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# Is Self-Sufficiency Really Sufficient? A Critical Analysis of Federal Refugee Resettlement Policy and Local Attendant English Language Training in Portland, Oregon

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Is Self-Sufficiency Really Sufficient? A Critical Analysis of Federal  
Refugee Resettlement Policy and Local Attendant  
English Language Training in  
Portland, Oregon

by

Domminick McParland

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the degree of

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in  
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## ABSTRACT

Since the 1951 United Nations Convention, nations have dealt with refugee issues in various ways. In the United States, since the Vietnam War, there has been great debate and a significant amount of research on issues of refugee resettlement, with these discourses inherently involving issues of power and ideology. English language training and the promotion of economic self-sufficiency have been interventions used to integrate and assimilate refugees into American culture and society. These two interventions were the subject of the current investigation.

The purpose of this study was to look into the way federal refugee resettlement policy mandated by the Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR) construes the notion of self-sufficiency in policy documents; and whether or not that constructed version of self-sufficiency is reflected or reinforced in the local attendant English language training, provided by the Immigrant and Refugee Community Organization's (IRCO) Pre-Employment Training's English language training courses.

Through a combination of Critical Discourse Analysis and analytic techniques influenced by Corpus Linguistics, this study was able to investigate the construal of self-sufficiency in ORR refugee resettlement policy and its reflection in IRCO PET ELT.

The ORR policy Title 45: Public Welfare, Part 400: Refugee Settlement Program and the lesson plans and materials of IRCO's PET's SPL levels 2 and 3 were analyzed with a textual analysis, process analysis, and social analysis. The ORR

policy also underwent a collocation comparison analysis that employed the Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA).

The results of this qualitative study indicate that the federal resettlement policy exploits a common connotation of self-sufficiency to mask its underlying subjugating policies that position resettled refugees into early employment positions with little opportunities for higher education or occupational advancement. The ELT provided by IRCO's PET program reflects and reinforces the ORR's construed notion of self-sufficiency as well as its underlying hegemonic agenda.

These findings this relate to broader discourses of immigration, neoliberalism, and education in the United States. Conclusions drawn from this investigation have pedagogical implications and applications that are discussed.

## Dedication

I dedicate this work to the Siblings McParland,  
from whom I draw great inspiration. Their  
support was the impetus for this pursuit  
and has seen me through  
to the end.

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## Chapter 1: Introduction

My research began during the winter term of 2011. I was enrolled in the TESOL Methods I course as part of the MATESOL program at Portland State University (PSU). In this course students were required to present on issues pertaining to language pedagogy. One group's project dealt with community ESL programs in the Portland area, which included the Pre-Employment Training (PET) program at the Immigrant and Refugee Community Organization (IRCO). Part of the presentation showed a video clip about the circumstances of refugees in Portland who receive services from IRCO. The filmmaker interviewed a service-provider at IRCO about programs offered to refugees, and I was startled by what she said.

The service-provider said that one of the most prominent challenges that faces Iraqi refugees is the fact that even if they had been a professional in Iraq, they would likely be forced to accept a custodial position in the United States. Why? Why does any individual with an economically valuable skill set have to accept a janitorial position in the United States? Is it a result of deficient English language abilities or is there more to the picture?

I found an answer in James Tollefson's (1991) book entitled, *Planning Language Planning Inequality*. Tollefson argues that resettlement policies enacted by the Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR) restrict the types of English language training (ELT) that can be provided to refugees, in part, effectively subjugating them to low-paying entry-level positions in the American job market. I decided to look into the ORR' website and investigate which programs the ORR funded in Oregon.

The first one that appeared on the website was IRCO, sparking the proverbial “light bulb” in my head. Was it possible that IRCO ELT actualizes and perpetuates the subjugating policies of the ORR? If so, how?

I decided to dedicate my thesis work to investigating the relationship between refugee resettlement policies and their associated ELT programs. Specifically, I chose to investigate the relationship between the refugee resettlement policies of the ORR and attendant ELT provided by IRCO. Initial research raised questions in my mind about the use of term *self-sufficiency* in the ORR’s refugee resettlement policies and IRCO ELT.

The central thrust of ORR resettlement policy claims to foster *economic self-sufficiency* in resettled populations. The disparate claims of ORR policies and the writings of Tollefson provoked the following question: if the policy’s purpose is to foster economic self-sufficiency in resettled populations, then why do the vast majority of resettled refugees end up in low-paying entry-level positions? The goal of refugee self-sufficiency in ORR policy is either a failed goal, or a severely restricted use of the term. Does the policy construct and utilize this term in a congruent manner as held by common framing, or does the policy use this term markedly to conceal an alternative meaning and purpose?

Framing, as described by Fairclough (1989) is the mental representations people have towards a particular entity. In other words, *frames* are common connotations people have when they think about things like love, hate, or, in this case, self-sufficiency. Framing, and the best ways to investigate the framing of self-

sufficiency, became a key component as I deliberated on how to best answer my questions.

I decided the best method with which to carry out my inquiry was to conduct a Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) on the ORR's refugee resettlement policies and attendant IRCO ELT texts. CDA would allow me to look at the appearance and usage of self-sufficiency. Specifically, this paper examines *self-sufficiency* as construed and actualized in these two respective discourses.

In the following chapter, I present a review of the pertinent literature to the subject at hand. I do so to position this investigation within the ongoing research-based debate on issues related to refugee integration and immigration, as well as the relationship between public policy and local ELT contexts. Moreover, the subsequent literature review creates space for my investigation within the current body of literature on these issues.

Chapter 3 summarizes and explains the CDA methodology I used as model for my analysis. I also describe the process of analysis for both sets of documents, including the corpus-based collocation comparison I performed with the ORR documents.

In Chapter 4, I present the results of my textual analysis as well discuss interpretations of the data. Some research requires separate chapters for presentation of results and discussion; however, the qualitative approach I employed in this study lends itself to interwoven presentation and discussion of results.

I end with a conclusion chapter, where I discuss how the analyzed discourses relate to and fit in broader socio-historical discourses of immigration, neoliberalism, and education. I discuss possible applications for this research, and I conclude by suggesting further research. The appendices include the ORR policy in its entirety, so others can readily replicate this study.

## Chapter 2: Literature Review

A prerequisite to the investigation of the construal of *self-sufficiency* in the Office of Refugee Resettlement's (ORR) refugee resettlement policy and its reflection in the Immigrant and Refugee Community Organization's (IRCO) Pre Employment Training (PET) English language training (ELT) is a description of the two discursive contexts, as well as a discussion of literature regarding: language and power; public policy (pertaining to language education and refugee resettlement); CDA (generally); CDA and Corpus Linguistics (CL) (as applied to refugee issues, language policy, and ELT); the relationship between refugee earnings and ELT; and, finally, issues of self-sufficiency, agency, and capital. The foundation of this study lies in the contextualization and connections of these topics.

### Office of Refugee Resettlement

The Office of Refugee Resettlement is partially resultant of the 1951 United Nations Convention. The Convention defines a refugee as:

a person who is outside his or her country of nationality or habitual residence; has a well-founded fear of being persecuted because of his or her race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion; and is unable or unwilling to avail him or herself of the protection of that country, or to return there, for fear of persecution. (United Nations High Council on Refugees (UNHCR), 1951, p. 3)

More than defining refugee characteristics, the convention decreed the rights refugees should be afforded - among which are the rights to work, housing and education (UNHCR, 1951).

In an effort to assure these rights and to manage the United States (US) refugee populations, the US Congress authorized the construction of the Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR). Its founding principle is that refugees have intrinsic abilities when given opportunities, the organization “provides new populations with opportunities to maximize their potential in the United States, linking people to critical resources to assist them in becoming integrated members of American Society” (Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR), n.d., para. 1).

The office has six divisions: Anti-trafficking in Persons, Refugee Assistance, Refugee Health, Children’s Services, Office of the Director, and Resettlement Services. Resettlement Services regulates the resettlement process for newly arrived refugees, and aims “to provide for the effective resettlement of refugees and to assist them to achieve economic self-sufficiency as quickly as possible” (Refugee Resettlement Program, 2012, p.345). English language training (ELT) is one platform by which Resettlement Services seeks to support this goal. The ORR policies pertaining to both self-sufficiency and ELT are explored in this analysis. These texts relate to my guiding questions, so analyzing them is appropriate for this investigation.

### **Immigrant and Refugee Community Organization**

The Immigrant and Refugee Community Organization (IRCO) is a resettlement agency largely funded by the State of Oregon’s Department of Human

Services (DHS). The DHS receives funding from the ORR, which results in all ORR regulations directly affecting services provided by IRCO. The organization's mission is "to promote the integration of refugees, immigrants, and the community at large into a self-sufficient, healthy, and inclusive multiethnic society" (Immigrant and Community Organization (IRCO), n.d., para. 1). Pre-Employment Training (PET), a job-training program designed by IRCO, is one method by which the organization seeks to achieve this goal. PET provides refugees a job-coach and ELT courses aimed at stewarding refugees towards employment (IRCO, n.d.). For this study, the texts from the PET's ELT courses are units of analysis. Analysis of these documents is necessary to fully answer my guiding questions.

### **Language and Power**

For many, the notion of power connotes a static entity or the consequence of a process where one being imposes physical or coercive force onto another. This is one notion of power; however, for the purposes of this investigation, I maintain a broader conception of power where it is understood as a never-ending *process* instead of a static entity or result. This notion of power originates with Michel Foucault (1977, 1980), who argues that power is not fixed or stable but rather continually *operates*. Foucault's (1977,1980) understanding of power is one where power is viewed as an ever-evolving give and take of resources and influence between social relations and discourses. This understanding of power allows for both power through force but also power through consent.

Gramsci (1971) discussed the notion of *hegemony*. Hegemony is the success of a dominant class to impose their world views, values, and beliefs on a subordinate class in such a way where the dominant groups' values and beliefs are taken to be *common sense* (Gramsci, 1971). Fairclough (1989) speaks of this same process as well as a similar notion: *naturalization* as being the instances where practices, both discourse and social, are regarded as universal and void of dominant ideology (Fairclough, 1989). Ideologies are "the ways in which a person's beliefs, opinions, and value-systems intersect with the broader social and political structures of the society in which they live" (Mayr & Simpson, 2010, p. 4). Regardless of the term used to describe the process, these notions of hegemony and naturalization point to a type of power that results from dominant influences being disguised and taken as simply natural.

In the words of Pierre Bourdieu (as quoted by Fairclough, 1989, p. 91), the main goal for any dominant group is the "recognition of legitimacy through the misrecognition of arbitrariness." In other words, the success of a dominant group is in large part determined by their ability to convince a subordinate group to accept their subjective ideologies as valid. According to Fairclough (1989, p. 85), "ideology is most effective when its workings are least visible."

The common sense way of doing things is in essence an effect of power, with one major tool for exercising said power being discourse (Fairclough, 1989). Discourse is language in use (Mayr & Simpson, 2010). Language is an abstract communicative semiotic system, whereas discourse is the instantiation of a language system (Mayr & Simpson, 2010). Discourse is not only a form of



communication but also a form of social practice (Fairclough, 1989). This means that discourse both *is* and *does*. It is used to perform a plethora of social processes; from seemingly innocuous illocutionary speech acts such as: 'I now pronounce you man and wife' to actualizing dominant political and social agendas.

It is with this understanding of the aforementioned notions of power, ideology, and discourse that I undertake this investigation into the federal refugee resettlement policies and attendant English language training at the IRCO. To do so, by in large I rely on the analytic tools and framework of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). CDA aligns these described notions of power, ideology, and discourse, making it an appropriate choice with which to carry out my investigation.

### **Critical Discourse Analysis**

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), stems from the work of Critical Linguistics in the 1970's (Mayr & Simpson, 2010). Unlike other types of linguistic analyses before it, Critical Linguistics set out to demonstrate how ideologies are perpetuated in texts (Mayr & Simpson, 2010). CDA extends the work of critical linguists by incorporating social theoretical perspectives into the realm of discourse analysis, with the goal of uncovering the ways in which structures of power and ideology are veiled in language use (Mayr & Simpson, 2010). CDA strives to *denaturalize* ideologies conveyed in discourse (Mayr & Simpson, 2010) by exposing hegemonic linguistic devices that naturalize dominant ideologies and structures of power. By uncovering power structures and ideologies concealed in discourse, CDA serves to

open the door for the emancipation of dominated groups, helping to ameliorate unequal distributions of power in society.

There is no single variety of CDA, but rather CDA is a group of methodologies and analytic tools that share common underlying principles and goals (Mayr & Simpson, 2010). One of the most recognized varieties of CDA is that of Norman Fairclough (1989). Fairclough (1989) views discourse as three interconnected stratum of discourse, with each level of discourse requiring independent analysis. This model has been used many times in previous research and is a very prominent model for CDA; thus, it is this model of CDA that I use in this study. Further detail of this model and its process being presented in Chapter 3. Having discussed my motivating conceptions of power, ideology, and discourse, as well as the alignment of CDA with said principles, I now turn to discussing the ways in which Corpus Linguistics (CL) can support a refugee related CDA study.

### **CDA, Corpus Linguistics, and Refugee Issues**

A substantial amount of research has investigated refugee issues using CDA and CL. However, the majority of the CDA and CL analyses regarding refugees have been concerned with the representation of refugees in the media (Baker, & McEney, 2005; Baker, Gabrielatos, KhosraviNik, Krzyzanowski, McEney, & Wodak, 2008; Gabrielatos & Baker, 2008; KhosraviNik, 2009; & KhosraviNik, 2010). Some of this research solely utilized CDA (KhosraviNik, 2009; KhosraviNik, 2010), while other research relied exclusively on corpus analysis (Baker & McEney, 2005; Gabrielatos & Baker, 2008). More and more, however, the symbiotic relationship between CL

and CDA has been employed to investigate a variety of issues (Baker, Gabrielatos, KhosraviNik, Krzyzanowski, McEnery, & Wodak, 2008; Orpin, 2005; & Wang, 2009).

Wang (2009) combined CDA and CL to compare deviating descriptions of Taiwan's KMT (Kuomintang) Chairmen's visit to China. Combining these two methodologies stemmed from the assertion that quantitative CL techniques serve to strengthen qualitative CDA analyses (Wang, 2009). According to Biber, Conrad, & Reppen (1994):

Text corpora provide large databases of naturally occurring discourse, enabling empirical analysis of the actual patterns of use in a language, and, when coupled with (semi) automatic computational tools, the corpus-based approach enables analyses of a scope not otherwise feasible. (p. 169)

The use of corpus computational tools allows researchers to analyze large bodies of discourse and when CDA and CL are combined, analyses become a mixture of both quantitative and qualitative methods.

As stated by Biber, Conrad & Reppen (1994), the use of CL techniques allows for an empirical analysis of language. Orpin (2005) describes a criticism of CDA as the alleged tendency of CDA to fulfill analysts' preconceived notions about an issue. Orpin (2005) also rebuts this accusation by offering that the combination of Corpus Linguistics and CDA diminishes such criticism because the combination allows an analyst to compare found linguistic features in a text with the norms of a language. Orpin (2005) goes on to state that the most common approach of combining CDA and CL involves comparing lexical and grammatical frequencies and the collocation patterns of key items between contexts.

Although this paper is not a Corpus Linguistics study, CL influences this investigation as the comparison techniques described by Orpin (2005) above are used in this analysis. Further details of the corpus comparison techniques used in this study are presented in Chapter 3. In addition to discussing the underlying principles and analytic tools of this study, discussion of pertinent issues must also be discussed. Specifically, this study concerns self-sufficiency and English language training (ELT); thus, in the next section, I discuss the relationship between refugee earnings and English language proficiency.

### **Refugee Earnings and English Proficiency**

Dustmann (1994) states that numerous studies have investigated the economic assimilation of migrant workers into labor markets. Several of such studies have found a positive correlation between immigrants' and refugees' English language proficiency and job earnings (Chiswick & Miller, 2002; Olliff & Couch, 2005; Dustmann, 1994; & Park, 1999). Other studies have observed a similar correlation between low English proficiency and long-term un/underemployment, and socioeconomic disadvantage (O'Loughlin & Watson, 1997; Tollefson, 1985).

