out loud to herself first from the page before Ms. Santos provides the question verbally and then responds with "In the living room" in Line 6. Lines 5-7 typify the basic IRE sequence, where first position initiation (Line 5) provides an elicitation opportunity for the student to use and display vocabulary knowledge from the lesson. In the next sequence, the IRE sequence is expanded when Lina (Line 11) asks for Ms. Santos in Spanish to pronounce the word for "cocina." Lina has heard Ms. Santos pronounce the word "kitchen" and asks for a pronunciation, which indicates that she may have preempted the answer to the next question, "I eat in the ____." Ms. Santos provides the correct pronunciation for "kitchen" and repeats it three times before moving onto the next initiation sequence.

Maria displayed word recognition (reading proficiency) by being able to read the sentence out loud before Ms. Santos provided it (Line 4) as well as speaking proficiency by then identifying the correct vocabulary word. Similarly, Lina displayed word recognition by preempting the answer to number 2 (Line 11), also building pronunciation through Ms. Santos' clarification of the word "kitchen." Lina also draws on Ms. Santos' bilingual ability to ask for the correct pronunciation in her L1, which prompts several Spanish-speaking students to repeat the pronunciation and gives Ricky (Line 24) the opportunity to use the word "kitchen" to answer the next question.

Calling out to answer or bidding (e.g. Maria, Line 15) were common ways that Spanish-speaking students displayed both literacy and verbal proficiency during these textbook lessons. In more than half of the IRE interactions that I observed, Spanish-

speaking students bid to answer questions rather than being called on by Ms. Santos. Arab-ESL students on the other hand rarely bid to answer questions and were even interrupted by Spanish-speaking students if they took too long to answer. In the following example, Ms. Santos continues the lesson on rooms in the house. Instead of allowing Maria to bid for her answer, Ms. Santos calls on Omar. He begins to read the question out loud and is interrupted by Maria and Lina.

Table 6.2 - Textbook Exercise 2: Ms. Santos/Maria/Omar/Lina

1	**Ms. Santos**	I cook in the kitchen. Number four?
2	**Maria**	((raises hand))
3	**Ms. Santos**	Omar?
4	**Maria**	Miss! [I wash in the]
5	**Omar**	[I wash in the (.)
6	**Lina**	=bathroom
7	**Ms. Santos**	>Sh sh sh< Hold on.
8		Go head. Go head.
9		>no no no< Go head.
10	**Omar**	>I wash in the bathroom< (Places head on desk)
11	**Ms. Santos**	I wash in the bathroom.

Unlike Spanish-speaking students, Arabic-speaking students rarely (if ever) raised their hands to answer questions. Ms. Santos did her best to evenly divide participation between everyone in the class, often calling on Arabic-students who rarely chose to bid. In the above transcript, "Textbook Exercise 2" Ms. Santos has just called on Sara (Arabic-speaking) to answer number three before calling on Omar to answer number 4, ignoring Maria's non-verbal attempt to bid. Maria then bids verbally in Line 4, and starts

to read the answer, speaking over Omar. Omar begins to read the sentence but takes a pause. Here, Lina jumps in with the answer "bathroom". Ms. Santos reprimands Lina and tells Omar to continue. He repeats the answer quickly before placing his head on his desk. Although Ms. Santos gave Omar the opportunity to correctly answer the question, he is visibly deflated by Lina's interruption and repeats the answer without looking at the textbook.

Fender argues that Arab-ESL students have more difficulty with literacy than other groups of ESL students, which can manifest as poor performance in a classroom where textbook reading is required in almost every lesson. He states that "Slow or inefficient word recognition processes constrain the flow of information to text interpretation and comprehension processes and limit the amount of text information that can be taken in and processed in a limited-capacity comprehension system" (2008:19) In other words, the inability to rapidly recognize words inhibits what a reader can interpret and comprehend.

