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Somali Stories: A Development of a Story-Based ESL Literacy Tool for Use With Older Adult Somali Women

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SOMALI STORIES: A DEVELOPMENT OF A STORY-BASED ESL LITERACY TOOL
FOR USE WITH OLDER ADULT SOMALI WOMEN

by

Susan Marshall

A Capstone submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts
in English as a Second Language

Hamline University

Saint Paul, Minnesota

December 2015

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Acronyms and Education Terms

Absolutive (case): A clause, construction, case, etc. that is not syntactically dependent on another part of the sentence; a word, form, or case that is morphologically unmarked or uninflected. In *Oxford English dictionary online*. Retrieved from <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/679#eid4713455>

Affective: Of or relating to the affections or emotions, esp. as contrasted with the intellect or rational faculty; emotional. In *Oxford English dictionary online*. Retrieved from <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/3357?redirectedFrom=affective#eid>

Agreement (subject, verb): The fact or condition of agreeing in number, gender, case, person, etc., with another element in the sentence or clause. In *Oxford English dictionary online*. Retrieved from <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/4159?redirectedFrom=agreement&>

Appositive (as used in linguistics): an adjective or adjectival phrase that directly follows the noun it modifies. In *Dictionary.com*. Retrieved from <http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/appositive>

Aspect (as used in linguistics): a verbal category that express action or being with respect to its inception, duration, or completion, etc. In *Oxford English dictionary online*. Retrieved from <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/11575?result=1&rskey=rjuyR4&>

Authentic target language stories: stories about real people, situations, or events that are used in teaching students a language they are trying to learn, also called the *target language*

Authentic text: a text about real people, situations, or events

Automaticity: automaticity – the fast, effortless recognition of words

Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment Systems (CASAS) Life and Work Reading test: CASAS Life and Work Reading assessments are used by educators, to measure ESL, among other students' basic skills and to track their progress in English-language reading comprehension, and to help in the process of designing instruction for these students. CASAS. *Life and Work Reading*. Retrieved from <https://www.casas.org/product-overviews/assessments/life-and-work-reading>

Cognitive: relating to cognition, the action or process of knowing. In *Oxford English dictionary online*. Retrieved from <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/35878?redirectedFrom=cognitive#eid>

Communicative-style teaching materials (as used in the context of language instruction): materials that provide students with language models which they practice in pairs or small groups, with the objective of being able to use the language in the language models. Ghosn, I.-K. (2004). Story as culturally appropriate content and social context for young English language learners: A look at Lebanese primary school classes. *Language, Culture and Curriculum*, 17(2), 109-126. doi: 10.1080/07908310408666687

Complex sentence: a sentence that has one or more subordinate clauses. In *Oxford English dictionary online*. Retrieved from <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/37672?redirectedFrom=complex+sentence#eid8833745>

Compound word: a word made of two or more words that are otherwise unaltered. In *Dictionary.com*. Retrieved from <http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/compound>

Convention (as used in the context of stories): agreement, conventional usage; general agreement or consent regarding an accepted usage, standard of behavior, etc. In *Oxford English dictionary online*. Retrieved from <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/40714?redirectedFrom=convention&>

Coordinated (as used in linguistics): in the same order, rank, or degree, as opposed to *subordination*. In *Oxford English dictionary online*. Retrieved from <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/41066?redirectedFrom=coordination&>

Declarative knowledge: definable, consciously held, skill-relevant knowledge. Segalowitz, N. (2005). Automaticity and second languages. In C. Doughty et al. (Eds.), *The handbook of second language acquisition*. Oxford, United Kingdom: Blackwell Publishers. Retrieved from http://ezproxy.hamline.edu:4984/content/entry/bksla/automaticity_and_second_languages/0

Declarative marker: declarative: in grammar, a sentence or phrase that takes the form of a simple statement. In *Oxford dictionaries online*. Retrieved from <http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/declarative>; marker: in linguistics, a word, affix, etc., which distinguishes or determines the class or function of the form, construction, etc., with which it is used. In *Oxford English dictionary online*. Retrieved from <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/114177?redirectedFrom=marker&>

Diacritic: in grammar, a sign or mark that distinguishes different sounds or values of the same letter or character. In *Oxford English dictionary online*. Retrieved from <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/51810?redirectedFrom=diacritic&>

Directional marker: an affix that shows whether an action is directed towards or away from the speaker; Serzisko, F. (2006). Somali. In K. Brown (Ed.), *Encyclopedia of language and linguistics* (2nd ed., Vol. 11, pp. 505-509). London, United Kingdom: A&C Black; marker: in linguistics, a word, affix, etc., which distinguishes or determines the class or function of the form, construction, etc., with which it is used. In *Oxford English dictionary online*. Retrieved from <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/114177?redirectedFrom=marker&>

English language proficiency level: A person's level of proficiency in the English language; proficiency: a specific standard of skill gained following a period of education or training. In *Oxford English dictionary online*. Retrieved from <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/152084?redirectedFrom=proficiency&>

EFL: English as a Foreign Language

ELL: English Language Learner

Error analysis: in linguistics, the systematic study of deviations from target language norms in the course of second language acquisition, especially in terms of the learner's developing interlanguage. In *Dictionary.com*. Retrieved from <http://www.dictionary.reference.com/browse/error-analysis>

ESL: English as a Second Language

Feminine (as used in linguistics): the designation of the gender of a word as female on the basis of sex or some arbitrary distinction, such as form. In *Oxford English dictionary online*. Retrieved from <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/69184?rskey=kbky40&result=1#eid>

Focus(ed) (as used in linguistics): The part of a sentence that is highlighted, usually for purposes of emphasis or contrast. In *Oxford dictionaries online*. Retrieved from http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/us/definition/american_english/focus

Fluency: the quality of flowing or being fluent; having a smooth, easy flow, and readiness, especially with regard to speech. In *Oxford English dictionary online*. Retrieved from <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/72066?redirectedFrom=fluency#eid>

Gender (as used in linguistics): In some languages, nouns and pronouns have classes – usually masculine, feminine, neuter, common - distinguished by the different inflections which they have and which they require in words syntactically associated with them. In some languages, gender is applied to adjectives, and in some cases verbs, to indicate the appropriate form for accompanying a noun of the two genders. In *Oxford English*

dictionary online. Retrieved from <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/77468?rskey=uSnFc6&result=1#eid>

High Beginning level of English language literacy: an English language literacy level correlating with a Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment Systems (CASAS) Life and Work Reading test score of 190-200; from my References: CASAS (n.d.). *Life and Work Reading*. Retrieved from <https://www.casas.org/product-overviews/assessments/life-and-work-reading>

High school equivalency: a level of achievement considered to be on the same level as earning a high school diploma. In *Merriam-Webster dictionary online*. Retrieved from <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/equivalency>

Higher-order thinking skills: thinking skills - including critical, logical, reflective, metacognitive, and creative thinking - that are activated when people encounter unfamiliar problems, uncertainties, or questions. Appropriate teaching strategies and learning environments, and student persistence, self-monitoring, and open-minded, flexible attitudes facilitate the growth of this type of thinking skills. Florida State University Center for Learning Advancement and Assessment. Assessment & Evaluation Educational Services Program. *Higher Order Thinking Skills*. Retrieved from http://www.cala.fsu.edu/files/higher_order_thinking_skills.pdf

Informal education: Education that takes place outside a classroom, e.g., in after-school programs, community-based organizations, museums, libraries, or homes. Corporation for Public Broadcasting. WGBH Boston. Enhancing Education. *Formal vs. Informal Education*. Retrieved from <http://enhancinged.wgbh.org/started/what/formal.html>

Intermediate level of English language literacy: an English language literacy level correlating with a Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment Systems (CASAS) Life and Work Reading test score of 200-220; CASAS (n.d.). *Life and Work Reading*. Retrieved from <https://www.casas.org/product-overviews/assessments/life-and-work-reading>

Intervention (as used in education): a systematic process of assessment and planning undertaken with the objective of remediating or preventing a type of problem or challenge. In *The free dictionary*. Retrieved from <http://www.thefreedictionary.com/intervention>

Knowledge base: the store of information that a person has available to draw on. In *Oxford English dictionary online*. Retrieved from <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/104170?redirectedFrom=knowledge+base&#eid40032808>

L1: first language

L2: second language

Learner-centered system: a system of education in which the student is at the center of learning, and in which the student assumes the responsibility for learning while the instructor is responsible for facilitating the learning. MERLOT Pedagogy (n.d.). *MERLOT pedagogy portal: Learner-centered teaching*. Retrieved from <http://pedagogy.merlot.org/LearnerCenteredTeaching.html>

Lexical affix: bound elements that appear as affixes, but function as incorporated nouns within verbs and as elements of compound nouns; they are comparable to word roots in their function, but are more like affixes in their form. Although they are similar to incorporated nouns, lexical affixes differ in that they never occur as freestanding nouns, i.e., they always appear as affixes. In *Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia*. Retrieved from https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Affix#Lexical_affixes

Linguistic development: development in a person's linguistic ability; linguistic: of or relating to language or linguistics. In *Oxford English dictionary online*. Retrieved from <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/108703?redirectedFrom=linguistic&>

Linguistic proximity: the degree of difference between one language or dialect from another; though there is no standard approach to measuring linguistic proximity between languages, the concept is used in a number of linguistic situations. In *Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia*. Retrieved from https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Linguistic_distance

Literacy rate: the percentage of people who are able to read and write. In *Cambridge dictionaries online*. Retrieved from <http://dictionary.cambridge.org/us/dictionary/english/literacy-rate>

Literacy tool: a tool that is utilized to increase a person's literacy level or skills; literacy: the quality of being literate; possessing the ability to read and write) (<http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/109054?redirectedFrom=literacy#eid>); tool: anything that is used like a tool, i.e., to perform some operation, or as a means of bringing something about. In *Oxford English dictionary online*. Retrieved from <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/203258?rskey=TG2CPe&result=1#eid>

Majority language: the language spoken by the majority of people in a region or nation). CARLA (n.d.). *2004 immersion conference: Pathways to bilingualism. Definition of terms*. Retrieved from <http://www.carla.umn.edu/conferences/past/immersion/terms.html>

Marked (as used in linguistics): a word, form, construction, etc., that is marked; distinguished by the presence of a feature of sound, meaning, structure, etc.; the less usual or frequent of the two alternative versions of a word, form, construction, etc.

In *Oxford English dictionary online*. Retrieved from <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/114174?redirectedFrom=marked&>

Masculine (as used in linguistics): the designation of the gender of a word as male on the basis of sex or some arbitrary distinction, such as form. In *Oxford English dictionary online*. Retrieved from <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/114561?redirectedFrom=masculine&>

Medium of instruction: the language used by a teacher in her or his instruction. The British Council – BBC. TeachingEnglish. *Second language acquisition: SLA*. Retrieved from <https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/article/medium-instruction>

Metacognitive development: development in a person's metacognitive ability; metacognitive: of or relating to metacognition. In *Oxford English dictionary online*. Retrieved from <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/251844?redirectedFrom=metacognitive&>; metacognition: an awareness and understanding of one's own thought processes; especially regarded as having a role in directing those processes. In *Oxford English dictionary online*. Retrieved from <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/245252?redirectedFrom=metacognition&>

Morphosyntactic category: the categories within each part of speech of a language that may be analyzed by criteria of morphology and syntax; morphosyntactic: of or relating to morphosyntax. In *Oxford English dictionary online*. Retrieved from <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/238880?redirectedFrom=morphosyntactic&>; morphosyntax: the branch of linguistics concerned with the study of morphology and syntax or their interaction; the parts of a language which may be analyzed by criteria of morphology and syntax. In *Oxford English dictionary online*. Retrieved from <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/122387?>

Narrative structure: the structural framework underlying the order and manner in which a narrative is presented to the reader, listener, or viewer. In *Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia*. Retrieved from https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Narrative_structure

Needs analysis: the systematic analysis of the specific needs of an individual or institution (used primarily in the contexts of education and management theory). In *Oxford English dictionary online*. Retrieved from <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/125752?redirectedFrom=needs+analysis#eid35031774>

NGO: non-governmental organization

Nominal (as used in linguistics): Of or relating to a noun or nouns. In *Oxford English dictionary online*. Retrieved from <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/127734?redirectedFrom=nominal&>

Non-past (verb tense), French (France): of, relating to, or designating a tense that does not express a past action or state, i.e., present or future tense. In *Oxford English dictionary online*. Retrieved from <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/128034?redirectedFrom=non-past&>

Noun phrase: a phrase whose head is a noun or pronoun. In *Oxford English dictionary online*. Retrieved from <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/128692?redirectedFrom=noun+phrase&>; phrase (as used in linguistics): a small, unified group of words in a sentence that does not include both a subject and a predicate or finite verb; a single word that has an equivalent syntactic function; any syntactic unit larger than a word and smaller than a clause. In *Oxford English dictionary online*. Retrieved from <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/142933?redirectedFrom=phrase&>

Number (as used in linguistics): the classification of word forms according to the number of entities to which they refer. In *Oxford English dictionary online*. Retrieved from <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/129082?redirectedFrom=number&>

Oral tradition: the passing from one generation to another of a community's cultural and historical traditions, by word of mouth or example without written instruction. In *Dictionary.com*. Retrieved from <http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/oral-tradition>

Particle (as used in linguistics): any of a set of words - sometimes treated as a minor part of speech, and sometimes including affixes - that are typically short and without grammatical inflections; a function word; also, prefix or suffix. In *Oxford English dictionary online*. Retrieved from <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/138255?result=1&rskey=gCr3e9&>

Person (as used in linguistics): a category used in the classification of pronouns, possessive determiners, and verb forms, according to whether they indicate the speaker, the addressee, or someone or something spoken of; the distinctions within this category, e.g., first person, second person, third person. In *Oxford English dictionary online*. Retrieved from <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/141476?result=1&rskey=oGWvE4&#eid30952397>

Post-reading: in an educational setting, activities done or strategies employed following (*post-*) reading to increase the quality or level of students' engagement with the text that was read

Preliteracy: The state or quality of being preliterate. In *Oxford English dictionary online*. Retrieved from <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/267075?rskey=w5vYvA&result=1#eid>

Preliterate: having no written language; existing before the development of writing; a child at a developmental stage prior to the development of literacy; a person who is not yet literate. In *Oxford English dictionary online*. Retrieved from <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/91475?redirectedFrom=preliterate#eid>

Pre-reading: in an educational setting, activities done or strategies employed prior to (*pre-*) reading to increase the quality or level of students' engagement with the text to be read

Pre-teach: to teach something to students prior to an exercise, activity, or assessment. From *Oxford advanced learner's dictionary*. Retrieved from <http://www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/us/definition/english/pre-teach>

Primary education: education which provides basic knowledge; early or elementary education. In *Oxford English dictionary online*. Retrieved from <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/151280?redirectedFrom=primary+education&>

Primary material (as used in a classroom context): the main text used in a class session or activity; primary: of the greatest importance; principal, chief. In *Oxford English dictionary online*. Retrieved from <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/151280?result=1&rskey=tRH3Io&>; material: text or images in print or electronic form. In *Oxford English dictionary online*. Retrieved from <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/114923?result=1&rskey=EYxZHh&>

Primary school: a school for young children; a first or elementary school. In *Oxford English dictionary online*. Retrieved from <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/151280?redirectedFrom=primary+school&>

Print language: language in print form; print: printed. In *Oxford English dictionary online*. Retrieved from <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/151480?result=2&rskey=B4am6k&>; language: the spoken or written communication system of particular country, people, community, etc., typically consists of words used within a regular grammatical and syntactic structure. In *Oxford English*

dictionary online. Retrieved from <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/105582?result=1&rskey=c7X5xO&>

Procedural knowledge: knowledge which is evident in a person's behavior, but which the person is not consciously aware of and thus cannot describe. Segalowitz, N. (2005). Automaticity and second languages. In C. Doughty et al. (Eds.), *The handbook of second language acquisition*. Oxford, United Kingdom: Blackwell Publishers. Retrieved from http://ezproxy.hamline.edu:4984/content/entry/bksla/automaticity_and_second_languages/0

Pronominal: of, relating to, or of the nature of a pronoun. In *Oxford English dictionary online*. Retrieved from <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/152541?redirectedFrom=pronominal&>

Question particle: a function word that serves to make a phrase or sentence a question; question: a point or subject to be investigated or discussed. In *Oxford English dictionary online*. Retrieved from <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/156343?result=1&rskey=pMmwQS&>; particle: any of a set of words - sometimes treated as a minor part of speech, and sometimes including affixes - that are typically short and without grammatical inflections; a function word; also, prefix or suffix. In *Oxford English dictionary online*. Retrieved from <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/138255?result=1&rskey=gCr3e9&>

Questioned (as used in linguistics): a phrase, clause, or sentence that takes the form of a question due to its occurring with a question particle

Re-teach: to teach someone or something again. In *Oxford English dictionary online*. Retrieved from <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/164215?redirectedFrom=re-teach&>

Script (as used in the context of language): a type of writing, a system of alphabetical or other written characters. In *Oxford English dictionary online*. Retrieved from <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/173567?isAdvanced=false&result=1&rskey=9UPJ9G&>

Second language acquisition: learning a second language; the theory of the process through which humans acquire a second language. The British Council – BBC.

TeachingEnglish. Second language acquisition: SLA. Retrieved from <https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/article/second-language-acquisition-sla>

Secondary school: school in which an education between the primary or elementary education and the higher or university education is given. In *Oxford English dictionary*

online. Retrieved from <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/174507?redirectedFrom=secondary+school#eid23656256>

Selection (as used in the context of curriculum): The action of selecting or choosing; a particular choice; the thing or things selected; a passage or a number of passages from one or more literary works. In *Oxford English dictionary online*. Retrieved from <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/175034?redirectedFrom=selection&>

Sequence (sequencing) (as used in the context of curriculum): to arrange in a particular sequence or order. In *Oxford English dictionary online*. Retrieved from <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/176290?redirectedFrom=sequencing&>

Simple sentence: a sentence comprising only one clause, with a single subject and predicate. In *Oxford dictionaries online*. Retrieved from http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/us/definition/american_english/simple-sentence

Simple tense: a verb tense that does not involve the use of an auxiliary verb in addition to the main verb. In *Collins dictionaries online*. Retrieved from <http://www.collinsdictionary.com/dictionary/english/simple-tense>

Spoken language: communication through speech. In *The free dictionary*. Retrieved from <http://www.thefreedictionary.com/spoken+language>

Story-based teaching materials (as used in the context of language instruction): using a story or stories as the base of a lesson or educational activity, as opposed to a more highly structured material that emphasizes practicing set types of language based on provided models

Story conventions: generally agreed-upon or accepted usage, practices, or elements in a story; story: a narrative account; historical writing or records; an account of a real or imaginary amusing, interesting, or revealing happening; a tale; traditional, poetic, or romantic legend or history; folklore, myth, or legend belonging of a particular culture or period. In *Oxford English dictionary online*. Retrieved from <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/190981?result=2&rskey=nLD5IX&>; convention: general agreement on a conventional or accepted usage, standard of behavior, method of artistic treatment, etc. In *Oxford English dictionary online*. Retrieved from <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/40714?redirectedFrom=convention&>

Story map: a strategy that employs a graphic organizer to aid students in learning the elements of a story or book. WETA Public Broadcasting. Reading Rockets. *Story Maps*. Retrieved from http://www.readingrockets.org/strategies/story_maps

Students with limited or interrupted formal education (SLIFE): students whose formal education has been limited or interrupted, and whose education is thus not equal to the grade level or other standard at which they would normally be expected to participate or perform had they experienced an education without limitations or interruptions; along with academic difficulties, many also are confronting emotional challenges due to having lived through traumatic experiences. DeCapua, A., Smathers, W., & Tang, L.F. (2009). *Meeting the Needs of Students with Limited or Interrupted Schooling: A Guide for Educators*. Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press. Retrieved from <https://www.press.umich.edu/pdf/9780472033515-ch1.pdf>

Subject area: a branch of knowledge; discipline; field of study. In *The free dictionary*. Retrieved from <http://www.thefreedictionary.com/subject+area>

Subject case: the category of nouns that can function as the grammatical subject of a verb. In *The free dictionary*. Retrieved from <http://www.thefreedictionary.com/subject+case>

Subordinated (as used in linguistics): in grammar, the dependence of one clause or unit upon another. In *Oxford English dictionary online*. Retrieved from <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/192884?rskey=YEf5he&result=1#eid>

Suffix: verbal element attached to the end of a word, resulting in the formation an entirely new word. (OED - <http://ezproxy.hamline.edu:33> In *Oxford English dictionary online*. Retrieved from <http://www.oed.com/47/view/Entry/193556?result=1&rskey=Kd6R8r&>

Syllabus (also appears as plural form, *syllabi*): a statement of the subjects covered by a course of instruction or by an examination; a program of study. In *Oxford English dictionary online*. Retrieved from <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/196148?redirectedFrom=syllabus&>

Syntactic complexity: the degree of complexity of the syntax in a phrase, clause, sentence, or selection of text; can be measured in terms of the number of major components of a syntactic construction. In *Glottopedia*. Retrieved from http://www.glottopedia.org/index.php/Syntactic_complexity

Syntax: the set of rules and principles in a language according to which words, phrases, and clauses are arranged to create what are considered well-formed sentences; the ways in which a particular word or part of speech can be arranged with other words or parts of speech; the order and arrangement of words in a particular sentence or text, or by a particular person. In *Oxford English dictionary online*. Retrieved from <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/196559?redirectedFrom=syntax&>

Tests of Adult Basic Education (TABE) test: a type of test that is utilized by educators to evaluate adult learners' knowledge and capabilities. CTB/McGraw Hill. *TABE Overview*. Retrieved from <http://www.ctb.com/ctb.com/control/productFamilyViewAction?p=products&productFamilyId=608>