According to Olliff & Couch (2005), English plays a central role in the successful integration of refugees into American society. One part of successful integration is assimilation into the job market, which is associated with English language proficiency (Warriner, 2007). According to Tollefson (1985), the job market cannot facilitate the necessary English proficiency for quality integration. Simply working at a job and living in the United States does not promote English

proficiency. Additionally, receiving a job other than an entry-level one, maintaining a job, and advancing to a better position all largely depend on English abilities (Tollefson, 1985).

Instead of acquisition occurring on the job, it is ESL classes that are effective for improving English competence and proficiency, with increased hours spent in ESL classes having the highest correlation with rates of employment (Tollefson, 1985). Without ESL education, refugees often only procure jobs that provide no opportunity for language learning; and without language learning, opportunities for employment remain extremely limited (Tollefson, 1985).

Olliff & Couch (2005) came to a similar conclusion, finding that ESL programs are necessary for young refugees to be able to make a successful transition into mainstream education and employment. Chiswick & Miller (2002) demonstrated the important role of English language abilities among individuals from non-English speaking countries, with English language competency improving the earnings of refugees. Dustmann (1994) looks more specifically at the role of writing proficiency, concluding this specific skill substantially advances the earnings of immigrants. Other factors such as amount of schooling, total labor market experience, and weeks worked in the year are greater among those more fluent in English and are typically quite low amongst those lacking fluency (Chiswick, & Miller, 2002).

Further supporting the relationship between increased English abilities and higher wage earnings is the work of Park (1999), who found a positive correlation between English-speaking ability and immigrant earnings. He argued that non-English speakers in the U.S. labor market often suffer from limited employment and

training opportunities, but fluency in English facilitates the transfer of labor market experience and education from one's native country to the U.S. labor market. He indicates that immigrants without sufficient English might need to regain labor experience once in the U.S. (1999).

Explaining his findings, Park (1999) stated that the lack of English proficiency on the part of workers potentially precludes potential employers from gathering information about them as well as prevents workers from getting information about available jobs. Dustmann (1994) echoed Park's (1999) sentiment by stating:

Deficiencies in the ability to communicate with natives are likely to be a major factor of constraining earnings of migrant workers for a variety of reasons. Not only is language proficiency likely to be used by employers as a screening device for employment decisions, but also those who are more fluent in the host country language are more capable to communicate their qualifications to potential employers. (p. 134)

These findings suggest that adequate English proficiency is a prerequisite for quality earnings. However, despite these conclusions, other studies have found that strong English proficiency is not the sole determinant of gainful employment (Mojab, 1999; Warriner, 2007).

Mojab (1999) found that skilled immigrants with high-levels of English proficiency were less likely to find gainful employment as compared to their native counterparts. Warriner (2007) found that refugees with strong English abilities were unable to find gainful employment other than entry-level positions. Both

Mojab (1999) and Warriner (2007) concluded that external factors, other than English proficiency, were strong determinants in immigrant and refugee earnings. External factors such as language environments are related to immigrant and refugee earnings (Hwang, Xi, & Cao, 2010).

Hwang, Xi, & Cao (2010) found that the relationship between immigrant earnings and English language abilities is not static but varies among language environments. English is more important in English-dominated areas and less significant in non-English communities (Hwang, Xi, & Cao, 2010). Chiswick & Miller (2002) came to a similar conclusion, finding that those not fluent in English might have an economic advantage when they live in a concentrated ethnic environment with others of the same native tongue.

These mixed findings do not diminish the fact that English proficiency is a strong factor in determining refugees' economic success, nor do they preclude refugee language learners from believing that learning English is a key factor for them becoming self-sufficient (Warriner, 2007). They do, though, suggest there is something more to the picture than English language abilities alone. It is overly reductionist to conclude that increased English abilities will automatically result in increased earnings. However, the literature suggests the need for strong English abilities as part the requirements for increased refugee incomes. Since research shows that English language proficiency is related to earnings in resettled refugees and immigrants, in the next section, I discuss literature on refugee English language training (ELT).

## **Refugee English Language Training**

Educational settings often serve to inculcate dominant societal values and behaviors in students (Brown, 2011; Mikan, Lucas, Davies, & Lim, 2007). In job-related education, classrooms also function to indoctrinate and parallel accepted workplace roles and relationships (Auerbach, & Burgess, 1985). Specific to refugee English education or English language training (ELT), after the Vietnam War there was an influx in investigations pertaining to ELT for recently arrived refugees (Auerbach & Burgess, 1985; Tollefson, 1985). These studies stemmed from concern about the assimilation of newcomers to the United States, who, according to Tollefson (1985), “without ESL...find only entry-level jobs, which provide no opportunity for language learning; and without language learning, opportunities for employment...remain extremely limited” (p. 756).

Accordingly, numerous studies have analyzed refugee ELT from a variety of lenses (Auerbach, & Burgess, 1985; Mikan, Lucas, Davies, & Lim, 2007; Taki, 2008; Taylor, 2008; Tollefson, 1985; & Warriner, 2007). Some of this research has focused on ESL materials (Auerbach, & Burgess, 1985; Taki, 2008). Other research has concentrated on classroom interactions (Mikan, Lucas, Davies, & Lim, 2007).

Taylor (2008) utilized CDA for an analysis of an adult literacy curriculum, which shed light on how the curriculum was used to proliferate prevailing educational policies based on political and economic motivations. Other findings from research on refugee ELT include those of Auerbach & Burgess (1985), who found that certain refugee ESL textbooks support the belief that job procurement is merely a matter of how well one can fill out applications, dress appropriately for



interviews, make appointments, etc. They also contended that even though these are significant factors in obtaining a job, they are not enough (1985).

Coupled with this oversimplified portrayal of reality, Auerbach & Burgess (1985) discovered that refugee students are taught to understand the imperative but not give it and that other common language skills promoted in refugee ESL materials “include asking for approval, clarification, reassurance, permission, and so on, but not praising, criticizing, complaining, refusing, or disagreeing” (p. 484). They assert that what is excluded from curricula is as important in shaping students’ perceptions of and roles in reality as what is included (1985).

In addition to focusing on particular language skills and not others, ESL materials often prescribe specific positions for refugee students and perpetuate the notion that refugees start at the bottom of the job-ladder because of their shortcomings, masking economic demands that restrict their options (Auerbach & Burgess, 1985). Survival texts used in refugee ESL curricula fail to acknowledge the socioeconomic conditions that refugees face and, instead, often reflect white, middle-class values, culture, and financial status (Auerbach & Burgess, 1985; Tollefson, 1985). This dis-acknowledgement of the true conditions in which refugees live fails to prepare students for the difficult challenges that their situations present (Auerbach & Burgess, 1985). Moreover, not preparing refugees for the challenges and pitfalls they might encounter delegitimizes these challenges and can foster the belief that these challenges are somehow the result of refugees’ inadequacies (Auerbach & Burgess, 1985) rather than the socio-political environment in which they find themselves.

Auerbach & Burgess (1985) argued that rather than being used as a foundation for discussing the contradictions many refugees face, many of whom were professionals in their home countries, the curricula and materials used in refugee ESL programs prepare students for menial occupations and teach students the “language of subservience” (p. 484). Coupled with fostering subservient language, Warriner, D. (2007) concluded that ESL education for refugees fails to include language education that would help learners engage with their community. These contradictions and incongruences have been referred to as the *hidden curriculum* of refugee ELT (Auerbach & Burgess, 1985). This hidden curriculum perpetuates social and cultural values and restrictions, which affect students’ roles and identities in the real world (Auerbach & Burgess, 1985).

Despite the subjugating findings of previous research, Warriner (2007) found that the basic assumption held by both refugee students and ELT teachers is that the main purpose of refugee ELT programs is to foster self-sufficiency as quickly as possible for students. Something is off here. On one hand, ELT programs, such as IRCO’s PET program, purport to foster self-sufficiency and students and teachers seem to believe that ELT is being used to foster self-sufficiency; yet, multiple studies have concluded something very different. Either these programs’ goals are failing, or self-sufficiency itself is marked. In order to better understand these discrepancies, it is the purpose of this analysis to focus on *self-sufficiency* as it is used and promoted in IRCO PET ELT texts. To accomplish this goal, I consider some suggestions for ELT analyses put forth by Auerbach & Burgess (1985).

Auerbach & Burgess (1985) argue that in refugee ELT analyses, attention should be paid to portrayed realities, the amount and type of student contributions allowed, implicit social roles for students, and the degree to which critical thinking is encouraged in students. Furthermore, analyses should focus on whether or not materials and curricula accurately emulate the actual lived lives of refugees, as well as the ways in which they potentially manipulate them (Auerbach & Burgess 1985). Based on these suggestions and prior ELT analyses (Taki, 2008; Taylor, 2008), I employ CDA for the IRCO PET ELT investigation.

Much of the research on the relationship between refugee earnings and ELT shows that increased proficiency is associated with increased earnings. However, research on refugee ELT shows that the language training offered to resettled refugees often fails to prepare them for any other position than entry-level ones, reflecting dominant social structures and ideologies. In the next section, I contextualize the discussed research on refugee ELT in relation to language policies. I also discuss the use of CDA for analysis of such policies.

### **Language Policy and CDA**

Language policies are often the subject of multiple varieties of analysis among which are discourse analysis, ethnography, and discourse-historical approaches (Johnson, 2011). Some analyses have demonstrated that language policies can affect the process of second language acquisition (SLA) (Tollefson, 1985); while others have concluded that language policies often instantiate dominant ideologies underpinning language education (Johnson, 2011). Dominant

ideologies can be examined by policy analysis, which provides indications of power relationships and dominant discourses latent in them (Gibb, 2008).

Taylor (1997) proposed policy analyses could be performed by agents affected by such policies, including language educators. Her work underscored the need to analyze policies within their broader socio-cultural context. She asserted that critical policy analysis must maintain a commitment to social justice by means of thorough analysis (1997). Gibb (2008) further advocated that policymakers and educators should challenge the socio-historical structures and systems embedded in policies - asserting their proclivities to essentialize learning to an individual and psychological process and to perpetuate the notion of learner deficit.

CDA is considered an appropriate tool to measure policy through socio-cultural and social justice lenses. Taylor (2004) praises CDA's propensity to investigate the relationships between discursive practices, events, and texts; and wider social and cultural structures, relations and processes. CDA explores how texts construct representations of the world, social relationships and identities - highlighting how such practices and texts are ideologically shaped by power relationships.

CDA of policy texts exposes underlying power and discourse dynamics embedded in public policy - potentially exposing the naturalized assumptions within policies and prominent intertextual connections among policies and other discourses (Gibb, 2008). Taylor (2004) reiterated Gibb's latter point claiming CDA is especially apt when examining competing discourses among policy texts. Johnson (2011) asserted, "CDA is effective in establishing intertextual and interdiscursive

links between the various layers of policy texts and discourses” (p. 277). CDA is exceptionally applicable for critical policy analysis as it combines linguistic analysis with broader social analysis - using a qualified framework of systematic analysis in order to establish policy text mechanics (Gibb, 2008).

Gibb (2008) used CDA to examine the connection between Canadian second language and employment policies, finding evidence that these discourses propagate societal inequalities that *essentialize the subjectivities* of immigrants and newcomers. Likewise, Hague & Cray (2007) analyzed language policy to investigate how language policies affect ESL educators. They found that even though ESL teachers appropriated policies in a variety of ways, that these policies “framed what they taught and how they assessed learners in their classes” (p. 637). This relationship between service providers and governmental policies is *multidimensional and multi-layered* with the government influencing the policies and practices of language education programs (Warriner, 2007).

Warriner (2007) investigated the connection between governmental language policies and attendant programs, looking for how language policies are reflected, reproduced, contested, appropriated, or transformed in local contexts. Her findings support the conclusions of Haque & Cray (2007), demonstrating how despite variance in the ways language policies are appropriated by teachers and students that:

Preparing refugees to find jobs quickly is an explicit concern and stated priority of...ESL program[s] because it is a concern and priority of the federal and local governments responsible for bringing refugees to the United States,

the refugee resettlement agencies that receive funding from those governments and place students in...educational program[s], and the grant agencies that provide funding to...program[s] and refugee[s] themselves.

(p.349)

Along with language policies working to get refugees employed as quickly as possible by regulating what language is taught in the classroom, they often oblige classrooms to be used to inculcate language learners to the dominant society's values, rights, and responsibilities (Haque & Cray, 2007).

Research has demonstrated a connection between public policies and local educational contexts. Moreover, previous research indicates that public policy often perpetuates dominant power structures and ideologies and constrains the types of education and training offered to refugees and newcomers. Public policies are a clear example of power in action, but, drawing upon previous research and the aforementioned notions of power, it is the purpose of this paper to investigate some of the less obvious enactments of power in order to reveal possible covert mechanisms of control proliferated through the ORR policies. Previous research has shown CDA to be an effective method of inquiry for analysis; thus, it seems prudent to employ such method to look into the construal of *self-sufficiency* in ORR refugee resettlement policies.

The research and literature presented in this section indicates a tendency for language policies to constrain the types of ELT offered to immigrants and refugees, gearing the sponsored ELT towards early employment; and other research shows that quality ELT is necessary for increased earnings and social integration. Thus,

research finds both the need for quality refugee ELT and that language policies do not allow for it. Nevertheless, the ORR claims that its policy's purpose is to foster economic self-sufficiency. Again, something is off here. Either ORR resettlement policies are the exception to the rule and allow for quality ELT that promotes self-sufficiency, or there is something covert in its purported agenda and use of the term. In the next section, I discuss self-sufficiency in detail as well as notions of agency, and *capital*.

### **Self-sufficiency, Agency, and Capital**

The recurrent theme of self-sufficiency is quite salient in many facets of refugee resettlement discourse (Fong, Busch, Armour, & Heffron, 2007; Halpern, 2008; IRCO, n.d.; ORR, 2010; & Warriner, 2007). Fostering self-sufficiency for refugees is a common goal amongst most programs serving sizeable populations (Halpern, 2008; IRCO, n.d.; ORR, 2010; Warriner, 2007); yet, discrepancies between this professed purpose and successive outcomes pervade resettlement research and literature (Halpern, 2008; ORR, 2010; Tollefson, 1985; Tollefson, 1991; Warriner, 2007). As Warriner (2007) puts it:

Although newcomers are expected to obtain a job to become self-sufficient, the kinds of jobs that [newcomers] obtain generally provide wages that are far below what is needed to be economically independent. Rather than work to incorporate newcomers into...economies and communities, [resettlement] institutions and organizations...serve to prepare them for minimum-wage, entry level jobs that provide incomes insufficient for paying bills and that

provide few possibilities for long-term social advancement, economic stability, or educational opportunity. (p. 355)

Minimum-wage jobs and early employment diminish refugees' potential for language learning, social integration, and self-sufficiency. For me, self-sufficiency does not connote scraping by and struggling to make ends meet in a low-paying profession; rather I, as I presume others do, have a frame of self-sufficiency that includes being able to get by without the help of others, but with a certain level of prosperity and *agency*. Bandura (2001, 2006) discusses agency as an individual's capability to have control over the nature and quality of their life. Agency and self-sufficiency, require a good amount of independence, both economic and personal; and in order to have independence and attain self-sufficiency, individuals must have a certain amount of *capital*.

Many think of capital in terms of *economic capital*, which is the amount of money and tangible goods that an individual possesses. However, capital, as it is used here, relates to Bourdieu's (1977, 1991) notion of capital, which distinguishes between economic capital and *symbolic capital*. Symbolic capital includes: *cultural capital*, *linguistic capital* and *social capital*. According to Bourdieu (1977, 1991), linguistic capital is the learned skill set of using a dominant or *official* language according to dominant groups' specifications; cultural capital is the types of knowledge, personalities, and educational credentials that are highly valued in a society; and social capital is the collection of relational resources that an individual possesses.



Symbolic capital is directly related to economic capital because having symbolic capital leads to access to material capital. De Costa (2010, p. 521) summarized this process as such: “linguistic capital can be cashed in for educational qualifications or *cultural capital*, which in turn can be cashed in for lucrative jobs or *economic capital*.” Thus, it is not sufficient to think of self-sufficiency in terms of economic resources alone. Instead, self-sufficiency must be considered as possession of and access to both economic and symbolic capital. Self-sufficiency results from a multi-dimensional network of material and symbolic resources that together produce independence, agency, and self-sufficiency.

