

AN UNEASY TRUCE: THE SIGNIFICANCE OF SCHOOLING AND ACADEMIC
ACHIEVEMENT FOR ROHINGYA REFUGEE YOUTHS IN ONTARIO

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Abstract

This dissertation explores how Rohingya refugee youths are navigating their historical legacy and past and ongoing lived experiences as they familiarize themselves with the culture of mainstream schooling in Canada and attempt to determine their place within this complex network. In particular, it investigates the role that the habitus and social position of participants within this migration community in southwestern Ontario play in structuring refugee youths' choices and opportunities in and through education. Given these goals, I pay special attention to the youths' evolving attitudes to the predispositions of their parents with regard to child language socialization and cultural continuity, and the influences that schooling experiences have in introducing youths to alternate cross-cultural currents.

I use two primary conceptual frameworks: (a) Pierre Bourdieu's (1977a, 1977b) perspective on *habitus* and *cultural capital* and (b) linguistic and cultural socialization (Bayley & Schecter, 2003; Schecter, 2015; Schecter & Bayley, 2002, 2004). These frameworks ground ethnographic case studies representing the perspectives I have identified in my empirical research—through participant observations, surveys/questionnaires, ethnographic interviews, and other, secondary data sources.

My research findings revealed that participating youths are struggling to adopt a concept of victimhood that their parents, as genocide survivors, have embodied, but that is not part of the youths' direct experiential reality. In addition, although my focal participants were well aware of the shortcomings and weaknesses of the school system in providing for their learning, they didn't appear especially surprised or unsettled by these inadequacies; nor did they expect school personnel to initiate imminent improvements in meeting their academic needs. These generally positive attitudes reflected an appreciation of the affordances of the public education system in

Canada in terms of freedom of association and life choices as compared with their desperate status in Myanmar and/or horrible existence in refugee camps.

Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to my two daughters, Maria and Sara.

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First of all, I thank Allah, my lord, for saving me from genocide in Myanmar and from the life of a refugee and giving me this great opportunity to stand for my people, the Rohingyas. I am also indebted to my parents, who have inspired me to love education and have had great expectations for my life since my childhood. Their support and guidance at every stage of my academic life have been invaluable.

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Glossary

Code-Mixing	The practice of combining two or more languages or dialects in speech
Code-Switching	The practice of changing one's language, behaviour, or actions to fit into a different cultural context
Desi	A person, culture, or product from the Indian subcontinent and its diaspora
IB	International Baccalaureate
IEP	Individualized Education Plan
Ramadan	The 9th month of the Islamic calendar, observed by Muslims worldwide as a month of fasting (<i>sawm</i>), prayer (<i>salah</i>), reflection, and community.
SSW	Student Support Worker
STEM	Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics

Chapter 1: Introduction and Background

Two Worlds

Mway Htani anyar yat see thoe. yawyi myaw man sate wai tan ta mann sa kar ye. Tan ta bar the.

(To my native place in the upper region! Yearning from my heart, I imagine it. I long for it.)

I sang this Burmese folk song as withered autumn leaves drifted down from the trees in our neighbourhood in Canada, rendering the song all the more touching. But my whole family became alarmed as soon as they heard it, and I had to stop singing. “She still can’t forget that country and people,” Mother said. “Tell her to forget Myanmar. We are Canadians.”

Burmese songs, movies, and foods have been forbidden in my family for several years, although in Myanmar (formerly known as Burma) they were significant parts of our lives. Based on my experience as a community member, the above vignette is typical of Rohingya families inhabiting Ontario province as they try to get past their bitter history and adjust to life in Canada. In addition to their linguistic and cultural challenges, Rohingya refugees must address many other aspects of life to become successful members of Canadian society. Education is one of these. Within this domain, there are many struggles for Rohingya youths, especially those whose parents have little or no formal education and limited knowledge of life and lives in places outside of the villages in Myanmar from where they came. This situation is largely due to the Myanmar government’s long-term policies of apartheid, carried out since 1982.