Target language: a foreign language which a person is endeavoring to learn or acquire. In *Oxford English dictionary online*. Retrieved from <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/197845?redirectedFrom=target+language&>

Tense (as used in linguistics): one of the different forms or modifications in the conjugation of a verb which indicates the different times (past, present, or future) at which the action or state denoted by it is seen as happening or existing, also the nature of the action or state as continuing (imperfect) or completed (perfect); the quality of a verb which depends on the expression of these differences. In *Oxford English dictionary online*. Retrieved from <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/199169?result=1&rskey=6YIWfh&>

Tool (as used in education): anything that is used like a tool, i.e., to perform some operation, or as a means of bringing something about. In *Oxford English dictionary online*. Retrieved from <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/203258?rskey=TG2CPe&result=1#eid>

UNESCO: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

UNHCR: United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

Unmarked (as used in linguistics): a word, form, construction, etc., that is not marked; distinguished by the absence of a feature of sound, meaning, structure, etc.; the more usual, more frequent, or default of two alternative forms of a word, form, etc. In *Oxford English dictionary online*. Retrieved from <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/215359?redirectedFrom=unmarked&>

Usage (as used in written and verbal communication): the established or usual manner of using a language; the way in which an item of vocabulary, syntax, or grammar is typically used, especially by a specific group or in a particular region or area. In *Oxford English dictionary online*. Retrieved from <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/220629?redirectedFrom=usage&>

Verbal complex: the verb or verbs, and words related or connected to them and also functioning as verbs in a phrase, clause, or sentence; verbal: of, pertaining to, or derived

from a verb; a word or group of words functioning as a verb. In *Oxford English dictionary online*. Retrieved from [http://www.oed.com /view/Entry/37671?result=1&rskey=5erPru&](http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/222360?result=1&rskey=PHXRnq&complex: a whole encompassing a number of parts. In <i>Oxford English dictionary online</i>. Retrieved from <a href=)

Vocabulary: the words that a person knows and can use. In *Merriam-Webster dictionary online*. Retrieved from <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/vocabulary>

Wh-question: questions that begin with one of the following words: *what, when, where, who, whom, which, whose, why* and *how*; used to ask for information; cannot be answered with a *yes* or *no* response. In *Cambridge dictionaries online*. Retrieved from <http://dictionary.cambridge.org/us/grammar/british-grammar/questions-wh-questions>

Word stem: the part of an inflected word that remains after the inflected part is removed. In *Merriam-Webster dictionary online*. Retrieved from <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/stem>

Writing process: the steps involved in developing a piece of writing, including prewriting, drafting, revising, and editing. Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Comparative Media Studies – Writing. *Resources for Writers: The Writing Process*. Retrieved from <http://cmsw.mit.edu/writing-and-communication-center/resources/writers/writing-process/>

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

I am developing a story-based English as a Second Language (ESL) literacy tool for educators to use in writing instruction with older adult Somali women. My interest in this topic stems in large part from having worked with Somali-Americans as a volunteer and AmeriCorps member at secondary schools for newcomer refugee and immigrant students in Seattle, Washington and Minneapolis, Minnesota. Ever since I can remember, I have been curious about the peoples and lands across the planet, and have had a deep desire to learn about and connect with people from the world's numerous regions and cultures. When I first encountered Somali students at these schools where I volunteered and worked, I was immediately interested in connecting with them due to my curiosity about their culture, one that was largely unfamiliar to me. I was also drawn to the warm, affectionate demeanor; musical-sounding rhythm and cadence of speech; lively, animated conversations, often with accompanying hand gestures; and frequent laughter that characterized quite a few of the Somali students I met, and that made them stand out to me from among other students at these schools.

Though I may have initially been drawn to getting to know and learn more about the Somali students whom I was encountering due to these more surface-level qualities that I perceived in many of them, my interest in working with them greatly increased when I began to learn more about refugees, including information specifically about Somali refugees in the United States. As I grew in my knowledge about the Somali civil war and resulting hardships experienced by many Somalis, as well as in my knowledge about refugees and immigrants from other parts of the world, I began to develop an ever

greater admiration for and amazement at the resilience and drive displayed by a considerable number of the Somali students with whom I was working, and continue to work today. This increased understanding of the experiences that many refugees and immigrants have, including Somalis, here and around the world has led to my becoming ever more motivated to spend much of my life working on behalf of refugees and immigrants, which at present has taken the form of working as an ESL educator.

Learning that stories and storytelling have long held a significant role in Somali culture and life, utilizing stories as a central part of a curriculum and literacy tool designed for older adult Somali students seems like a promising approach to take in my creation of a curriculum. Additionally, the longer a person has lived, the more stories she or he generally has to tell. Thus, stories may be an efficacious part of a curriculum and literacy tool intended primarily for use with older adults. Through the sharing of stories, humans can relive joyful times, further process difficult times, and also pass on interesting and important knowledge to, and connect with their audience, all results that can bring benefit to individuals and society. These are experiences that I hope all people can have, and thus I want to do what I can to make such experiences possible for students with whom I and other ESL educators work. In this study, I have attempted to do so in the form of creating a curriculum and literacy tool based on composing and sharing stories.

I have chosen to focus on working with women in this study since women around the world, including women from Somalia, often have a more difficult time than do men engaging in educational pursuits. This may be, among other reasons, due to their often

being expected to devote more of their time to caretaking activities than is the case for men, leaving women with less time for activities often considered nonessential, including pursuing an education. Also, the literacy rate for women in Somalia is lower than that for men, and women across the world make up a disproportionate percentage of the population who is illiterate, as detailed in later sections of this study. Additionally, I have found that I generally have an easier time connecting and working with students who are women than with students who are men, and that I especially enjoy getting to know and teaching female students.

I am studying this topic because I want to find out if a story-based tool can support Somali women's English language literacy development, and then use this information to design and implement a literacy program that educators can use in their work with older Somali adults. The tool is designed to offer ESL students the opportunity to learn English language literacy skills, and simultaneously share with readers written folk tales and stories about their personal experiences.

The development of a tool as the one I have created is important because the numerous benefits of achieving literacy in English, a dominant world language and the majority language where many immigrants and refugees live after leaving their home countries, are widely recognized. Principle among these benefits are that literacy in English grants people access to greater opportunities for education and work and empowers them to become more well-informed about issues impacting their health and well-being. Nonetheless, there is a low rate of literacy among Somali women in both Somalia and the United States. In his discussion of difficulties that Somalis in Minnesota

encounter, Yusuf (2012) states “A leading contender, experienced by immigrant groups over the centuries, involves proficiency in English...” (p. 43).

Often, Barro (2005) states, improvements in women’s agency and well-being are connected to their access to education, especially formal education. For women living in countries where English is the dominant language, education in English literacy is a vital component of these educational endeavors. Additionally, older members of any society possess a great deal of experience, and often have many stories and teachings to offer. Through taking part in the story writing activities that comprise the ESL literacy tool I have developed in this project, students would develop an English-language collection of some of their stories and create a channel through which some of their histories and tales can be more easily shared.

Background of the Researcher

This study is important to me in a professional sense because I have been working, primarily in an educational capacity, with adult refugees for most of my adult life and plan to continue my involvement in this field. I volunteered with a refugee resettlement agency in Seattle where I worked with Somalis who had recently arrived in the United States, and I also volunteered with a friend's grassroots ESL education program at a Seattle-area apartment complex where many new refugees lived. Through volunteer work and previous employment at a humanitarian aid organization in Minneapolis where I have often been in close contact with the local large Somali community, and also in my current position as the coordinator of a learning center offering ESL classes for adult immigrants and refugees – including some from Somalia –

my motivation to deepen my level of knowledge and involvement in the Somali community has only increased. Having a substantial number people from Somalia in my life, while still feeling like I know relatively little about Somalia and Somali culture as compared to some other countries and cultures of the world, propels me to find and take opportunities to connect with more Somalis here, including through working with Somalis in ESL education.

The storytelling and writing element of this study holds importance for me largely because I grew up in a family who greatly values stories, and I frequently had stories both read and told to me by older relatives. Thanks to these experiences I have come to adore listening to, reading, and writing stories, and grow ever more in my appreciation for what a powerful, effective, and beautiful form of communication they can be. I am immensely grateful for the vast amount of learning and enjoyment I have experienced through both sharing, and also reading and listening to stories, and I want to give students opportunities, and empower students, to tell and share their stories with others.

I currently work in a role in which I facilitate volunteer teachers' instruction of ESL to adult refugees and immigrants, and I also teach there on a regular basis. A number of our students are from Somalia, and some are older adults. I have perceived that there are relatively few educational offerings specifically for older ESL students. Despite the fact that these students may be less likely than their younger counterparts to pursue higher education and career opportunities in the United States, I have, in the course of my career as an ESL educator, met a substantial number of older students who have a strong desire and motivation to develop as high an English language proficiency

as possible, and who work very hard to accomplish this goal. I want to do what I can to facilitate the development of materials for use in programs for this group of students.

I am a graduate student in a Master of Arts in ESL program, which focuses largely on preparing ESL educators to help people become literate and/or develop their existing literacy skills. Also, a number of my past and present volunteer and employment activities have entailed working to support people in their efforts to grow in their literacy. I plan to continue working in the field of ESL in the United States, where there are many Somali people. I also aspire to work in the field of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) abroad, including, I hope, in Somalia. Given these activities, I likely hold the bias of assuming that literacy always or nearly always leads to an improved quality of life for people. I believe that becoming literate enables people to become better-informed about issues impacting numerous aspects of their lives, thus enhancing their empowerment. Increased literacy can also foster greater social and civic engagement and allows people to access a greater number and higher quality of social, educational, and professional opportunities. Developing English-language literacy skills through participation in this story-based literacy program may help people increase their quality of life by making them better equipped to engage in and share their knowledge and insight with their families, friends, and the wider communities in which they live.

Role of the Researcher

In my study, I have developed a curriculum resource designed for use with older Somali women who have a high beginning or intermediate level of English language literacy. In using the curriculum resource developed, I would first conduct a pre-class

interview (see Appendix A: *Pre-Class Interview*) with and administer a pre-class diagnostic assessment (see Appendix B: *Pre-Class Assessment - Questions*) to each student. I would assign written work to be done by students in class, including a folk tale and a personal story (see Appendix C: *Class Session Outlines*). I would focus teaching on the most needed areas based on the pre-class assessment and work with students on revisions to their writing. Following the completion of class sessions, I would administer a post-class assessment (see Appendix D: *Post-Class Assessment - Questions*) to and conduct a post-class exit interview (see Appendix E: *Post-Class Exit Interview*) with each student. I make the tool available for others to use. An additional final step could be to compile a collection of the students' narratives for their use.

Guiding Questions

Because of my interest in contributing to a high-quality English-language literacy education program for older Somali adult women, and my interest in storytelling, I have sought answers to my primary research question:

- How can educators incorporate stories from older adult Somali women into English language instruction to improve their English writing skills?

I also wish to investigate the following sub-question:

- What are the components of a story-based English language literacy development program for older Somali adult women?

Summary

In this chapter I discussed the focus of this study, development of a curriculum resource that educators can use to incorporate stories from older adult Somali women into

English language instruction to improve their English writing skills. I am studying this topic because I want to learn what types of tools can best support these women's development of literacy skills, and then use the information I ascertain to design a curriculum that can be used in a literacy development program for ESL/EFL students. In this program older Somali women would learn literacy skills through the process of composing folk tales and stories about their personal experiences. This program would initially be conducted by the researcher with Somali women in the Twin Cities, but could later be made available for use by educational institutions and other organizations in Somalia, as well as in other countries where Somalis live.

Chapter Overviews

In Chapter One, an introduction was given to this research study, including establishing the need for study of this topic. A brief introduction was given to the study's context, along with an overview of the researcher's role, assumptions, and biases. The background of the researcher was provided. This chapter introduces key points relevant to development of a story-based English language literacy curriculum resource designed for initial use in a program for older Somali adults in Minnesota. Chapter Two consists of a review of the literature relevant to general information about the research on the educational background of Minnesota's Somali population, the development of education in Somalia, the effects that living in refugee camps has on education, the education and literacy of the adult Somali population in Minnesota, Somali oral tradition, the Somali language, adult literacy in the context of ESL/EFL, the use of stories in and creation of curriculum for ESL/EFL programs for adults, and the use of interviews in research.

Chapter Three includes an explanation of the rationale for the development of this curriculum resource and of the researcher's goals in developing the curriculum, and a description of the curriculum development process. A curriculum unit will be presented in Chapter Four. Chapter Five will contain the researcher's major findings, discussion of the limitations of my study, implications of my study's findings, and recommendations for further research.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

This study focuses on the development of a curriculum resource designed for use by educators of older adult Somali women students. The curriculum incorporates stories that would be developed by these students in English language instruction to improve their English writing skills. In the course of developing the curriculum, I have investigated the types of tools that can best support these women's development of literacy skills, and then have used this information to design a literacy development program in which older Somali women would learn literacy skills through the process of writing folk tales and stories about their personal experiences, and also share their stories with a wider audience. The study investigates my primary research question:

- How can educators incorporate stories from older adult Somali women into English language instruction to improve their English writing skills?

I also wish to investigate the following sub-question:

- What are the components of a story-based English language literacy development program for older Somali adult women?

My objective in this study is to develop a story-based curriculum resource that would lead to improvement in the English-language writing skills of students who take part in classes that use the curriculum. The curriculum's design is intended to make it appropriate for use with Somali students in the United States, in Somalia, and in other countries with Somali-speaking ESL/EFL students. Somali women in both Somalia and the United States have a low literacy rate. The development of literacy in English, a dominant world language and the majority language where many immigrants and

refugees live after leaving their home countries, facilitates people's access to increased opportunities for education and work, as well as making it possible for them to become better informed about issues relevant to their lives.

Chapter Overview

To provide background for the curriculum resource developed and described in this study, in this chapter the researcher explores research on the educational background of Minnesota's Somali population, the development of education in Somalia, the effects that living in refugee camps have on education, the education and literacy of the adult Somali population in Minnesota, Somali oral tradition, and the Somali language. Additional topics covered include research on adult literacy in the context of English as a Second Language (ESL)/ English as a Foreign Language (EFL), and the use of stories in and creation of curriculum for ESL/EFL programs for adults. The chapter also includes a review of scholarly literature on the use of interviews in research.

Overview of the Somali Population in Minnesota

Present-day Somalia became an independent nation in 1960 (The Minneapolis Community Foundation, 2004). For the following nine years, Somalia had a thriving democracy led by a civilian government. However, conflict between clans resulted in the assassination of the president. General Mohammed Siad Barre took power and, though initially popular, ushered in an ever more "autocratic and repressive" regime (Putnam & Noor, 1993, as cited in Hengel, 2002, p. 9). Throughout much of the following three decades Somalia was mired in Cold War politics. Around the time of the Soviet Union's collapse civil war broke out in Somalia (The Minneapolis Community Foundation, 2004).

The Barre regime fell in 1989, and in the absence of a central authority Somalia fell into clan conflict (McFerson, 1996, as cited in Hengel, 2002, p. 9). Coinciding with the war were severe famine, floods, and droughts. In combination, the war and these natural disasters led to the fleeing of over one million Somalis to neighboring countries such as Ethiopia and Kenya (The Minneapolis Community Foundation, 2004). The Somalis who fled the country had to leave behind their homes and belongings. Many of their homes were looted and demolished in the fighting (Gardner & Bushra, 2004). According to Gardner and Bushra (1994), Somalia's civil war has been described as among the most severe crises endured by humanity. At the close of 1992, approximately 500,000 people, among them approximately 300,000 children, had died in the war and in the famine that followed (Gardner & Bushra, 1994).

Many Somalis have sought refuge in the United States (Hengel, 2002). A majority of the Somalis in Minnesota arrived as refugees (The Minneapolis Community Foundation, 2004). Because most but not all of the Somalis in Minnesota are refugees, I will use both the terms *refugee* and *immigrant* throughout this study. According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the 1951 Refugee Convention defines a refugee as a person who "owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality, and is unable to, or owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country" (UNHCR, 2015). In contrast to immigrants, who usually leave their home country of their own volition, and at a time of their choosing, refugees must leave their home

country – and often also family who remains there – due to war, political crisis, or ethnic or religious conflict (Detzner, Senyurekli, Yang, & Sheikh, 2009). Many refugees live through traumatic events and circumstances during escape, detention, or refugee camps prior to resettlement (Weien et al., 2004; Halcon et al., 2004; Rousseau, Abdelwahed & Moreau, 2001) (as cited in Detzner et al., 2009).

Minnesota has the largest population of Somalis in the United States, and one of the most substantial populations of Somalis in the Western Hemisphere is in the Twin Cities metropolitan area (The Minneapolis Community Foundation, 2004; Rode, 1999). Estimates of the number of Somalis in Minnesota vary, from the official estimate of around 30,000 to Somali community leaders' assertion that the number is closer to 80,000 (Dunbar & Yuen, 2010; U.S. Census Bureau, 2014). Minnesota Compass (n.d.) puts the figure at around 36,000, comprising approximately 21,000 foreign-born Somalis and around 15,000 native-born children who have at least one foreign-born parent. Due to its large and growing population of Somalis, Minneapolis has earned the title of being the “Somali capital of the United States” (Detzner et al., 2009, p. 137). Somalis in Minnesota live throughout the state, with the greatest numbers in the Twin Cities metropolitan area (The Minneapolis Community Foundation, 2004, Minnesota Compass, n.d.).

A majority of Minnesota's foreign-born Somalis have arrived from the 1990s on (Minnesota Compass, n.d.). Dunbar and Yuen (2010) observe that Somali immigrants in Minnesota join people from many other countries in the state, as immigrants have been coming to Minnesota for hundreds of years. Once a sizable population from a given

country arrived in Minnesota, family members and friends of those settled there come to be part of the community that has been established by those relatives or friends. There are many reasons for the arrival of large numbers of Somalis in the state.

Among the factors that have made Minnesota a popular destination for immigrants and refugees are its robust network of support services, strong job market, and a population that is perhaps more tolerant of immigrants than are people in some other areas (Dunbar & Yuen, 2010, Remington, 2008, Rode, 2009). Compared with other U.S. states Minnesota has one of the highest rates of immigrant employment (Remington, 2008). There additionally is, in Minnesota, a relatively high availability of jobs for which having fluency or literacy in the English language is not required (The Minneapolis Community Foundation, 2004).

Minnesota's sizable and well-established Somali community has brought about the development of education, health care, and other services designed specifically for Somalis (The Minneapolis Community Foundation, 2004). Adam (2005) adds that the prevalence of oral communication and strong family ties, both traits that are very common among Somalis, have been major factors in the arrival and settling of so many Somalis in Minnesota. As has been the case for many groups of immigrants in Minnesota, many who were part of the first large wave of Somali immigrants to arrive in the state were able to access many good opportunities and establish themselves quickly. Somalis in refugee camps abroad and in other states in the U.S. heard their positive reports of life in Minnesota and migrated to the state (Adam, 2005).

Somalis in the United States come from a variety of backgrounds and social strata. They vary in their levels of formal education. Some were nomads while others hail from cities, and they are members of different majority and minority clans (Farah, McCullough-Zander & McGuire, 2001; Magnuson, 2002, as cited in Smalkoski, 2005). The Somali population in Minnesota is largely young to middle aged, there are slightly more females than males, and many are poor. Data from the U.S. Census Bureau lists the proportions of Twin Cities Somali residents in various age groups as follows: Under 5 years: 16.40%; 5 to 17 years: 28.90%; 18 to 24 years: 9.10%; 25 to 34 years: 17.40%; 35 to 44 years: 13.30%; 45 to 54 years: 6.70%; 55 to 64 years: 3.50%; 65 to 74 years: 3.10%; 75 years and over: 1.60% (2014). U.S. Census Bureau data puts the percentages of the males and females in the Twin Cities Somali population at approximately 47% and 53%, respectively (2014). Data also indicates that 55.4% of Somalis are at or below the poverty line.

Minnesota's Somalis comprise various groups that share a language, culture, geographical region, or other trait. Anderson (2003) writes that among Somalis in Minnesota there are notable differences in social class. Those Somalis who are highly educated work in settings including government agencies, hospitals, and schools. Many of those with less education are engaged in occupations such as working in hotels or retail businesses, cleaning office buildings, or driving taxi cabs (Anderson, 2003). Much of the Somali presence in Minnesota's economy takes the form of working in jobs with minimal requirements for English language proficiency. Many Somalis are involved in entrepreneurial activities. A substantial number of Somalis own and operate businesses

targeted toward other Somali immigrants, and provide services to Somalis (Owen, Meyerson, & Otteson, 2010).

By increasing their English language proficiency levels through classes and other sources of education and practice, immigrants and refugees often can gain increased access to educational and vocational opportunities in, and subsequently make greater social and economic contributions to the place to which they have moved. Somalis in Minnesota have had a relatively small economic impact on the state in comparison with a number of other ethnic groups who have had a longer-term presence there (The Minneapolis Community Foundation, 2004). But many Somalis and immigrants from other countries make considerable contributions through paying taxes (Owen, Meyerson, & Otteson, 2010).

Similar to immigrants from many parts of the world who have moved to the U.S., many immigrants from Somalia have professional skills that are underutilized in the country to which they have moved. This is largely due to the fact that often professional licensure achieved in other countries is not recognized in the U.S. Therefore, many of Minnesota's Somalis who were employed in highly-skilled occupations in Somalia or other countries do manual labor in the U.S. Their engagement in this latter type of work, while providing important services to Minnesota, robs the state of these employees' professional skills (The Minneapolis Community Foundation, 2004; Remington, 2008).