The notion of self-sufficiency is pervasive in the policies, research, and literature relating to refugee resettlement. Studies have discussed how refugees work towards self-sufficiency (Fong, Busch, Armour, &Heffron, 2007); the impediments that preclude refugees from attaining self-sufficiency (Warriner, 2007); and the success of programs that aim to foster self-sufficiency in refugees (Halpern, 2008). Yet, despite the various perspectives from which self-sufficiency has been considered, no one has yet to question the construct itself. This lack of inquiry regarding the use of self-sufficiency in resettlement discourse suggests a possible naturalization of the construct. Thus, in light of this gap in existing research, I set out to investigate the use of self-sufficiency in resettlement discourse, with my research being guided by the following questions:

## Guiding Questions

1. How is the construct *self-sufficiency* construed in the Office of Refugee Resettlement's refugee resettlement policy documents?
2. To what extent is the Office of Refugee Resettlement's constructed notion of *self-sufficiency* reflected and/or reinforced in the Immigrant and Refugee Community Organization's Pre-Employment Training ELT materials, and lesson plans?

## **Chapter 3: Methodology**

In this chapter I explain how I gathered and analyzed the textual data. I also discuss limitations of the study and any pertinent ethical issues that pertain to the study.

### **Overall Design**

This qualitative exploratory study is informed by Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) and Corpus Linguistics (CL). CDA endeavors to investigate power relations veiled within language use. Fittingly, I employed the methodological framework of CDA in an effort to investigate latent power relations and struggles in the refugee resettlement policies of the Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR) and the attendant English language training (ELT) of the Immigrant and Refugee Community Organization's (IRCO) Pre-Employment Training (PET) program.

### **Data Collection**

I now explain how I accessed the analyzed texts, beginning with the documents from the ORR and then the documents from the IRCO's PET program.

#### **ORR Policy Documents**

The ORR refugee resettlement policy that concerns this investigation is one segment of the 1952 Immigration and Nationality Act (INA) (U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS), 2013). The INA is divided into titles, chapters, and

sections (USCIS, 2013). The policy accessed and analyzed in this investigation is governed under Section 412(a)(9) Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1522(a)(9))(ORR, n.d.). Specifically, Title 45: Public Welfare, Part 400: Refugee Settlement Program was the focus of this analysis. This Part is made up of twelve Subparts (A-L), and each contains several subsections. In total, there are 109 subsections to this policy that comprise roughly 34 pages; all of which were analyzed in this investigation.

As is the case with all public policy, this policy is public record and accessible through the Internet. Part 400 was accessed by going to the ORR website, clicking on the Policy tab at the top of the page, and then selecting Part 400. The documents were downloaded from the Internet and combined into one PDF file. This process is described in the Analysis section.

### **IRCO Texts**

The English language training (ELT) portion of the Pre-Employment Training (PET) program at IRCO consists of two parts. The first part of the program is a series of six proficiency-based levels that provide ELT for job training. These courses are named Preliterate and SPL 1-5. Although there are six levels, there are actually only four courses. Levels SPL one and two are grouped together, and SPL three and four are grouped together as well. This leaves the levels as Preliterate, SPL1, SPL2, and SPL 3 (which is actually SPL 5). The only levels that stand independently are the lowest (preliterate) and the highest (SPL 3). The second part of the ELT program consists of three independent modular courses geared towards:

English for working as a cashier, as a housekeeper, and working with weights and measures.

Taken together, there are hundreds of pages of text for all of these courses. In order to narrow the scope of this analysis, I analyzed the materials and lesson plans for the SPL levels 2 and 3 courses in the tiered track. I analyzed texts from these courses for several reasons. First, again, was to narrow the scope of the analysis and make it more manageable. Second, I chose to analyze two levels in order to get a good sense of the topics and lessons provided to students throughout the program. Additionally, SPL3 is the highest level and the last level that students participate in before leaving the program. Consequently, I hoped that analyzing the texts from this course would provide the fullest picture of the skills and language abilities that the program deems necessary for students to have before entering into the job market.

I used to work at IRCO, teaching an adjunct speaking and listening class. I was able to gain access to the analyzed documents because of my role there as a teacher and per discussion with the program director regarding my intended research. The texts for these classes are all kept in two binders in the PET office and it was these binders of documents for SPL 2 and 3 that I used for the analysis. All PET texts are proprietary and may not be copied, reproduced, or even removed from the building. As a result, my analysis of these documents occurred on premises and no proprietary texts are provided in this write-up.

## **Analysis**

This section outlines the way in which I analyzed the selected texts. I first outline the CDA and Corpus Linguistics techniques that were employed for the analysis. I end the chapter by detailing the process of analysis, beginning with the ORR texts and concluding with the IRCO documents.

### **CDA Methodology**

The CDA methodology that I applied for this investigation was based on Fairclough's (1989) model for CDA. I also drew upon CDA methodology as outlined and explained by Janks (1997). Additionally, the analyses of KhosravNik (2009) and Taki (2008) were used as methodological resources to help me fully answer my guiding questions.

Fairclough's model for CDA is based on three connected aspects of discourse, which are linked to three interrelated types of analysis (Fairclough, 1989; Janks, 1997). Janks (1997, p. 329) describes the three dimensions of discourse as:

1. the object of analysis (including verbal, visual, or verbal and visual texts);
2. the processes by which the object is produced and received (writing/speaking/designing and reading/listening/viewing) by human subjects;
3. the socio-historical conditions that govern these principles

Each of these dimensions of discourse warrants and requires a distinct type of analysis (Fairclough, 1989):

1. text analysis (description);

2. processing analysis (interpretation);
3. social analysis (explanation)

Chapter 4 presents description and interpretation of the data and in Chapter 5, I present a social analysis and explanation of the findings.

### **Corpus Linguistics Methods**

In addition to CDA, Corpus Linguistics informs this methodology. Although this is not a Corpus Linguistics study, some analytical techniques used in this study were influenced by Corpus Linguistics. Corpus Linguistics uses large corpora of text from a variety of registers to investigate language in actual use. Part of this investigation concerns discerning if the ORR policy uses the term *self-sufficiency* similarly to common use. Accordingly, I used a corpus (specifically, the Corpus of Contemporary American English) to compare the collocation patterns of self-sufficiency in the ORR documents to patterns of other discursive contexts.

### **ORR Policy Methods**

The analysis of the ORR refugee resettlement policy began with downloading all of the individual subsections from the Internet. In order to analyze them as one document, I had to combine all of the 109 separate documents into one file. I used Adobe Acrobat Pro to combine the files into one PDF and also used this program to help analyze the text (described below). Adobe allows one to combine individual PDFs into one PDF file; however, the documents from the ORR site are certified documents, which cannot be combined. Consequently, I had to convert all 109

individual PDFs into Word docs and then reconvert those 109 Word docs back into PDFs. I was then able to take the 109 converted PDFs and combine them into one PDF file using Adobe Acrobat Pro.

The individual subsections of the resettlement policy are broken up in a way on the internet that when combined into one document, there are duplicates of multiple pages. As a result, I had to go through the combined PDF doc and remove all duplicate pages so that the final PDF file was the complete Chapter 4-Part 400: Refugee Resettlement Program policy document. To ensure that the document was complete, I crosschecked the PDF I created with the documents on the ORR website. Having created one complete policy document, I was then able to begin the textual analysis, starting with a collocation comparison.

According to Gabrielatos & Baker (2008), collocates (word/s that are adjacent to or proximal to another word in context) contribute the meaning of a word. Collocations serve to indicate which connotations are most associated with a word (Gabrielatos & Baker, 2008). Since the primary orientation of this analysis was to discover the construed meaning of *self-sufficiency* in ORR refugee resettlement policy, I began by analyzing the collocation patterns of this term in the ORR policy as compared to the Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA).

I first went through the entire policy and recorded each instance of the term *self-sufficiency*, as well as the first phrase on either side of the term. I did this by using the 'sticky note' option of Adobe Pro. This allowed me to mark each token (or instances of the term) and then search the entire document for easy retrieval. I chose to use the first phrase on each side of the term because I wanted to afford the



possibility that a collocate could be a somewhat long complement clause, feeling that such clauses might need to be complete in order to be significant. After noting all of the tokens and their collocates, I constructed a self-sufficiency collocate table that showed each token and its corresponding collocates. This was the template for the table.

Table 3: ORR Policy Self-sufficiency Collocate Table

Policy section	Collocates to left	Token	Collocates to right
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After constructing the self-sufficiency table, I went through the collected data and created a frequency table of the found collocates. This was the template used for the table:

Table 4: ORR Policy Self-sufficiency Frequency Table

Self-sufficiency collocate	Number of tokens
----------------------------	------------------

I created this table because if I found that certain collocations occurred in significant numbers, this would help decipher how *self-sufficiency* is construed in the resettlement policy. Moreover, significant collocation patterns would raise the question of whether these patterns are congruent with other contexts, or marked in this particular discourse. To answer this question, I performed a collocation comparison employing the Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA).

Similar frequencies of collocations between contexts would suggest congruent usage

of the term *self-sufficiency*; however, incongruence would potentially suggest a usage specific to the refugee resettlement policy, with various possible implications.

The COCA allows researchers to not only search for the frequency of a term across several registers (including: fiction, magazine, newspaper, academic and spoken texts) but also its collocates. Researchers can search by *frequency*, which results in the most frequent results appearing first or *relevance*, which uses a Mutual Information score that factors in the overall frequency of collocates and sorts out high frequency 'noise' words (Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA), 2012). There are also a variety of collocation search options that expand or restrict a search in several ways (COCA, 2012). According to the COCA (2012) website, the 5/5 option searches any five words on either side of the searched term. This was the search parameter I deemed appropriate for this investigation because it would give the most general collocations for the search term and would most mimic the method I employed on the ORR documents. I also chose to have the search span across registers, again, in an effort to find the most general collocates for the term.

I performed two searches using the COCA: one for frequency and one for relevance. I did both of these search types because I was interested to see how the results would vary in comparison to each other, as well as the data I found in the policy text. I used *self-sufficiency* as the search term and set the concordancer to search for the first five words on either side of the term. This would most mimic the procedure I did by hand with the policy and would also serve to identify and possible *keywords*. *Keywords* are words that occur with significantly different frequencies between texts (Gabrielatos & Baker, 2008). Any found *keywords* would

help illustrate whether the way *self-sufficiency* is construed in the resettlement policy is congruent with common conceptions and usages of the term across discourses.

I recorded the first 20 collocates from each of the COCA searches and then compared those results to the policy findings. The results of this corpus comparison served as starting point of the CDA analysis. Utilizing Fairclough's (1989) framework and the analytic sequencing from Janks' (1997) work, I began with the textual analysis while maintaining consideration for its relationship to the other two analytic components.

In accordance with the work of Janks (1997, p.335), I performed a textual analysis consisting of systematically examining each text while considering the following:

1. lexicalization/nominalization;
2. cohesive devices;
3. the use of active and passive voice;
4. choices of modality or polarity;
5. the structure of the text;

In addition to these units of analysis, I also considered the constructs used by Taki (2008) in his CDA of high school ESL textbooks. These units of analysis are: contents, social relations, and subject positions (Taki, 2008). According to Taki (2008), *contents* refer to the meanings expressed related to a speaker's or author's experience of the social and natural world; *relations* denote social relationships manifested through text; and *subject positions* indicate the social role of a person in

a text. Instead of analyzing the policy document for each of the categories and constructs individually, I utilized an emergent category approach that involved analyzing whole the document for salient features.

I first began by analyzing the context of each token of *self-sufficiency* in the policy document. While systematically examining the context and collocations of each token with regard to the aforementioned categories and constructs, the theme of *early employment* emerged. This theme warranted further analysis of the ORR documents with regard to this theme. *Early employment* analysis, sparked *agency* analysis, and an analysis for *policy preclusions* stemmed from the *agency analysis*. It was the salient linguistic features and themes uncovered during analysis that served as the basis for the interpretation of the text, which is discussed in Chapter 4.

According to Fairclough (1989), two major contexts are imperative for the interpretation of a text. These contexts are the situational context and the intertextual context (Fairclough, 1989). Situational context refers to the time and place of a text and the intertextual context refers to the way in which a text intersects with related texts (Janks, 1997). I considered both of these contexts while interpreting the textual findings, with the latter being especially important, as it pertained to connections between the IRCO and ORR documents.

In addition to these two contextual considerations for interpretation, my analysis also drew upon the CDA work of KhosravNik (2009, p. 482-483), borrowing some of the interpretive questions of his work. Specifically:

1. How are the persons, objects, phenomena/events, processes and actions named and referred to linguistically?

2. What characteristics, qualities, and features are attributed to social actors, objects, phenomena/events and processes?
3. What arguments are employed in the discourse in question?
4. From what perspectives are these nominations, attributions and arguments expressed?
5. Are the respective utterances articulated overtly; are they intensified or mitigated?

These questions were considered in relation to the textual findings, both of which informed the explanation or social analysis.

The social analysis component of CDA is the explanatory portion of analysis (Fairclough, 1989), where I combined my textual and interpretive findings and positioned them within broader socio-historical discourses in the United States. This analysis involved explaining connections between the discursive processes at hand in both the ORR and IRCO texts in light of socio-historical processes that relate to them. It was at this point where I was able to draw explanative conclusions and discuss the implications of my analysis. The social analysis is presented in Chapter 5.

### **IRCO Texts Methods**

The findings and conclusions of the ORR policy analysis were used as the basis for the IRCO PET ELT analysis. I used the construal of *self-sufficiency* that resulted from the ORR analysis and investigated the IRCO documents in relation to the way that they did or did not reflect and reinforce that construal.

Analysis of the IRCO texts began with going through all of the documents and noting all of the provided goals and objectives of the lessons for both courses. I felt that noting the explicit goals and objectives of the courses would help give indication of the desired outcomes of the courses, which would in turn serve to indicate whether the ELT courses reinforce the findings of the ORR analysis.

I then went through the documents again and recorded every time a job type was mentioned. I also noted the circumstance in which the job type was mentioned. For example, I recorded if a particular job was mentioned as a possibility for refugees to attain in the United States; a job for people other than refugees; or a job that was held in refugee's home country.

Finally, I went through the documents again and analyzed them for instances in lessons or materials that reinforced or subverted the findings of the ORR analysis. The evidence from these three data collection procedures were used to draw conclusions that answered this investigation's second research question.

## **Limitations**

This is an exploratory study; I did not try to test or confirm any hypothesis or hypotheses. This was also a mostly qualitative study; and despite some debate about the generalizability of qualitative research (Delmar, 2010), I do not expect the results of this analysis to have any external validity in other public policies or community organizations. However, I trust that the results and conclusions of this analysis could potentially be transferable to other similar contexts and circumstances.

This investigation only looked at one resettlement policy and attendant ELT program. There are other benefit programs and services that were not considered during this investigation. The findings and conclusions of this analysis are specific only to the analyzed policy and ELT program.

I looked only at textual data, which excludes other possible mitigating factors in relation to self-sufficiency. For example, my analysis does not show the way that teachers at IRCO use the lesson plans and materials in their own classrooms; thus, my findings are specific to the analyzed textual discourses and are not meant to depict how teachers appropriate the analyzed documents.

Qualitative research and CDA in particular involves, or at least should involve, a certain amount of reflexivity on the part of the researcher, reflexivity being the conscious awareness of one's role as a researcher and their influence on a research context and procedure (Gilgun, 2010). Although I maintained reflexivity as an asset to my CDA work and hold that it served to strengthen and qualify my conclusions, this analysis is limited by the fact that it only involved one researcher. I was the only researcher for this investigation; thus, my conclusions are limited by the exclusion of other perspectives on the data and process.

Finally, this investigation was only my second attempt at performing Critical Discourse Analysis. Even though I stand my by systematic analysis and conclusions, I must admit I was somewhat limited by my inexperience with this variety of discourse analysis.

## **Ethical Issues**

The fact that this analysis dealt with pre-existing data is not to say that there were no ethical issues to consider. On the contrary, maintaining respect for both the federal body and community organization that I investigated was of the utmost importance. I continually reminded myself that, notwithstanding the results of this analysis, it is most likely the case that the individuals working in both of these organizations have the best of intentions, regardless of any constraints imposed on them.

Moreover, since I used to work at IRCO, I strived to remain cognizant of not betraying the trust of anyone with whom I worked. One way that I dealt with this ethical issue was to maintain an open dialogue with IRCO and the people who work there, so that they knew exactly what I was doing and what my intentions were. I have planned to share my findings and my write-up with the curriculum designer at IRCO in a continued effort for transparency; to get their reactions; and hopefully help their program and the refugees they serve in some way.