Fender suggests strongly that the Arab-ESL students have with literacy is in part linked to how Arab-ESL students acquire literacy in their L1 (First language). At the beginning stages of learning, Arabic-speaking children learn to speak colloquial dialects but learn to write in Modern Standard Arabic. MSA is comprised of 25 consonant letters, and three long form vowels. Three are also three short form vowels that are represented as diacritic marks above or below consonant letters. In the beginning stages of literacy development, children learn to read a transparent "fully-vowelized" orthography, or conventional spelling system, that includes diacritic marks (Fender 2008). As they get older, diacritic marks are omitted and most text in Arabic, especially in the media, is written without diacritics (Fender 2008). This means that most adolescents will have been

experienced in reading orthographic forms with hidden vowels by the time they reach high school levels. However, even with the hidden vowel characteristic of MSA, contextual interpretation through consonant based morphemes in Arabic are more reliable than English, which tends to have "irregular and inconsistent" spelling cues and spelling patterns (Fender 2008).

Fender suggests that because Arab-ESL students begin with a "transparent orthography" which is then learned as a relatively consistent and intuitive "opaque orthography," they instinctively apply the same practice in decoding English (2008). Unfortunately, this practice often does not map correctly onto the inconsistent patterns of English grapheme-phoneme spellings. As a result, studies show that Arab-ESL students consistently take more time to decode written English and make more errors than their other ESL counterparts (Ryan and Meara 1991). Returning to the transcript excerpt above Lina's inadvertent public hazing of Omar because of his delay in answering resulted in an unfortunate deflation of his confidence. Furthermore, having the answer already spoken verbally denied him ownership of answering the question correctly.

Even students that displayed advanced proficiency in speaking, like Emi, had difficulty in reading out loud. In the next example, Emi has been called on to answer. This was toward the end of the semester the day before the final. Students were rowdy from the heat and promise of freedom the following week, which meant Ms. Santos had to work hard to manage behavior and talking in the classroom. Her goal that day was to do as many exercises as possible before the weekend and their final exam. The goal of the worksheet was to add the correct contraction to a sentence. Ms. Santos has already

called on another Spanish-speaking student who bid to answer the first question before she calls on Emi.

Table 6.3 - Textbook Exercise 3: Ms. Santos and Emi

1	**Ms. Santos**	K. Number two (.)
2		Emi, read number 2 -Ricky, stop. (.)
3		Number two.
4	**Emi**	((Picks up paper and motions to paper with pencil in
5		left hand))
6	**Ms. Santos**	Read it.
7	**Emi**	Umm…
8		((other students begin to talk))
9	**Ms. Santos**	Sh sh sh sh sh.
10		Number two.
11	**Emi**	The (points to paper) the=
12	**Ms. Santos**	=The lizard
13	**Emi**	° has not been –
14	**Ms. Santos**	Pet
15	**Emi**	=Pet for a long time so I'm not happy about it. °
16	**Ms. Santos**	So I'm not happy about it. I am becomes I'm.

In Line 4, Emi uses non-verbal cues to signal that she needs clarification for the trouble source "lizard" and in Line 13, she pauses at the word "pet." Emi normally spoke loudly and clearly but when answering questions in lessons, her voice dropped to a whisper so that even mistakes sometimes went unnoticed by Ms. Santos. The examples of Emi and Omar's difficulty in answering questions within textbook based lessons was a consistent issue throughout the course. Given that using recommended textbook assignment was the primary way Ms. Santos could complete such as condensed

curriculum in the eight-week course, students like Emi had limited opportunities to use their English in exercises that were not in part dependent on reading skills. Given the research on Arab-ESL students and literacy and the oversight of orthographic knowledge in state standards, it frequently seemed as if the odds of success were stacked against Arabic-speaking students in this classroom.

6.2 Repairs and Clarification

Having mastery over Latin script in their L1, Spanish-speaking students succeeded more during lessons that involved both reading and speaking. They also benefitted from Ms. Santos' bilingual abilities to ask for clarification in Spanish, an option that was not available to Arabic-speaking students (e.g. Emi's non-verbal gesture for clarification in Line 4). Having the ability to use their L1 to ask questions gave Ms. Santos the opportunity to provide better support to initiate repairs for Spanish-speaking students.

In second language learning, the correction of errors or "repairs" happens frequently and is important for building comprehension (Lyster 2001). SLA theorists interested in studying repairs find that they can play out primarily as self-initiated (repaired by the speaker) or other-initiated (repaired by another interlocutor) (Allwright and Bailey 1991). There are other dimensions of repair available in an interaction such as a self-initiated other-repair (where the speaker acknowledges the mistake and asks for explicit clarification) and other-initiated self-repair (where the interlocutor or addressee acknowledges the mistake and the speaker self-corrects) (Allwright and Bailey 1991).