In Waterloo Region, Ontario, home to the largest Rohingya population in Canada (Perla, 2018), most of the Rohingya parents are uneducated and almost all the fathers are working in factories as labourers or line assemblers and their English language skills are minimal. For

applications and paperwork, they need educated members of the community to help them. Those who have been in Canada more than 10 years rely on their children for paperwork and any communication in English. The families with young children are struggling in communicating with the outside world. The hospitals and a few clinics provide Rohingya interpreters, but many other government services do not offer language assistance. A majority of the women lose contact with the outside world as their English language skills do not improve much after several years. Also, they need training and enrichment to build confidence for communication with Canadian society. In addition, a majority of the community members continue to suffer from past traumas and need support to believe in themselves and the potential of the resources available in Canada to change their lives positively. Most importantly, they need to build courage to access useful available resources.

Based on my initial observations as a community member, most families in the Rohingya community have no contact with people outside their own cultural background. In other words, these families build “Little Arakan” (after the Rohingyas’ home province in northern Myanmar) and they live inside this bubble surrounded by people from their own ethnicity. The fathers work in the same factory where other Rohingyas work and their daily communication is always in Rohingya. Similarly, the mothers make friends with other Rohingya women and never attempt to go beyond their current circles of friends. Depending on their transit countries, many parents can speak Bengali or Malay, but they have no personal connection with any Bangladeshi or Malay communities in Canada. Only a few members of the community can speak Burmese, the official language of Myanmar, but most hold hostile attitudes towards this language. In the same way, all the youths and children of this Rohingya community speak Rohingya as their mother tongue, and their English tends to become a stronger language as they enter public school.

Although it is maintained that the Rohingya language had a written form in ancient times, there are not a lot of books written in the modern Rohingya languages, which are Rohingyalish and Hanifi Script. As a result, the children are not literate in their home language, Rohingya. Most of the children align to the category Generation 1.5 as they started their primary education in Canada and speak a language other than English in their home (Schechter, 2012). Consequently, they have no reading and writing abilities in their home language. According to Cummins's (1996) *interdependence theory*, literacy skills in a certain language may be transferred to another language (Cummins, 1979); however, these children have no such resources to transfer from their home variety to the mainstream language. Consequently, it is likely that they will be encountering issues in their academic reading and writing.

The parents have high expectations for their children's education but have no idea how to help their children achieve these educational goals. Moreover, the children do not share their conditions at schools with the parents. As the parents need to rely on their children reading documents written in English, the children act as though they know better than their parents in school matters. A majority of the parents are unable or unwilling to give any suggestions to children regarding their future education and career pathways. They always mention that as long as their children become educated, they are happy.

Youths at the high school level do not have anyone in their family to support them with school lessons. Some youths drop out of high school and many take labourer jobs at the factory after finishing secondary school. There are services such as Pathways to Education for high school students, offered by the Camino Wellbeing + Mental Health agency, but I have seen only a few youths joining such programs. As the parents have been deprived of education in Myanmar, their

children do not receive any input from the parents or other community members regarding strategies for being successful in education.

To better understand the current situation of Rohingya youths and their families, it is important to provide the history and conditions of the Rohingyas with regard to education and socialization, since these experiences have contributed to the youths' evolving attitudes towards Ontario schooling and academic achievement. The following section provides a summary of the situation of the Rohingyas in Myanmar and how it contributes to the current conditions of the youths in Ontario regarding their language socialization and education.

A Brief Historical Account of the Rohingyas

According to studies by Mill (1817) and Gutman (2001), the first settlers and rulers in Arakan Region (which is now a part of Myanmar) were Indo-Aryan groups who believed in Hinduism and can be identified with the modern-era Rohingyas around 3000 BC. Then the region turned into a multireligious and multiethnic state when traders from India and Arabia brought Islam and Mughls (present-day Rakhines) from central Myanmar, who believed in Buddhism, migrated there in the 7th century. The geographical location of Arakan state, which allows easier access to East Bengal rather than central Myanmar due to natural mountain barriers, supports the claim that the first settlers in the region were Indo-Aryan descendants (i.e., the Rohingyas). Moreover, there is additional evidence for the existence of the Rohingyas in Arakan (now Rakhine state) by the early 19th century in a sequence of works which included the Rohingyas as a major ethnic group (Buchanan, 1799; Languages of Burma, 1811; Vateri, 1815).