## Chapter 4: Findings and Discussion

### Introduction

This study was designed in to investigate the notion of *self-sufficiency* in the Office of Refugee Resettlement's (ORR) refugee resettlement policy, as well as its possible reflection in the Immigrant and Refugee Community Organization's (IRCO) Pre Employment Training (PET) English language courses. Specifically, this study set out to answer two guiding questions:

1. How is the construct *self-sufficiency* construed in the Office of Refugee Resettlement's refugee resettlement policy documents?
2. To what extent is the Office of Refugee Resettlement's constructed notion of *self-sufficiency* reflected and/or reinforced in the Immigrant and Refugee Community Organization's Pre-Employment Training ELT materials, and lesson plans?

In this chapter, having applied the methodology described in chapter three, I describe and interpret my findings. Believing the textual analysis and interpretations are mutually supportive of one another, I interweave discussions of both analyses throughout the section. Quotation marks and italics are used to identify text directly from the ORR policy. Italics are also used to refer to specific entities and distinguish important concepts, such as *self-sufficiency*.

First, I present the *corpus comparison analysis*, where I compared the *self-sufficiency* collocation patterns found in the ORR document with those of the Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA). This analysis resulted in finding several marked collocation patterns in the ORR documents. After the *collocation comparison analysis*, I expand that inquiry from the immediate collocations of self-sufficiency to the immediate context in which each token of the term is found. The results of these first two analyses, bore an emergent theme *early employment*. Consequently, I performed another analysis of the documents with regard to this theme and present that analysis after the token analysis. The *early employment* examination resulted in the emergence of yet another theme *-agency*. This *agency* inquiry too resulted in an emergent theme, *policy preclusion*; these latter two analyses sequentially follow the *early employment* theme analysis.

As much as discussion of the emergent themes is necessary to completely understand the analysis and its findings, several salient linguistic and discourse features warrant discussion to help fully answer the study's guiding questions. After the emergent theme analyses, I present discussion of modal usage throughout the ORR documents as well as additional examples of cohesion that help shed light on the policy's purpose and proclivities.

The last section relating to the ORR document is discussion of the policy as it relates to ELT. This section precedes the presentation of the IRCO documents analysis, where I discuss the findings of that analysis and the intertextuality between the ORR policy and IRCO documents. The chapter ends with a conclusion, segueing into explanation of findings in Chapter 5.

## Collocation Comparison Analysis

### COCA Analysis Results

The frequency and relevance searches of the Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA) resulted in finding *economic* being ranked 1<sup>st</sup> on the frequency list and 7<sup>th</sup> on the relevance list (see Tables 1 & 2). Table 2 shows the top ranking collocate of the relevance list was found to be *dependency*. Lemmas of *achieve* ranked notably on the frequency and relevance lists combined (see Tables 1 & 2). Tables 1 & 2 show that *independence* also ranked high on both the frequency and relevance lists.

The results of the COCA analysis suggest that self-sufficiency is associated with an achieved, or achieving a state of independence. The high ranking of *economic* on the frequency list suggests that self-sufficiency is related to an economic state, but the fact that it ranked 7<sup>th</sup> on the relevance list with *dependency* ranking first, indicates that there are more relevant factors than economics alone. The high ranking of *dependency* on the relevance list could possibly suggest that the relevance of a term such as self-sufficiency is relevant in relation to its opposite, or that self-sufficiency is dependent on various factors.

Overall, the findings of the COCA analysis suggest that self-sufficiency is an achieved state of independence, including an economic state. These findings are relevant with regard to this study's first research question because they provide a base-line of the common connotation of self-sufficiency, which can be used in comparison to the collocation patterns and construal in ORR policy.

Table 1: Corpus of Contemporary American English Self-sufficiency Frequency Table

Collocate	Frequency
Economic	79
Toward	35
<i>Food</i>	34
Achieve	30
Independence	27
Programs	19
Production	17
Goal	15
Dependency	14
Agricultural	12
Energy	12
Achieving	11
Greater	11
Promoting	10
Promote	10
Financial	10
Philosophy	9
Families	9
Pride	8
Rice	8

Table 2: Corpus of Contemporary American English Self-sufficiency Relevance Table

Collocate	Frequency
Dependency	14
Achieving	11
Independence	27
Achieve	30
Promoting	10
Agricultural	12
Economic	79
Promote	10
Production	17
Goal	15
Food	34
Toward	35
Programs	19
Greater	11
Financial	10
Energy	12
Policy	13
Move	11
Sense	11
Idea	10

## ORR Policy Collocation Results and Comparison

Table 3 displays each token of the construct; the subpart and section of identification; and the collocates - to either side of the term. The comparison of the policy documents and the COCA, with regard to *self-sufficiency*, identified similarities and discrepancies. For example, the second most frequent collocate in the ORR policy was *economic* (see Table 4). This standard was consistent with the COCA frequency list (see Table 1). This congruence suggest that self-sufficiency is a term that connotes an economic condition across contexts.

Table 3: Office of Refugee Resettlement Policy Self-sufficiency Collocate Table

Policy section	Collocates to left	Token	Collocates to right
Subpart A: 400.1	economic	Self-sufficiency	as quickly as possible
Subpart A: 400.2	economic	Self-sufficiency	means earning a total family income at a level that enables a family unit to support itself without receipt of cash assistance grant
Subpart B: 400.5	to promote employment and economic	Self-sufficiency	as quickly as possible
Subpart E: 400.58	of the employment and	Self-sufficiency	services to be provided to RCA recipients
Subpart E: 400.60	in order to encourage early employment and	Self-sufficiency	as long as the total combined payments to a refugee do not exceed the ORR monthly ceilings established in this section multiplied by the allowable number of months of RCA eligibility
Subpart F: 400.71	family	Self-sufficiency	plan
Subpart F: 400.79	a family	Self-sufficiency	plan

Table 3: Office of Refugee Resettlement Policy Self-sufficiency Collocate Table (Cont)

Policy section	Collocates to left	Token	Collocates to right
Subpart I: 400.146	in order to achieve economic	Self-sufficiency	as soon as possible
Subpart I: 400.154	including development of a family	Self-sufficiency	plan
Subpart I: 400.155	to achieve and maintain	Self-sufficiency	family stability
Subpart I: 400.156	a family	Self-sufficiency	plan
Subpart L: 400.313	in order to achieve economic	Self-sufficiency	as soon as possible

Table 4: Office of Refugee Resettlement Policy Self-sufficiency Frequency Table

Self-sufficiency collocate	Number of tokens
Family	6
Economic	5
Plan	4
Achieve	3
Employment	3
Soon	2
Quickly	2
Means...	1
Services...	1
As long as...	1

Stability	1
Promote	1

In alignment with the COCA analysis, *achieve* was found to be a noteworthy collocate in the ORR policy. This similarity indicates another congruence between the ORR policy and common usage. By comparing the COCA and ORR lists, it seems that self-sufficiency is not a condition created spontaneously; rather, this data suggests that self-sufficiency is associated with a process of attainment across contexts.

Notwithstanding these congruencies, the collocation comparison did not result in synonymous usages of self-sufficiency among ORR policy and COCA texts. Table 4 shows that *Family* was the most recurrently identified collocate in the ORR document; whereas *family* ranked 17<sup>th</sup> on the COCA frequency list (see Table 1); and the collocate failed to rank on the COCA relevance list (see Table 2). These findings suggest the ORR policy’s construal of self-sufficiency concerns an individual or an entire family unit, whereas in more common usage, it might more so pertain to an individual self.

Other collocates, identified in the ORR document, relate to the hurried attainment of self-sufficiency. Both *soon* and *quickly* collocated with self-sufficiency in the ORR policy (see Table 4). Together, these nearly synonymous collocations (*soon and quickly*) ranked considerably in the ORR document (see Table 4). These collocates or even similar collocates failed to rank in either of the frequency or relevance COCA lists (see Tables 1 & 2). This data suggests that even though self-



sufficiency is associated with a sense of achievement across contexts, in the ORR policy it is a hurried state of achievement –markedly different than common connotation.

The high rate of *economic* coupled with the collocation patterns of *soon* and *quickly* suggests the ORR policy constructs self-sufficiency as an economic condition to be attained as quickly as possible. These findings are not surprising being that the purported purpose of this policy is to “promote economic self-sufficiency as quickly as possible in resettled refugees”, but they do raise the question as to how this goal is accomplished. Further examination of the self-sufficiency collocation patterns in the ORR document sheds light on this question by revealing that, unlike in the COCA, self-sufficiency is collocated with *employment* in the ORR policy and, more specifically, *early employment*.

*Employment* fails to rank in the COCA frequency and relevance lists (see Tables 1 & 2); yet, it collocates with self-sufficiency a quarter of the time in the ORR documents (See table 4). Even though employment was not found to be the most frequent collocation in the ORR documents, the fact that it ranks meaningfully in the ORR documents and not at all in the COCA suggests a marked usage in ORR policy. The marked collocation pattern in the ORR document suggests a construction of self-sufficiency, which possibly entails employment. In light of this possibility, I performed an analysis of each token of self-sufficiency in the ORR policy. In the next section, I present the analysis of the immediate context in which each token was found.

## **Token Analysis**

I now present examination of the immediate context in which I found each token. This analysis broadens the scope of the collocate-analysis beyond the immediate phrase adjacent to the term, and provides further interpretation of how *self-sufficiency* is construed in the policy. I present analysis of each token in the order in which they were found in the policy, holding that each token is significant for answering this study's guiding questions, as is the sequence in which they appear.

Twelve tokens of the term *self-sufficiency* were identified by an analysis of the ORR policy documents. Tokens were identified in six of the eleven subparts. Self-sufficiency was found in four of the six subparts that pertain to assistance and service programs offered to refugees. All four of the service and assistance subparts that included tokens concern economic and employment resettlement issues. The construct was not identified in the *G-Refugee Medical Assistance* and *H-Child Welfare Services* subparts. The juxtaposition of self-sufficiency in subparts pertaining to employment and its deficit in subparts pertaining to medical and child welfare suggests the term is construed as a function of economic and employment conditions more than it is a derivative of medical construct or a term applied to children.

### **Token one**

Subpart A-subsection 400.1 describes the basis and rationale for the refugee resettlement program. The policy states, "it is the purpose of this program to provide for the effective resettlement of refugees and to assist them to achieve

economic self-sufficiency as quickly as possible.” The context of self-sufficiency in this subsection highlights the findings of the collocate analysis, connecting the term *self-sufficiency* to an economic condition to be attained in a hurried fashion.

Moreover, we see the conjunction *and* used to combine the “effective resettlement of refugees” with the achievement of “economic self-sufficiency”, suggesting that the success of refugee resettlement is tied to refugees attaining economic self-sufficiency.

### **Token two**

Subpart A-subsection 400.2 defines the term *self-sufficiency* in the policy.

The policy states, “economic self-sufficiency means earning a total family income that enables a family unit to support itself without receipt of a cash assistance grant.” As the policy explicitly defines the term, some might query the guiding questions of this investigation. However, the orientation of this study is to identify the construal of the term rather than its explicit definition.

In section Subpart A-400.1, the policy states that its purpose is to help refugees “achieve economic self-sufficiency as quickly as possible.” The policy then defines *economic self-sufficiency* in this subsection, as a state wherein cash assistance is unwarranted. *Support* is undefined, so this construction could mean a family earns plenty enough money to not need support or just enough to no longer qualify for aid. By stating that its purpose is to foster self-sufficiency and then delimiting economic self-sufficiency as merely not receiving cash support, the policy

purposes itself as an instrument to remove resettled refugees from cash assistance programs *as quickly as possible*.

### **Token three**

One requirement states must meet in order to receive federal refugee resettlement grants is submission of a resettlement plan to the ORR. Subpart B-subsection 400.5 controls the contents of state refugee resettlement plans, which must:

*Describe how the State will coordinate cash and medical assistance with support services to ensure their successful use to encourage effective refugee resettlement and to promote employment and economic self-sufficiency as quickly as possible.*

Here, we see that in order for states to receive federal refugee resettlement funding, they must use those funds to *promote early employment and economic self-sufficiency*, or, in other words, to promote the termination of cash assistance grants to resettled refugees. Again, we see the use of the coordinator *and* suggesting a close relationship between early employment and self-sufficiency. Another option could have been *or* which would have suggested that early employment and self-sufficiency are mutually exclusive.

### **Token four**

Subpart E-subsection 400.58 regulates Refugee Cash Assistance (RCA) programs. This subsection of the policy dictates the contents of and submission

process for public/private RCA plans. The policy decrees that RCA plans must include “a description of the employment and self-sufficiency services to be provided to RCA recipients.” The required inclusion of self-sufficiency services in RCA plans indicates a connection between the provision of refugee cash assistance benefits and *self-sufficiency* in the policy document.

### **Token 5**

Subpart-E 400.60 sets forth payment levels for RCA programs and permits that:

*States and local resettlement agencies may design an assistance program that combines RCA payments with income disregards or other incentives such as employment bonuses, or graduated payments in order to encourage early employment and self-sufficiency, as long as the total combined payments to a refugee do not exceed the ORR monthly ceilings established in this section multiplied by the allowable number of months of RCA eligibility.*

This subsection indicates the policy’s incentivization of early employment. The creation of incentives aimed to promote early employment and self-sufficiency underscores the policy’s purpose of eliminating refugees from RCA benefit programs as quickly as possible.

### **Token six**

Subpart-F 400.71 describes requirements for the Employability Services provided to resettled refugees and the employment criteria for refugees. This subsection provides definitions for terms used in the Subpart and defines a:

*Family self-sufficiency plan as a plan that addresses the employment related service needs of the employable members in a family for the purpose of enabling the family to become self-supporting through the employment of one or more family members.*

Here, employment services are the sole method available to support self-sufficiency of refugees. By limiting the family self-sufficiency plan to only address the employment needs of refugees, the policy makers chose to address self-sufficiency with but one intervention. Other related policy interventions could include addressing issues of agency, community involvement, support, and integration. The deficit of other interventions aimed to foster resettled refugees' self-sufficiency indicates the construct is construed only an economic term related to employment.

### **Token seven**

Subpart-F 400.79 stipulates the necessity for the development of an employability plan for refugees receiving RCA. The policy states, "an individual employability plan must be developed as part of a family self-sufficiency plan where applicable for each recipient of cash assistance in a family unit who is not exempt under 400.76 of this part." In this subsection, we continue to see the connection between employment and self-sufficiency. *As part of* indicates a plan for employing

refugees is embedded in fostering self-sufficiency for refugees. *As part of* could also indicate the presence of multiple parts of a self-sufficiency plan; however, in Subpart-F 400.71, we find the self-sufficiency plan only pertains to employment related needs of resettled refugees - suggesting a deficit of other facets to such plan. In this subsection, we also see connection among the provision of cash benefits, employment, and self-sufficiency, with plans for fostering employment and self-sufficiency embedded in RCA programs.

### **Token eight**

Subpart-I 400.146 pertains to social services provided to refugees, and mandates states' use of funds for those services. Specifically:

*the State must use its social service grants primarily for employability services designed to enable refugees to obtain jobs within one year of becoming enrolled in services in order to achieve economic self-sufficiency as soon as possible.*

In Subpart-E 400.60, we find evidence that RCA programs are used to promote early employment. Here, we observe social service programs are used to encourage the early employment of refugees as well. The use of *primarily* is indication that the main purpose for social service grants is to move resettled refugees into early employment and off of cash assistance benefits as quickly as possible.

### **Token nine**

Subpart-I 400.154 mandates the types of employability services states may provide to refugees. One type being:

*Employment services, including development of a family self-sufficiency plan and an individual employability plan, world-of-work and job orientation, job clubs, job workshops, job development, referral to job opportunities, and job placement and follow up.*

In addition to the aforementioned *self-sufficiency plan* and *employability plan*, we see that the policy allows for states to provide other sorts of employment services that are connected to job attainment. Given this subsection affects employability services provided to refugees, there seems to be nothing marked about the inclusion of various job-promoting services. However, the inclusion of a self-sufficiency plan in the list of employment services illustrates connection between the policy's construal of self-sufficiency and employment.

Moreover, textually, *self-sufficiency plan* and *employability plan* are at the top of the list demonstrating greater importance over the other types of employment-related services that can be provided. Again, a self-sufficiency plan must include an employability plan aimed to support early employment. The textual placing of these two plans in the list of employment services suggests the ORR resettlement policy prioritizes promoting early employment over other types of employment services.