Spanish-speaking students in the class frequently asked clarification questions during lessons, which Ms. Santos primarily responded to in English. In the data I coded, Spanish-speaking students asked questions in Spanish 75% more often than they asked

questions in English. Although Ms. Santos responded to most questions in English, it still gave Spanish-speaking students an advantage that was not afforded to Arab-ESL students.

The following transcript is an example of how Ms. Santos dealt with error, repair, and clarification differently between the two linguistic groups. In this exercise, students were given a worksheet that Ms. Santos had created with scrambled sentences. Each represented an interrogative or imperative, and the goal was for students to correctly unscramble the sentence according to the punctuation. In addition to the given punctuation, Ms. Santos also indicated what word the sentence should start with by providing a capitalized first letter. For each student, she asked them to unscramble and read either the imperative or the interrogative version of the statement. Instead of allowing people to raise their hand to answer, Ms. Santos called on each student individually. The first transcript is an expanded IRE sequence with a repair after Lina has difficulty with the name "Allison."

Table 6.4 - Repair Sequence: Lina and Ms. Santos

1	**Ms. Santos**	Number eight Lina?	
2	**Lina**	A l lee sun (.2) Say—	*Error*
3		E ll I son	
4	**Ms. Santos**	=Allison	*Other Initiated repair*
5	**Lina**	((pointing to paper) Cómo es eso?	*Clarification requested*
6	**Ms. Santos**	Far. A ver lejos.	*Clarification*
7		So, how would you say it?	*provided/*
8		[Allison (.) can (.) see (.) far.]	*Other initiated repair*

| 9 | **Lina** | [Allison (.) can see far.] | *Self-repair* |

In Line 2, Lina struggles to pronounce the word Allison, which Ms. Santos provides the repair for. Then, Lina points to the worksheet to indicate that she needs a definition for the word "far," and Ms. Santos translates the definition of "far" into Spanish before allowing Lina to try again. Lina's request for a clarification in Line 5 is not based on the initial trouble source (Line 2) but by asking for clarification, Ms. Santos is doing double work to construct or repair vocabulary knowledge.

While I argue that being able to use Spanish in the classroom benefitted certain students, Ms. Santos also knew how to provide repairs for Arab-ESL students even though she was limited in being able to differentiate instruction to adequately attend to consistent mistakes such as spelling and reading. Looking to the next transcript, Emi is called on to perform the same task of unscrambling an imperative sentence. On the paper, the sentence read "The are fish jumping."

Table 6.5 - Repair Sequence: Emi and Ms. Santos

1	**Ms. Santos**	Number 4, Emi?	
2	**Emi**	The (.) are (.) fish	*Error*
3	**Ms. Santos**	[The what?]	
4	**Emi**	=oh wait. Th-Th- The <u>are</u> fish=	*Error*
5 6	**Ms. Santos**	=The are fish jumping. What's the correct way of saying that?	*Error acknowledged*
7	**Emi**	The fish <u>are</u> jumping.	*Self-repair*
8	**Ms. Santos**	The fish are jumping, very good.	*Evaluation*

Although Ms. Santos could provide the right repair for both students, this is another example of how defaulting to textbook exercises became an issue of performance for Arab-ESL students in the classroom.

Emi begins the sentence incorrectly and acknowledges her own mistake. When she restarts the sentence again, she makes the same error, reading the sentence as it appears on the paper. Whereas Lina's error in the first example is an issue of pronunciation, Emi's mistake seems to be more complex and text based. Although I have no data to support that Emi understood all the vocabulary, her error was rooted in syntax and did not indicate a pronunciation or vocabulary issue. However, given that she is self-aware of the mistake in Line 6 but makes the same error, and is then able to respond correctly when she hears the sentence (still scrambled) read out loud, it can be implied that her error was even more text based than it was syntactic.