Once refugees and immigrants have arrived in a new country they face a number of daunting challenges such as needing to secure food, shelter, and clothing, learn a new language and skills necessary for employment, build support networks, adjust to cultural

expectations of the new culture, navigate what is often long-term economic hardship, and contend with the psychological challenges that having lived through violence and leaving some family members behind in the home country entails (Detzner, 2004, as cited in Detzner et al., 2009; Warfa, 2014). Somali immigrants in Minnesota face many of the other challenges that are common to refugees and immigrants from all places, among these adapting to Minnesota's severe winter weather, and healing from very difficult, painful occurrences that many have experienced during war in the countries from which they came (Dunbar and Yuen, 2010).

For many Somalis in Minnesota it is a continual challenge to survive the effects of trauma resulting from Somalia's civil war, since problems associated with the war continue (Farah & McMahan, 2004). Many refugees have family members who live in several different camps across multiple countries, and also family who live in various countries across the globe. Others may have lost family members in war, or in the journey out of their home country (Detzner et al., 2009; Farah & McMahan, 2004). The civil war in Somalia has displaced many Somali people from their homes, separated many families, resulted in the deaths of many people's family members and loved ones, subjected a great number to violence, physical trauma, and malnutrition, and has often deprived them of educational opportunities. Somali refugees in Minnesota who have experienced this lack of educational opportunities due to hardships in Somalia, and who become students in the state can be considered students with limited or interrupted formal education (SLIFE). SLIFE have had relatively little, or disrupted formal education, resulting in their education not being equal to the grade level or other standard at which

they would normally be expected to participate or perform had they experienced an education without limitations or interruptions. Along with academic difficulties, many also confront emotional challenges due to having lived through traumatic experiences (DeCapua, Smathers, & Tang, 2009).

Among the primary social and economic challenges for much of the Somali population in Minnesota, according to Farah and McMahan (2004), are locating affordable housing; isolation, especially for people who live outside of urban areas with high concentrations of Somalis, and also due to the language barrier that exists for some Somalis; and financial hardships, including difficulty in paying bills combined with pressure to send money to relatives in Somalia. Other challenges Farah and McMahan highlight include the pressures created by the expectation that Somalis take care of relatives, often a large number of extended family members; the stress that parents often experience in their efforts to raise bilingual and bicultural children; and the reversals in traditional Somali family roles that come with many Somali women and children taking on more responsibility, authority, and public roles than they would have been expected to according to long-standing customs in Somali culture. Because many of Somalia's men died fighting in the country's civil war, many of their wives were left as single mothers and the head of their household, a previously unheard of circumstance in the culture (Adam, 2005; Farah & McMahan, 2004). In addition, a great number of Somali women make important contributions to the survival of many refugee families by sending money or, in some cases, sponsoring family members (Adam, 2005). Increasing their English language literacy skills and thus likely being able to gain more educational and work

opportunities in the U.S. can be an important way for such women to ensure that they will be able to provide for their families.

A lack of understanding of Somali culture, and stereotypes about Somalis, Warfa states, are at the base of much of the discrimination directed towards Somalis (2014). Warfa (2014) believes that, in addition to facing the same adversities as those shared by all immigrants, Somalis in the United States also must contend with a number of structural barriers thanks to their being associated with violence, piracy and terrorism. A majority of Somalis are Sunni Muslims (The Minneapolis Community Foundation, 2004). Because of their Islamic faith, many Somalis in Minnesota have encountered troubles not experienced by immigrants from other parts of the world where Islam is not the predominant religious faith of the people. Following the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001 in New York City – which were carried out by members of the Islamic terrorist group Al Qaeda - some in the United States have come to associate Islam with religious extremism and terrorism, and to therefore view Muslims in the U.S. – including Somalis – with suspicion (Dunbar & Yuen, 2010). This wariness is exacerbated by news of a small number of young Somali men who have left Minnesota to join the fighting in their home country with, the U.S. government believes, Al Qaeda.

Some of the practices in which many Somalis engage because of their Islamic faith can hinder their attempts to integrate into the culture of their new home (Dunbar & Yuen, 2010). Many women wear a type of head scarf, called a *hijab*, which can attract attention. The prayer rituals required by the faith often do not coincide with workplace and school schedules (Dunbar & Yuen, 2010). According to Dr. Dan Detzner, a professor

who has studied immigrant and refugee groups in Minnesota, people who are criticized or attacked by others from outside of their population can become more insular, separating themselves from surrounding groups of people (as cited in Dunbar & Yuen, 2010). Participating in English language classes in which Somalis can enhance their ability to communicate in English can sometimes help facilitate integration into the wider community, possibly serving as an antidote to at least some of the isolation that Somalis and other immigrants may experience.

In comparison with other groups of immigrants in Minnesota Somalis have arrived relatively recently, resulting in having had a lesser amount of time to work through challenges and integrate into the wider culture of Minnesota (Dunbar & Yuen, 2010). Despite their relatively short time in the state and the many difficulties they face, members of Somalia's diaspora have established and continue to cultivate a strong, dynamic community in Minneapolis (Fredrickson, 2006).

Development of Education in Somalia

“The European Scramble,” which took place in 1884, was a process through which the continent of Africa was divided and subsequently settled by colonists from European nations (Putnam & Noor, 1993, as cited in Hengel, 2002, p. 9). The government and educational systems established in Somalia by European colonists brought western influences to Somalia's people (Putnam & Noor, 1993, as cited in Hengel, 2002, p. 9). While British and Italian colonists established a formal education system in Somalia in the 1800s, and a number of Arab nations backed schools in Somalia

with Arabic as the medium of instruction, literacy in the Somali language did not start to become common in Somalia until relatively recently (Bigelow, 2010).

Even prior to Somalia's civil war, the country's literacy rate was among the lowest in the world (Gardner & Bushra, 2004). Siad Barre's government in 1972 mandated that the Somali language would be written using the Roman script (Warsame, 2001). Along with making this declaration, the Somali government initiated a major education program and launched a multi-part nationwide literacy campaign. Key features of the education program were: making primary education mandatory for Somali children age 6-14; providing free education across the country; introducing a new curriculum that emphasized practical, relevant skills rather than theory; and bringing Somalia's private schools – which often had many elements of the respective foreign cultures by which they had been started or run – into the public school system and overhauling these schools' curriculum from foreign syllabi and textbooks to materials written in Somali, and with an emphasis on Somali culture and tradition (Warsame, 2001). The written Somali language was used throughout education up to the university level and was also implemented into administrative settings (Orwin, 2006).

The first of these two literacy campaigns took place from 1973-1974, and focused on the urban population. Civil servants were one group targeted in this first phase of the literacy campaign (Adam, 2005). Its objective was to eliminate illiteracy among adults in cities and large towns. The campaign reached approximately 500,000 people, the great majority of whom achieved literacy. In addition to the gains in literacy resulting from this campaign, at least 600,000 Somalis learned how to read and write through various

media sources, including radio. In 1974-1975, the Somali government carried out a rural literacy campaign. Given that Somalia's rural population was larger than its urban population, and also that it had a higher illiteracy rate, this campaign was larger in scale and contained greater challenges than the urban campaign (Warsame, 2001). One of the primary objectives of the campaign was to erase illiteracy among Somalia's nomadic population, and from the entire country by 1975. Farming communities were another population targeted in this second phase of the campaign (Adam, 2005). Adam (2005) reports that in 1974-1975 schools across Somalia were closed in order to make it possible for students and teachers from these schools to spend an academic year teaching Somali to these rural peoples. Warsame (2001) believes that this campaign was a success, in great part due to the resulting increased self-confidence of the many Somalis who learned to read and write Somali through their participation in the campaign. At the close of the urban and rural literacy campaigns, according to the Somali government, the adult population's literacy rate had risen from 5% to approximately 80%. However, other sources, unnamed by Warsame, stated that the true figure was closer to 60% (Warsame, 2001).

Mass media in Somalia played an important role in advancing the literacy campaign. Extensive media outreach and advertising communicated the benefits of the new written Somali language (Adam, 2005). Each day, the country's radio network broadcast two literacy programs. The two daily newspapers -written in Arabic and English - and the one weekly newspaper – written in English – were shut down in 1973 and replaced with a Somali-language daily newspaper, which was distributed throughout

the country. In addition to this, a magazine which had previously been published in Arabic, Italian and English editions began to publish a Somali edition as well (Warsame, 2001).

In the 1970s, basic education became a requirement for Somalis, but many were unable to access anything beyond a primary school education (Hengel, 2002). Putnam and Noor (1993) report that in the 1980s in Somalia, the number of students enrolled in secondary schools was less than one-tenth the total enrollment of students in primary schools (as cited in Hengel, 2002, p. 12). In addition, gender balance in Somalia's primary schools was persistently unequal. Prior to the 1969 overthrow of the Somali government by Siad Barre, 20% of primary school students in Somalia were girls, while in 1979 girls made up close to 40% of the country's primary school students (Putnam & Noor, 1993, as cited in Hengel, 2002, p. 12). During this era Somalia had a number of technical schools, and apprenticeships in various fields from blacksmithing and carpentry to farming, fishing, and pastoralism were emphasized (Putnam & Noor, 1993, as cited in Hengel, 2002, p. 12).

Unfortunately, much of the progress made by Somalia's literacy campaigns in increasing the literacy level of Somalia's population was negated by a number of subsequent events which changed many circumstances in the country in the years following these campaigns. In 1974-1975 a severe drought occurred in the country; in 1977 Somalia fought a war against Ethiopia over the Ogaden region; during the 1980s the regime of Siad Barre became increasingly militarized and spent more of Somalia's resources towards expenses of the military; and throughout the 1990s the civil war in the

country resulted in major declines in the country's social and economic structure (Warsame, 2001). By 1990, approximately 600 schools remained operational, and enrollment among children in the formal education system numbered around 150,000, which was one of the lowest school enrollment rates across the globe (UNICEF, n.d.). As the civil war raged, approximately 90% of Somalia's schools were ruined, much of the schools' equipment and materials were looted, and vast numbers of the students and teachers were displaced. As a result, formal education in Somalia nearly ceased to exist for two years.

In 1993, Somali communities and teachers began to re-open schools; former educational administrators and other community leaders set up informal education committees and began to seek help from outside the country; and local communities, a number of United Nations agencies, and other international non-governmental organizations (NGOs) collaborated to recover and re-print textbooks and teachers' guides, train teachers, issue school kits containing basic supplies for students and teachers, and provide other varieties of assistance to schools, beginning to restore Somalia's formal education system (UNICEF, n.d.). Putnam & Noor (1993) report that private English classes had also been on the rise in Somalia (as cited by Hengel, 2002, p. 13).

Due to the often turbulent conditions that Somalia's civil war has brought about in much of the country throughout the past couple of decades, it is somewhat difficult to gather accurate data about the country. Thus, reported literacy rates of Somalia's population vary. According to data from the Somalia Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS) cited in the United Nations Human Development Programme's *Somalia Human*

Development Report, in 2012 Somalia's literacy rate was estimated to be 31%, specifically 26% for females and 36% for males (United Nations Development Programme [UNDP], 2012). The Central Intelligence Agency (2014) puts the country's literacy rate at 37.8% (Central Intelligence Agency [CIA], 2014). In a report by the African Development Bank Group, Somalia's adult literacy rate is estimated at 24% (African Development Bank Group [AFDB], 2013).

Perhaps because of the considerable hurdles that many Somalis have faced in their efforts at accessing education, many place an especially high value on education. Hamse Warfa, a Somali refugee who moved to the United States, notes in his memoir that he strongly believes that continuous education is critical to personal growth and that it is crucial for a promising future, regardless of a person's age (Warfa, 2014). He traces this belief at least in part to the teachings of his father, who conveyed to Warfa and his siblings that education was paramount to life, and encouraged his children to get an education so that they would be able to successfully manage the family business. Warfa puts forth the idea that knowledge is not an end in and of itself, but rather a means of accessing one's aims (2014). Many immigrants, writes Warfa, are unable to access a high-quality education or professional training due to the necessity of working a number of low-paying jobs to support themselves and their families, and thus not having the time or financial resources to devote to furthering their education or professional skills (2014). Many, he adds, sacrifice much of their lives in an effort to allow their children to have the opportunity for a better quality of life (Warfa, 2014).

Effects on Education of Living in Refugee Camps

Approximately one-third of Minnesota's Somalis arrived in the state directly from refugee camps, while others first lived in other countries or U.S. states and later moved to Minnesota (The Minneapolis Community Foundation, 2004). Though not all Somalis in Minnesota are refugees or lived in refugee camps, many were displaced by the civil war in Somalia and thus spent time, in some cases many years, in refugee camps (Bigelow, 2010). According to Farid and McMahan (2004) the Somali civil war and subsequent years in refugee camps experienced by many Somalis – including a portion of the Somali community in Minnesota – led to many families being torn apart, and to previously held traditional Somali and Islamic values being discarded by some. The resulting “refugee culture,” as Farid and McMahan (2004) refer to it (p. 48), is one in which few Somali children have grown up in a stable family. In the refugee camps where some of the Somalis in Minnesota lived for years, very difficult and chaotic conditions - including the threat of starvation - made the struggle to survive and the maintenance of whatever small amount of dignity they still had the primary goals of many adults inhabiting these camps. As a result, many children were left with little care and supervision, and without the opportunity to receive even a basic education.

Warfa, in his account of his and his family's lives in refugee camps after fleeing their home in Mogadishu, discusses the daily struggles that securing basic necessities such as shelter, water, and food entailed. He names limited freedom, crowded conditions and subsequent lack of privacy, the tedious nature of everyday life and resulting boredom and irritability, widespread quarreling and violence, crime, attacks from members of the

community outside the camp, disease, unsanitary conditions, lack of opportunity to earn money, mediocre educational offerings, depression, and uncertainty about the future as other particularly trying aspects of life in a refugee camp (2014).

Life in refugee camps often results in low rates of print literacy, and an interruption in the formal schooling for the people who have lived there. Among the factors leading to this are that some camps have no schools, while the schools in some camps have a scarcity of materials and large numbers of students in classes. Additionally, the cost of uniforms, books, and other supplies required by schools is prohibitive for some families who wish to send their students to school. Finally, the conditions in many refugee camps are such that it can be dangerous for adolescent girls to attend school, as they can be at risk of experiencing sexual violence as they arrive at marriageable age (Bigelow, 2010). These, along with other circumstances have led to the result that many of the Somali refugees who have arrived in Minnesota and elsewhere, and who pursue educational opportunities in the places to which they have arrived, can be characterized as SLIFE.

Education and Literacy Among Somali Adults in Minnesota

A substantial number of Somalis have had limited formal schooling due to having lived in rural environments in Somalia in which they had minimal access to formal education. As one indicator of the proportion of Somalis who lived in such circumstances while in Somalia, Kahin (1997) found that three fifths of the Somali population was pastoral nomadic people. Although the migration of nomadic Somalis to urban areas has increased, Kahin (1997) adds, the nomadic tradition in Somalia has

remained the predominate way of life in the country (p. 5). For centuries, education in Somalia took place largely through families providing their children with instruction on the traditional pastoralist way of life. This form of education was flexible, adapting so as to remain relevant to people's evolving circumstances in environment and needs.

In addition to the informal education that took place in many Somali families, Somali children often receive more structured Islamic education in nomadic Quranic schools or *dugsi*, which remain prevalent today (United Nations Children's Fund [UNICEF], n.d.).

The Quranic schooling in which many Somali students take part may offer these students the opportunity to develop capacities and skills that are relevant and can be transferred to their subsequent learning of other languages (Moore, 2011). This is because "Qur'anic schooling entails and rewards sustained attention to and accurate reproduction of oral and written second language forms" (Moore, 2011, p. 294). Thus, in the process of taking part in this type of education, students learn to discern and produce sounds and words in a non-native language, Arabic, and to recognize and copy the symbols that represent these sounds and words in written form. The considerable practice that students in these schools have studying Quranic texts develops accuracy, automaticity – the fast, effortless recognition of words - and fluency in reading and writing. These skills are, according to many reading researchers and instructors, fundamental in reading instruction, and are predictors of later success in reading (August & Shanahan, 2006; Gersten et al., 2007, as cited in Moore, 2011, p. 294).

Muller and Murtagh (2002) relate that the United Nations General Assembly, in its proclamation of a United Nations Literacy Decade, stressed that a literate environment

is crucial to the elimination of poverty, the realization of gender equality, and the facilitation of sustainable development. Claudia Harvey of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) calls literacy “a moral issue” that allows people to participate “in the modern world” (as cited in Muller & Murtagh, 2002, p. 3). Adama Duane, also of UNESCO, offers that literacy is fundamental to “empowerment, a better livelihood, smaller and healthier families, and participation in democratic life” (as cited in Muller & Murtagh, 2002, p. 3). Women especially benefit from becoming literate, according to Muller and Murtagh. Women, they continue, constitute up to two-thirds of the number of adults across the globe who are illiterate. Abagi (1998) asserts that education can advance gender equity, and therein alter both individuals’ and societies’ beliefs and norms about women’s participation in development, particularly in the realm of education (as cited in Kariuki, 1999, p. 187).

Yusuf (2012), discussing the challenges faced by Somalis in Minnesota, states that “A leading contender, experienced by immigrant groups over the centuries, involves proficiency in English, without which one cannot articulate his or her needs and air grievances” (p. 43). Minnesota Compass data informs that, among foreign-born Somalis as of 2010-2012, approximately 8% did not speak English, 15% spoke some English but not well, 71% spoke English well or very well, and less than 1% spoke only English (n.d.). Fennelly and Palasz (2003) acknowledge that relatively little research has been done on the English language proficiency of smaller, regionally concentrated groups of immigrants and refugees in the U.S. Ancheta (2007) and Wilder Research (2000) found evidence showing that having limited proficiency in a language can be a hindrance to

immigrants in their efforts to integrate with the mainstream culture, and that it can be a source of stress, segregation, and tension between groups of people born in other countries and those who are native born (as cited in Owen et al., 2010). They recommend that greater investments be made in programs that will help immigrants become more self-sufficient, especially in terms of language skills. These programs, they write, can potentially alter immigrants' opportunities for success and integration, as well as lessen the misconceptions about and segregation from immigrants that exists among a sizable proportion of native-born residents (Ancheta, 2007 & Wilder Research, 2000, as cited in Owen et al., 2010).

The Somali population, Adam (2005) declares, is "thirsty for education" (p. 67). Adam writes that Somali adults in Minnesota are engaged in education of various sorts, from classes in basic ESL to high school diploma and university programs (2005). In a survey of individuals who worked in various professional capacities with Somalis in the Minneapolis-Saint Paul ("Twin Cities") metropolitan area, Hengel (2002) found that ESL classes for Somalis in the Twin Cities were among the main needs that these participants identified among their Somali clients. Similarly, a finding in a report by The Minneapolis Community Foundation illustrates the value placed on education by many new immigrants, stating that many adult immigrants in Minnesota are engaged in educational pursuits including English classes, even, in many cases, while working full-time and caring for family (2004).

In discussing Somali immigrants' experiences learning a second language, Bigelow (2010) reports having found that many Somalis "have great appreciation for the

beauty and power of language” (p. 42). She adds that many Somalis have had limited formal education, and that a person having limited formal schooling often – though not always – corresponds with a low level of print literacy, which leads to challenges in learning academic material in more traditional styles. Although having had limited formal schooling and possessing a low level of print literacy ability does present additional challenges in learning additional languages, adolescents and adults with these circumstances in their educational background are able to attain fluency in additional languages (Bigelow, 2010).

The country of origin of a population can have a considerable influence on its proficiency in the language spoken in the country where members of the population currently live. This is due to factors including the language spoken in the home country, the linguistic proximity of that language to the target language (the language being learned), and the opportunities that were available in the home country to learn the language. As Fennelly & Palasz (2003) note, many economic and social status factors present in the home country also may have a connection with a population’s access to opportunities and motivations to learn the target language. In the perception of Bigelow (2010), the Somali population in Minnesota is adapting and contributing to the life of the communities in which they are settling, but they nonetheless face significant challenges. Bigelow elaborates that especially those Somalis who arrive in Minnesota in their adolescent or adult years, and who have had minimal educational experience prior to their arrival may struggle since these factors can present difficulty when attempting to make a successful transition into education and employment in an environment with abundant

written text such as the United States.

Prior education is a factor that can influence an individual's ability to acquire a second language. A number of researchers, among them Jasso and Rosenzweig (1990), Espenshade and Fu (1997), and Carliner (2000) (as cited in Fennelly & Palasz, 2003) have found that there is a consistent positive correlation between both the years of school that a person has completed and the person's graduation status with the person's proficiency in the English language (p. 106). Possible reasons for this correlation include that school frequently offers opportunities for formal language instruction, as well as opportunity for development of cognitive skills that aid in learning a language. Attending school also often facilitates connections with peers who speak the target language (Fennelly & Palasz, 2003, p. 106). The analysis of survey data supports the findings of McManus et al. (as cited in Fennelly & Palasz, 2003, p. 113) that a person's schooling both prior to and following migration are important factors in a person's level of English proficiency (Fennelly & Palasz, 2003). U.S. Census Bureau data states that among Twin Cities Somalis age 25 years and over, as of 2013 39.4% had less than a high school diploma, 22.7% were high school graduates (including high school equivalency), 23.7% had some college or an associate's degree, 10.8% had a bachelor's degree, and 3.4% held a graduate or professional degree (2014). Data from Minnesota Compass (n.d.) indicates that as of 2010-2012 approximately 40% of foreign-born Somalis in Minnesota had not graduated from high school, 30% were high school graduates, 23% had had some college or held an associate's degree, and 5% had a bachelor's degree.