## Token ten

Subpart-I 400.155 describes other services that may be offered to refugees, which include:

*Any additional service, upon submission to and approval by the Director of ORR, aimed at strengthening and supporting the ability of a refugee individual, family, or refugee community to achieve and maintain economic self-sufficiency, family stability, or community integration which has been demonstrated as effective and is not available from any other funding source.*

This provision suggests that the policy affords any type of service be provided to resettled refugees. However, the textual positioning of this subsection indicates otherwise – being the second to last subsection of the Refugee Social Services subpart following the Employability services subsection. The placement of the *Other services* provision below Employability services suggests that those services are of a lower priority as compared to employability-related services. Further evidence for the lesser importance of Other services is found in the specific services provided in the respective subsections.

Three services afforded in the Employability services section are *day care; case management services; and translation and interpreter services*. In each case, the policy stipulates that these services may be provided as they relate to gaining employment. The Other services section then allows these same services “when necessary for services other than employability services.” These allowances shadow the provisions of the employability services suggesting a policy preference

for incentivizing employment over other services. Furthermore, the policy's proclivity towards revoking refugees' eligibility for cash assistance is reinforced in this subsection, being the first purpose listed for the use of other services.

The use of the conjunction *or* in the purpose-list for other services suggests it is either one purpose or the other. Another choice could have been *and*, which would suggest that there could be more than one purpose supported by *other services*. Also, the purpose-list indicates that the policy holds these three constructs as independent of each other. An option that would suggest connection between the constructs would be *to promote economic self-sufficiency, which entails family stability and community integration*.

The stipulations for additional services are also quite extensive, requiring prior approval from the Director; all other funding sources be exhausted first; and demonstration that the service is effective. This last stipulation is especially opaque because there is no description provided of the effectiveness requirements for a service. The textual positioning of this subsection in conjunction with the extensive requisites for other services suggests that Other services are of low priority in the policy.

### **Token eleven**

Subpart I: 400.156 decrees the service requirements for the permitted refugee social services. One of these requirements is that "a family self-sufficiency plan must be developed for anyone who receives employment related services funded under this part." This subsection connects back to section Subpart-F 400.79,

which stipulates, “an individual employability plan must be developed as part of a family self-sufficiency plan.” This textual cohesion reveals that in order for a state to provide RCA benefits to refugees, they must develop *self-sufficiency plan* for those refugees that contains within it an *individual employability plan* geared towards early employment. These textual connections point to a policy construal of self-sufficiency that entails early employment.

### **Token twelve**

Subpart L: 400.313 details the ways in which funds allocated to states for targeted assistance programs must be used:

*A state must use its targeted assistance funds primarily for employability services designed to enable refugees to obtain jobs with less than one year’s participation in the targeted assistance program in order to achieve economic self-sufficiency as soon as possible.*

The stipulations for targeted assistance fund allocations echo those of social service grants, requiring that funds be used to promote early employment and retraction of cash assistance benefits to resettled refugees.

### **Token Analysis Conclusion**

The token analysis I performed for each immediate context of self-sufficiency supports and expands the findings of the *collocation comparison analysis*. I discovered in the previous collocation inquiry that the resettlement policy uses self-sufficiency in marked relation to employment. Token analysis furthers this finding,

indicating the policy does not only associate self-sufficiency with employment, but construes the term to entail *early employment*. Moreover, the policy exploits the promotion of early employment as mechanism for fulfilling its latent goal of eliminating assistance benefits resettled refugees. From this analysis, I noted early employment as a surfaced theme, warranting further examination of the policy in specific relation to the emergent-theme *early employment*. Discussion of this analysis is presented in the next section.

### **Early Employment Theme Analysis**

The results of the first two analyses I performed suggest the ORR refugee resettlement policy construes self-sufficiency as an economic condition to be achieved hurriedly through early employment. The textual results of the *early employment* inquiry are summarized in Table 5. I found reinforcement, rather than counter-evidence, of previous conclusions, and I continue to assert that the policy construes self-sufficiency in a way that entails early employment.

Subpart-B 400.5 and Subpart-E 400.60, stipulate that the funds provided to states for refugee resettlement programs must be used to promote early employment. Subpart-B 400.5 requires that states' plans for resettlement programs must include the ways in which the programs' granted funds will be use to promote employment *as quickly as possible*. Subpart-E 400.60 provides that states may design their assistance programs to include various incentives for resettled refugees as long as those incentives are used to encourage *early employment*. These mandates illustrate how the policy advances early employment for resettled

refugees. Further analysis finds that early employment is incentivized by Refugee Cash Assistance (RCA) and Targeted Assistance programs.

Table 5: Early Employment Theme Policy Text

Policy section	Policy text
Subpart A—Introduction: § 400.1 Basis and purpose of the program.	It is the purpose of this program to provide for the effective resettlement of refugees and to assist them to achieve economic self-sufficiency as quickly as possible
Subpart B—Grants to States for Refugee Resettlement: § 400.5 Content of the plan.	Describe how the state will coordinate cash and medical assistance with support services to ensure their successful use to encourage effective refugee resettlement and promote employment and economic self-sufficiency as quickly as possible
Subpart E—Refugee Cash Assistance: § 400.60 Payment levels.	States may design an assistance program that combines RCA payments with income disregards or other incentives such as employment bonuses, or graduated payments in order to encourage early employment and self-sufficiency
Subpart F—Requirements for Employability Services and Employment: § 400.71 Definitions.	Employability plan means individualized written plan for a refugee registered for employment services that sets forth a program of services intended to result in the earliest possible employment of the refugee
Subpart F—Requirements for Employability Services and Employment: § 400.79 Development of an employability plan.	(a) An individual employability plan must be developed as part of a family self-sufficiency plan where applicable for each recipient of refugee cash assistance in a family unit who is not exempt

Table 5: Early Employment Policy Text (Continued)

Policy section	Policy text
Subpart I—Refugee Social Services: § 400.146 Use of funds.	The state must use its social service grants primarily for employability services designed to enable refugees to obtain jobs within one year of becoming enrolled in services in order to achieve economic self-sufficiency as soon as possible. Social services may continue to be provided after a refugee has entered a job to help the refugee retain employment or move to a better job. Social service funds may not be used for long-term training programs such as vocational training that lasts for more than a year or educational programs not intended to lead to employment within a year.
Subpart I—Refugee Social Services: § 400.154 Employability services.	(a) Employment services, including development of a family self-sufficiency plan and an individual employability plan
Subpart I—Refugee Social Services: § 400.156 Service requirements.	(g) A family self-sufficiency plan must be developed for anyone who receives employment related services funded under this part
Subpart L—Targeted Assistance: § 400.313 Use of funds.	A state must use its targeted assistance funds primarily for employability services designed to enable refugees to obtain jobs with less than one year’s participation in the targeted assistance program in order to achieve economic self-sufficiency as soon as possible. Targeted assistance services may continue to be provided after a refugee has entered a job to help the refugee retain employment or move to a better job. Targeted assistance funds may not be used for long-term training programs such as vocational training that last for more than one year or educational programs that are not intended to lead to employment within in year.

In the *Use of Funds* subsection of both the RCA and Targeted Assistance program subparts, the policy requires that the program funds provided to states be used “primarily for employability services designed to enable refugees to obtain jobs within one year of becoming enrolled in services in order to achieve economic

self-sufficiency as soon as possible.” This mandate is echoed in Subpart F-400.79, which dictates that “an individual employability plan must be developed as part of a family self-sufficiency plan” for all refugees receiving RCA benefits. Subpart F-400.71 defines an employability plan as an “individualized written plan for a refugee registered for employment services that sets forth a program of services intended to result in the earliest possible employment of the refugee.” The textual cohesion between these subparts and subsections indicate that in order for resettled refugees to be eligible for assistance programs from the state, they must take part in employability services geared towards early employment.

These stipulations for refugee benefit programs create a circumstance where if resettled refugees choose to not take part in early employment plans, they do so at the expense of aid from the state. If we think about the circumstances in which many refugees arrive in this country, with little or no means of their own, the choice between early employment and cash assistance does not really seem like a choice at all. RCA is not only an incentive for early employment but a coercive device for it as well.

I found no other occupational endorsements other than those of early employment. With regard to this investigation’s primary research question, the fact that the policy provides no other option for promoting self-sufficiency in resettled refugees other than through early employment indicates that the policy construes self-sufficiency in a way that entails early employment. The deficit of employment options afforded by the policy suggests that the policy provides resettled refugees little choice, if any, with regard to their occupation in the United States. This

apparent lack of choice prompted another emergent-theme of the policy -*agency*. In order to better understand the amount and type/s of agency resettled refugees have under this program, I analyzed the policy in relation to this construct. Discussion of this analysis is presented in the next section.

### **Agency Theme Analysis**

Analysis thus far has demonstrated that the ORR refugee resettlement policy construes self-sufficiency to be the economic condition of making enough money to preclude qualifying for federal assistance that is to be achieved as quickly as possible through early employment. I find that the policy's insistence on using early employment as the sole means to promote self-sufficiency inhibits the agency of the resettled refugees. *Agency*, as I use it in this study, is related to Bandura's (2001) notion of the term, which connects agency to one's capacity to control their life quality and condition. In this particular context, I use agency to refer to individuals' efficacy in choosing their own vocational pursuits.

Table 6 provides the textual findings of the *agency* analysis. Subpart F designates the "Requirements for Employability Services and Employment" of refugees. Subpart F-subsection 400.70 mandates that any refugee who applies for or receives Refugee Cash Assistance (RCA) "must comply with the requirements of this subpart" in order to receive aid from the government. Subpart F-400.75(4) dictates that refugees must "participate in any employability service program" that is determined to be "appropriate for that refugee."



Table 6: Agency Theme Policy Text

Policy section	Policy text
Subpart E: § 400.57	(a) Primary participants in the planning process must include representatives of the State and each local agency that resettles refugees in the State. During the planning process, the State must fully consult with the representatives of counties, refugee mutual assistance association, (MAAs), local community service agencies, national voluntary agencies that resettle refugees in the State, representatives of each refugee ethnic group, and other agencies that serve refugees.
Subpart F: § 400.70	A refugee who is an applicant for or recipient of refugee cash assistance must comply with the requirements in this subpart.
Subpart F: § 400.75	(3) Accept at anytime, from any source, an offer of employment, as determined to be appropriate by the State agency or its designee.
Subpart F: § 400.75	(4) Participate in any employability service program which provides job or language training in the area in which the refugee resides, which is funded under section 412© of the Act, and which is determined to be available and appropriate for that refugee
Subpart F: § 400.75	(6)(i) Accept an offer of employment which is determined to be appropriate by the local resettlement agency which was responsible for the initial resettlement of the refugee or by the appropriate State or local employment service

Table 6: Agency Theme Policy Text (Continued)

Policy section	Policy text
Subpart F: § 400.79	(b) If such a plan has been developed by the local resettlement agency which sponsored the refugee, or its designee, the State agency or its designee, may accept this plan if it is determined that the plan is appropriate for the refugee and meets their requirements of this subpart.
Subpart F: § 400.81	(2) The services or employment must be related to the capability of the individual to perform the task on a regular basis. Any claim of adverse effect on physical or mental health must be based on adequate medical testimony from a physician or licensed or certified psychologist indicating that participation would impair the individual's physical or mental health.
Subpart F: § 400.81.	(11) In addition to meeting the other criteria of this paragraph, the quality of training must meet local employers' requirements so that the individual will be in a competitive position within the local labor market. The training must also be likely to lead to employment which will meet the appropriate work criteria
Subpart F: § 400.82	(a) Termination of assistance. When without good cause, an employable non-exempt recipient of refugee cash assistance under the public/private RCA program or under a publicly administered RCA program has failed or refused to meet the requirements of 400.75(a) or has voluntarily quit a job, the State, or the agency(s) responsible for the provision of RCA, must terminate assistance in accordance with paragraphs (b) and (c) of this section.

This data indicates that policy requires refugees participate in employability services (that previous analysis shows to be geared towards early employment) in order to receive federal assistance. The preposition *for* indicates that it is not refugees who deem the appropriateness of employability programs, but rather some other person or agency makes that decision. Another prepositional choice could

have been *by*, which would have suggested that refugees had choice in the appropriateness of an employability program.

I find that the policy does not merely lack mention of refugee agency but serves to limit it. This impediment persists beyond choosing appropriate employability services to choice of occupation. Subpart F-400.75(3) states that a refugee must “accept at anytime, from any source, an offer of employment, as determined to be appropriate by the State agency or its designee.” This mandate is echoed in Subpart F-400.75(6)(i), which states that a refugee must “accept an offer of employment which is determined to be appropriate by the local resettlement agency which was responsible for the initial resettlement of the refugee or by the appropriate State or local employment service.”

There is a deficit of refugee voice in both of the complement clauses following the verb *determined* in these provisions, excluding resettled refugees’ occupational agency. In both instances, the verb *determined* is followed by a to-infinitive complement clause that contains an embedded prepositional *by* phrase. In neither instance is there mention of *by a resettled refugee* or some similar construction; rather, it is the state and resettlement agencies that determine the appropriateness of work for a refugee. These grammatical constructions evidence a lack of agency on the part of resettled refugees with regard to job choice.

Whereas the policy excludes the voice of refugees with regard to their employment, I found the policy does account for the voice of employers. Subpart F-400.81(11) states that the employment related training provided to refugees “must meet local employers’ requirements so that the individual will be in a competitive

position within the local labor market.” This predilection for employer’s requirements and disregard for refugees’ input shows that the policy favors the needs of employers and the marketplace over those of resettled refugee workers.

I found that inhibited refugee agency extends beyond choosing an occupation to determining whether an occupation is detrimental to them. Subpart-F-400.81(2) states, “Any claim of adverse effect on physical or mental health must be based on adequate medical testimony from a physician or licensed or certified psychologist indicating that participation would impair the individual’s physical or mental health.” The use of *any* means that all claims of adverse effect of a particular occupation on resettled refugees must come from the designated sources. Furthermore, the cohesive device *or* is exclusionary, indicating that these are the only options for people who can make claims of detriment, none of whom are refugees.

In the *token* and *early employment* analyses, I found evidence that refugees are not eligible for RCA benefits if they do not concede to placement in an early employment position. In this analysis, I found that resettled refugees are also sanctioned with expulsion from RCA benefits if they leave such a position. Subpart F-400.82(a) states that refugees who fail or refuse to meet the requirements of the part or “voluntarily quit” a job must have their benefits terminated. The *token* and *early employment* analyses of the document show that RCA benefits are used as a mechanism to incentivize and coerce early employment for resettled refugees. Here we see that these benefits too are exploited to obstruct refugees from leaving promoted early employment positions. I found this tendency towards preclusion quite salient in the policy, sparking me to create another emergent theme- *policy*

*preclusions*. The following section presents discussion of the preclusive aspects of the ORR's refugee resettlement program.

### **Policy Preclusions Theme Analysis**

In the previous section, I conclude that RCA benefits are used as a coercive device to preclude refugees from resigning from early employment positions. I found the recertification mandates of the policy to be preclusive as well. With regard to recertification programs, Man (2004) found that:

the re-certification process is often costly and time consuming. There is a prolonged waiting period, and information regarding re-certification is not easily available, and often couched in vague language. It is difficult for new immigrants to navigate the bureaucratic red tape (p. 142).

My findings echo and add to the findings of Man (2004). I found the policy goes beyond preventing resettled refugees from quitting early employment positions but also limits their upward occupational mobility by inhibiting access to recertification and training programs. Table 7 depicts the preclusive policy sections and text discussed below.

Table 7: Preclusive Theme Policy Text

Policy section	Policy text
Subpart E: § 400.53	(4) Are not full-time students in institutions of higher education, as defined by the Director.
Subpart F: § 400.81	(b) If an individual is a professional in need of professional refresher training and other recertification services in order to qualify to practice his or her profession in the United States, the training may consist of full-time attendance in a college or professional training program, provided that such training: Is approved as part of the individual's employability plan by the State agency, or its designee; does not exceed one year's duration (including any time enrolled in such program in the United States prior to the refugee's application for assistance); is specifically intended to assist the professional in becoming relicensed in his or her profession; and, if completed, can realistically be expected to result in such relicensing. This training may only be made available to individuals who are employed.
Subpart I: § 400.146	The State must use its social service grants primarily for the employability services designed to enable refugees to obtain jobs within one year of becoming enrolled in services in order to achieve economic self-sufficiency as soon as possible. Social services may continue to be provided after a refugee has entered a job to help the refugee retain employment or move to a better job. Social service funds may not be used for long-term training programs such as vocational training that lasts for more than a year or educational programs that are not intended to lead to employment within a year.
Subpart I: § 400.154 E	(f) Skills recertification, when such training meets the criteria for appropriate training in 400.81(b) of this part.