This excerpt above was taken earlier in the semester, before their midterm. On that day, I noted that it was incredibly hot and students were very vocal about being uncomfortable. Ms. Santos was under pressure to prepare them for the midterm and went through exercises quickly, not pausing long to explain and working primarily towards getting through sentence structure, which she knew would be on the test. I personally do not remember this excerpt, which happened at the beginning of class, as much as I remember the end. Shortly after this exercise, Ms. Santos stepped out of the room to translate for a Spanish-speaking parent and asked me to watch the classroom. While I had my back turned, moving on to a new textbook exercise, Omar and another student came close to a physical altercation and I had to physically jump into the middle of the situation.

6.3 Formal Assessment of ELL Students in New Jersey

The limited form of textbook based IRE style sequences meant that students rarely used English outside of these lessons. The formal assessments Ms. Santos was required to give students were also disproportionately geared towards literacy skills over verbal and vocabulary proficiency.

In New Jersey, ELLs are required to take the ACCESS for ELLs 2.0 English Proficiency assessment. The ACCESS for ELLs 2.0 is an annual standardized test administered by WIDA, the same initiative that New Jersey adopted for its ESL state standards.

ACCESS for ELLs 2.0 is optionally given to students online or on paper. Verbal and written instructions are given, in English, for each section of the four-part test. Listening and Reading are administered first, followed by Speaking and Writing. The tests are timed to run no longer than 45-60 minutes per section but can be given over multiple days. In accordance with the state standard guidelines, the students in summer credit recovery were required to take one midterm and one final to pass the course. These formal assessments were modeled after the paper version of an ACCESS for ELLs 2.0 assessment.

Like WIDA's assessments, the exams were broken up into four sections. Reading was first and students were asked to read and answer a series of multiple choice (MC) questions or fill in the blanks (FIB) that tested grammar and vocabulary. Listening came next and had MC and FIB questions but as opposed to reading a question, students wrote their answer in response to prompts read out loud by Ms. Santos. Writing consisted of one prompt that students responded with a written paragraph.

Administered correctly, the last portion should have been speaking. Ideally, Ms. Santos would have taken each student individually and given them questions to answer orally like "What is your name?" and "Tell me about your family." However, due to the limited time frame of the class and the number of students, Ms. Santos was not able to properly administer speaking portions of the test for either formal assessment. Instead, she provided the questions in writing, repeated them out loud twice, and asked students to write their responses. While I was not able to obtain data on how Arabic students generally did on these tests, based on class performance and students' stated difficulty with Latin-based script as evidenced in text-based exercises and their sign-in sheet writings, this was yet another challenge the students had to face in their evaluation.

6.4 Other Forms of Interaction

Arabic-speaking students in the classroom I observed faced unique challenges that cannot be reduced to one root cause. At a state level, New Jersey's state standards fail to address some of the specific challenges Arabic-speaking students face, especially in literacy. On another level, the condensed structure of the summer credit recovery course limited how Ms. Santos could structure classroom lessons and exacerbated gaps in the curriculum for students like Miriam, who had not been taught Latin script, or like Emi, who was a proficient speaker but had literacy issues that mapped negatively onto her performance in a program where lessons are restricted to textbook exercises and written assessments.

All the students in Ms. Santos' class relied on speaking in their L1 to peers outside of lessons. Spanish-speaking students were also able to communicate with Ms. Santos in Spanish, which at times was helpful for scaffolding or differentiating lessons for lower

level students. Arab-ESL students only had the option of speaking to Ms. Santos and myself in English, forcing them to use generative language in non-academic talk. I found that capturing these moments to transcribe was difficult, especially when students were talkative during breaks, but they were incredibly robust.

6.5 Off-Script Conversation

In this chapter, I presented Emi's difficulty in reading from a textbook grammar exercise on contractions. Revisiting that same transcript, this excerpt includes her interaction with Ms. Santos immediately before being called on.

This interaction is an expanded and reanalyzed version of Table 6.3 (86). The students were anxious to leave, as it was now August and the heat was brutal. In the recording, Ms. Santos asks the class if they are ready for number one and Omar shakes his head "no" jokingly. Between the heat and the stress of taking a final, the class started to get distracted and loud in the transition between a previous exercise and the one in progress. Ms. Santos asks them to be quiet and reminds them that they have "two days" left, implying that they only need to pay attention and behave for "two more days." Reminding students (or perhaps themselves) how many days were left in the course was a common theme from the faculty. Every afternoon before dismissal at 10:30, Mr. Ortiz would remind students how many days were left, and Ms. Santos wrote the number of days left on the board each morning next to the date. Students with no absences were able to skip the last day of class while many, like Emi, had to finish out the week.