In a survey by Rode (1999) of Ethiopian and Somali families in Minneapolis,

nearly everyone who was interviewed reported being able to read and write in their own language. Just over half of the approximately 150 parents surveyed stated that they could read in English, less than half believed that they could converse well with someone in English, more than two-thirds reported that they needed assistance to read and write English, and just over three-fourths stated that they had taken English classes at some point. In this survey, 29% of respondents reported being enrolled in school or taking classes, and 81% of respondents expressed a desire to begin or continue attending school or taking classes, with ESL classes the type of class most frequently named. Seventy-eight percent stated that they had taken English classes at one time (Rode, 1999).

Additional factors to take into consideration when examining a population's educational background and how it relates to second language acquisition are those of differences between the educational offerings made available to people of various genders, and the cultural expectations for each gender's access to these offerings. Gender differences in access to education and work opportunities should be investigated in both the population's home country and in the country or countries to which members of the population have emigrated. Since I am investigating the development of a literacy tool designed for use with Somali women students, it is useful to consider these aspects of the educational background of the population of students for whom the curriculum is being designed. Fennelly and Palasz (2003) note that in a great number of countries men are assigned a higher status than women, and that following from this difference in status men generally have a larger number and higher level of educational and occupational opportunities available to them than do women. Kariuki (1999) states that in many

African countries, and in developing countries, fewer females than males tend to participate in school.

In many Somali communities, women commonly have less opportunity than men to leave the home to attend school or work. Kahin, in his profile of Somalia's culture, writes that across levels of education there is a gender gap, and that this gap is largest in higher education since many women drop out of school to settle into a marriage by this stage in their education (1997). Following from this, many more women than men in Somalia are preliterate, reflecting differences in men's and women's roles and status in Somali society (Kahin, 1997). The greater level of access many men have to educational and work opportunities can result in men having generally more exposure to English and greater motivation to learn the language (Fennelly & Palasz, 2003). In Somalia men hold a social status superior to that of women (Gardner & Bushra, 2004). Putnam and Noor (1993) state that Somali culture is "male centered but women do play important economic roles" in herding and farming families and in businesses, and that their household work is valued "as long as the male of the household is in charge" (as cited in Hengel, 2002, p. 18). As compared with Muslim women in other countries, Somali women have more liberty than do most to "become educated, to work, and to travel" (Putnam & Noor, 1993, as cited in Hengel, 2002, p. 18). After members of a population move to a new country, such gender differences may continue depending on the likelihood of the population's men and women, respectively, to leave their ethnic community and interact with members of the wider community.

Warriner (2007) researched the experiences of Sudanese women refugees as they

learned English, and whether learning English better equipped them to become active participants in civil society. Although Warriner's study focuses on women from Sudan rather than from Somalia – the country the students for whom the curriculum developed in my study are from – the two countries have numerous similarities. Thus I believe that Warriner's study of this group of Sudanese women is highly relevant to my study, in which I have developed curriculum designed for use with Somali women. According to the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), among these commonalities is the two countries' geography, as both are located in eastern Africa. Both countries have, for many decades, experienced regular conflict and upheaval, with a substantial number of governments – some formed through coups or by military regimes – battling for control, and civil wars, among many other ongoing major challenges (Central Intelligence Agency [CIA], 2014). In both Sudan and Somalia, Arabic and English are among the several most commonly spoken languages. The main religion in both is Sunni Muslim. The two countries have very young populations. Sudan and Somalia also share the feature of having a majority of their respective populations living in rural areas. However, life expectancy of the population in the two countries is not similar, with 63.32 years as the life expectancy in Sudan, and 51.58 years the life expectancy in Somalia. Sudan gained its independence in 1956, and Somalia became independent in 1960. Both countries experience ongoing conflict both within their own borders and with neighboring countries. One area relevant to my study in which the two countries vary significantly is in their literacy rates, defined by this source as the percentage of the population age 15 and over that can read and write. Sudan's and Somalia's literacy rates are 71.9 and 37.8%, respectively (CIA, 2014); these

literacy rates, which differ from those given earlier in this chapter, indicate the difficulty of obtaining data in Somalia.

Warriner (2007) focused on the connections between ideologies of language and language learning, dialogue about immigration and belonging, and the lives of language learners. She found that – especially for recently arrived refugees and immigrants from African countries that have experienced severe wars – a number of historical, political, and social factors impact the educational access, economic stability, and social membership of these students. She concluded that although many immigrants and refugees – along with much of the general public – often equate increasing English proficiency with more positive economic and social outcomes for newcomers to the United States, learning English by itself is not guaranteed to bring about such improvements in their lives.

Somali Oral Tradition

One factor that needs to be taken into consideration in working with Somali immigrants and refugees in literacy programs is the Somali culture's value of oral language. This can be quite different from the experience and perspective of many people who have grown up in cultures without a similar rich oral tradition. Prior to the 1972 introduction of a written form of the Somali language, Somalis relied on storytelling as a way to remember the major elements of their culture and identity: "important historic events, customs, social roles, and norms of behavior" (Przytula, 2002, p. 66). Bigelow (2010) writes, "The importance of oral language cannot be undermined in the Somali ethos" (p. 53). For people from cultures in which print language is more valued, it can be

challenging to comprehend Somalis' relationship to both traditional and more contemporary forms of oral language (Bigelow, 2010). People from Western cultures, which generally value and emphasize print language, often possess very little understanding of the skills and abilities facilitated by oral language (Farid & McMahan, 2004). Memorization of spoken language is a skill that is unnecessary in print-focused cultures, but that is taken for granted in cultures with an oral tradition. While the benefits of literacy are considerable, they can detract from the proficiency that people in oral cultures develop in listening and memorization (Farid & McMahan, 2004).

Przytula (2002) writes that Somali oral tradition "is exceptionally rich and varied" in its form and content (p. 12). Among the elements present in the Somali oral tradition are dances, songs, music, folk tales, narratives, parables, proverbs, and poetry (Przytula, 2002). In her description of the importance that oral language has continued to hold in the lives of the Somali Diaspora, Bigelow (2010) writes, "It seems that one of the most important cultural artifacts of Somalis in the Diaspora is their ongoing and exuberant sense of orality" (p. 35). She states that Somalis' enthusiasm for oral language has moved along with them from Somali to English language, and that it is present in the newer forms of communication that have been ushered in with recent developments in communication technology. Through sharing stories of their personal history and of their culture's folklore in written form, the Somali students using the curriculum developed in my project would be able to help readers develop a greater knowledge and deeper understanding of Somali culture and of the lives of some of the Somalis in Minnesota as they increase their English literacy skills.

Including Somali folk tales as an element of class sessions in the curriculum developed in my research project may enhance the ability of students who participate in classes using the curriculum to adjust to U.S. culture, and also help them to honor and share their Somali identity and heritage. Przytula, in research on ESL educators engaging the imagination of adult Somali learners, found that the rich Somali oral tradition is used by Somalis as a tool for adjusting to a new culture, and for maintaining their Somali identity (2002). Przytula observed bilingual ESL instructors connecting Somali and U.S. cultures through utilization of folk tales, poems, and proverbs in their classes. One instructor noted that Somali proverbs offer motivation and “moral support during difficult times related to the stress of adjustment to a new culture” (Przytula, 2002, p. 55). Examples that the instructors shared demonstrated the widespread use of Somali proverbs and folk tales by Somali “extended family members, elders and teachers to bring in the folk wisdom of the past” to their present-day lives as they work “to empower, and to motivate the youth” as they adapt to a new culture (Przytula, 2002, p. 56). One of the instructors noted that often he incorporates folk tales into his classes as a way to bring energy to, and spark discussions in class. The instructors’ practice of including Somali folk tales and proverbs in their classes of immigrant Somali ESL students aids the students in handling challenging situations at work and in other realms of life, and can foster innovation and empowerment among the students. One of the instructors notes that in the process of searching for commonalities between stories from Somali folk tales and proverbs and circumstances in their present-day lives, students are taught to “rely on their cultural heritage, which represents the strength they bring with them into the classroom”

(Przytula, 2002, p. 57).

The Somali Language

Orwin (2006) writes that Somalia is unique among Africa's many nations due to the fact that there is generally just one language, Somali, spoken throughout the country. Somali, the national language of Somalia, is among the Cushitic languages of the Afroasiatic family of languages (Somali, 2004). Somali is spoken by approximately 10 million people in Somalia and the surrounding regions (Lamberti, 1986, as cited in Serzisko, 2006). Evidence from historical records created two thousand or more years ago suggests that the language has been spoken in the region where Somalia is located for thousands of years (Somali, 2004). There exist various dialects of Somali; however, all Somali people have some knowledge of, and for the most part speak and comprehend the standard version of Somali (Adam, 2005, Orwin, 2006).

This "standard Somali" or "Common Somali" is the dialect of a majority of Somalis, as well as of the large number of Kenyans who speak Somali (Orwin, 2006, Somali, 2004). Other prevalent Somali dialects are 'Central' Somali, spoken by people in Upper Juba province, and 'Coastal' Somali, the dialect spoken by many in the Benadir province and also in Kenya's Mandera district. In addition to the numerous Somali speakers in Somalia, there are also large numbers of people who speak Somali in Ethiopia, Kenya, and Djibouti (Somali, 2004). Standard Somali is based on the group of dialects from the northern region of the country (Orwin, 2006). It is the lingua franca of Somali-speaking territories, and is the language used in Somali broadcasts and print media in Somali and Kenya (Orwin, 2006, Somali, 2004). Even before Somali was

introduced as the country's official national language, standard Somali language was the lingua franca since it was spoken by nomadic groups across the territories, and because these groups' oral poetry became increasingly well-known. Use of Somali in radio, especially the Somali Section of the BBC World Service, further indicates that it is comprehensible to all Somalis (Orwin, 2006).

Somali, like most languages, has continually evolved through time, and the influence of various circumstances and peoples with which it has come into contact. For the past two thousand years or more, Somalia and the Arabian Peninsula have been connected through migration and other forms of interaction. This, along with study and recitation of the Quran – which is written in the Arabic language – has resulted in Arabic having a substantial effect on Somali. Its influence appears in, among other forms, the many Arabic loanwords that are part of the Somali language (Somali, 2004).

In recent decades, much effort was put into developing words for concepts that had not previously existed in Somali life (Orwin, 2006). An example of this is expanding the meaning of indigenous words and the creation of compound words. In the 1970s the Somali government established committees whose objective was to develop new Somali terminology. In addition, a number of Somalis working in media – particularly some employed by the BBC - had created a considerable number of new words before the Somali language had an official script (Orwin, 2006).

The military regime in power during the era of the birth of print Somali language chose to use the Latin alphabet for creation of the written Somali language (Orwin, 2006). The matter of which script to use for Somali's written form was the subject of

debate. Some argued for Arabic, largely because of religious reasons. Others advocated for an indigenous script because it would be authentically Somali. Latin was favored primarily for practical reasons having to do with typing and printing. The selection of the Latin alphabet for the language's script has facilitated its use on the Internet because this alphabet does not contain diacritics. There are numerous websites written in Somali (Orwin, 2006). The written form of Somali that was introduced in 1972 does not contain accents or other types of diacritics (Somali, 2004).

Serzisko observes that the Somali language has a fairly extensive collection of lexical affixes that can be used to generate many word stems (2006). The morphosyntactic categories of Somali verbs are tense, aspect, and person. The fundamental distinction in verb tense is between past and non-past, which can create difficulties for Somalis learning English with its system of simple and perfect tenses. Directional markers show whether an action is directed towards or away from the speaker. The verbal complex also contains the particle indicating negation. There is verb and subject agreement in gender and number (Serzisko, 2006).

Nouns in the Somali language have the morphosyntactic categories of case, number, and gender (Serzisko, 2006). There are two primary cases, subject and absolutive. The basic distinction in noun number is singular/plural. Plural can be marked in several ways, depending on the noun's length and gender. Noun gender has a two-part distinction between masculine and feminine. Possession on a noun is indicated by pronominal suffixes (Serzisko, 2006). Pronouns are distinguished through use of case markers.

In Somali syntax, in basic terms a simple sentence construction has a verb complex containing the necessary information and noun phrases that have an appositive type of relation to the verb complex. The unmarked word order in a main clause in Somali is subject-object-verb (SOV) (Serzisko, 2006). To construct yes-no questions in Somali the declarative marker is replaced with the question particle (Serzisko, 2006). In sentences that contain a nominal focus, the question particle is positioned in front of the focused noun phrase. *Wh*-questions always include a nominal focus. The questioned noun phrase is located next to the interrogative article (Serzisko, 2006). In the Somali language, complex sentences may be coordinated or subordinated (Serzisko, 2006). Due to the many differences in grammar and syntax usage between the Somali and English languages, Somali English Language Learners (ELLs) may experience difficulty in learning these features of the English language.

Due to the many differences in grammar and syntax usage between the Somali and English languages, Somali ELLs at a high beginning or intermediate level – the level of learners on whom this study focuses - may experience difficulty learning these features of the English language. Following is a table listing the differences between the two languages' grammar and syntax that instructors of ELLs may be most likely to need to address with their students whose first language is Somali.

Table 1

Key Differences Between Somali and English in Grammar and Syntax

Somali Language	English Language
Vocal inflection, or changes in the grammatical tone of voice, is used to	Words do not have gender except in a few instances. A suffix, <i>-s</i> or <i>-es</i> , is added to

designate a word's gender, number, and case. The gender of a word can also connoted by the definite article preceding it (Somalia Holland Online, n.d.; University of San Diego School of Education, n.d.).	show that a word is plural.
There is no passive voice. In place of the passive voice, the indefinite pronoun <i>la</i> is used (Somalia Holland Online, n.d.).	There is a passive voice.
Nouns have the morphosyntactic categories of case, number, and gender. Noun gender has a two-part distinction between masculine and feminine. There are two primary noun cases, subject and absolutive (Serzisko, 2006).	Nouns have case and number, but not gender (except in a few instances). The three noun cases are subjective/nominative, objective/accusative, and possessive/genitive (Learn English Grammar, n.d.).
Plural can be marked in several ways, depending on the noun's length and gender (Serzisko, 2006).	Plurals of a majority of nouns are formed with the addition of an <i>-s</i> , <i>-es</i> , or <i>-ies</i> , depending on what letter or letters the word ends with. A number of irregular noun plurals are formed through spelling changes, or through adding letters other than those listed above to the singular noun.
Possession on a noun is indicated by pronominal suffixes (Serzisko, 2006).	Noun possession is shown by the addition of an apostrophe and <i>-s</i> to a singular noun, by an apostrophe to plural nouns that end in <i>-s</i> , and by an apostrophe and <i>-s</i> to plural nouns that do not end in <i>-s</i> .
In basic terms, pronouns function the same way in Somali as they do in English (Kahin, 2011). Pronouns are distinguished through use of case markers (Serzisko, 2006). There is a great variety of pronouns for each case except for the reflexive (Kahin, 2011).	In basic terms, pronouns function the same way in English as they do in Somali. Pronouns are distinguished through use of case markers. There is a variety of pronouns for each case (Capital Community College, n.d.).
Does not have an indefinite article; indefiniteness is shown by a noun without a definite article preceding it (Kahin, 2011; Somalia Holland Online, n.d.).	Has an indefinite article, <i>a/an</i> , which precedes the noun
Most adjectives are formed through adding the suffix <i>-an</i> or <i>-san</i> to a verb or noun (Somalia Holland Online, n.d.).	There is not a general rule for forming adjectives. Many adjectives are formed through adding one of the following suffixes to a noun or verb: <i>-able</i> , <i>-ible</i> , <i>-al</i> , <i>-ial</i> , <i>-ful</i> , <i>-ic</i> , <i>-ical</i> , <i>ish</i> , <i>-ive</i> , <i>-ative</i> , <i>-less</i> , -

	<i>eous, -ious, -ous, -y</i>
Often, adjectives occur with a short form of the verb to be suffixed with them (Somalia Holland Online, n.d.).	With a small number of exceptions, adjectives do not have a short form of a verb suffixed to them.
Adjectives occur after nouns (Kahin, 2011).	Adjectives occur after a form of <i>to be</i> verbs, and before nouns.
Comparatives and superlatives are formed through the use of an auxiliary noun and prepositions (Kahin, 2011).	Comparatives and superlatives are formed by adding suffixes to one-syllable adjectives (<i>-er</i> for comparatives and <i>-est</i> for the superlative). For adjectives with two syllables, comparatives are formed by adding <i>-er</i> or by placing the word <i>more</i> before the adjective, while superlatives are formed by adding <i>-est</i> or by placing <i>most</i> before the adjective. For adjectives with three or more syllables, comparatives are formed by placing <i>more</i> before the adjective, and superlatives by placing <i>most</i> before the adjective. Also, there are a number of adjectives that have irregular comparative and superlative forms.
There are four prepositions, and they each have a variety of meanings. Prepositions precede verbs, and can also occur with each other, and with pronouns, negatives, and conjunctions. Also, some verbs have a preposition included in them and thus do not require a separate preposition. Plus, there are prepositions of place that follow nouns or pronouns to connect them to another part of the sentence grammatically or semantically (Kahin, 2011; University of San Diego School of Education, n.d.).	There are many prepositions, and they each have only one meaning. Prepositions precede nouns. There are no verbs with prepositions included in them. There are no prepositions of place that follow nouns or pronouns to connect them to another part of the sentence grammatically or semantically.
The fundamental distinction in verb tense is between past and non-past; does not have a system of simple and perfect verb tenses (Serzisko, 2006).	Has a system of simple and perfect verb tenses
There is verb and subject agreement in gender and number (Serzisko, 2006).	There is not verb and subject agreement in gender, other than with a small number of pronouns.
Verbs usually occur at the end of the sentence (Kahin, 2011; Somalia Holland Online, n.d.).	Verbs usually occur after the subject.

<p>Has a present habitual and a present progressive tense, but they are not used in the same contexts in which these tenses are used in English. Somali uses the present progressive tense where the simple present tense would be used in English (Somalia Holland Online, n.d.).</p>	<p>Has a present habitual tense and a present progressive tense, but they are used in different contexts than those in which they are used in Somali. English uses the simple present tense where Somali uses the present progressive tense.</p>
<p>Complex sentences may be coordinated or subordinated (Serzisko, 2006). There are a variety of types of conjunctions as compared to how they are used in English (Kahin, 2011).</p>	<p>Coordinating conjunctions are used to join independent clauses to make compound sentences, and subordinating conjunctions are used to join an independent clause with one or more dependent clauses to make complex sentences. There is essentially only one usage for each semantic type of conjunction: <i>and</i> for conjunctions, <i>or</i> for disjunctions, and <i>but</i> for adversatives.</p>
<p>In basic terms a simple sentence construction has a verb complex containing the necessary information, and noun phrases that have an appositive type of relation to the verb complex (Serzisko, 2006).</p>	<p>A simple sentence consists of a subject - a noun or noun phrase – followed by a verb or verb phrase.</p>
<p>The unmarked word order in a main clause is subject-object-verb (SOV) (Kahin, 2011; Serzisko, 2006).</p>	<p>The unmarked word order is subject-verb-object (SVO).</p>
<p>To construct yes-no questions the declarative marker is replaced with the question particle (Serzisko, 2006).</p>	<p>A yes-no question is formed from a declarative sentence with an auxiliary verb, a modal auxiliary, or the copular form of <i>be</i> through subject-auxiliary inversion, or reversing the position of the subject and the verbal element following it. To change a declarative sentence without an auxiliary verb, a modal auxiliary, or a copular <i>be</i>, a form of the auxiliary form <i>do</i> is added to the beginning of the sentence (Cowan, 2008).</p>
<p>In sentences that contain a nominal focus, the question particle is positioned in front of the focused noun phrase. The questioned noun phrase is located next to the interrogative determiner (Serzisko, 2006).</p>	<p>English does not have a question particle. It does have the interrogative determiners <i>which</i> and <i>what</i>. The questioned noun phrase is located next to the interrogative determiner.</p>
<p>Directional markers show whether an action is directed towards or away from the</p>	<p>English does not have directional markers. Prepositions (i.e., <i>from</i>, <i>toward</i>) may be</p>

speaker (Serzisko, 2006).	used to indicate whether an action is directed towards or away from the speaker.
The Somali language has a fairly extensive collection of lexical affixes that can be used to generate many word stems (Serzisko, 2006).	The English language does not have a large collection of lexical affixes that generate numerous word stems.

Adult Literacy in the Context of ESL/EFL

Since a person's literacy skills are integral to their language learning experiences, it is important that those who work in the field of adult ESL and EFL possess some amount of background knowledge on adult literacy and some of the ways in which literacy is a factor in adult ESL/EFL education. The numerous benefits that come with the achievement of literacy in a dominant world language, and the majority language where a person lives after leaving her or his home country, are widely recognized. The term *literacy* does not have a single, simple definition, though most researchers concur that it involves the ability to read and write (Barro, 2005). Fillmore & Snow (2000) report that a substantial number of researchers now consider literacy to encompass not only reading and writing skills, but also oral communication skills and higher-order thinking skills such as conceptualizing, making inferences, inventing, and testing. A report by UNESCO on education offers that the concept of literacy is complicated and ever-changing, and that the term is interpreted and defined in various ways since people's understanding of it is influenced by numerous sources and factors (UNESCO, 2006).

The international community has evolved in its concept of literacy, from imagining it as simply the acquisition of some basic cognitive skills, to being able to use these skills to bring about personal, social, cultural, economic, and political change and

growth. Despite the various ideas held about the exact definition of literacy, there is strong consensus among researchers that the achievement of literacy generally brings substantial improvements to people's lives (UNESCO, 2006).