Under Subpart I-400.154(f) the policy permits that one of the employability services that can be provided to resettled refugees is “skills recertification, when such training meets the criteria for appropriate training in 400.81(b) of this part.” This allowance seems to be anything but preclusive; however, when we go back to Subpart F-400.81(b) and analyze the “criteria for appropriate employability services”, we find that Subpart I-400.154 (f) is misleading. Subpart F-400.81(b) allows for refugee recertification training to:

*consist of full-time attendance in a college or professional training program, provided that such training: Is approved as part of the individual's employability plan by the State agency, or its designee; does not exceed one year's duration (including any time enrolled in such program in the United States prior to the refugee's application for assistance); is specifically intended to assist the professional in becoming relicensed in his or her profession; and, if completed, can realistically be expected to result in such relicensing. This training may only be made available to individuals who are employed.*

The provision that a recertification program may “consist of full-time attendance in a college or professional training program” seems facilitative; yet, in Subpart E-400.53(4), the policy mandates that in order for a refugee to be eligible for Refugee Cash Assistance (RCA) benefits, they must not be “full-time students in institutions of higher education.” Thus, the policy creates a circumstance where a resettled refugee’s enrollment in a recertification program comes at the cost of terminated RCA benefits.

The stipulation that “training may only be made available to individuals who are employed” diminishes the realistic viability of refugee recertification. Most entry-level, early employment, jobs (the sort of positions promoted by the policy) require individuals work many hours merely to subsist. An individual working full-time for a full-year at minimum wage would earn \$15,080.00 in 2012 (Gould, Wething, Sabadish, & Fino, 2013). This is only just over three thousand dollars more than the 2013 U.S. poverty threshold (Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation, 2013) and far below the actual amount required to

modestly live, for example, in Portland, Oregon (Gould, Wething, Sabadish, & Fino, 2013).

Requiring that refugees attempt a recertification program while working an early employment job limits the realistic possibility for such a pursuit. This stipulation coupled with the *early employment* and *agency* conclusions, depicts policy that serves to preclude any other option for resettled refugees than early employment. I have been able to draw several well-founded conclusions from the analyses thus far; however, in order to completely understand the issues at hand, discussion of salient linguistic and discourse level features must be discussed. The following section discusses the use of modals in the policy document, which is followed by further specific discussion of the policy's cohesion.

### **Modal Analysis**

Throughout the documents, I found modal usage to be one of the most salient devices employed by the policy to achieve its purposes. This is a regulating federal policy, so it is not surprising to find that the majority of the modals used function to prescribe obligation or give permission. This type of modality is what Fairclough (1989) refers to as *relational modality*. Relational modality expresses a "matter of the authority of one participant in relation to others" (Fairclough, 1989, p. 126).

The two most prominent relational modals used in the document were *may* and *must*. The textual analysis I performed resulted in finding that *must* was used 187 times and *may* 84 times in the documents. Table 8 shows that every token of *must* was used to dictate obligation and the majority of tokens of *may*, 83 out of 84,



were used to give permission. My analysis shows that these two modals are used in decisive ways.

Table 8: May vs. Must Frequency Table

Modal	Frequency	Function	Example
Must	187	Obligation	A family self-sufficiency plan must be developed for anyone who receives employment related services under this part
May	83	Permission	A state may provide the following services-
May	1	Possibility	The Secretary has established a Departmental Grant Appeals Board for the purpose of reviewing and providing hearings on post-award disputes which may arise

One striking result of my analysis is the fact that *may* was only used one time to permit refugees to take action. Nearly every time that the policy discussed refugee doings, it was in reference to what a refugee *must* do or *may not* do. One exception was found in Subpart F-400.83(b) that described the mediation process for sanctioned refugees. The policy states that states “either the State or local resettlement agency(s) responsible for the provision of RCA or the recipient may terminate this period sooner when either believes that the dispute cannot be resolved by mediation.”

Here we see the policy using *may* to give permission to refugees to terminate mediation. However, the policy did not employ this same permissive device to allow refugees to initiate mediation; rather, “the state must ensure that a mediation

period prior to imposition of sanctions is provided to refugees by local resettlement agencies.” These requirements make refugees passive agents in the creation of a mediation process and only gain active agency with regard to canceling said mediation.

The only other permissive usages of *may* were found in relation to refugees’ eligibility for services. Subpart E-400.53(b) provides that “a refugee may be eligible for refugee cash assistance under this subpart during a period to be determined by the Director in accordance with 400.211.” The same usage of *may be eligible* was found in Subpart H-400.113 and Subpart G-400.100. These three instances are permissive *may* usages but do not pertain to refugees’ volition; rather, it is the government that is in control of the eligibility. By in large, modal use in the policy serves to restrict refugees’ actions, limiting their possible courses of action.

Aside from restricting refugee volition, I found that modal usage serves to signify the priorities of the policy. For example, Subpart I-400.146 states that:

*The State must use its social service grants primarily for employability services designed to enable refugees to obtain jobs within one year of becoming enrolled in services in order to achieve economic self-sufficiency as soon as possible. Social services may continue to be provided after a refugee has entered a job to help the refugee retain employment or move to a better job. Social service funds may not be used for long-term training programs such as vocational training that last for more than a year or educational programs that are not intended to lead to employment within a year.*

Here we see that the modal *must* used to dictate the obligation of states to use funds to promote the early employment of refugees. However, when the policy switches topic to the continuation of services to help refugees retain or improve their employment, we see the use of *may*, which is permissive but not obligatory.

This variance in modal usage indicates a policy proclivity for advancing resettled refugees into early employment over helping them improve their economic condition. Moreover, the use of *may not* with regard to funding vocational training and educational programs is further evidence of the policy's disfavor for assisting resettled refugees to move beyond initial early employment positions. The linguistic usage of modals were quite telling from the analysis of the document as was the cohesion of the documents.

### **Cohesion Analysis**

In addition to modal usage, I found the cohesion of the documents to be one of the most telling discursive features of the policy documents. Fairclough (1989) describes one part of interpreting texts is determining how whole texts work together or, as he puts it, interpreting the *global coherence* of a text. He states that ideological assumptions can be implied by the juxtaposition of clauses (1989). Evident in discussions of the previous analyses, I found that the way the subparts and subsections relate to each other serves as indication of the true purpose of the program and its construal of *self-sufficiency*. Cohesion also shows the policy's underlying purpose in the service programs' allocation of funds priority-lists.

In Subpart-I 400.147 states that social service program allocations must be provided to refugees in the following order:

*1) All newly arriving refugees during their first year in the US, who apply for services; 2) Refugees who are receiving cash assistance; 3) Unemployed refugees who are not receiving cash assistance; 4) Employed refugees in need of services to retain employment or to attain economic independence.*

A similar order of priority is found in the Target Assistance program subpart, which stipulates that funds must be allocated to:

*1) Cash assistance recipients, particularly long-term recipients; 2) Unemployed refugees who are not receiving cash assistance; 3) Employed refugees in need of services to retain employment or to attain economic independence.*

Together, these priority-lists illustrate the program's proclivity towards eliminating resettled refugees from assistance programs over continuing assistance to help refugees improve their economic condition in the States. We see the priority of helping resettled refugees "retain employment or to attain economic independence" as the last priority listed, whereas refugees who receive *cash assistance* are at or near the top of each priority list. These lists indicate that the policy prioritizes the exclusion of refugees from assistance programs over helping refugees gain true economic independence.

Taken together, the analyses thus far have lead to my conclusions about the construal of self-sufficiency in the policy; the role early employment plays in advancing the policy's construction of self-sufficiency; as well as my conclusions

about the inhibited agency and preclusions resettled refugees face because of policy mandates. In the next section, I discuss my analysis of the document with regard to ELT. This discussion demonstrates the relationship between ELT and self-sufficiency as well as segues into the second inquiry of this study -IRCO ELT.

**ELT Policy Analysis**

One of the services afforded to resettled refugees by the policy is English language training (ELT). The second guiding question of this investigation questions the way that the ORR policy’s construal of *self-sufficiency* is reflected in IRCO documents, so this section presents analysis of the policy document with regard to ELT. Table 9 provides the policy sections and text that pertain to ELT, which are discussed below.

Table 9: English Language Training Policy Text

Policy section	Policy text
Subpart A: § 400.1	(c) Under the authority in section 412(a)(6)(b) of the Immigration and Nationality Act, the Director has established the provision of employment services and English language training a priority in accomplishing the purpose of this program.
Subpart I: § 400.154	(d) English language instruction, with an emphasis on English as it relates to obtaining and retaining a job.
Subpart I: § 400.156	(c) English language instruction funded under this part must be provided in a concurrent, rather than sequential time period with employment or other employment related services.

Table 9: English Language Training Policy Text (Continued)

Policy section	Policy text
Subpart I: § 400.156	(a) In order to avoid interference with refugee employment, English language instruction and vocational training funded under this part must be provided to the fullest extent feasible outside normal working hours.
Subpart I: § 400.156	(d)) Services funded under this part must be refugee-specific services which are designed specifically to meet the refugee needs and are in keeping with the rules and objectives of the refugee program, except that of vocational or job skills training, on the job training, or English language training need not be refugee specific.
Subpart I: § 400.155	(i)) Citizenship and naturalization preparation services, including English language training and civics instruction to prepare the refugee for citizenship.

Subpart A-400.1 states that ELT is “a priority in accomplishing the purpose of this program.” The purpose of the program has been shown to be eliminating resettled refugees from assistance programs by positioning resettled refugees in early employment occupational positions; thus, the policy prioritizes ELT as a tool to get refugees off of assistance programs and into early employment jobs. This contention is supported by the ELT provision in the policy that mandates ELT be provided “with an emphasis on English as it relates to obtaining and retaining a job” (Subpart I-400.154(d). One exception to this provision is when ELT is used for “citizenship and naturalization preparation services” (Subpart I-400.155(i)).

Subpart-I requires that “English language instruction funded under this part must be provided in a concurrent, rather than sequential time period with

employment or other employment related services.” It also states that “in order to avoid interference with refugee employment, English language instruction and vocational training funded under this part must be provided to the fullest extent feasible outside normal working hours” (Subpart I-400.156). However, many funded programs, such as the Pre-Employment Training (PET) program at the Immigrant and Community Organization (IRCO), offer classes during regular business hours, which prohibit refugees from attending classes while employed.

Refugee social services funded under Subpart I must be refugee specific with an exception being that “English language training need not be refugee specific” (Subsection 400.156). An inference from this stipulation is that refugee ELT permitted by the policy is not learner-based. Rather, this mandate in conjunction with Subpart I-400.154(d), which states that refugee ELT must emphasize “English as it relates to obtaining and retaining a job” suggests that ELT is used as a tool to help the program achieve its goals and meet market demands, instead of help refugees with their individual needs.

### **ORR Policy Analysis Conclusions**

Rigorous and systematic analysis of the ORR document allows me to draw several conclusions and answer my first guiding question: the policy construes *self-sufficiency* as a hurriedly achieved economic condition of earning an exclusionary amount of income for assistance benefits qualification; *self-sufficiency* entails early employment; dictating early employment as sole means for fostering *self-sufficiency*

inhibits resettled refugees' occupational agency and opportunities for advancement.

Moreover, I conclude that the underlying purpose of the policy is to exclude resettled refugees from assistance programs as quickly as possible. ELT is one mechanism for fulfilling the policy's purpose by requiring ELT to be geared towards job training. The second guiding question of this investigation is – to what extent does the ELT at IRCO reflect or reinforce the policy's constructed notion of *self-sufficiency*? In answer to this question, I present discussion in the following section of the IRCO analysis I performed based on these ORR policy conclusions.

## **IRCO PET Texts Analysis**

### **Introduction**

Analysis of the ORR refugee resettlement policy documents reveals that the policy construes *self-sufficiency* as the economic condition of earning an exclusionary amount of money for assistance benefits qualification to be achieved as quickly as possible through early employment. English language training (ELT) is one method by which the advancement of early employment is achieved. Consequently, in order to answer this investigation's second guiding question, the Immigrant and Refugee Community Organization's (IRCO) Pre-Employment Training (PET) program's ELT documents were examined in light of these findings. The findings of this IRCO investigation show that the ELT at IRCO reflects and reinforces the constructed notion of self-sufficiency in the ORR policy and aids in



fulfilling the policy's underlying purpose of excluding resettled refugees from assistance benefits by advancing them into early employment positions.

### **Analysis of IRCO PET ELT Goals and Objectives**

The first step of the analysis included analyzing SLP levels 2 and 3 for their goals and objectives. The goals and objectives I found are presented in Tables 10 and 11. The course goals and objectives I discovered in both courses almost exclusively pertained to acquiring a job; understanding the American workplace; and skills for working in the American workplace. I found 47 total goals and objectives between the two SPL levels. Twenty-nine of these goals and objectives related directly to acquiring a job; nine to the American workplace; seven (such as general communication skills) were counted as pertaining to both; only two goals and objectives were found to relate to something other than work.

These two exceptions were English for using a phonebook and opening a bank account. Opening a bank account could be considered as relating to work, but the lesson did not mention work, only information about opening a bank account and saving money; thus, it was classified as a life-skill lesson, rather than related to work. The phonebook lesson, too, was considered a life-skill lesson because it focused on using the phonebook to locate goods and services, instead of say possible businesses to apply to.

Table 10: IRCO PET SPL 2 Course Goals

Goals	Goals (continued)
Learn how to use a time-clock	Craigslist for job search
Introductions	Job responsibilities related to positions
Job acquisition process	Job skills related to positions
Clear communication: connect, be clear, check, ask	Job posting: compare responsibilities and qualifications
Communication skill: I need, May I have	Draft a basic letter
Communication skill: I'm sorry I forgot your name	Emails to request an interview
Cardinal and Ordinal numbers	Dictation skills
Understand basic information form	Job application: physical abilities
Communication skill: Simple past tense, present and future	Interview
Job application: Emergency contact	American education system
Job application: Background information	Applications: educational background
Job posting: positions, Ft/Pt, shifts, pay, apply	Interview practice
Interview: name, DOB, age, eligibility, shifts	Applications: work experience
Maintaining a safe work environment	Applications: references, signature & date
Qualifications	English spelling system
Language skill: asking sensitive questions May I ask...	Formal introductions: title and last name
Calling in sick to excuse an absence	Asking for a job application

Table 11: IRCO PET SPL 3 Course Objectives

Objectives	Objectives (continued)
Drafting a cover letter	Computer job search for qualified positions
Phone etiquette/cold calling	Draft resumes/cover letters
Understanding employment dilemmas/choosing appropriate jobs	Emergency situations/ how to call in sick
Understanding employment protection laws	Understanding salary and benefits
Effective workplace communication	Opening a bank account and saving
Employee social expectations/inter-employee relations	Read and understand graphs, charts, and tables
Using the phonebook	Independence and self-sufficiency: the intrinsic motivation to work and the value of work over dependency

SPL 2 focused more on the objectives of finding and acquiring a job and SPL 3, which also focused on job acquisition, also focused on goals relating to American workplace situations. The SPL 2 course begins with an overview of the job acquisition process, then throughout the rest of the course, students learn about and practice various methods for finding and interviewing for jobs. The class culminates with students completing a job application and participating in a mock-interview. In addition to covering skills and techniques for acquiring a job, the course also covers the topics of clocking in and out of work (which students actually do in class) as well as how to maintain a safe work environment.

The former is related to the findings of the ORR policy analysis because here we see the ELT classroom being used to mimic the conditions of a factory or similar

type position. Not only is the content of the course used to prepare students for employment, but also the classroom itself serves as a model for the types of employment it is promoting. In this case, it is factory type worker positions, which are often also early employment positions. This training of students to become ideal employees is not only reflected in the fact that students are required to clock in and out of class, but also in the content of workplace safety. This content is used to prepare workers to work in factories, kitchens, and other semi-dangerous work environments. SPL2 prepares students for the application and interview process of job procurement, which is then reinforced and added to in SPL3.