Table 6.6 - Textbook Exercise 3 expanded - Off-Script Conversation

1	**Ms. Santos**	You got <u>two</u> days guys
2		<u>don't</u> mess up now. (2)
3		Two days, Some people only have <u>one</u> day.

4	**Emi**	(Nods head) But I have two days. (Raises up two fingers))	*Listening/Speaking*
5	**Ms. Santos**	=Ok (.2) Don't mess up now	
6	**Emi**	⇑I'm not messin up⇑ ((Ms. S walks away))	*Listening/Speaking*
7	**Ms. Santos**	K. Number two (.)	
8		Emi, read number 2 -Ricky, stop. (.)	
9		Number two.	
10	**Emi**	((Picks up paper and motions to paper with pencil in left hand))	*Listening*
11	**Ms. Santos**	Read it.	
12	**Emi**	°Umm…	*Reading/Speaking*
13		((other students begin to talk))	
14	**Ms. Santos**	Sh sh sh sh sh.	
15		Number two.	
16	**Emi**	°The (points to paper) the=	*Reading/Speaking*
17	**Ms. Santos**	=The lizard	
18	**Emi**	°The lizard has not been –	*Reading/Speaking*
19	**Ms. Santos**	Pet	
20	**Emi**	=Pet for a long time so I'm not happy about it. °	*Reading/Speaking*
21	**Ms. Santos**	So I'm not happy about it. I am becomes I'm.	

In this exchange, Emi initiates a short conversation with Ms. Santos (Line 4) by responding to her statement that some people only have "one day." She then continues the conversation by asserting "I'm not messin up" in Line 6. Emi displays listening and speaking skills in Line 4 and 6, which goes unevaluated, but is then called on to complete the next question. As my previous discussion notes, Emi's entire demeanor changed

when she was asked to complete the question, lowering her voice and struggling with the sentences. Although she did not have many opportunities to let Arab-ESL students speak English outside of a lesson, Ms. Santos knew that some students, like Emi, were fluent enough to broker for students like Mariam when she needed to convey important non-academic information.

When students produce conversation in the target language that are not specific to a lesson or the teachers "script," some ESL researchers refer to it as "off-script conversation" and argue that it is an effective way of evaluating a student's ability to use conversational speech (Baynham 2006). Although limited in my data, it was clear that when Arabic-speaking students used "off-script" conversation in the classroom, like the example above, they were more confident and productive in their English than during textbook based lessons.

6.6 Group Work

Arabic-speaking students were also productive speaking in small groups. One of their assignments was to write a "bio-poem," a poem about themselves, using descriptions of positive traits given to them from members of their group. Originally, Ms. Santos had made one large group with Emi, Omar, Sara, Mariam, and Aaron (A Hindi-speaking student). During her instructions, two of the Botros siblings walked in late and Ms. Santos reorganized the large group into two smaller groups with just Omar, Aaron, and Emi. Because Aaron spoke Hindi, the group had to speak in English to complete the assignment. After helping other students, Ms. Santos asked if any other groups needed help while walking from her desk on one side of the room towards Emi, Omar, and Aarons group.

Table 6.7 - Group Work: Ms. Santos/Emi/Aaron/Omar

1   **Ms. Santos**   Any questions?

2   **Emi**   Yea. (raises hand)
((Omar and Aaron continue to talk))

3   **Ms. Santos**   This is group work but - you shouldn't talk.

4   **Student**   Claro!

5   **Omar**   Shh! [(puts hand up to Aaron playfully)]

6   **Aaron**   Here we put five?

7   **Ms. Santos**   You need – no, just two. Five when it was the group. The group is
8   small now so – Aaron you should get one from Omar and one
from Emi.

9   **Emi**   Yea.

10   **Aaron**   [   ]

11   **Ms. Santos**   Omar. What do you – when you look at this paper, from the nice
12   side and the positive side, pick something. When you think of
13   Omar, what do you think about?

14   **Emi**   He's mean!