After Burma's independence from British colonization in 1948, the Rohingyas became a core target for the regime, Buddhist extremists, and almost all political parties. They are not only a convenient target for their ethnicity and religion; they are also a safe target as, unlike other ethnic

groups in Myanmar such as the Karan or Shan, they do not have a significant history of armed revolt, apart from a brief period of unrest in 1947. Underscoring the gradual and incremental nature of the process, Ibrahim (2018) points out that there is evidence from the Burmese legal framework which suggests that the Rohingyas were not seen as being especially different from any other ethnic minority in the period of democratic rule up to 1962. Through the 1974 Constitution of the Socialist Republic of the Union of Myanmar, the status the Rohingyas had been granted was removed through the issuing of identity cards that described them as “Foreigner.” Through a sustained campaign of propaganda and lies aimed at the Rohingyas, the state, which had been taken over by military generals, sought to convince the rest of the population that the Rohingyas, who spoke a very different language, had no place in the country. After establishing the 1982 Burmese citizenship law, the military generals tried to justify their own rule. The exclusion of Muslim candidates in the 2015 federal elections and persecution of the Rohingyas reflects over 40 years of state propaganda designed to portray this ethnic minority as disloyal foreigners who represent a threat to Buddhist culture.

Current Conditions of the Rohingyas in Myanmar and the Diaspora

Until 1973 the Rohingyas were regarded as citizens and one of 144 ethnic groups living in Myanmar. However, following the establishment of the 1982 constitution, there were only 135 ethnic groups legally accepted in Myanmar, with the Rohingyas and other minorities dropped from the list. Since then, the Rohingyas have been persecuted, and their basic rights such as access to health services, education, business, and other facilities have been limited (Ibrahim, 2018; Lewa, 2009). Beginning in 2012, persecution of the Rohingya was stepped up, with campaigns of ethnic cleansing on the part of the Myanmar military, local nationalists, and hardline Buddhist monks in Rakhine state, and many Rohingyas were put into concentration camps in Sittwe Township and

other locales. Increasing numbers of Rohingyas have fled the country; most of them are now living in refugee camps in Bangladesh, Malaysia, and Indonesia, waiting to be relocated to third countries under the (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) (Zarni & Cowley, 2014).

According to the UN definition of genocide, genocide entails “intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group” (United Nations Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, 1951, p. 1). All the signs of genocide such as the creation of a racist culture that rationalizes systematic legal discrimination and abuse of historical records to construct a narrative in which mass murder becomes desirable are present in connection with the treatment of the Rohingyas in Myanmar (Ibrahim, 2018). At the same time, the military regime in power has strategically made North Korea one of its key allies. In effect, Western countries are hesitant to antagonize the regime for fear that this could force Myanmar to deepen its existing links with North Korea. Here, Ibrahim (2018) states, “Their ability to balance their competing external suitors [referring to the UN, U.S., China, and ASEAN] has proved useful in allowing them to trade, earn money and buy weapons with a minimum of interference.” (p. 146). Although the UN has voiced its concern regarding the situation in many reports, the rest of the world has accepted limited democracy reforms, given its interest in ensuring a share of the investment boom, the openness of the current economy, and its affinity for an internationally friendly opposition leader, Aung San Suu Kyi.

The Rohingyas are now incarcerated in concentration camps or confined to their own villages. Desperate to leave the region, the majority choose to cross the Indian Ocean to go to Malaysia where they expect to receive asylum. However, the process of registration for asylum application takes many years due to increasing numbers of people seeking refuge in Malaysia (Huennekes, 2018). Without the refugee card issued by the United Nations, it is dangerous for the

Rohingyas to survive in Malaysia due to frequent operations of undercover police against illegal immigrants (Hui, 2018).