One component of my research study is investigating the literacy backgrounds of the population of students for whom the curriculum is designed, and their motivations for increasing their literacy skills. Since I have developed curriculum designed for use with students who likely would have had at least some of their prior education and literacy learning experiences in Somalia or a refugee camp during the past several decades, it is prudent to consider literacy education in the country during that time period. Some adult English learners may have taken part in a literacy program in their home country or a refugee camp, including a literacy campaign such as those carried out in a number of African nations. As described in a previous section of Chapter Two, the Somali Literacy Campaign was undertaken in the 1970s and resulted in considerable improvements in the population's levels of literacy (Adam, 2005; Orwin, 2006; Warsame, 2001), but many of the gains made through this campaign were lost during the civil war of the 1990s.

There exists a great deal of evidence, including that by Bialystok (2002) and Cummins (1991), indicating that literacy in a person's first language (L1) aids in the development of literacy in a second language (L2) (as cited in Bigelow & Tarone, 2004, p. 690). Some, if not all of the students who could take classes that incorporate the curriculum developed in my study, may have been preliterate for much or all of their lives. Thus, it is pertinent to briefly examine the relationship between being preliterate and learning a second language. The words *illiterate* and *preliterate*, and their related

forms *illiteracy* and *preliteracy*, respectively, are very similar in meaning. Both are often used to describe the state of lacking literacy skills, or being unable to read and write. However, the terms *illiterate* and *illiteracy* have several additional meanings, many of which have negative connotations. These include unfamiliarity with letters or written literature, lacking education, ignorance, and lacking subtlety (Illiterate, n.d.). *Preliterate* and *preliteracy* have the more narrow meanings of having no written language, existing before the development of writing, a child at a developmental stage prior to the development of literacy, and a person who is not yet literate (Preliterate, n.d.). For the sake of clarity, the terms *preliterate* and *preliteracy* will be used in this study to describe people who are not able to read or write, or the state of being unable to read or write. An exception to this will be in paraphrasing of works by authors who have used the term *illiterate* or *illiteracy* in their works that I reference.

Increasing people's literacy skills through education can bring numerous benefits to them, and to their families and communities. Barro (2005), in her study of the effects that participating in an educational program had on a group of Senegalese women, describes the positive outcomes that the women reported from their gaining the ability to read and write. Among the benefits of literacy mentioned by study participants were increased self-esteem, greater feelings of self-worth, and having more confidence. The participants reported that literacy skills benefited them on a personal level and in their roles in their families. Increased literacy skills also enhanced their ability to earn an income. They reported being more informed about their finances, and more able to save, invest, and plan their financial resources, resulting in their making greater contributions

to their families' finances. Many of the women's participation in civic and community activities increased (Barro, 2005).

Many participants in Barro's (2005) study described feeling pleasure, joy, and self-worth when engaged in reading and writing activities in their free time. Participants stated that, through increasing their literacy skills, they became more self-reliant through being able to do more tasks that entail reading or writing, increased in their ability to communicate in writing with extended family, experienced the enjoyment and enlightenment that can come from reading, and became better able to practice their religion. Barro asserts that literacy programs can empower women through making them more able to assess and gain greater control over their own lives, and to bring about social change (Barro, 2005). My hope is that, through their participation in classes as part of my capstone project, participants will experience some of these benefits that can result from becoming better able to read and write in a language.

Barro also discusses the positive aspects of the women in her study participating in the study with a group, noting that the class sessions created opportunities for the women to meet, socialize, and discuss issues important to them and their community (Barro, 2005). Many of the participants noted that they obtained moral and emotional support from fellow participants in the educational program, providing mutual reinforcement to one another. Students who could use the curriculum resource developed in my study would be a group of Somali women. I hope that through gathering for class sessions, they would, similar to the women in Barro's study, have increased opportunity

to socialize and converse about topics that hold importance for them and their community.

Use of Stories in Adult ESL/EFL Programs

Utilization of students' stories as the basis for literacy instruction can hold various benefits for students. Connelly and Clandinin (1990) describe humans as "storytelling organisms who, individually and collectively, lead storied lives...and tell stories of those lives" (as cited in Nicholas, Rossiter, & Abbott, 2011). Rinvoluceri characterizes storytelling as the oldest method for learning an L2 (as cited in Nicholas et al., 2011). Jones (2001) writes that story and narrative frequently are components of language learning.

Communicating one's own story can be a healing, empowering experience. Many refugee women do not think that anyone would be interested in hearing their stories about painful experiences they have had in their lives as refugees or everyday experiences in their home country, but they are often still willing to tell them (Kariuki, 1995). Aggers (1992) stresses that it is important for refugees to tell their stories, since doing so can be a transformative act (as cited in Kariuki, 1995, p. 68). Some stories, states Kariuki (1995), are so painful that only the act of telling them diminishes the pain they hold. One of the most crucial elements in the healing process is for a person to tell her or his own story, therein forming her or his own narrative. In this process "material that lies deep within the inner world can be given a space, be transformed, or consolidated" (Kariuki, 1995, p. 68).

Randall (2009), in her research on resilience in Minnesota's Hmong and Somali

communities, writes that storytelling has a strong link to connectedness. Both connectedness and storytelling are analyzed in scholarly literature on resilience in individuals, families, and communities (Bagley & Carroll, 1998; Higgins, 1994; Landau & Saul, 2004; Reivich & Slatte, 2002, as cited in Randall, 2009, p. 13). Pipher (2002) writes that people who are resilient “tell themselves a story that gives their lives meaning and purpose” (as cited in Randall, 2009, p. 13). Especially in light of the fact that, as previously mentioned, many Somalis in Minnesota have lived and often do still live in challenging circumstances, this resilience-building quality of telling stories about one’s life and experiences is an important aspect of stories that students would write and share through participation in classes using the story-based literacy program the researcher has developed. Storytelling can also provide SLIFE students with opportunities to share their own, and learn from SLIFE classmates’ “*knowledge of life*”, knowledge that these students, though they often have relatively minimal academic knowledge and skills, have in abundance due to having “witnessed or even been part of life-changing events” (DeCapua et al., 2009).

Myriad benefits can result from use of learners’ stories in language classrooms. The use of stories in ESL classes can aid instructors in including content from students’ cultures, making the classes potentially more relevant and meaningful to students. Somali culture is replete with stories and storytelling. The stories told in Somali families have the important function of transmitting moral values and positive characteristics including “kindness to parents, bravery, generosity, independence, fairness, and wisdom” (Adam, 2005, 35). Poetry and songs are essential elements of Somali culture in Africa,

suggest Putnam and Noor (1993), and are present even during periods of conflict and resolution (as cited in Hengel, 2002, p. 17). These functions will be carried over into the writing of stories in English.

In Ghosn's assessment, teaching based in stories is sensitive to students' cultures and can be tailored to specific cultures and contexts (2004). Ghosn concluded that story-based lessons facilitate a more culturally appropriate social context and, as a result, language learning that is broader than that which often takes place with more communicative-style teaching materials or only stories not from the students' own culture. Ghosn describes communicative-type materials as those in which "students are provided with language models, which they practise in pairs or small groups, the aim being student use of the new language" (Ghosn, 2004, p. 111). For example, students may be prompted to engage in a dialogue with a classmate in which they role-play making a medical appointment.

While practices such as this are important, in contrast, the story-based teaching materials Ghosn discusses are based in "authentic target language stories" that instructors use to teach students various aspects of the language that appear in the stories (2004, p. 112). Classroom activities incorporating stories from both U.S. and Somali culture "will bring an element of appreciation of the heritage of both languages and cultures, a sense of continuity of the wisdom of the past, and the joy of the cultural identity" (Przytula, 2002, p. 59). Przytula (2002) advocates use of stories in ESL classes for Somali adults of all levels of English language proficiency. Doing so can "appeal to the learners on the emotional level, as well as...tap into their imagination" (Przytula, 2002, p. 6).

Stories serving as the basis of language class curriculum can enhance the alignment of class activities with students' goals and interests. Students' needs, interests, characteristics, and culture should be considered by instructors in the selection of stories for the class, Ghosn (2004) suggests. Weinstein (1990) states that use of student-created texts in L2 classes serves to help students develop language skills pertinent to their goals, incorporate themes and topics they consider interesting into the class, and foster a sense of community in the classroom (as cited in Nicholas et al., 2011).

Rich language learning can take place through the study of and practice composing stories. Cortazzi and Jin (2007), in their study of young ELLs' use of keywords and story maps to tell and retell stories in both their respective first languages and English, concluded that encouraging language learners to tell their personal stories may aid in their linguistic and metacognitive development, and give added credibility to the expression of their experiences (as cited in Nicholas et al., 2011). They advocated structuring a curriculum around storytelling, claiming that language learning takes place in the process of learning to tell stories better. Language learning is an integral part of the process of learning to tell and write stories, since in the process of communicating stories through speaking and writing, students' knowledge of vocabulary and grammar increases (Nicholas et al., 2011). Writing stories as a class activity facilitates learning and practice of a range of vocabulary and grammar. Because story conventions vary across cultures and languages, use of stories in a language classroom can also aid learners through giving them an opportunity to develop an acquaintance with the conventions of stories in the L2 they are learning, along with practice in producing stories in this language. According to

this study, knowledge can be of value to students in other settings where students likely will encounter and perhaps be expected to produce stories, such as the workplace or social groups (Nicholas et al., 2011).

Ghosn (2004), in comparing language lessons centered around stories with lessons based on the more common type of language curriculum based on short communicative interactions, found that the story-based lessons led to teachers frequently asking questions of a more challenging, open-ended nature. These questions resulted in student responses that were both longer and had a greater degree of syntactic complexity than those in the lessons with communicative-style materials. Participants in the lessons with a story-based approach asked questions about the lesson content and vocabulary and about how language works. Stories, Ghosn asserted, create a context in which learners can engage in meaningful exploration and exchanges about material. Ghosn recounted that the focus of classes using stories was on meaning, which engaged students and led to rich discussion on many occasions, giving students valuable practice in connected, interactive conversation. It also led to teachers often elaborating on students' words, negotiating meaning, and expanding on students' ideas. Ghosn concluded that while students often practice communication in classes where more typical communicative-style materials are used, in classes that use stories as a primary material, students instead communicate ideas and communicate with the text. This latter approach gives students richer experiences of communicative interaction not constrained by a set formula.

According to Nicholas et al. (2011), knowledge of narrative forms can be of value to students. Narrative forms vary across cultures, and language learners need to be able

to recognize the conventions of stories in various contexts, such as the workplace. Absent this ability, they may misunderstand and incorrectly interpret stories they encounter. Wajnryb (2003) adds that in the process of learning to tell stories within the narrative structures of a second language, language learners need to develop the ability to convert their declarative knowledge into procedural knowledge (as cited in Nicholas et al., 2011). Segalowitz (2005) describes declarative knowledge as “knowledge that”, or “consciously held, skill-relevant knowledge that is definable” and procedural knowledge as “knowledge how”, or “knowledge evident in a person’s behavior but which the person is not consciously aware of and hence cannot describe in words” (3.1 Anderson’s ACT Theory section, para. 1). Nicholas et al. state that language learners will benefit both in and outside the classroom from enhancing their knowledge of the story genre.

I would, when teaching classes that utilize the curriculum resource I have developed in this study, plan to print the final versions of the pieces that students in the class sessions would write, with their permission, in a form that they could keep to share with others. Having their stories printed can bring students more benefits in addition to those that they can reap from writing the stories. In discussing a collection of stories and poems which ELLs in her class created, Jacobs (2008) names additional benefits that can result from language learning activities, which include publication of students’ work. Among these benefits are – for the audience and public – an opportunity to gain an insight into some of the deeper, more personal, and perhaps sensitive aspects of students’ lives, as well as correction of some previously held stereotypes about the ethnic groups of which the students are a part (Jacobs, 2008). For students, Jacobs claims that writing as

part of a project, which they knew was going to be published, spurred them to strive for a high level of correctness, as well as imparting them with a sense of motivation and empowerment. Guariento and Morley (2001) describe student-produced stories as a form of authentic text, which fosters a sense of purpose among students, highlights their goals, and facilitates greater interaction and engagement in the classroom (as cited in Nicholas et al., 2011).

Creation of Curriculum for Adult ESL/EFL Programs

Nation and Macalister (2010) recommend taking into consideration a number of factors in designing a language course and its curriculum. As defined by Rogers (1976), curriculum includes “*not only what pupils learn, but how they learn it, and how teachers help them learn, using what supporting materials, styles and methods of assessment [sic], and in what kind of facilities*” (as cited in Rodgers, 1989, p. 26). First, a person planning a course should look at the practical and theoretical elements of a course. Considering these elements when designing a course will increase the likelihood that the course will be well-suited for the circumstances for which and students for whom it is intended, and be an effective and efficient way of cultivating learning (Nation and Macalister, 2010).

Brindley (1989) emphasizes the importance of conducting a needs analysis when planning a class, asserting that in a learner-centered system of language learning, creating a program that is responsive to the learners’ needs is crucial. Brindley advocates finding a balance between a more narrow interpretation of needs analysis that is focused solely on the language skills that learners will need in a specific situation involving communication, and a broader conception of needs analysis that also accounts for

learners' attitudes, sources of motivation, awareness, personalities, desires, expectations, learning styles, and other affective and cognitive factors. Brindley argues that an ideal system of needs analysis will be flexible enough to work effectively through regular, continual discussion and negotiation between instructors and students. Teachers can, using students' feedback, make adjustments to a course's objectives (Brindley, 1989).

Citing Richterich (1972), Brindley assesses that instructors need to start with the 'objective' needs of students when planning the goals and learning objectives of a program of education (1989). To ensure that instruction is truly learner-centered and is relevant to learners, Brindley contends, instructors need to obtain information about learners' perceptions of their current communication abilities and difficulties, and their goals for improvement in their communication skills. In addition, it is necessary to gather information about learners' English language proficiency, plus some biographical information about learners including their educational and occupational background, lifestyle, and interests. Such information can aid instructors in making decisions on class placements of learners, and on what types of learning activities to include in a course (Brindley, 1989). Therefore, prior to conducting class sessions with students using the curriculum developed in my research project, I would conduct a pre-class interview with each student so as to obtain information about matters including their backgrounds, English language proficiency, and educational goals (see Appendix A: *Pre-Class Interview*).

Nation & Macalister (2010) emphasize the importance of establishing clear goals for a course. Among the elements to be included in this establishment of goals are

considering the content of a course, including the questions of what language and ideas content the course will contain, and how much and how often various pieces of this content will be covered. The sequence in which various parts of the course content will be presented is another piece of the goals to be considered in the design of curriculum, taking into account the questions of how the material will be presented, what format a lesson will have, and who will present the lesson. An additional element to be considered in language course curriculum design is the format and presentation of a course's lessons and activities, including which techniques and varieties of activities will be employed to advance students' learning. Finally, monitoring and assessment of students' learning and the ways in which feedback will be provided to them need to be considered, specifically what will be assessed, when and how it will be assessed, and who will conduct the assessments.

Nation and Macalister (2010) point out that the major pieces of their language curriculum design model - environment analysis, needs analysis, principles, goals, content and sequencing, format and presentation, monitoring and assessment, and evaluation - correspond closely with those present in the framework of course development processes authored by Graves (2000): defining the context, assessing needs, articulating beliefs, formulating goals and objectives, organizing the course, conceptualizing content, developing materials, and designing an assessment plan (as cited in Nation & Macalister, 2010, p. 136-137).

Nation and Macalister (2010) state that even when an instructor is utilizing existing curriculum materials to which they make few adjustments, they do have great

flexibility in how they format and present the material, as well as in the monitoring and assessment of students. Instructors can vary presentation techniques of material in accordance with students' interest and proficiency level. Additionally, since many curriculum offerings do not provide much or any direction on monitoring and assessing students' progress, instructors may need to design their own processes and resources for doing so. Instructors may also need to develop and implement various ways of assessing students' and their own performance and success throughout the course (Nation & Macalister, 2010). In evaluating curriculum, a class instructor should consider the following points: whether the curriculum is well-matched to the environment where it will be used, whether it meets students' needs, whether it applies rational and intelligent principles of teaching and learning, whether its goals match the course's goals, whether the curriculum's content is at a level well-suited to students' proficiency level and demonstrates sensible principles of selection and sequencing, whether it is interesting and employs effective techniques, and whether it contains assessments and other ways to monitor progress (Nation & Macalister, 2010).

Nation and Macalister (2010) present the following examples of questions that instructors may ask themselves at various points in the curriculum design and implementation. General questions about curriculum may include whether an item is a worthwhile activity on which to spend time, how she or he will present the material, and what should be tested. In analyzing the environment where curriculum will be used, teachers may ask questions such as whether the activity will be sufficiently interesting for students, whether time allows for doing the activity, whether the noise level that the

activity entails will be excessive, whether students know how to do the activity or if they will need an explanation of how to do it, and whether the activity will create a need for the instructor to do a lot of grading. Questions to be considered in analyzing students' needs could include whether the material is too difficult for students, whether the activity contains new material for students to learn, and whether everyone in the class will be able to engage in the activity. In terms of the principles involved in teaching and learning instructors may ask questions such as whether the activity will be beneficial to students, whether students are doing a sufficient amount of reading, whether it is beneficial for students to ask them to memorize words and phrases, whether an activity should be repeated, and whether students should be doing homework. Questions in the realm of content and sequencing may include which reading passage to use, the vocabulary on which students will focus in an activity, which items should be used in the blanks for fill-in-the-blank sorts of activities, how language items from previous lessons can be incorporated repeatedly into subsequent lessons, and which topics students should discuss in conversation activities. In considering curriculum's format and presentation, an instructor may ask questions including which activities students will do in a class session, whether students will do activities individually or in pairs or groups, whether students would benefit from pre-teaching of content, whether the content should be written on the board for students to see, whether the class should discuss a text in pre- or post-reading discussions, and whether a lesson contains a good balance of activities. In planning monitoring and assessment of students, an instructor may consider whether an activity is going well, whether all students are participating in an activity, whether some students

are doing a greater amount of work than others, whether students have learned anything from the activity, and whether students should take a test in order to encourage them to continue learning the content. When evaluating a course, an instructor may ask questions like whether the course as a whole and also individual lessons are well-organized and coherent, whether students and the instructor are content with the course, whether other teachers would think that the course is of a high level of quality, whether the course can be improved in some respects, and whether the class will complete the course book by the end of the course (p. 197-205).

The curriculum I have developed in this research project is concerned largely with helping students improve their proficiency in English language writing. In describing the importance of ELLs studying and practicing English language writing skills, Page (2007) states that success in any academic field with an English language medium of instruction requires that a person is capable of writing and speaking English in an effective manner. English language writing and speaking skills are, additionally, very helpful in both obtaining work, and also advancing in that work. Writing is part of numerous aspects of day-to-day life as well, from writing lists of items to purchase at the grocery store to a note to a friend or boss. A person's writing provides insight into the writer's personality, and creates an impression to others of certain aspects of the person (Page, 2007), and the stories that students will write in this project will build on that.

When making decisions about what materials, activities, and other aspects of the class sessions I would be teaching with the curriculum resource I have developed, I needed to consider some of the major components of what constitutes high-quality

writing. Writing, including correct grammar, spelling and punctuation, is the clear communication of one's ideas to other people via written text (Turkenik, 1998). All writers, in creating written compositions, go through the writing process. This process is a series of steps entailed in conveying the ideas from a person's mind to written words. It involves the thought and effort that a writer puts into deciding what words to use in a piece of writing, organizing the words, and editing the writing to make it as clear and correct as possible. Another important aspect of learning to write is developing the ability to be a more independent writer, since most individuals will not always be in a writing class and be able to benefit from the support of an instructor and classmates (Turkenik, 1998).

Weaver (2007) writes that incorporating grammar instruction throughout the writing process rather than teaching it in isolation can be a much more effective and practical method of grammar instruction, and one that is more motivating to students. Weaver concedes that while there is minimal experimental research investigating the question of whether to teach grammar in isolation or in the context of other writing activities, a century's worth of research has led researchers to conclude that teaching grammar alone, outside the context of other subject matter, has very little or no effect on the level of quality or accuracy of students' writing. Teachers can often teach writing most effectively through first teaching a lesson on a grammatical construction, followed by continually emphasizing that concept throughout students' revision, editing, and proofreading of their writing. Warriner (2007) cautions that students will likely make new types of errors when they are beginning to employ new types of grammatical

constructions in their writing. However, with an instructor's encouragement to continue taking these risks in their writing and repeated re-teaching of a grammar concept as necessary, students will continue to progress.

Interviews in Research

Use of the curriculum developed in this research project would also involve pre-class and exit interviews with students. These interviews are an elemental part of the process of gathering information that would inform instructors using the curriculum in their teaching of English-language literacy skills through storytelling. In the words of Patton (2002), "Qualitative interviewing begins with the assumption that the perspective of others is meaningful, knowable, and able to be made explicit" (p. 341). DeMarrais's (2004) description of interviews is "a process in which a researcher and participant engage in a conversation focused on questions related to a research study" (as cited in Merriam, 2009, p. 87).

In conducting interviews it is crucial, as Merriam (2009) emphasizes, to ask good questions, as the quality of interview questions has a major direct impact on the type and quality of the answers given by interview respondents. Since I am interested in learning the demographic information and educational backgrounds of the population of students for whom I am designing this curriculum, and also their perceptions of the value of improving their English language writing skills, my pre-class interviews include questions designed to elicit responses in these areas.

The questions in the pre-class and exit interviews I have created for use with students in classes using the curriculum I have developed are based on a list, offered by

Patton (2002), of six types of questions that interviewers can ask. These question types are: 1. background/demographic questions, which elicit information about students which is relevant to the curriculum; 2. experience and behavior questions designed to gain information about a person's present and/or past behaviors, actions and activities; 3. feelings questions, which address how a person feels about something; 4. opinions and values questions, which yield information on what a person thinks or believes about a given topic; 5. knowledge questions, intended to offer information about respondents' factual knowledge about a topic or situation; and 6. sensory questions, which are closely related to experience and behavior questions, with the distinction of accessing more specific information on what respondents' saw, heard, touched, etc. while experiencing or doing something.