SPL 3 also prepares students to find employment by focusing on how to draft a resume, write a cover letter, and perform cold-calls. Additionally, SPL 3 focuses on the American workplace itself (see Table 12), with students learning about appropriate inter-employee relations and effective workplace communication. Students are taught their rights and responsibilities as employees in the United States, including employee protection laws and sexual harassment policy. Students are also taught a couple of life skills in this course, including how to open a bank account and use the phone book to find support services.

Table 12: IRCO PET American Workplace Topics

Topics

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Appropriate reasons and manner for calling in sick/missing work
Understanding sexual harassment policies
Understanding employee benefits
Understanding pay stubs
Understanding taxes and W-4 forms
Understanding emergency contacts
Learning to clock in & out
Learning appropriate bodily hygiene and work attire

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Both courses included lessons on success in the American workplace. Table 12 provides a list of the topics covered on this subject. They are taught the importance of punctuality in the American workplace by having to punch in and out of class at IRCO. There are taught proper procedures and conditions for calling-in sick or missing work. Other topics include understanding paystubs, benefits, and taxes –all of which are important for success in the American workplace. They are instructed about their rights as employees, including sexual harassment policies.

The communicative skills fostered in the program include basic grammar constructions needed to acquire and maintain employment, but also communication repair techniques such as asking for clarification requests. Additionally, students are taught how to ask sensitive questions, and how to construct polite requests for

fulfilling their needs. These findings related to American workplace and communicative skill building serve as partial counterevidence to the ORR policy analysis because they do not specifically focus on early employment; nevertheless, they do not outweigh the rest of the IRCO analysis findings.

Together, by looking at the goals and objectives of SPL 2 and SPL 3 we see a picture of an ELT program geared towards promoting the procurement of employment and skills necessary to be successful in the American workplace. However, when the types of positions that are promoted in the program are analyzed it becomes apparent that it is not just employment that the program promotes but, in fact, early employment.

### **Analysis of IRCO PET ELT Depicted Job Types**

I found twenty-five types of jobs between SPL levels 2 and 3 (see Table 13). Of these twenty-five job types, sixteen of these (well over half) were entry-level positions that require no or very little training or experience. Five mid-level positions were found, which include jobs that require some training or certification, including jobs like truck-driver, taxi-driver, auto-mechanic, carpenter, and home healthcare-worker. Only four of the positions discussed in the courses were highly skilled positions: electrician, computer programmer, interpreter, and teacher. Even though these four high-skill positions were discussed in the course, only once was a refugee depicted as being able to have a skilled position, and in that instance, acceptance of the skilled position came at the cost of relocating his entire family across state lines.

Table 13: IRCO PET SPL 2 & 3 Depicted Job Types

Depicted Job Types	Depicted Job Types (Continued)
Supermarket shelf stocker	Construction worker
Dish washer	Housekeeper
Repair order processor at a mechanic shop	Cook
Auto mechanic	Office worker
Beauty salon employee	Interpreter
Electrician	Caregiver
Fast food worker	Car washer
Daycare assistant	Home healthcare worker
Computer programmer	Carpenter
Telecommunications	Teacher
Cleaner	Truck driver
Taxi driver	Factory worker
Window installer	

The skilled positions were mostly discussed as jobs that refugees had in their home country, not as positions available to them in the United States. Furthermore, when these positions were used as examples of jobs refugees had in their home country, subsequent examples portrayed these same refugees in entry-level positions in the United States. For example, a computer programmer in Russia was depicted as working at a telecommunications firm in the United States. The interpreter position was used as an example job posting, with one of the qualifications being that the individual be fluent in English. Even though this

position was used as an example of a job that students could possibly attain, the qualifications would preclude most from doing so.

This false portrayal of job opportunity was again found in the qualifications to be a teacher. In an activity where students had to match positions to the position's qualifications, the only qualification listed for a teacher was the ability to create lesson plans. This portrayal misconstrues the true qualifications of a teacher and misleads students as to the true requirements of obtaining such a position. Nowhere in either of the courses were there lessons on how to move beyond an entry-level position into higher-level education.

I found only four instances of occupational advancement during the analysis. One instance suggested an individual could potentially move from working at a fast food restaurant to a computer-related position after taking some computer classes. In fact, three of the four instances were not depicted as actually occurring, but only that they were desired or possible. Whether this possibility is supported by facilitated classroom discussion is unclear from this analysis. The other instance of advancement I found was an individual who moved from being a car-washer to being a mechanic. This individual was depicted as succeeding in this ascendance in the activity.

From my analysis of the job types depicted in these two courses, it is evident that the ELT at IRCO mainly promotes employment in entry-level early employment positions. The most striking findings of the IRCO analysis, which support my conclusions from the ORR policy analysis, came from analyzing the activities in SPL3 that related to employment related problems that refugees face in the United States.



### **Analysis of IRCO PET ELT Case studies**

The lesson about employment related problems refugees face in the United States listed the objective as being for refugees to consider some of the challenges that they may face in the United States. The instructions for one activity stated that refugees should be encouraged to take the first job that they can get because it is necessary for them to support themselves once federal assistance runs out. This statement was given as a matter of fact, as if this was the only option and naturally makes sense. This is an instance of naturalization and is evidence of the program's reinforcement of the resettlement policy's promotion of the imperativeness of early employment. Moreover, it also indicates that the program's ELT reflects the construal of self-sufficiency in the policy, holding that early employment is the key to economic independence. Not only is the construal of self-sufficiency evident in the instructions for this lesson but also the activity itself.

This lesson utilized a case study based on an actual resettled refugee. The case study portrayed a refugee that is highly educated and a skilled engineer in her home country. The individual also has strong English abilities. However, she did not go Cultural Orientation before coming to the United States and tried to make it on her own without the help of employment services at a resettlement agency. Thus, she is depicted as struggling to find and maintain employment, losing one job after another. She ends up working two jobs –one as a dishwasher and the other in a mechanic's office. Finally, as a result of her struggle to maintain these positions, she chooses to enlist the help of an employment service program at the resettlement agency. Through her positive relationship with the resettlement agency she is

shown to be able to get a driver's license, procure a car, and maintain the (same) two jobs that support her family. The case study ends by stating that her rent is high for her low income, but by working two jobs she manages to support her family in a two-bedroom apartment. In this case study, I found strong evidence of the PET's ELT reinforcement of the resettlement policies of the ORR.

The first piece of evidence comes from the description of the individual in the case study. She is highly educated, highly skilled, and has proficient English abilities, yet she cannot find and maintain lucrative employment. This depiction frames the refugee condition in the United States as one where no matter what their place in their home country, here they will work a low-paying position. Furthermore, we find the employment services of resettlement agencies to be the only avenue towards security in the U.S. It is not until the depicted refugee enlists the aid of the resettlement agency that she is able to procure a license, a car, and economic stability. This depiction proposes that resettlement employment services are the only avenue towards economic stability. I have shown that the employment services funded by the ORR policy must be geared towards early employment; thus, this case study surreptitiously supports early employment through the depiction of employment services in this case study.

From this case study I find support to my conclusion that the ELT at IRCO is used to reinforce the policies of the ORR. This reinforcement is performed through *naturalization*. The agenda of the ORR is naturalized in this case study by portraying the cause and effect as common sense. The policy and the ideologies that it conveys are completely arbitrary, but this case study depicts the refugee condition and

remedies as natural and completely void of federal influence and dominant ideology. The lesson makes it seem that it is only natural to ask the resettlement agencies for help because failure is imminent otherwise. Moreover, the deficit of discussion with regard to the deskilling of the depicted refugee suggests that not working in your trade is a natural result of the resettlement process and is in no part resultant of structural constraints. The last part of this case study is particularly telling, in that it illustrates what the ORR policy's definition of self-sufficiency means by "without support of cash assistance."

The ORR policy defines *self-sufficiency* as earning enough money to support a family without federal aid. In this case study we see one possibility of what that actually looks like. It involves working multiple jobs that provide a *low-income* but allows a family to *manage* and get by in light of expensive rents. In addition to reading and discussing this real example case study, students were also presented several scenarios that reinforce the agenda of the ORR policy.

Table 14 provides the five case studies presented to students. In each example, students were provided a hypothetical situation of a resettled refugee in the United States. In three of the five examples, the refugees were depicted as being employed in the United States and in every instance they were depicted in entry-level positions. In three of the five examples, refugees were described as having skilled positions in their home country, and in only one of these examples was a refugee shown as being able to maintain such a position in the United States. In another instance, the depicted refugee was offered a trainee position in a job he was already qualified for. In both of these instances where the refugee was shown as

possibly being able to maintain their previous position, they had to do so at a cost to their family.

Table 14: IRCO PET SPL 3 Job Opportunity Case Studies

Current situation	Opportunity	Choice
You were a mechanic in your home country. You have a wife and two kids. U.S. job: full-time dishwasher. Pays \$8.95/hour with health insurance for whole family. Possibility for internal promotion.	Offered: job as a mechanic-trainee. Pays \$10.50/ hour and is full-time. No health insurance.	Which job? Why? Why not?
You are married with three children. U.S. job: salon employee near home. Husband is an unemployed electrician.	Offered: electrician job in another state where you could also work. Kids have friends here and do well in school, but you don't make enough to support your family without cash assistance from the government.	Move? Why or why not?
Current job in U.S.: Dishwasher.	Job offer that pays \$1500.00 cash each month. Job application costs \$65.00	Apply? Why? Why not?
You were a mechanic in home country and made good money. You plan to work as a mechanic in the U.S. You have some money saved.	Resettlement agency finds you a fast-food restaurant job that pays 8.95/hour.	Take the job? Why? Why not?
You are 20 years old. You were unable to finish high school in home country. You are excited about school in U.S. and plan to get a G.E.D. and attend college full-time.	A neighbor owns a day-care nearby your home and they offer you a job as a daycare assistant.	Take the job or go to school first? Why? Why not?

In another instance, a family was shown to have to make the choice between keeping their children in a school where they are happy and doing well or moving to another state, which would allow them to make enough money to support themselves without the aid of cash assistance. The text says that they kids are

happy in school *but* you don't make enough money to support yourself without aid from the government. This cohesive device suggests that not making enough money to not need aid is negative, implying that the family should relocate in order to get off of government assistance. This insinuation reflects the policy's agenda of removing resettled refugees from cash assistance as quickly as possible.

In another case, a refugee was a mechanic in their home country and is offered a fast-food restaurant job by the resettlement agency. There was no explicit statement that the employee should take it; however, when we connect this example back to the to the real-life case study example, the directions of that lesson stated that refugees were encouraged to take the first job they can get. Therefore, we can extrapolate that the preferred outcome of this situation is that the refugee gives up his hope of being a mechanic in the United States and resigns to the fact that he will work an entry-level position in the United States.

This conclusion is supported by the IRCO service-worker's statement described in the introduction of this investigation where she said that refugees have to accept that they might have been skilled workers in their home countries but will be *janitors* in the United States. This case study reinforces the ORR policy's promotion of early employment and inhibition of occupational advancement. A similar outcome can be concluded for the situation where a resettled refugee was depicted as desiring to go to high school and college after her resettlement, but is offered a job as a daycare assistant. Again, refugees are encouraged to take the first job they are offered, which, in this case, means foregoing the chance to go to school.

This instance reflects the Policy's agenda of advancing resettled refugees into early employment positions as quickly as possible.

Case studies were also used for another lesson's objective, which was to promote *self-sufficiency* by fostering an intrinsic motivation to work and the value of work over dependency. In this lesson objective alone, we see reinforcement of the ORR policy's assertion that employment is the sole way to self-sufficiency.

Moreover, latent in this lesson objective is the implicit assumption that if left to their own devices, refugees would not seek work and would favor federal aid dependency.

This particular case study described a man who receives \$1000.00 per month in federal aid. He is offered a job as a bus-mechanic trainee that pays \$800.00 with a possible opportunity for training to drive the busses. If the man takes the job, his benefits will decrease by the amount he makes at work. If he takes the job, he will work 40hrs per week and take home \$1000.00 between salary and benefits. If he does not take the job, he will stay home and receive \$1000.00 in benefits.

Students were to break into groups and discuss the pros and cons of taking the job or not taking the job. Students were then to present the pros and cons they came up with in small groups; and then work as a whole group to conclude whether or not the man should take the job. There are no explicit mandates for the teacher in the documents as to which direction they should lead the whole class to decide; however, since the objective of the lesson is to promote work over dependency, we can presume that the desired outcome of this lesson is that the class decides that the man should take the job.

This lesson further supports two of my conclusions from the ORR policy analysis. The first being the policy emphasizes early employment as a means to *self-sufficiency* and the second is that the programs underlying purpose is to exclude refugees from cash assistance as quickly as possible. In this and other ELT lessons I encountered, we see both the promotion of taking an early employment position as well as the advancement of excluding refugees from benefits.

### **IRCO Analysis Conclusions**

From the analysis of the IRCO documents, I find evidence of the intertextual relationship between the respective analyzed discourses, with the goals and agenda of the ORR policy being reflected and reinforced in the IRCO's PET ELT lesson plans and materials. The program's lesson plans and materials almost exclusively depict refugees in entry-level positions and present minimal discussion of refugees having opportunities to advance beyond those jobs. These findings evidence the program's reflection of the ORR policy's proclivity for advancing early employment and inhibition of occupational advancement. Moreover, the case studies I encountered during the analysis reinforce the policy's goal of fostering early employment in resettled refugees as well as excluding them from cash assistance benefits as quickly as possible.

## Chapter 4 Conclusion

In this chapter, I have presented a collocation comparison analysis as well as textual and interpretive CDA analyses for the two analyzed discourses. From these analyses, I have shown the ways that the ORR policy and IRCO documents interact with their respective discursive processes as well as intertextually with each other. To understand the complete picture, though, I must position these discourses within the broader socio-historical discourses that relate to them. In the next chapter, I contextualize the findings of Chapter 4 in the broader discourses of immigration, education and neoliberalism. I also discuss ideologies of *becoming* and *being* American. Said discussion will serve as explanation of the interpretive conclusions I drew in this chapter.



## Chapter 5: Conclusion

### Implications and Explanations

#### Conclusions

Again, rigorous and systematic analysis of the ORR and IRCO documents has allowed me to draw several conclusions: the policy construes *self-sufficiency* as a hurriedly achieved economic condition of earning an exclusionary amount of income for assistance benefits qualification; *self-sufficiency* entails early employment; mandating early employment as sole means for fostering *self-sufficiency* inhibits resettled refugee agency and opportunities for occupational and educational advancement. The policy restricts attendant ELT provided to resettled refugees to aid its purpose of positioning and maintaining resettled refugees in early employment positions; excluding them from assistance benefits as quickly as possible; and inhibiting their chances of participating in higher education. These conclusions are reflected and reinforced in IRCO's PET ELT.

Furthermore, I conclude that the federal government uses policy to constrain various aspects of resettlement discourse. Fairclough (1989) contends that dominant discourses can have various types of social constraints. Constraints are instances in "which powerful participants in discourse can exercise over the contributions of non-powerful participants" (Fairclough, 1989, p. 74). Constraints can take the form of constraining the *contents*, *relations*, and *subjects* of discourse, with both immediate and long-term effects.

I argue that ORR uses policy text as a tool for two types of social constraints: contents and subjects. First, the federal government uses resettlement policy to constrain the subject positions of refugees in the United States. In other words, the ORR uses the resettlement policy to restrict the types of roles and occupations refugees can have in the U.S. This constraint results in relegating refugees to marginal status in the American economy and society. Similarly, through manipulation of *self-sufficiency*, the government aims to constrain public perception of resettlement policy in a way where the public views the policy as being altruistic, when in fact it serves to maintain unequal social strata and distributions of power and wealth.

By stating that the policy's goal is to *foster self-sufficiency*, the government exploits a common framing of the term, which involves a certain level of agency and prosperity, to mask its underlying subjugating agenda. My analysis has shown that the policy restricts resettled refugees' agency and opportunities for prosperity, indicating that the policy does not promote true self-sufficiency; instead, it promotes a rather shallow version of the construct, which entails merely not getting aid from others.

The federal government uses the policy's professed purpose of *fostering self-sufficiency in resettled refugees* as a linguistic device to conceal the policy's ideologically determined objectives. *Self-sufficiency*, as employed by the federal government, is a hegemonic device utilized to naturalize the subjugated economic condition of resettled refugees in the United States. Unfortunately, these

conclusions are not isolated to this particular discursive context but exist in broader American discourses and ideologies.