Another unfortunate reality is that many Rohingyas who escape from Myanmar through the Indian Ocean are frequently sold to sex industries and fisheries if they stop in Thailand on their way to Malaysia. Human traffickers also attempt to persuade the Rohingyas to leave their villages so that they can subsequently be brought to Thailand. In fact, there is collaboration between human trafficking networks and business firms for cheap labour and this situation has effects on the Rohingyas in the region. Indeed, Buddhist extremist involvement can be seen in every stage in the process, forcing the Rohingyas to leave their homes (Wade, 2019). The regional prawn fishing industry commonly uses slave labour in Southeast Asia; and Western companies are complicit as they source cheap prawns from this region (Ibrahim, 2018). There are also a large number of Rohingyas who have escaped to Bangladesh and Indonesia. Unlike Rohingya refugees in Malaysia, those who fled to these countries cannot leave refugee camps, which are monitored by local authorities (Sari, 2018; Ullah, 2011).

Figure 1*Rohingya Migration Map*

Source. Middle East Institute.

The Rohingyas in Canada

Currently, based on my personal observation, there are approximately 5,000 Rohingyas living in Canada, with more than a third of these residing in Waterloo Region. There are four major places in Canada where Rohingyas reside: Waterloo Region; Quebec City; Winnipeg, Manitoba; and Surrey, British Columbia. There are two major groups of Rohingya refugees in Canada. The first group is from the Bangladesh refugee camps and mainly arrived around 2006. However, in

2017 Bangladesh banned the Rohingyas in refugee camps from leaving for a third country. Since then, most of the Rohingyas arriving in Canada have come from Malaysia.

My initial observations of these two groups revealed that the group arriving from Bangladesh camps appreciate the freedoms in this new country but have almost no skills to reach out for facilities and services in Canada. Most importantly, most technological advances and modern infrastructure known to most Canadians are beyond their imagining, a problem that is compounded with the language barrier. Consequently, these individuals need considerable support and orientation to survive and resettle in Canada. On the other hand, those who arrive from Malaysia were not locked inside camps and had the opportunity to roam throughout the country. Malaysia is a highly industrialized country in Southeast Asia with world-standard modern infrastructure all over, including in the capital city Kuala Lumpur. Although refugees in Malaysia are not allowed to work and study, many have been able to obtain low-paying labour to survive in the country. Commuting to their work, many Rohingyas have gained knowledge of how to use societal services for transportation and communication. Being one of the easiest languages, most Rohingyas learn Malay in a short time, befriend locals, and acquire important survival and cultural skills. As a result, Rohingya refugees who come from Malaysia resettle in Canada relatively quickly, as they have experience with starting a life in a new place and a familiarity with modern technology.

When I arrived in Ontario in 2015, I saw only a few educated members in the community. These educated people were leaders in the Rohingya Association of Canada and carried out advocacy and charity work. In the case of advocacy, the Rohingya Association of Canada proposed that the government of Canada recognize the atrocities that happened to the Rohingyas in Arakan region as genocide. As well, they organized many demonstrations to inform the world regarding

the horrifying realities of life for the Rohingyas in Arakan Region. Also, the organization presented the realities and lived experiences of the Rohingyas in the diaspora in the “Time to Act: Rohingya Voices” exhibition at the Canadian Museum for Human Rights in 2019. In this event, several Rohingya youths and children shared their lived experiences and performed cultural songs and plays which reflected their journey to Canada and future aspirations.

Although there are many events led by educated members of the community for the purpose of advocacy and awareness, only limited numbers of youths have made the journey to the university. As a volunteer in the community, I observed that Rohingya students enrolled in public education institutions experience difficulties with socialization to schooling and participating in classroom activities linked to the Ontario Ministry of Education curriculum. Despite consistent efforts at improvement in school provision, there are still many students who miss out on the opportunities that education has the potential to afford, as school systems fail to bridge the gap between two realities: students’ background experiences and histories and the culture of mainstream schooling (Conway, 2012; Schechter & Cummins, 2003). With these observations in mind, I was motivated to study the experiences of Rohingya students in the Ontario school system more extensively.