As discussed by Merriam (2009), there are several types of questions that researchers should avoid including in interviews they conduct. Multiple questions can result in participants frequently needing to request clarification or not addressing the entire question in their response. Leading questions often make clear a bias or assumption held by the researcher, and can lead to a dynamic in which participants give responses that align with the researcher's perspective. Yes-or-no questions typically yield minimal or no information to the researcher, as participants are likely to answer them with a simple yes or no, with little or no elaboration (Merriam, 2009).

The interviews included with the curriculum resources developed in my research project have semistructured questions. As described by Merriam (2009), on a continuum of the level of structure present in an interview semistructured interviews fall in the

middle of highly structured and unstructured interviews. In such interviews, either all of the interview questions have flexible wording, or there is a mix of questions, some with more and some with less structure. Such a design, Merriam states, makes it possible for the researcher to consider and react to respondents' views and ideas on a topic as they arise (Merriam, 2009). Patton (1990) (as cited in McKay, 2006, p. 52) terms this type of interview a *standardized open-ended interview*. Patton describes such interviews as having a high degree of structure since the interviewer, when asking questions of interview respondents, adheres to a specific wording in each question, and asks the questions in a certain order.

Merriam, in describing good interview questions, emphasizes the value of open-ended questions (2009). These questions will likely lead to the most descriptive, detailed data. Merriam writes that the greater the degree of description and detail in an interviewee's responses to questions, the better the quality of data that the interviewer will get from the interview.

The Research Gap

After reviewing the resources discussed in this chapter, it is clear that more research specifically about English language education for older adult Somali students is needed. Also lacking is research on story-based literacy tools for use in English language instruction with this population. Although a sizable body of research exists on the use of literature in L2 classes, relatively little research has been done on the various methods for, and also rewards and challenges of incorporating students' stories into language learning in the ESL classroom (Nicholas et al., 2011). It has become apparent that while

there are ESL and EFL programs for older adult Somalis, there exist few or no tools designed to aid in the development of these students' English language literacy skills through facilitating their writing of folk tales from their culture and personal stories. More research is needed to broaden the collection of information on working with older adult Somali ESL students, as well as to expand knowledge of developing and using literacy tools that are based on students generating folk tales and personal stories. Thus, I have designed this study to investigate the development and use of a story-based literacy tool with older adult Somali English learners.

Research Questions

This study focuses on the development of a curriculum resource designed for use by ESL/EFL educators. The curriculum has been designed for use with older adult Somali women students, and is based on incorporating students' stories into English language instruction to improve students' English writing skills. In the study, I have investigated which types of tools can best promote growth in these women's literacy skills. Then, I have used this information in designing a literacy development program in which older Somali women would learn literacy skills through the process of writing folk tales and stories about their personal experiences, and also share their stories.

Based on research, and because of my interest in the components contributing to a high-quality English-language literacy education program for older Somali adult women, I have investigated the following primary research question:

- How can educators incorporate stories from older adult Somali women into English language instruction to improve their English writing skills?

I also wish to investigate the following sub-question:

- What are the components of a story-based English language literacy development program for older Somali adult women?

Summary

In Chapter Two, I have reviewed literature relevant to research on the educational background of Minnesota's Somali population, the development of education in Somalia, the effects that living in refugee camps has on education, the education and literacy of the adult Somali population in Minnesota, Somali oral tradition, the Somali language, adult literacy in the context of ESL/EFL, the use of stories in, and creation of curriculum for ESL/EFL programs for adults, and the use of interviews in research. I have explained the gap in current research, and why the study I have conducted may yield information and understandings valuable to the field. I also list my research questions. Chapter Three includes an explanation of the rationale for the development of this curriculum resource, and of the researcher's goals in developing the curriculum. This is followed by a description of the curriculum development process. Other components of Chapter Three are descriptions of the general type of students with whom this curriculum could be used, the creation and delivery of the curriculum, and the student interviews and assessments that I have developed to accompany the curriculum.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

In this study, I investigated and developed a curriculum resource designed to teach English language literacy skills to older Somali women through the use of stories and by providing a vehicle through which the women can share their stories.

Specifically, the study investigates my primary research question:

- How can educators incorporate stories from older adult Somali women into English language instruction to improve their English writing skills?

I also wish to investigate the following sub-question:

- What are the components of a story-based English language literacy development program for older Somali adult women?

My main objective was to create a literacy tool that would result in improvement in the English-language syntax and grammar skills of students who participate in classes that utilize this curriculum. Since I was unable to work with participants in the course of this study, the students about whom I write in this chapter are not a group of actual students, but rather an invented group representative of the type students for whom I believe this curriculum would be well-suited.

Utilization of this tool would take place in a class over approximately six weeks. Following the assessment of students' skills, I would lead them in reading and writing folk tales and personal stories, then teach them English-language syntax and grammar based on the results of error analysis I conduct of their pre-class assessments and their in-class writing. Class sessions would include a variety of materials and activities, with the aim of creating class content that is of interest, relevant, and helpful. Over the duration

of these six class periods, I would monitor and assess students' learning and progress through conducting both informal and formal assessments. An additional goal would be to compile and print a collection of students' writing for their use as a culmination of these class sessions and of the study as a whole. I hope that doing so would empower the women who would participate in classes utilizing this curriculum resource, and also create an opportunity for readers of the published collection to learn about the lives and cultures of the students who wrote the stories.

Chapter Overview

I begin this chapter with the rationale for the development of this curriculum resource, and an explanation of my goals in developing the curriculum. This is followed by a description of the curriculum development process. Next, I provide a description of the general type of students, with whom this curriculum could be used. I then detail the creation and delivery of the curriculum. I also describe the student interviews and assessments that I have developed to accompany the curriculum.

Curriculum Resource Rationale, Goals, and Development

Rationale

The focus of this curriculum resource is on incorporating what I learned through my research – presented in Chapter Two – about the education and literacy of Somali adults in Minnesota, the Somali language and oral tradition, adult literacy in the context of English as a Second Language (ESL) and English as a Foreign Language (EFL), and use of stories in adult ESL/EFL programs to develop a curriculum resource in the form of a literacy tool designed to teach English language literacy skills to older Somali women through the use of stories and by providing a vehicle through which the women can share

their stories. Through my research I developed a greater understanding of the types of story-based literacy tools that can be effective in helping the target population of students for which I have designed this curriculum develop English language literacy skills in key areas of writing, and also of the process of developing and using such tools with these students.

Somali women in both Somalia and the United States have a low rate of literacy. Through improved literacy in English, a dominant world language and the majority language where they now live, they will become empowered to learn about and be able to take action in issues impacting their well-being and gain access to greater opportunities for education and work. In addition, older members of our society have a great deal of experience and knowledge, which they have accumulated through their years of life. Developing an English-language collection of elders' accounts of folk tales from their cultures and stories of their lives will facilitate the sharing of elders' knowledge with their families and with the wider public, can help foster respect for elders, and can facilitate their learning of English.

Goals

My primary objective in developing this curriculum was to create a literacy tool that would result in improvement in students' English-language syntax and grammar skills as a result of the story-writing activities in class sessions incorporating the curriculum. My plan is that other ESL/EFL educators of Somali students and I will be able to use these tools to teach English language syntax and grammar writing skills to students.

Class sessions have been designed to include a variety of materials and activities, with the aim of creating class content that is of interest, relevant, and helpful. An additional goal of instructors who use this curriculum may be to compile and print a collection of students' writing for their use as a culmination of these class sessions and of the study as a whole. I believe that doing so would empower the students who would have participated in classes utilizing this curriculum.

Development

In the process of developing this curriculum resource, I drew on what I learned from my research about the use of stories and folk tales in education, education-related issues specific to older adult Somali women, motivations in learning English, and literacy tools for teaching writing to English learners. These themes were generated from the guiding questions for my research project. The literacy tool I have developed consists of instructions and examples for educators to use in teaching students English-language writing skills, primarily syntax and grammar, through story-based activities. The focus is on teaching older female immigrants but can be adapted for use with other groups.

Resources for Educators

The basic outline of the curriculum resource I have developed came out of a conversation with my primary advisor. In the process of developing this curriculum, I drew on a variety of writing curriculum materials, exploring some of the concepts and activities included in these. Educators are referred to Altano (2004), Minnesota Literacy Council (n.d.), Phifer, (1995), Reiff (1987), Tom and McKay (1999), and Turkenik (1998) for further resources.

Description of How Curriculum Would be Presented

Students

The curriculum resource I have created is designed for older adult Somali women who have a high beginning or intermediate level of English language proficiency. In order to have benefit most optimally from a class utilizing this curriculum, a student would need to be an English Language Learner (ELL) and to have a Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment Systems (CASAS) Life and Work Reading test score of 190-200, which is the range of scores correlating with the CASAS level High Beginning ESL, or 200-220, which is the range of scores correlating with the CASAS level Intermediate ESL, and to be a member of the Beginning or Intermediate level English as a Second Language (ESL) class at the learning center where they attend classes or another adult education center. CASAS Life and Work Reading assessments are used by educators to measure ESL, among other students' basic skills, and to track their progress in English-language reading comprehension, and to help in the process of designing instruction for these students (CASAS, n.d.).

According to information contained in the *CASAS Skill Level Descriptors for ELL: Descriptors* chart, (CASAS, n.d.), a High Beginning ELL student, in the areas of listening and speaking, “functions with some difficulty in situations related to immediate needs; may have some simple oral communication abilities using basic learned phrases and sentences”, and in the areas of reading and writing, “Reads and writes letters and numbers and a limited number of basic sight words and simple phrases related to immediate needs. Can write basic personal information on simplified forms” (CASAS,

n.d.). The descriptor for a Low Intermediate ELL student states that in the areas of listening and speaking, a student “Can satisfy basic survival needs and very routine social demands. Understands simple learned phrases easily and some new simple phrases containing familiar vocabulary, spoken slowly with frequent repetition”, and that in reading and writing, the student “Can read and interpret simple material on familiar topics. Able to read and interpret simple directions, schedules, signs, maps, and menus. Can fill out forms requiring basic personal information and write short, simple notes and messages based on familiar situations” (CASAS, n.d.). According to the chart’s section on High Intermediate ELL students, a student at this level, in listening and speaking, “Can satisfy basic survival needs and limited social demands; can follow oral directions in familiar contexts. Has limited ability to understand on the telephone. Understands learned phrases easily and new phrases containing familiar vocabulary”, and in reading and writing, “Can read and interpret simplified and some authentic material on familiar subjects. Can write messages or notes related to basic needs. Can fill out basic medical forms and job applications” (CASAS, n.d.).

Students would participate in class sessions using this curriculum through: 1) completing a one-on-one pre-class interview with the instructor; 2) taking a pre-class diagnostic exam; 3) attending class sessions and writing stories according to guidelines and instruction given by the instructor; 4) taking a post-class assessment; and 5) completing a one-on-one exit interview with the instructor. Pre- and post-class interviews would take place in the classroom where we would conduct our class sessions.

Creation and Delivery of Materials to Teach Specified Writing Skills Using Students' Stories

I have designed a tool which educators of older adults can use to teach literacy skills through the use of stories, provide students with a vehicle through which to compose folk tales and stories about their personal experiences, and disseminate students' writing. I would use the tool to teach students English-language literacy, syntax, and grammar skills in specific areas I would have identified as a result of my analysis of their writing assessments. (See Appendix C: *Class Session Outlines* for further detail on class sessions' structure.)

As recommended by Nation and Macalister (2010), I have considered a number of factors when designing the study's class sessions. I have looked at the practical and theoretical elements of the course, including the students' current knowledge and areas in which they lack knowledge; available resources including time, my instructional skills, and my strengths and limitations as the course designer; and the teaching and learning principles that will be part of the course.

In designing the curriculum resource for this study, I have, based on what I believe would be the type of students and circumstance for which this curriculum would be well-suited, taken into account the suggestion of Rodgers (1980) that curriculum design emerges from three main areas of design: learner considerations, knowledge considerations, and instructional considerations (as cited in Rodgers, 1989, pp. 28-29). I have also considered some of the sub-areas listed by Rodgers (1980), in his Polity Planning Framework, in each of these areas of consideration (as cited in Rodgers, 1989,

p. 31). Among the sub-areas of consideration for learners are factors including the size of the group of learners, and the group's levels of homogeneity, teachability, and motivation. Sub-areas in the realm of knowledge considerations include learners' familiarity with the subject area, how defined or undefined their knowledge base is, the availability of relevant materials, and whether the objective of the course is for students to gain knowledge in the form of facts or values. Sub-areas that are factors in the area of instructional considerations include the level of complexity of curriculum design, whether the educational plan is more well-researched or intuitive, and whether the media used in instruction is technically simple or complex (Rodgers, 1989).

Although I will have prepared lessons and materials for the curriculum I am planning to teach, I will have a degree of flexibility in these, allowing for adaptation of activities and materials to best meet students' needs and objectives. As suggested by Nation and Macalister (2010), some of the ways in which I may be able to adapt this curriculum to better fit the circumstances and needs of my class are to add or omit content, alter the sequencing of content, change the format of the lessons, change the techniques used in presenting material, and add or omit monitoring and assessment activities that students and the teacher can conduct to check students' learning and progress.

Examining the curriculum resource I have developed as part of this research study, I believe that this curriculum definitely meets the criteria recommended by Nation and Macalester (2010) of essential features in the curriculum for the class she or he is preparing to teach. Among the possible essential features that could be considered in the

selection of a curriculum resource are: if it is at an appropriate level of vocabulary and grammar for students, whether it focuses on the language and skills comprising the course's goals, its price and availability, whether the scope and amount of lessons in the book are well-suited to the scope and length of the course, and verification that the book does not contain behavior and topics that could be considered offensive by students due to religious or cultural sensitivities (Nation & Macalister, 2010). Using these suggestions for features to consider when assessing curriculum, the curriculum I have developed for my research project's classes seems very likely to be a good fit according to the educational circumstances of the target population of students for whom the curriculum has been designed.

I have designed a tool that educators of older adults can use to teach literacy skills through the use of stories, provide students with a vehicle through which to compose folk tales and stories about their personal experiences, and to disseminate their writing. I would use the tool to teach students English-language literacy, syntax, and grammar skills in specific areas I would have identified as a result of my analysis of their writing assessments. (See Appendix C: *Class Session Outlines* for further detail on class sessions' structure.) During our classes I would use this tool to guide students in writing: a.) a folk tale from their culture; about their personal history; and b.) a story about their personal history I would then teach students English-language literacy, syntax, and grammar skills in specific areas I would have identified as a result of my analysis of their writing assessments. Instruction of grammar and syntax would be woven throughout my teaching of the students in class sessions using the curriculum developed in my research

project. Following the recommendations of Weaver (2007), I would incorporate grammar instruction throughout the writing process rather than teach it in isolation, since this strategy can be a much more effective and practical method of grammar instruction, and one that is more motivating to students.

Based on the advice of Weaver (2007), in working towards my goal of helping students improve their writing, I would teach grammar in ways such as incorporating literature and other types of texts into my instruction, and including select areas of grammar in my writing instruction. This manner of teaching grammar can help students develop the following six qualities of writing that are, according to Weaver, commonly taught: ideas, organization, voice, word choice, sentence fluency, and conventions. Weaver offers additional principles that I would consider in my instruction of grammar, including that it is more effective to repeatedly teach students a smaller number of grammatical concepts well than to teach a larger number of grammar concepts that may have minimal relevance to students' writing. It may be necessary to teach a particular grammar concept a number of times in order for students to achieve mastery of the concept. As far as possible, Weaver continues, it is ideal to teach a new grammar concept to a student who has already mastered a given grammar concept rather than continue to teach her or him the same material as other classmates who have yet to learn the concept which the student has already mastered.

As Weaver (2007) recommends, I would also help students develop editing skills, since editing is an important domain of writing related to grammar. I would teach editing skills throughout the class, rather than simply through marking students' writing with

corrections of their errors. Based on what Warriner (2007) advocates, I would guide students in adding interest and style to their writing, and provide students with instruction in editing their writing. Also, as Warriner (2007) suggests, I would share my own writing and model editing of my own work, therein serving as a writing and editing role model to my students.

Class sessions would take place weekly over the course of one and a half months, for a total of six class sessions. At the beginning of the series of class sessions, I would give students a brief syllabus outlining what we would cover over the course of the six sessions. At or near the beginning of each class session, I would give students an outline of that class session's objectives and activities. During each class session I would also give students handouts with reading selections and writing exercises. Reading selections used in class sessions would include folk tales and personal stories written by adult refugees and immigrants. These reading selections would be excerpted from a variety of storybooks and story anthologies.

Each class session would last for approximately two hours. Each class session would have different specific activities, but in general, the trajectory of class sessions would be as follows: the session would begin with a brief warm-up activity in which students write and/or discuss some aspect of writing. Next, I would lead the class in reading a folk tale or a personal story. We would discuss the folk tale or story, and then I would instruct students in correct usage of one to several English-language grammar points based on examples from the folk tale or story. The grammar points I teach would be determined based on the error analysis I had conducted of students' pre-class

assessments. Following this period of instruction, students would work on writing their own folk tales and personal stories. I would offer feedback to each individual student, helping them identify and correct errors and providing guidance on which area(s) to focus on as they work to improve their English-language writing. During the final part of each class session, students would continue writing their folk tales or stories. Depending on time and also on students' needs and preferences, I could also ask students to share parts of their work during the final part of some class sessions. All students would share parts of their writing during the final class session. I would collect students' work so that I could review it and provide additional feedback to them when I returned their work at the following class session. (See Appendix C: *Class Session Outlines* for further detail on class sessions' structure.) The following class session would always include review of earlier work.

Student Interviews and Assessments

Based on Brindley's (1989) suggestions, to accompany the curriculum resource I developed, I created two interviews – a pre-class and post-class exit interview - and two assessments – a pre-class assessment and post-class assessment. Educators utilizing the curriculum resource developed in this study could use these interviews and assessments to gather information about their students that would further refine their own teaching. Prior to conducting class sessions using this curriculum resource with students I would conduct a pre-class interview with each student to obtain information about matters including their backgrounds, English language proficiency, and educational goals (see Appendix A: *Pre-Class Interview*). Brindley emphasizes the importance of conducting a

needs analysis when planning a class, and asserts that in a learner-centered system of language learning, creating a program that is responsive to the learners' needs is crucial. As Brindley suggests, after initial information gathered at the outset of the class, I would then need to engage in ongoing needs analysis, a careful, organized process of monitoring individual students' learning needs, throughout the classes. This would allow me to respond to evolving and newly emergent language-related needs and learning needs of students throughout the duration of the course. This ongoing needs analysis would take place through observation of students reading and writing in class, and also through reading and discussing students' written work.

Data yielded in the pre-class and post-class diagnostic assessments taken by students would be analyzed through conducting error analysis of students' writing in these analyses. In an effort to assure the validity of this error analysis, I would ask a professional ESL education colleague to also read the students' assessments and offer feedback on students' errors.

Pre-Class Interview

Prior to the initial class using this curriculum, I would meet with students and conduct a one-on-one pre-class interview with each student. Interviews would take place in the classroom where we would hold the study's class session, and will last for approximately 30 minutes. The interviews consist of 20 questions designed to elicit information about locations where students have lived, students' languages, students' educational background and educational goals, and their literacy experiences (see Appendix A: *Pre-Class Interview*). In order to increase the ability of interviewees to

understand the interview questions I would be asking them, I would give each student a paper copy of the interview questions so that they can read the questions while they listen to me read each question aloud.

McKay (2010) states that interviews can fulfill various objectives including - as is the case with these pre-class interviews - gathering background information on participants and information about participants' opinions and attitudes about a given aspect of language learning. In these interviews, I would ask students about their prior education, experience learning English, and what they perceive as the advantages of developing greater English language literacy skills. Additionally, in teaching a class using this or any curriculum, I wish to gain insight into students' attitudes about literacy and the benefits of increasing their literacy skills, and information about their goals for furthering their education in English language literacy. As pointed out by Merriam (2009), interviewing is necessary in order to access such information, as it cannot be gained only through observation of study participants.

As suggested by Merriam (2009), I wrote the interview questions in such a way that they will yield the type of information I would hope to gather from students. One specific factor I consider in the questions' wording is whether interview respondents understand the meaning of the questions (Merriam, 2009). I have included as many open-ended questions as possible since, as Merriam (2009) writes, in general good interview questions are open-ended and lead to data that is detailed and descriptive. Also at the suggestion of Merriam (2009), I would strive to ask students a smaller number of broader, more open-ended questions. Merriam (2009) states that this results in the

interviewer being able to listen more attentively to interviewees' responses, and to then be more able to ask relevant follow-up questions that will potentially lead to valuable responses. I could include a number of follow-up questions, also called probes (as described by Merriam, 2009), in an effort to gather additional information about, or to clarify a student's response to one or more questions that have already been asked in an interview. It is not possible to create these questions prior to an interview because they depend on the responses given by interviewees to the interview's original questions.

The interviews in my study are semistructured. This level of structure, recommended by Merriam (2009), is, I believe, ideal for use with students because while I would wish to gain information on a number of specific topics relevant to students' experience with the curriculum, I would also want to leave open the possibility that other types of ideas and information could come out in the course of these interviews. I recognize that students may, during interviews, raise questions, share ideas, and reveal perceptions that could be potentially valuable to informing my teaching activities with them, and I want to ensure that there is space for such developments. Especially because I would be interviewing language learners, I would ensure that the interview questions I ask are culturally and linguistically appropriate for the interviewees, as recommended by Patton (1990) (as cited in McKay, 2006, p. 53).