### **Ideologies and Dominant Discourse**

One of the most salient ideologies in American culture is the importance of the individual. Americans are supposed to make it on their own, not as a group. This is an ideologically based mind-set reflected in the professed goals of ORR resettlement policy. The policy's asserted goal is to promote self-sufficiency, which reflects the American Ideology of self-reliance. If dominant American culture and ideology were more communal and put less focus on the importance of the individual, the policy's purported goal might not be as highly regarded.

Moreover, the fact that the policy's goal reflects dominant American ideology facilitates the success of its covert agendas. Nobody questions the goal of fostering self-sufficiency because it is what all Americans must strive for. The ideology of self-reliance is also reinforced by ORR resettlement policy's emphasis of early employment.

Halpern (2008) found, in her study of government-funded refugee resettlement ELT programs, that ELT classes are designed to reinforce the message refugees receive from their case manager about the importance of early employment. My findings align with those of Halpern (2008), as well as those of Nawyn (2010), who found that the majority of the government funded job-placement programs center heavily on getting people off of public assistance.

All of these findings reflect the American ideology of self-reliance. Refugees need to take the first job they can so they can make it for themselves without the help of the government. The ideology of self-reliance is also reflected in dominant American immigration discourse.

Dominant American discourse asserts that anyone who works hard and 'pulls themselves up by the bootstraps' will make it. This ideologically driven discourse has been imposed on immigrant populations since the beginning of immigration in the United States. Immigration discourse often presumes that the first generation of immigrants has to work hard and struggle, so that their children and second generation will be able to have the 'American Dream'. Immigrants and refugees have to start at the bottom and work their way up because this is the 'American way'.

I believe that this discourse is a myth and fails to acknowledge the structural impediments refugees and immigrants face in the United States. This study's findings fit into dominant immigration discourse as well the discourse of neoliberalism.

### **Neoliberalism**

Neoliberalism is a political movement that values the private over the public. It favors free markets, globalization, deregulation, and privatization. Dominant neoliberal discourses contend that the effects of globalization, privatization, and deregulation are inevitable. (Man, 2004). This movement has an ever-growing

presence in world economies and societies, having far reaching consequences for a variety of issues, including but not limited to education.

According to Gibb (2008), a neoliberal approach to education asserts that a country with a well-educated workforce will have significant competitive benefits in the global economy. This seems innocuous enough, but is really anything but. Neoliberal educational agenda seeks to homogenize a workforce rather than addressing the variety of needs and capacities of a population (Gibb, 2008). The result of such homogenization is an adult-education free market that emphasizes vocational training and services for those sectors that yield the highest profits (Gibb, 2008). This educational agenda disregards the needs of individuals and has found its way into ORR resettlement policy. The policy's acknowledgement of market employers' desires and disregard for refugees' occupational needs is evidence of the growing trend towards neoliberalism. This market-based approach is also apparent in the ELT requirements of ORR policy.

ORR funded ELT is geared only for job training; moreover, this job-training ELT is not learner-based. ORR funded ELT programs reflect the neoliberal agenda of creating a homogenized workforce who's only purpose is to fulfill market needs. Language skills should not be fostered solely as a component of worker-commodities to be exploited for greater economic good. As the foundation for humans' social relations and individual identities, limiting English language training to the role of advancing an occupational skill-set leaves learners studying a curriculum that cannot help them adjust and acclimate to their new environments

or move beyond their assigned entry-level positions. Unfortunately, the mal-effects of neoliberalism do not end in the ELT classroom.

Neoliberalism views immigrant [including refugee] workers as disposable labor, necessary to meet the demands of the global economy (Hanley, & Shragge, 2009; & Man, 2004). This view limits immigrants' successful integration into their adopted society (Man, 2004), as well as essentializes the preexisting skills and knowledge (Gibb, 2008). We see this neoliberal perspective in the ORR refugee resettlement policy, with the prohibition of recertification programs as well as the 'one size fits all' approach to job placement. Neoliberalism is dominating the public policies of the United States. This study demonstrates a federal refugee resettlement policy and attendant ELT program that serve to prepare resettled refugees for a specific place in the labor market and nothing more. The types of education promoted by neoliberalism and ORR policy reflect the flawed model of *human capital*.

Human capital theory holds that investment in individuals' education increases their productivity and value as capital, which in turn, benefits the overall economy, as well as translates to individual socioeconomic ascendance (Baptiste, 2001). Under this model, humans are viewed not as individuals who earn or produce capital but *are* capital (Baptiste, 2001). Social inequities are viewed as the result of improper training for the free market, instead of an effect of structures of power and exploitation (Baptiste, 2001).

Human capital model incorrectly identifies social inequities as resultant of free market forces, ignoring the socio-historical structures of power and ideology

and affect individuals and society. This human capital model is reflected in the goals and ideology of neoliberalism and supported by ORR policy. Furthermore, even if this model was valid, the educational restrictions imposed by ORR policy would still fail to properly invest in the human capital of resettled refugees. ORR policy promotes a limited amount of human capital in resettled populations and serves to inhibit their procurement of other types of *symbolic capital*.

### **Symbolic Capital**

Power relations are embedded in language. One way to think about the power of language is through the notion of *linguistic capital*. Bourdieu (1991) refers to linguistic capital as the learned skill-set of using a dominant or *official* language according to dominant groups' specifications. Linguistic capital is necessary for successful participation in a variety of social discourses. ORR policy promotes only a restricted amount of *linguistic capital*; by limiting the ELT offered to refugees to job-place specific language, the linguistic capital advanced by ORR resettlement policy is sufficient only to help refugees fulfill their restricted role in the American workplace. Moreover, by limiting refugees' access to linguistic capital, ORR policy also restricts refugees' access to *cultural capital*.

Cultural capital is the types of knowledge, personalities, and educational credentials that are highly valued in a society (Bourdieu, 1991). Without requisite linguistic capital needed to participate in educational discourse, refugees are unable to gain scholastic credentials, thereby preventing accumulation of cultural capital.

Refugees' access to cultural capital is impeded by limited ELT, as well as by recertification and vocational training restrictions.

The ORR resettlement policy impedes refugees' ability to obtain recertification and vocational training, which not only reduces their cultural capital in the United States but also robs them of cultural capital previously held in their home countries. The policy restrictions that obstruct refugees from gaining linguistic and cultural capital, by consequence, limit refugees' ability to accrue material capital.

Linguistic capital is needed for education; and education is needed for cultural capital, which is needed for gainful employment and economic prosperity (Kanno & Varghese, 2010); thus, by restricting refugees' access to these various types of symbolic capital, ORR policy prevents refugees from accruing significant monetary gains. The ORR policy restrictions not only limit refugees' access to linguistic, cultural, and material capital but also the attainment of *social capital*.

Bourdieu (1985, p. 248) states that social capital is "the aggregate of the actual and potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance or recognition." Social capital, in other words, is the resources that result from human connections. Social capital is less tangible because it exists in the relations of people (Nawyn, Gjokaj, Agbenyiga, & Grace, 2012). Social capital yields information, influence, social recognition, as well as, in a broader sense, mental health, sense of safety, and community integration (Nawyn, Gjokaj, Agbenyiga, & Grace, 2012).



I contend that the constrained ELT mandated by the ORR and provided by IRCO does not foster social capital in resettled refugees. This assertion aligns with the findings of Warriner (2007), who found that refugee ESL does not teach the language necessary for them to obtain social capital. By limiting the amount of linguistic, social, and cultural capital that resettled refugees can attain, ORR policy precludes their potential for true integration into American society. Furthermore, focusing solely on the English language skills necessary to exist in the American workforce does not prepare resettled refugees to emancipate themselves from and move beyond their assigned early employment positions. As argued in this section, a major tool for control used by the ORR is the restriction of access to education.

### **Education and Symbolic Violence**

One of the main purposes of education is to inculcate dominant groups' values, culture, and beliefs (Brown, 2011). Bourdieu (1977) contends that schools contribute to the reproduction of existing power relations in society by favoring the cultural background of students of the dominant class; holding that the culture and values of the dominant class are accessible only to members of it. In other words, schools perpetuate the cycle of structural power and dominance by replicating and reproducing the values of the dominant class, thereby restricting subordinate groups from joining the dominant block. ORR policy is complicit in this cycle of structural power reproduction by limiting resettled refugees' access to adequate quality ESL education as well as higher education; thus, by extension, preventing refugees' advancement into the dominant class.

Bourdieu (1977) contends that schools' reproduction of existing power relations is a form of *symbolic violence*. Symbolic violence is the systematic structural subjugation of subordinate groups in an institution or society. Symbolic violence is most often perpetrated on working-class, poor, immigrant and refugee populations by privileging the culture of the prevailing class as if it were inherently more valuable. ORR policy enacts symbolic violence on resettled refugees by disregarding their culture, backgrounds, and prior knowledge; and by excluding them from necessary discourses for full and successful integration into mainstream American society. The symbolic violence committed on resettled refugees maintains poverty in said population and sustains refugees in the lower class of U.S. society with little, if any, means for upward social or economic mobility.

I end this section with a question: Is this who we are as a society? Does a society, such as ours, in which 'all [people] are created equal' want to continue the systematic subjugation of individuals seeking refuge and a new start here in the United States?

### **Applications**

The nature of this investigation and its findings can have various applications: to give support to the use of CDA for policy analysis; and to raise teachers awareness of issues of power and ideology in language classrooms.

Supporting prior language policy research (Gibb, 2008; & Haque, & Cray, 2007), this investigation demonstrates the appropriateness of using CDA as a tool to investigate the implications of public policy, as well as the connection between

public policies and local contexts. Previous research has worked to link public policies to language education settings (Bhattacharya, Gupta, Jewitt, Newfield, Reed, & Stein, 2007; Haque & Cray, 2007; Johnson, 2011; Ricento, & Hornberger, 1996, Taylor, 2004; & Stritucus, 2003; Warriner, 2007). I find CDA to be an essential analytical tool and methodology for connecting public policy to local contexts.

Unlike other sorts of analysis, the theoretical foundation and principles of CDA allow analysts to focus on issues of power and agency in policy discourse. For example, one could analyze the correlation between language policies and immigrant earnings, without looking into issues of power and ideologies that affect that relationship. Policy enactments inherently contain issues of power and ideology; thus, CDA is appropriate for such analysis because not only can it look at, for example, the relationship between language policies and immigrant earnings, but CDA allows for the analysis of the social and agentive implications of such issues. Not only does this study demonstrate that CDA is appropriate for policy analysis, but it also has pedagogical applications.

This study helps raise awareness of the relationship between public policies and local language education contexts. Morgan & Ramanathan (2007) argue for raising continued awareness of the relationship between language policies and local enactments, holding that teachers, curriculum designers, administrators, and researchers are all stakeholders in the “realization of policy practices” (p. 449). This study furthers the goal put forth by Morgan & Rmanathan (2007) by demonstrating the relationship between federal refugee resettlement policy an local ELT. In

addition to raising awareness of the policy/classroom connection, this study has applications in the classroom.

Specifically, I would like to revisit the suggestions for ELT analyses offered by Auerbach & Burgess (1985). They argue that in refugee ELT analyses, attention should be paid to portrayed realities; the amount and type of student contributions allowed; implicit social roles for students; and the degree to which critical thinking is encouraged in students (1985). Furthermore, they suggest analyses should focus on whether or not materials and curricula accurately emulate the actual lived lives of refugees, as well as the ways in which they potentially manipulate them (1985).

These considerations have direct applications to a language classroom. Teachers need not conduct CDA to ask themselves these questions when designing lesson plans, creating materials, and leading in-class activities. Issues of power and ideology cannot be separated from the language classroom. Critical reflection on the issues of power and ideology that affect teachers' classrooms will allow them to better understand their own as well as students' situations and constraints. Moreover, with raised awareness of the structures of power that affect language classrooms, teachers can have choice as whether to placate and reinforce them or contest and subvert them. I wholeheartedly advocate for the latter.

### **Future Research**

This study offers opportunities for future research. For example, as I mentioned in Chapter 3, I have limited experience as a CDA analyst. In the future, a more experienced analyst could replicate my analysis, which would test the

reliability of my findings. Additionally, a similar analysis regarding self-sufficiency could be performed in a different discursive context. Such an investigation would help illustrate whether my findings are specific to these analyzed discourses, or if these findings hold across contexts.

Gibb (2008) and Mojab (1999) discussed the ways that language policies disregard the prior knowledge and skills of newly arrived immigrants. The ORR policy does the same. In the ORR's 2010 report to congress, they reported that over 50 percent of the resettled refugees in the five-year sample, "had completed a secondary or technical school degree or higher prior to coming to the U.S." (p. 43). Moreover, the same report indicated that nearly 20 percent of these refugees "had earned a college or university degree (including a medical degree) prior to arrival in the U.S." (p. 43). Yet, despite over half of resettled refugees having some form of higher education prior to arriving in the United States, the ORR report indicated that less than, "20 percent of refugees surveyed in 2010 continued their education...after arrival in the U.S." (p. 43).

My analysis has shown that all refugees are subjected to the same resettlement policies and practices, regardless of their individual educational level or skill-set. Thus, future research should investigate the implications of such 'one-size fits all' resettlement policies, including the long-term effects of such mandates. CDA is appropriate for such a pursuit, because CDA does not disregard the implicit structures of power that are inherent in such policy implications. For example, one could analyze public education policy or professional licensing board discourse as

other possible controlling factors in refugee subjugation beyond resettlement policies and English language training programs.

### **Final Thoughts**

It is not unusual to find structures of power and ideologies concealed in policy and ELT. My conclusions echo those of researchers such as Auerbach & Burgess (1985); Gibb (2008); Man (2004); Olliff & Couch (2005); Tollefson (1985); & Tollefson (1991); & Warriner (2007); and also add to the current body of research.

This study provides linguistic evidence of discourse used to naturalize the ideologies and power structures latent in public policy as well as ELT. These findings add to the current body of literature by adding an additional context where we find a relationship between public policy and local educational settings – ORR resettlement policies and attendant IRCO ELT.

By looking at the actual policy and ELT discourse, I uncovered that the policy exploits a common framing of self-sufficiency to naturalize and perpetuate its hegemonic agenda. Moreover, I found that *fostering self-sufficiency* is not an altruistic or even innocuous effort. When the federal government suggests that its goal is to promote self-sufficiency in resettled refugees, it is in fact to maintain a supply of available low-wage workers. These findings have various implications, but are particularly significant for language teachers.

As a professional language educator, who performed this study as partial fulfillment of a teaching degree, I would like to offer some considerations for the classroom. The field of language education has for some time considered the

classroom to be a *cultural contact zone* (Pratt, 1991). I contend that the classroom is not only a cultural contact zone but also a contact zone of power and ideology.

We cannot think of our classrooms as neutral territory removed from societal power structures and dominant ideologies. Power and ideology pervade every aspect of society, with pronounced influence in the language classroom. As professional language educators, we are often working with individuals who are not only learning a new language but learning to adapt and operate in a new culture and society. As we help such individuals navigate their new homes and culture through language education, we must remain cognizant of the macro-structures of power and ideology that work to constrain them as well as our classrooms. Only through raised awareness of the macro-mechanisms that enact power and perpetuate ideologies in educational contexts can we as teachers hope to challenge them.

In light of my last argument, I would like to add a qualifying statement. My findings show that IRCO PET ELT reflects and reinforces the subjugating policies of the ORR. However, complicity does not necessitate volition. Having taught at IRCO for some time and having gotten to know the people who work there, I can say that the individuals of IRCO's PET program have nothing but the upmost of intentions. Most are quite aware of the constraints imposed on them, but rather than 'throwing in the towel', they choose to work within the restraints imposed on them with the goal of helping newly arrived refugees the best way they can.

ORR policy constrains the ELT that IRCO can offer. If IRCO were to refuse to align their ELT with ORR mandate, they would lose their funding from the federal

government. This defunding would not only affect the PET program but also all of the other programs that IRCO offers to help refugees succeed and flourish.

Final note: Power structures exist. Inequalities exist; and there will never be a system that does not perpetuate them if nothing is done. Through tempered idealism and continued effort, we can make a difference. We cannot wait around for inequality to vanish on its own. We cannot be ambivalent. Instead, we must work within the existing systems; enact change when we can; and never stop trying.



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## Appendix

<http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/orr/resource/400-refugee-resettlement-program>