When Emi asked for help in Line 2, Ms. Santos addressed the question but also

reprimanded Aaron and Omar for talking. Having observed this interaction, I believe that

Ms. Santos was responding to the noise level in the classroom in general but I was

surprised that she reprimanded a group using English to communicate specifically. Group

work is a valued method in ESL because it requires mutilingual classrooms to interact

using generative interactive language while also lowering the affective filter by

facilitating cooperation between students (Brown 2001; Long and Porter 1985). Susan

Philips also found that different cultural groups, like those in her study on Indian reservation students, are socialized to speak in small group settings as opposed to the teacher-centric format. Given the limitations of the curriculum, opportunities for students to work in small groups were productive but infrequent. Off-script conversation also generated better production of English from Arab-ESL students like Emi but were not considered for evaluation in the "Speaking" portion of formal assessments.

The purpose of this chapter was to use conversation analysis to look at how the most common form of instruction used in the ESL program illustrated the ways in which Arab-ESL students and their academic needs were inadvertently marginalized and overlooked in the classroom. These issues stem from larger structural issues in the standards practices of New Jersey, which have not acknowledged the growing number of Arabic-speaking students in their schools.

CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSION

On the New Jersey Department of Education website, there is an infographic that displays statistics on ESL students in the state listing Arabic as the second most common non-English language spoken in the home after Spanish. Arabic-speaking students are the fastest growing linguistic demographic nationally and are already a large demographic in areas of New Jersey as was the case in my fieldsite. If you drive outside the pristine boundaries of William McKinley High School's neighborhood, you will see more stores with Arabic signage popping up everywhere. Once considered the enclave of Italian and Irish, then Latinx immigrants, specific parts of North New Jersey are now taking on names like "Little Ramallah."

Despite this, you can also search the ESL/Bilingual Education tab on the NJDOE website and you will only find one document (The 504 Rights for Parents) available in Arabic. At the Summer academy, many teachers who were bilingual in English and Spanish were available to translate for parents of immigrant students but none available for Arabic-speaking students, or their parents. At the end of the regular school year, students were given popular English literature titles like "Lord of the Flies" or "To Kill a Mockingbird" as their summer reading, which included an essay component to be turned it at the beginning of September. Spanish translations of each book were available for Level 1 and Level 2 ESL students. However, when I asked if Arabic versions were available, a faculty member looked at me and asked "Where would you even get

something like that?" (The answer, for curious minds, is online through a company named Jamalon. I was able to order Arabic versions of both books for each Arabic-speaking student in the class before the summer course was over.)

The purpose of my research has been to address the ways in which the challenges and linguistic needs of Arabic-speaking ESL students are currently being addressed in an area with a growing population of Arab immigrants through the prism of a credit recovery program. Due to the constraints of the MA program to complete fieldwork during the summer following the first year of study, I could not observe regular school year classrooms and only had time to participate in the credit recovery program. However, the credit recovery program became a productive site and metaphor for revealing how the system of education is so underprepared to serve Arabic-ESL youth that they are structurally positioned to be placed in a category of deficit (i.e. credit recovery as a place of failure) where they must play catch up using compressed curriculum that only exacerbates the academic challenges that might be apparent during the normal school year.

From this research, it seems as if schools in this area have yet to address, or even acknowledge, how current standards and curriculum overlook the most basic linguistic differences of this new demographic. As I discussed in Chapter 2, language education policy is now at the discretion of the state, and continues to be a source of debate vulnerable to the unsteady winds of politics. New Jersey has attempted to improve its ESL programs over the years but has not yet addressed any new changes it needs to make. New Jersey is not unique in its inability to keep up with changing linguistic demographics. Nationally, second language education is seen as largely failing its ELL

populations. Just this past March, an article in Education Week quoted studies by the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine and the American Academy of Arts and Sciences suggesting that ESL education is more fractured than ever (Mitchell 2017). While some states have regressed back to English-Only policies, and other adopt developmental bilingual programs, ESL students continue to have low graduation rates and ESL programs continue to be understaffed.

In another recent article, the effect of sweeping acts like the recent immigration ban has negatively impacted the more than 6% of students in the United States who are immigrants and refugees in ESL programs around the country (Mitchell and Vara-Orta 2017). With ESL education already threatened by broad cuts to education, the new Trump administration's threat to cut funding from states who do not cooperate with immigration authorities puts schools with large numbers of immigrant students at even more risk.