I would, when interviewing students, strive to prevent the development of a power differential between them and me by giving respondents a thorough but concise explanation of my reasons for conducting the interview, what I would do with the information gathered in the interview, and the benefits for respondents of participating in

the interview; and be perceptive of and respond to difficulties which may be caused by language proficiency, nervousness, or cultural differences that a respondent appears to be experiencing when answering interview questions (Merriam, 2009; Nunan, 1992). As advised by Merriam (2009), I would hold interviewees in the regard that they have been selected to participate in an interview since I believe that they have ideas, experiences, and opinions that are useful to me in my research and teaching. This will, according to Merriam, greatly help the interviewees feel at ease, and to thereby offer more candid and expansive responses to interview questions. At the suggestion of McKay (2006), I would offer interview respondents encouraging feedback and words of gratitude and praise during the interview. I would also rely on my own experience teaching immigrants as I responded to them.

Pre-Class Diagnostic Assessment

In order to determine in which specific aspect(s) of English language writing students could benefit from instruction and practice, I would ask them to complete a diagnostic assessment designed to identify areas of English language writing – primarily in the areas of syntax and grammar - in which they demonstrate a lack of understanding, or are making errors (see Appendix B: *Pre-Class Assessment - Questions*). The pre-class assessment that I would administer to students is a self-designed writing assessment based on the Writing sections of the TABE (Tests of Adult Basic Education) Complete Language Assessment System-English Level 3 Form A test. I would administer the same test to students as a post-class assessment. (See Appendices B: *Pre-Class Assessment - Questions* and D: *Post-Class Assessment - Questions*). TABE tests are utilized by

educators to evaluate adult learners' knowledge and capabilities (CTB/McGraw Hill, n.d.). TABE Language tests, the type of TABE test on which I modeled the assessments that I would create and administer to students in my study, measure test takers' knowledge and skills in the following aspects of language: grammar, syntax, usage, sentence formation, paragraph development, capitalization, punctuation, and writing conventions.

I would conduct an error analysis of the results of students' assessments, seeking evidence of their understanding and use of English syntax and grammar. To help ensure the validity of my error analysis, I would ask another ESL professional to also read through the students' assessments and to offer her or his feedback on students' errors. Based on conclusions drawn from my and the other ESL professional's analyses of the students' assessments, I would determine which specific topics and skills to emphasize with individual students, and with the entire class with whom I would use the curriculum resource developed in this study.

Post-Class Assessment

Following the class sessions, I would administer a post-class assessment. The post-class assessment that I would administer to students is a self-designed writing assessment based on the Writing sections of the TABE Complete Language Assessment System-English Level 3 Form A test. It is the same assessment that I would administer to students as a pre-class assessment (see Appendix D: *Post-Class Assessment - Questions*). I believe that using the same assessment would provide a clear, quantifiable measure of whether, and if so how much, students grew in their knowledge and abilities in key areas

of English language grammar, syntax, and usage through participation in class sessions based on the curriculum resource I have developed.

Post-Class Exit Interview

At the conclusion of class sessions with students in class sessions utilizing the curriculum I have developed, I would conduct an exit interview with each student. I would ask students about their experiences learning in a class that incorporated this curriculum, focusing on both the language learning and social aspects of participation. The interviews consist of 16 questions designed to access information about students' perceptions of aspects of the class sessions which they found to be effective in helping them improve their English-language literacy abilities, and aspects of the class which are in need of improvement; students' literacy experiences in class sessions; specific ways in which students grew in their English-language literacy skills through participating in the class; and students' literacy goals (see Appendix E: *Post-Class Exit Interview*).

In order to increase the ability of interviewees to understand the interview questions I would be asking them, I would give each student a paper copy of the interview questions so that they could all read the questions while they listened to me read each question aloud. Since the questions in Section One of the exit interview ask interviewees to evaluate the class, in order to ensure that respondents were as forthcoming and honest as possible in their responses, I would ask them to respond in writing to these questions. I would instruct them to not write their name on the form on which they would write their responses to these questions, and would assure them that their responses will be anonymous.

Summary

This study focuses on developing and using a story-based tool designed to teach English language literacy skills to older Somali women, providing a way for the women to disseminate their stories. Based on research, and also because of my interest in the elements that constitute a high-quality English-language literacy education program for older Somali adult women, I have investigated my primary research question:

- How can educators incorporate stories from older adult Somali women into English language instruction to improve their English writing skills?

I have also investigated the following sub-question:

- What are the components of a story-based English language literacy development program for older Somali adult women?

This chapter began with a statement of the rationale for developing this curriculum, and an explanation of the researcher's goals for the curriculum's development. Following was a description of the curriculum development process. Next, a description of the general type of students with whom this curriculum could be used was provided. The creation and delivery of the curriculum was described. Finally, a description of student interviews and assessments that the researcher developed to accompany the curriculum was included. In Chapter Four, I will present a rationale for the creation of the curriculum resource I have created, as well as a discussion of the decisions that went into creating the curriculum. These will be followed by the curriculum. Also included in this chapter will be a collection of resources and strategies to support best instructional practice.

CHAPTER FOUR: CURRICULUM UNIT

This study focuses on the development of a curriculum resource designed for educators to use with older adult Somali women. In use of the curriculum, instructors utilize stories written by students in English language instruction, with the aim of improving students' English writing skills with a focus on grammar and syntax. In the process of developing the curriculum, I have explored the varieties of tools that can best support the development of literacy skills of the population of students for whom the curriculum has been designed. I have then used this information to design a curriculum resource intended for use in classes in which older Somali women would learn literacy skills through the process of writing folk tales and stories about their personal experiences. This would also provide them with a way to share their stories with a wider audience. The study investigates my primary research question:

- How can educators incorporate stories from older adult Somali women into English language instruction to improve their English writing skills?

I also wish to investigate the following sub-question:

- What are the components of a story-based English language literacy development program for older Somali adult women?

My main objectives are to design a curriculum resource that would lead to improvement in the English-language syntax and grammar skills of students who participate in classes utilizing the curriculum resource developed. Prior to using the curriculum with students, instructors would first assess students' skills. They would then lead students in reading and writing folk tales and personal stories, and teach them

English-language syntax and grammar based on the results of error analysis they would conduct of students' pre-class assessments and their in-class writing. Class sessions in the curriculum developed include a variety of materials and activities, with the aim of creating class content that is of interest, relevant, and helpful. Over the duration of the six class periods for which the curriculum is designed, instructors would monitor and assess students' learning and progress through conducting both informal and formal assessments. An additional goal would be to compile and print a collection of students' writing for their use as a culmination of these class sessions and of the study as a whole. I hope that doing so would empower the women participating in classes that utilize the curriculum developed in this project.

Chapter Overview

In this chapter, I will present the curriculum I have created. My goal in creating this curriculum was to design a curriculum resource that would lead to improvement in the English-language syntax and grammar skills of students who participate in classes utilizing the curriculum resource developed. This curriculum is based on various researchers' findings about the benefits that ESL students, including specifically students from Somalia, can experience through the use of stories as a central component of an ESL class. It offers a resource designed specifically for use with older adult Somali women ESL students. The curriculum is centered on using students' personal stories and folktales as a vehicle for teaching key English-language grammar and syntax knowledge and skills. A rationale for the creation of this curriculum will be presented, along with a discussion of the decisions that went into creating it. These will be followed by the

curriculum. Also included in this chapter is a collection of resources and strategies to support best instructional practice.

Curriculum Rationale

Rich language learning can take place through the study of and practice composing stories. Cortazzi and Jin (2007), in their study of young ELLs' use of keywords and story maps to tell and retell stories in both their respective first languages and English, concluded that encouraging language learners to tell their personal stories may aid in their linguistic and metacognitive development, and give added credibility to the expression of their experiences (as cited in Nicholas et al., 2011). They advocated structuring a curriculum around storytelling, claiming that language learning takes place in the process of learning to tell stories better. Language learning is an integral part of the process of learning to tell and write stories, since in the process of communicating stories through speaking and writing, students' knowledge of vocabulary and grammar increases (Nicholas et al., 2011). Writing stories as a class activity facilitates learning and practice of a range of vocabulary and grammar.

In designing a curriculum resource specifically for Somali students, I chose to make folktales and students' personal stories a key component of the resource since Somali culture is replete with stories and storytelling. The stories told in Somali families have the important function of transmitting moral values and positive characteristics including "kindness to parents, bravery, generosity, independence, fairness, and wisdom" (Adam, 2005, 35). Poetry and songs are essential elements of Somali culture in Africa, suggest Putnam and Noor (1993), and are present even during periods of conflict and

resolution (as cited in Hengel, 2002, p. 17). These functions will be carried over into the writing of stories in English.

The development of a tool like that I have created – one designed for use with Somali women ESL/EFL students - is important because of the many benefits of achieving literacy in English, a dominant world language and the majority language where many immigrants and refugees live after leaving their home countries. Among these benefits are that literacy in English allows people access to greater opportunities for education and work, and empowers them to become more well-informed about issues that impact important aspects of their lives. However, there is a low rate of literacy among Somali women in both Somalia and the United States. Yusuf (2012), in describing difficulties that Somalis in Minnesota encounter, states, “A leading contender, experienced by immigrant groups over the centuries, involves proficiency in English...” (p. 43).

There are compelling reasons to consider developing curriculum designed specifically for use with women students. Barro (2005) conveys that improvements in women’s agency and well-being are connected to their access to education, especially formal education. For those women who live in countries where English is the dominant language, education in English literacy is a crucial piece of their education. In addition, Barro advances that literacy programs can empower women through making them more able to assess and gain greater control over their own lives, and to foster social change (Barro, 2005). My hope is that, through their participation in classes that utilize the curriculum developed in my capstone project, participants will experience some of these

benefits that can result from becoming better able to read and write in a language.

I was especially interested in creating curriculum designed for use by older students since older members of any society possess a great deal of experience, and often have many stories and teachings to offer. Through taking part in the story writing activities that comprise the curriculum resource I have developed in this research project, students can develop an English-language collection of some of their stories and create a channel through which some of their histories and tales can be more easily shared.

Curriculum Decisions

Utilizing students' stories as the basis for literacy instruction can hold various benefits for participants. Connelly and Clandinin (1990) describe humans as "storytelling organisms who, individually and collectively, lead storied lives...and tell stories of those lives" (as cited in Nicholas, Rossiter, & Abbott, 2011). Rinvolutri characterizes storytelling as the oldest method for learning an L2 (as cited in Nicholas et al., 2011). Jones (2001) writes that story and narrative frequently are components of language learning.

Myriad benefits can result from use of learners' stories in language classrooms. The use of stories in ESL classes can aid instructors in including content from students' cultures, making the classes potentially more relevant and meaningful to students. Classroom activities incorporating stories from both U.S. and Somali culture "will bring an element of appreciation of the heritage of both languages and cultures, a sense of continuity of the wisdom of the past, and the joy of the cultural identity" (Przytula, 2002, p. 59). Przytula (2002) advocates use of stories in ESL classes for Somali adults of all

levels of English language proficiency. Doing so can “appeal to the learners on the emotional level, as well as...tap into their imagination” (Przytula, 2002, p. 6).

Specifically, including Somali folk tales as an element of the curriculum resource in my research project may enhance students’ ability to adjust to U.S. culture, and also help them to honor and share their Somali identity and heritage. Przytula, in research on ESL educators engaging the imagination of adult Somali learners, found that the rich Somali oral tradition is used by Somalis as a tool for adjusting to a new culture, and for maintaining their Somali identity (2002). Przytula observed bilingual ESL instructors connecting Somali and U.S. cultures through utilization of folk tales, poems, and proverbs in their classes. One instructor noted that Somali proverbs offer motivation and “moral support during difficult times related to the stress of adjustment to a new culture” (Przytula, 2002, p. 55). Examples that the instructors shared demonstrated the widespread use of Somali proverbs and folk tales by Somali “extended family members, elders and teachers to bring in the folk wisdom of the past” to their present-day lives as they work “to empower, and to motivate the youth” as they adapt to a new culture (Przytula, 2002, p. 56).

Randall (2009), in her research on resilience in Minnesota’s Hmong and Somali communities, writes that storytelling has a strong link to connectedness. Both connectedness and storytelling are analyzed in scholarly literature on resilience in individuals, families, and communities (Bagley & Carroll, 1998; Higgins, 1994; Landau & Saul, 2004; Reivich & Slatte, 2002, as cited in Randall, 2009, p. 13). Pipher (2002) writes that people who are resilient “tell themselves a story that gives their lives meaning

and purpose” (as cited in Randall, 2009, p. 13). Especially in light of the fact that, as previously mentioned, many Somalis in Minnesota have lived and often do still live in challenging circumstances, this resilience-building quality of telling stories about one’s life and experiences is an important aspect of stories that participants will write and share through participation in the story-based literacy program the researcher is developing.

Ghosn (2004), in comparing language lessons centered around stories with lessons based on the more common type of language curriculum based on short communicative interactions, found that the story-based lessons led to teachers frequently asking questions of a more challenging, open-ended nature. These questions resulted in student responses that were both longer and had a greater degree of syntactic complexity than those in the lessons with communicative-style materials. Participants in the lessons with a story-based approach asked questions about the lesson content and vocabulary and about how language works. Stories, Ghosn asserted, create a context in which learners can engage in meaningful exploration and exchanges about material. Ghosn recounted that the focus of classes using stories was on meaning, which engaged students and led to rich discussion on many occasions, giving students valuable practice in connected, interactive conversation. It also led to teachers often elaborating on students’ words, negotiating meaning, and expanding on students’ ideas.

The Curriculum: Literacy Tool - Teaching English-Language Literacy Skills Through Story Writing

Following is the curriculum I have created. It includes an introduction to the curriculum, recommendations for developing groups of students who could participate in

a class in which the instructor utilizes this curriculum, and approximations of how much time educators using the curriculum should plan to allocate for its use. Also included are an outline of suggested activities for class sessions in which the curriculum is used, and suggestions for resources which instructors could use concurrently with this curriculum.

Introduction

I have developed a curriculum resource designed to teach English language literacy skills to older Somali women through the use of stories and by providing a vehicle through which the women can share their stories. The curriculum is designed for utilization in a class that could take place over approximately six weeks.

My main objective was to create a literacy tool that would result in improvement in students' English-language syntax and grammar skills as a result of the story-writing activities in class sessions incorporating the curriculum. Following the assessment of students' skills, I would lead them in reading and writing folk tales and personal stories, then teach them English-language syntax and grammar based on the results of error analysis I conduct of their pre-class assessments and their in-class writing. Class sessions include a variety of materials and activities, with the aim of creating class content that is of interest, relevant, and helpful. An additional goal of instructors who use this curriculum may be to compile and print a collection of students' writing for their use as a culmination of these class sessions and of the study as a whole. I hope that doing so would empower the students who would have participated in classes utilizing this curriculum.

Developing Groups of Students

The curriculum resource I have created is designed for older adult Somali women who have a high beginning or intermediate level of English language proficiency. In order to have benefit most optimally from a class utilizing this curriculum, a student would need to be an English Language Learner (ELL) and to have a Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment Systems (CASAS) Life and Work Reading test score of 190-200, which is the range of scores correlating with the CASAS level High Beginning ESL, or 200-220, which is the range of scores correlating with the CASAS level Intermediate ESL, and to be a member of the Beginning or Intermediate level English as a Second Language (ESL) class at the learning center where they attend classes. CASAS Life and Work Reading assessments are used by educators, to measure ESL, among other students' basic skills and to track their progress in English-language reading comprehension, and to help in the process of designing instruction for these students (CASAS, n.d.).

Time Allocations for Lessons

The curriculum is designed for utilization in a class that could take place over approximately six weeks. Lessons in the curriculum are designed to last for approximately two hours.

Outline of Suggested Activities

1.) Warm-up Activity: Lead students in writing about and discussing an aspect of writing.

Examples of topics for writing or discussion:

1a.) Ask students about their ability to write in their respective first languages and in English.

1b.) Ask students about their abilities – in their respective first languages and in English - in the four language modalities of reading, writing, speaking, and listening.

1c.) Discuss with students what types of writing they have done in their respective first languages and in English. Ask them about the contexts in, and purposes for which they have done this writing.

1d.) Discuss students' feelings about writing in their respective first languages, and in English.

1e.) Through a class discussion and/or a brief individual reflection writing activity, gauge students' familiarity with, and knowledge about folk tales.

1g.) Provide 1-2 brief examples – orally and/or in written form – of folk tales, then invite students to share, orally, an example of a folk tale from their respective home countries.

1h.) Through a class discussion and/or a brief individual reflection writing activity, gauge students' familiarity with, and knowledge about personal stories.

1i.) Provide 1-2 brief examples – orally and/or in written form – of personal stories, then invite students to share an example of a personal story they may have read.

1j.) Discuss with students what they have been learning about writing in class sessions.

1k.) Ask students how they feel about the writing they have been doing in class sessions.

2.) Lead students in reading a folk tale or personal story.

Examples of activities to do with reading:

2a.) Share a small amount of basic information about the story, such as its author(s) (if known), the culture or cultures it comes from, and background information about the story.

2b.) Pre-teach vocabulary words from the story.

2c.) Ask students to answer – in writing or orally - one to several comprehension questions about the story. Review responses to these questions.

2d.) Ask students to write about or discuss some of their questions about, and reactions to the story. Review responses to these questions.

3.) Teach students one or several syntax or grammar points from the story.

Examples of teaching activities:

3a.) Highlight examples of the given syntax or grammar point(s) in the story students read in class that day. Tell students the name of each target syntax or grammar point, and explain in basic terms what it means and how it is used. Point out examples of the syntax or grammar point in the story, and ask students to locate other examples.

3b.) Compose or locate brief exercises that students can do to practice correct use of the target syntax or grammar point(s). Review students' answers to these practice exercises. If it becomes evident that many students do not yet have a good understanding of the target syntax or grammar point(s), teach the point(s) again in different ways than

the initial presentation of the material. Next, give students several more practice exercises, review their answers to these exercises, and do more re-teaching if necessary.

4.) Lead students in writing their own folk tales or personal stories.

Prior to beginning any writing activities, explain to students that they will, throughout the course of the current and upcoming class sessions, write two stories – a personal story and a folk tale, each in stages: an outline, one or more initial drafts, and a final version. Briefly explain what each of these stages entails. Through explicit instruction, providing examples, and modeling, teach students what an outline is. Explain that spending a few minutes writing an outline prior to beginning to write each paragraph in a composition can make the entire process much easier.

Examples of writing activities:

4a.) Pre-writing: give students one to several suggested topics or areas of focus for the story they will write. Then lead students in brainstorming about a topic or topics that will be the focus of their story. One possible idea is a personal story that relates to an aspect of a folk tale we have read. If students are not familiar with the concept of brainstorming, coach them to think about and write as many words or phrases as they can that relate to the topic about which they are writing. Give the class a designated amount of time for brainstorming. Once the class has completed this brainstorming session, ask students to try to group together words and ideas that are similar. Encourage students not to worry about having perfect spelling or grammar at this point, but to instead focus on

simply thinking of ideas. If students are struggling to get started, provide several sentence starters.

4b.) Through explicit instruction, thinking aloud while modeling, and providing examples, teach students what a paragraph is and how to write one. Define and explain topic and supporting sentences, and also that a paragraph typically has around 3-5 sentences. Teach transition words, including *first*, *next*, *then*, and *finally*.

4c.) Writing: instruct students to write a given number of paragraphs. Remind them to begin with an outline. Encourage them to use the ideas they generated during pre-writing as the basis for their writing, but to also be open to making some changes to the topic or focus of their writing if they begin to focus on other topics than those with which they began. Emphasize to students that at this point, they should not place too much focus on spelling, capitalization, and punctuation, but rather on simply putting their ideas into paragraphs on the paper. Inform them that in later class sessions they will have time to focus on polishing the mechanics of their writing. Encourage students to focus on the syntax or grammar point(s) that have been taught in class that day, and to try to incorporate these into their stories.

4d.) Inform students that they will leave their writing with the teacher at the end of class, and that the teacher will review it and offer suggestions for edits that students can make to the writing.

4e.) As students write, review each individual student's writing and share any feedback and suggestions that may be helpful. Aid them in identifying and correcting

syntax and grammar errors, focusing primarily on the syntax and grammar point(s) that were taught in that day's class.

4f.) Encourage students to consider: if their composition mirrors the structure of the outline they created for it; if their sentences are complete, begin with a capital letter, and have an appropriate punctuation mark at the end; if there are any run-on sentences; and if they see any words that they think may not be spelled correctly. For the latter, they can use dictionaries to look up the correct spelling of words. Students can also consider whether each paragraph, and the piece as a whole, has a clear, focused meaning. They may want to add details or remove details that they decide are not necessary or relevant, make changes to some words or sentences, add more vivid or interesting vocabulary words, or rearrange some sentences or paragraphs.

4g.) For class sessions in which students are revising writing they have done in a previous class session, discuss with students the revision suggestions you have made during your review of their writing. This instruction may take place with the whole class and/or individual students. Instruct students to write the revised draft on a new piece of paper.

4h.) Ask students if they are open to having classmates read their writing. If so, they can read and offer feedback on each other's compositions. They can ask each other questions about ideas, syntax and grammar, spelling, and other aspects of their classmates' writing, including those listed in # 4e. Write examples of peer editing questions on the board so that students can refer to them in these interactions.

4i.) While considering the revisions they have made to their own writing and also classmates' revisions (if applicable), encourage students to focus on improving their compositions through tactics such as adding interest through details. Perhaps the composition is rather short and could be improved by the student adding one or more paragraph. Alternatively, it may quite lengthy and contain what seem like excessive or irrelevant details, and could be shortened. If students are challenged by the revision process, offer share examples and demonstrate some of the revision activities you have suggested. If necessary, aid students in locating specific areas of their writing that could be improved in some way, and ask questions or offer suggestions for initial steps to take in making these revisions.

5.) Lead students in sharing parts of their stories.

Examples of sharing activities:

5a.) First, coach students in good practices for sharing (speaking in an audible and clear voice, facing the audience, etc.), and for good audience etiquette (i.e., not speaking while someone is sharing, waiting to ask questions until after the speaker has completed their presentation, and applauding when the speaker has finished speaking).

5b.) Model how to begin with praising an effective point, how to offer helpful criticism, and how to end with another praiseworthy point. Then model sharing a story by reading a story and demonstrating the good audience etiquette practices that were discussed. Also, ask students to practice the good audience etiquette discussed.

5c.) Next, invite each student to share her story with the class.

Teachers are referred to Altano (2004), Minnesota Literacy Council (n.d.), Phifer, (1995), Reiff (1987), Tom and McKay (1999), and Turkenik (1998) for further resources.

Summary

This study focuses on developing and using a story-based tool designed to teach English language literacy skills to older Somali women, providing a way for the women to disseminate their stories. Based on research, and also because of my interest in the elements that constitute a high-quality English-language literacy education program for older Somali adult women, I have investigated my primary research question:

- How can educators incorporate stories from older adult Somali women into English language instruction to improve their English writing skills?

I have also investigated the following sub-question:

- What are the components of a story-based English language literacy development program for older Somali adult women?

In this chapter, I presented a rationale for the creation of the curriculum resource I have created, as a well as a discussion of the decisions that went into creating the curriculum. These were followed by the curriculum. Also included in this chapter were a collection of resources and strategies to support best instructional practice. In Chapter Five I will discuss my major findings, the limitations of my study, implications of my study's findings, and recommendations for further research.

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSIONS

This study focused on developing a story-based tool designed to teach English language literacy skills to older Somali women, providing a way for the women to improve their English-language writing skills and, ultimately, disseminate their stories. Based on research, and also because of my interest in the elements that constitute a high-quality English-language literacy education program for older Somali adult women, I have investigated my primary research question:

- How can educators incorporate stories from older adult Somali women into English language instruction to improve their English writing skills?

I have also investigated the following sub-question:

- What are the components of a story-based English language literacy development program for older Somali adult women?

This capstone was presented in five chapters. In Chapter One, an introduction was given to this research study, including establishing the need for study of this topic. A brief introduction was given to the study's context, along with an overview of the researcher's role, assumptions, and biases. The background of the researcher was provided. The chapter introduced key points relevant to development of a story-based English language literacy curriculum resource designed for initial use in a program for older Somali adults in Minnesota. Chapter Two presented a review of the literature relevant to general information about the research on the educational background of Minnesota's Somali population, the development of education in Somalia, the effects that living in refugee camps has on education, the education and literacy of the adult Somali

population in Minnesota, Somali oral tradition, the Somali language, adult literacy in the context of ESL/EFL, the use of stories in and creation of curriculum for ESL/EFL programs for adults, and the use of interviews in research. Chapter Three included an explanation of the rationale for the development of this curriculum resource and of the researcher's goals in developing the curriculum, and a description of the curriculum development process. A curriculum unit was presented in Chapter Four. Chapter Five will contain the researcher's major findings, discussion of the limitations of my study, implications of my study's findings, plans for dissemination of the research and findings in the study, and recommendations for further research.

Chapter Overview

In this chapter, I will discuss the major findings that came out of my study, the limitations of this study, implications of my study's findings, my plans for dissemination of the research and findings in my study, and recommendations for further research.

Major Findings

In conducting my literature review – presented in Chapter Two – I investigated the education and literacy of Somali adults in Minnesota, the Somali language and oral tradition, adult literacy in the context of ESL and EFL, and use of stories in adult ESL/EFL programs to develop a curriculum resource in the form of a literacy tool designed to teach English language literacy skills to older Somali women through the use of stories and by providing a vehicle through which the women can share their stories. Following my investigation and consideration of these resources, it became evident that more research specific to English language education for older adult Somali students is

needed. Also, I found that there is a dearth of research on story-based literacy tools designed for use in English language instruction with this population. While a significant amount of research does exist on the use of literature in second language (L2) classes, a relatively small amount of research has been conducted on the various methods for, and also rewards and challenges of incorporating students' stories into language learning in the ESL classroom (Nicholas et al., 2011). It became clear that while there are ESL and EFL programs for older adult Somalis, there exist few or no tools designed to aid in the development of these students' English language literacy skills through facilitating their writing of folk tales from their culture and personal stories.

The focus of this study was on incorporating what I learned through my research to develop a curriculum resource. Through my research I developed a greater understanding of the types of story-based literacy tools that can be effective in helping the target population of students for which I designed this curriculum develop English language literacy skills in key areas of writing, and also of the process of developing and using such tools with these students.

Limitations

My capstone originally had a mixed methods research design. I planned to investigate, through mixed methods research with a group of participants, the development and use of a tool designed to teach English language literacy skills to older Somali women through the use of stories, and by providing a vehicle through which the women can share their stories. Due to logistical challenges and time constraints, I was

unable to work with participants in the course of this study. Thus, I needed to change the study from a mixed methods to a curriculum development design.

Altering significant portions of my capstone in light of this change has proved challenging. I needed to, in a relatively short amount of time, familiarize myself with a curriculum development capstone design, and develop a much more extensive curriculum section of my capstone than what it had contained up til that point. Time constraints kept me from locating and developing nearly as many resources as I would have ideally liked to include in the curriculum resource.

Implications

Although I have endeavored to design this curriculum resource to be easily accessible and usable to ESL/EFL instructors, instructors using the curriculum will need to spend some time preparing prior to beginning to teach class sessions with the curriculum. I recommend that educators who plan to use the curriculum read through the entire curriculum prior to beginning its use. Since it is designed for use in a series of approximately six class sessions, gaining a clear idea of the scope of the entire class, and also of how each class session relates to the prior and following class can be useful to instructors as they plan and teach lessons for each class session. Being familiar with the scope of material and activities in, and purpose of each class session will help instructors optimally teach the curriculum.

Instructors should ensure that they are possess a thorough understanding of the personal stories, folk tales, and grammar and syntax points that they plan to include and teach in each class session. Additionally, instructors can and should seek out examples of

personal stories and folk tales that are of interest, relevant to, and at an appropriate level for the students in their class. Doing so will make the curriculum as beneficial as possible to students in the class. Such resources can, in most cases, be found in libraries and bookstores, and at schools and other educational institutions in the instructor's community.

Because this curriculum resource has been designed with a great deal of focus on the needs and development of individual students within a class using the curriculum, instructors should, to make the class as valuable as possible in students' English language literacy development, plan to be highly attentive to and spend a substantial amount of time with each individual student throughout the course of the class.

Dissemination and Further Research

My objective in developing this curriculum resource was to create a literacy tool that would result in improvement in students' English-language syntax and grammar skills as a result of the story-writing activities in class sessions incorporating the curriculum. I hope that other ESL/EFL educators and I will be able to use these tools to teach English language syntax and grammar writing skills to students. Teaching classes utilizing the curriculum resource I have developed in this study should follow.

Conducting class sessions with the curriculum resource and accompanying student interviews and assessments developed in this capstone would likely bring more rich and insightful findings about its potential benefits for students.

In addition, although the curriculum as presented in this study was designed for use with older adult Somali women students, it can be redesigned for use with other

student populations, based on their respective backgrounds, needs, and goals. The curriculum was designed for use in approximately six class sessions, but it could be expanded for use over a longer series of classes. An additional goal of instructors who use this curriculum may be to compile and print a collection of students' writing for their use as a culmination of these class sessions and of the study as a whole. I hope that doing so would empower the students who would have participated in classes utilizing this curriculum.

I will make this curriculum available to any educators who are interested in using it in classes they teach, or who wish to peruse it to learn about and gather ideas for working with students like those for whom I have designed the curriculum. Also, I plan to present this curriculum at a conference and will seek feedback from attendees. Finally, more research is needed to expand the collection of information on working with older adult Somali ESL students, as well as to increase knowledge of the development and utilization of literacy tools that are based on students generating folk tales and personal stories. Educators who use the curriculum resource in their instructional activities with students, and students who take part in classes using the curriculum should offer feedback on their experience with the curriculum. This feedback can be used to continually refine and improve the curriculum resources available for these students and their instructors.

APPENDIX A: *Pre-Class Interview*

APPENDIX A: *Pre-Class Interview*

Note to teacher: Ask these questions using a conversational style. Explain any questions that students don't understand.

Purpose: I am asking these questions to find out more about you, including information about your educational background and language learning experiences.

Please answer the following questions. Your responses are confidential and anonymous.

1. Name (as pseudonym):
2. Age:
3. Gender:
4. Where were you born?
5. How long have you lived in the U.S.? (Please give the number of months or years that you have lived in the U.S.):
6. Where else have you lived before coming to the U.S.?
7. Which languages do you speak?
8. What was the first language you learned as a child?
9. Did you attend school as a child? If so, for how many years?
10. Which languages do you read and write?
11. Please describe how you learned to write.
12. Why do you want to improve your English language reading and writing skills?
13. Is there anything else you'd like to tell me?

Thank you very much for participating in this interview!

APPENDIX B: *Pre-Class Assessment - Questions*

APPENDIX B: Pre-Class Assessment – Questions**Section A: Multiple Choice Questions**

Directions: Please use a pencil to mark your answers on the answer sheet. On the answer sheet, for each question you will circle only the one letter that goes with the answer you choose. If you want to change an answer, please completely erase the circle you drew around one letter before drawing a circle around another letter. You will not be graded. Your answers will help me know what we need to work on in the class.

Part 1: Multiple Choice Sample Questions: We will do these sample questions together. After you have answered each of the three sample questions, I will tell you the answer to each question. I will also ask you if you have any questions.

Sample A: Choose the word or words that correctly complete the sentence.

He _____ a new job.

- A has
- B have
- C is having

Sample B: Choose the correct sentence.

- A Does have she a pencil?
- B Does she have a pencil?
- C Does have a pencil she?

Sample C: Read the two underlined sentences. Next, choose the sentence that best combines them.

Ayan bought new shoes. The shoes are for her daughter.

- A Ayan bought new shoes are for her daughter.
- B Ayan bought new shoes for her daughter.

C Ayan bought new shoes, the new shoes are for her daughter.

Part 2: Multiple Choice Questions: You will do these questions by yourself. You will have 20 minutes to do this part of the test. On the answer sheet, for each question you will circle only the one letter that goes with the answer you choose. If you want to change an answer, please completely erase the circle you drew around one letter before drawing a circle around another letter.

Directions: For Numbers 1-6, please choose the word or words that correctly complete the sentence.

1. The number 6,700 is the same as _____.
A six thousand seven hundred
B sixty-seven thousand
C sixty thousand seven hundred

2. The time 8:45 is the same as _____.
A a quarter to eight
B a quarter past eight
C a quarter to nine

3. The number $2\frac{1}{3}$ is the same as _____.
A two and one three
B two thirds
C two and one third

4. It was _____ interesting way of solving the problem.
A a

- B** an
- C** the

5. Please help _____ find the classroom.

- A** they
- B** their
- C** them

6. Mario has the _____ apartment in our building.

- A** big
- B** bigger
- C** biggest

Directions: For Numbers 7-15, please choose the correct sentence.

- 7. **A** Today is her twenty-fifth birthday.
 - B** Today is her twenty-five birthday.
 - C** Today is her number twenty-five birthday.
-
- 8. **A** The boys be playing in the park.
 - B** The boys is playing in the park.
 - C** The boys are playing in the park.
-
- 9. **A** Rachel talked with, her friend, mother, and son on the phone.
 - B** Rachel talked with her friend, mother, and son on the phone.

- C** Rachel talked with her friend, mother, and son, on the phone.
- 10. A** The Social Security office is at 719 West, Broadway Street, Minneapolis.
B The Social Security office is at 719 West Broadway Street Minneapolis.
C The Social Security office is at 719 West Broadway Street, Minneapolis.
- 11. A** John is eating his lunch slow.
B John is slowly eating his lunch.
C John is slowing eating his lunch.
- 12. A** Can you please tell me how much this jacket costs?
B Can you please tell me how much costs this jacket?
C Can you please tell me this jacket costs how much?
- 13. A** Every student in the class need to bring a notebook.
B Every student in the class needing to bring a notebook.
C Every student in the class needs to bring a notebook.
- 14. A** She couldn't go to the movie because she was cleaning all day.
B She couldn't go to the movie because she was clean all day.
C She couldn't go to the movie because she cleaning all day.
- 15. A** My family and I eat breakfast at Marta's Café every Saturday morning.
B My family and I eat breakfast at marta's café every Saturday morning.

- C My family and I eat breakfast at Marta's Café every Saturday morning.

Directions: For Number 16, please choose the COMPLETE sentence. (Two of these are not complete sentences.)

16. A She likes to go to the mosque on Franklin Avenue.
B When she is in Minneapolis.
C Going there to visit her friend.

Directions: For Numbers 17-20, please read the two underlined sentences. Then choose the sentence that best combines them.

17. My son is really happy. He got a new job.

- A My son is really happy because he got a new job.
B My son is really happy so he got a new job.
C My son is really happy and he got a new job.

18. Mohamed needed milk and bread. He went to the market.

- A Mohamed needed milk and bread he went to the market.
B Mohamed needed milk and bread, so he went to the market.
C Mohamed needed milk and bread and he went to the market.

19. I like to sing. I also like to dance.

- A I like to sing and also to dance.
B I like to sing and dance.
C I like to sing, I also like to dance.

20. Sahro visited her family in Toronto. She went with her daughter.
- A Sahro visited her family in Toronto with her daughter.
 - B Sahro visited her family in Toronto and she went with her daughter.
 - C Sahro visited her family in Toronto, she went with her daughter.

Section B: Short-Answer Questions

Directions: Please use a pencil to write your answers on the answer sheet. On the answer sheet, for each question you will write sentences or paragraphs to answer the question. If you want to change an answer, please completely erase the words you want to change before writing different words.

Part 1: Short Answer Sample Question: We will do this sample question together. After you have answered the sample question, I will then tell you some of the possible answers to the question (there are different possible answers). I will also ask you if you have any questions.

Sample A: Please write two sentences about the picture.



Griffin, P. (n.d.) *Train Tracks*. [Photograph]. Retrieved from <http://www.publicdomainpictures.net/view-image.php?image=29210&picture=train-tracks>

Part 2: Short Answer Questions: You will do these questions by yourself. You will have 10 minutes to do this part of the test. On the answer sheet, for each question you will write two sentences about each picture. If you want to change your answer, please erase the part of the answer that you want to change before you write new information.

1. Please write two sentences about the picture.



Langova, A. (n.d.) *African Woman*. [Photograph]. Retrieved from <http://www.publicdomainpictures.net/view-image.php?image=9894&picture=african-woman>

2. Please write two sentences about the picture.



Ong, M. (n.d.) *Beautiful Sunset*. [Photograph]. Retrieved from <http://www.publicdomainpictures.net/view-image.php?image=26530&picture=beautiful-sunset>

Please note: this pre-class assessment is a self-designed writing assessment based on the Writing sections of the TABE (Tests of Adult Basic Education) Complete Language Assessment System-English Level 3 Form A test.

APPENDIX C: *Class Session Outlines*

APPENDIX C: *Class Session Outlines***Class 1**

Pre-Class Assessment

Introductions

Warm-up Activity

Reading

Story Ideas

Class 2

Warm-Up Activity

Begin writing folk tale

Class 3

Warm-Up Activity

Hand back feedback on writing

Work on revision of folk tale

Class 4

Warm-Up Activity

Reading

Begin writing personal story

Class 5

Warm-Up Activity

Hand back feedback on personal story

Work on revision of personal story

Class 6

Warm-Up Activity

Post-class assessment

Sharing of stories

Discussion of publication

APPENDIX D: *Post-Class Assessment - Questions*

APPENDIX D: Post-Class Assessment - Questions**Section A: Multiple Choice Questions**

Directions: Please use a pencil to mark your answers on the answer sheet. On the answer sheet, for each question you will circle only the one letter that goes with the answer you choose. If you want to change an answer, please completely erase the circle you drew around one letter before drawing a circle around another letter. You will not be graded. Your answers will help me know what you learned in the class.

Part 1: Multiple Choice Sample Questions: We will do these sample questions together. After you have answered each of the three sample questions, I will tell you the answer to each question. I will also ask you if you have any questions.

Sample A: Choose the word or words that correctly complete the sentence.

He _____ a new job.

- A has
- B have
- C is having

Sample B: Choose the correct sentence.

- A Does have she a pencil?
- B Does she have a pencil?
- C Does have a pencil she?

Sample C: Read the two underlined sentences. Next, choose the sentence that best combines them.

Ayan bought new shoes. The shoes are for her daughter.

- A Ayan bought new shoes are for her daughter.
- B Ayan bought new shoes for her daughter.

C Ayan bought new shoes, the new shoes are for her daughter.

Part 2: Multiple Choice Questions: You will do these questions by yourself. You will have 20 minutes to do this part of the test. On the answer sheet, for each question you will circle only the one letter that goes with the answer you choose. If you want to change an answer, please completely erase the circle you drew around one letter before drawing a circle around another letter.

Directions: For Numbers 1-6, please choose the word or words that correctly complete the sentence.

1. The number 6,700 is the same as _____.
A six thousand seven hundred
B sixty-seven thousand
C sixty thousand seven hundred

2. The time 8:45 is the same as _____.
A a quarter to eight
B a quarter past eight
C a quarter to nine

3. The number $2\frac{1}{3}$ is the same as _____.
A two and one three
B two thirds
C two and one third

4. It was _____ interesting way of solving the problem.
A a

- B** an
- C** the

5. Please help _____ find the classroom.

- A** they
- B** their
- C** them

6. Mario has the _____ apartment in our building.

- A** big
- B** bigger
- C** biggest

Directions: For Numbers 7-15, please choose the correct sentence.

7. **A** Today is her twenty-fifth birthday.
B Today is her twenty-five birthday.
C Today is her number twenty-five birthday.
8. **A** The boys be playing in the park.
B The boys is playing in the park.
C The boys are playing in the park.
9. **A** Rachel talked with, her friend, mother, and son on the phone.
B Rachel talked with her friend, mother, and son on the phone.

- C** Rachel talked with her friend, mother, and son, on the phone.
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B The Social Security office is at 719 West Broadway Street Minneapolis.
C The Social Security office is at 719 West Broadway Street, Minneapolis.
- 11. A** John is eating his lunch slow.
B John is slowly eating his lunch.
C John is slowing eating his lunch.
- 12. A** Can you please tell me how much this jacket costs?
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B My family and I eat breakfast at marta's café every Saturday morning.

- C My family and I eat breakfast at Marta's Café every Saturday morning.

Directions: For Number 16, please choose the COMPLETE sentence. (Two of these are not complete sentences.)

16. A She likes to go to the mosque on Franklin Avenue.
B When she is in Minneapolis.
C Going there to visit her friend.

Directions: For Numbers 17-20, please read the two underlined sentences. Then choose the sentence that best combines them.

17. My son is really happy. He got a new job.

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- A Sahro visited her family in Toronto with her daughter.
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Section B: Short-Answer Questions

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Part 1: Short Answer Sample Question: We will do this sample question together. After you have answered the sample question, I will then tell you some of the possible answers to the question (there are different possible answers). I will also ask you if you have any questions.

Sample A: Please write two sentences about the picture.



Jones, M. (n.d.) *Market Lady*. [Photograph]. Retrieved from <http://www.publicdomainpictures.net/view-image.php?image=113662&picture=market-lady>

Part 2: Short Answer Questions: You will do these questions by yourself. You will have 10 minutes to do this part of the test. On the answer sheet, for each question you will write two sentences about each picture. If you want to change your answer, please erase the part of the answer that you want to change before you write new information.

1. Please write two sentences about the picture.



Kratochvil, P. (n.d.) Mother and Baby in Park. [Photograph]. Retrieved from <http://www.publicdomainpictures.net/view-image.php?image=32333&picture=mother-and-baby-in-park>

2. Please write two sentences about the picture.



Griffin, P. (n.d.) *Classroom*. [Photograph]. Retrieved from <http://www.publicdomainpictures.net/view-image.php?image=3267&picture=classroom>

Please note: this post-class assessment is a self-designed writing assessment based on the Writing sections of the TABE (Tests of Adult Basic Education) Complete Language Assessment System-English Level 3 Form A test.

Appendix E: *Post-Class Exit Interview*

Appendix E: *Post-Class Exit Interview*

Note to teacher: Ask these questions using a conversational style. Explain any questions that students don't understand.

Purpose: I am asking these questions to find out about your experiences participating in this class. I also want to find out more about you, including information about your educational background and language learning experiences.

Please answer the following questions. Your responses are confidential and anonymous.

1. Do you think the teacher's instruction during class sessions in this study was helpful? How?
2. Do you think the discussions during class sessions in this study were helpful? How?
3. Do you think the reading and writing activities done in class were helpful? How?
4. Did you enjoy reading and writing folk tales? Please explain.
5. Did you enjoy reading and writing personal stories? Please explain.
6. Do you think the written and verbal feedback you got from the teacher on your writing was helpful?
7. What have you learned about writing in these class sessions?
8. Before our class sessions, you said that you most wanted to improve _____ in your English-language writing. Please look at the final copies of the two stories you wrote and find three areas that show examples of improvements in these areas of your writing. Please tell me about these examples of improvements in your writing.
9. Is there anything else you'd like to tell me?

Thank you very much for participating in this interview!

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