Using research in education and linguistic anthropology, I have attempted to contribute to conversations about immigrant youth in education broadly, and visible forms of "othering" that occur for Arab-ESL students in instructional forms and state standardization more specifically. Using units of analysis that have allowed linguistic anthropologists to pay attention to structures of participation (Philips 1993; 2011) and teacher-fronted instruction (Mehan 1979), I have isolated the specific forms of participation in which I see Arab-ESL students secondarily being "othered" through instruction and formal evaluation. Given the research available to support the idea that Arab-ESL students have different academic challenges in an ESL classroom (Fender, 2008), I used transcript examples of instruction that illustrate how literacy practices and

orthographic knowledge are presupposed institutionally, leading to instruction that consistently conflates fluency with literacy. Ultimately, this process limits the ways in which Arabic-speaking students can successfully participate in the classroom. Speaking more to the idea of "othering," these interactions manifest as moments of ridicule where Arabic-speaking students are unable to receive the same public evaluation or support that is available for Spanish-speaking students for whom the curriculum does not subvert in similar ways. The ways in which Arabic-speaking students are inadvertently marginalized in the classroom adds to conversations in the linguistic anthropology of education that consider how learning becomes sidelined at levels both structural and interactional (Jaffa 2012; Pine 2015). By attending to the ways in which language ideologies that conflate literacy and fluency make their way into policy and teaching routines in the ESL classroom, this research shows specifically how Arabic-speaking students are disadvantaged by a language ideology that ignores the role of alternative socializations into writing systems and different script literacies.

Given the emphasis on print and literacy as a focal issue in the classroom, linguistic anthropology would also contribute to the future of his research in looking at how Arab-ESL students use print in other scales of modern communication such as online or through social media (Appadurai 2010; Cogan, Grossman, and Liu Grossman 2000). In Ms. Santos classroom, students from both Spanish and Arabic linguistic groups used Google Translate as a method of communication but again, the issue of print comes up as Arabic-speaking students had phones with MSA keyboards. While Ms. Santos allowed the use of Google Translate, the constraint of the curriculum (being so tied to textbook work and tests) did not allow her to explore the possibility of using this as a teaching tool.

The limitations and constraints Ms. Santos contended with made it incredibly difficult for her to explore teaching strategies that would be more inclusive of the linguistic strengths and sensitive to the weaknesses of Arabic-speaking ESL students. She was also aware that even her years of training in ESL could not combat some of the issues that are too deeply embedded within the institution, such as the rigid state standards and assessments. Still, in her own way Ms. Santos did her best to differentiate for students and provide a safe learning environment. I recently contacted Ms. Santos and she told me that her current elementary classroom has many Arabic-speaking students, including the younger siblings of the Botros family. "It's challenging," she said "but it's great. I enjoy teaching them." I also asked what she would want as a teacher to help facilitate accommodating her lesson plans to Arabic-speaking students. She suggested simple things like a translator and bilingual books "Remember that the goal is to teach them English. We don't want to cripple them by giving too much…we just want to be able to communicate back and forth."

Overall, the sense that I got speaking with faculty members was that any resources would be an improvement over what they have now. Creating more access to resources that provide teachers with better teaching tools is one thing, as is giving them training in working with students from multiple linguistic backgrounds. With the amount of research available, simply bringing attention to studies that focus on specific groups of ESL students will give teachers the knowledge to find new ways to differentiate lessons in multilingual classrooms.

Further research into this subject is not only worthwhile but necessary for the development of ESL programs in areas with an increasing number of Arabic-speaking

students. Education has taken a turn towards looking at the social and emotional aspects of learning, giving qualitative research in linguistic anthropology a place to contribute to inquiries concerned with the cultural and linguistic dimensions of how students learn.

The alternative to addressing culturally and linguistically based issues in education is an academic chasm that will continue to grow. For students like Miriam, teachers without the proper resources and training will have no way to prevent students from "falling between the cracks." As for students like Omar, the inability to keep up pace in exercises that privilege students already familiar with reading English script will continue to leave Arabic-speaking students feeling defeated and less engaged. And for students like Emi, assessing proficiency through written assessments and text based classroom work will continue to limit not just their ability to see themselves as a "good student" but a student capable of pursuing their dreams of becoming a doctor.

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