Additionally, institutional innovation and the nature of Canada’s multiculturalism are not sufficient to accommodate students from all cultural and historical backgrounds, especially those from communities that were denied access to education and therefore cannot connect with its relevancy and potential (Dagenais, 2013). As compared to other immigrants, there are no services or systematic assistance designated for Rohingya youths who are struggling with their schooling. Considering their past traumatic experiences under the Myanmar government’s extended persecution and their temporary encounters with multiple languages in the countries where they

resided as refugees, it is important to explore how the historical context and diasporic experiences of Rohingya youths who have immigrated to Canada mesh with the resources and socialization patterns these students encounter in mainstream education. In addition, it is important to investigate the role that these youths see education playing in their future life aspirations.

This said, given the dearth of research on the perspectives of youths on such issues—as opposed to those of adult caregivers—it is important to document, and acknowledge, any differences that may exist between the attitudes of the two generations. In this context, differences between the experiences and attitudes of Rohingya youths and those of their parents need to be noted. In the community I worked with, most Rohingya youths do not have the same direct experience of victimhood as their parents. They relate to the historical and current trauma of the Rohingyas as victims by proxy. Initially, in undertaking this research, I was ignorant of the burden this identity status places on them. In analyzing my research findings, I was forced to confront this legacy of the tragic history of the Rohingyas in Myanmar—a bifurcated identity, revealed through the voices of my study participants (see Chapters 5 and 6).

Situating My Research

This research explores the role and significance of schooling and academic achievement for Rohingya refugee youths residing in Canada. My study is embedded within two conceptual frameworks. The first draws from Bourdieu's (1977a, 1977b) perspective on cultural capital, which is centrally concerned with the connection between the individual and the broader social context, represented in the dialectic between habitus (an agent's durable and structuring disposition [Bourdieu, 1990]) and field (configuration of relations with organizational logic [Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992]). The second framework is concerned with language socialization (Bayley & Schecter, 2003; Schecter & Bayley, 2002, 2004), especially with how subjects select "language

practices in societal or situational contexts where individuals have choice” (Schechter & Bayley, 2002, p. 609). Here I will draw particularly on Schechter’s (2012; Schechter et al., 2015) and colleagues’ (e.g., Cummins, 1996) research in relation to academically vulnerable students who have not had and will not have the opportunity to develop literacy in the first or home variety.

Unlike international and other immigrant students, refugees who have escaped from persecution must navigate past traumas and cultural differences without preparation for their host country educational system. In addition, Rohingya refugee students who were minorities in their countries of origin have had to acquire multiple languages over the years, and now must master two more, English and French. Very little research has investigated Myanmar (formerly Burmese) immigrants’ cultural adaptation and language learning experiences in North America. However, existing studies on Myanmar refugees suggest that there are constraints on the role that education can play with regard to the adaptation of refugees relocated to English-speaking countries (Kelley, 2014; Nawyn et al., 2012; Tervo, 2017).

Although there are a few studies on Myanmar refugees regarding their language learning and experiences within North American schooling, no study has been carried out with the Rohingyas. In particular, research that focuses on the schooling and socialization of younger members of this ethnic community is notably missing. Given this gap, my dissertation research explores how Rohingya youths are navigating their past and present experiences as they familiarize themselves with the culture of mainstream schooling in Canada and attempt to determine their place within this complex network. I am particularly interested in the role that these youths see the skills they acquire through formal education playing in their future trajectories. Based on these purposes, the research explores past experiences of Rohingya refugee youths in Waterloo Region with regards to linguistic and cultural socialization and education, and how these experiences have

contributed to evolving attitudes towards Ontario schooling and academic achievement. I also investigate how Rohingya youths' experiences in Ontario schools contribute to changing or modifying students' attitudes towards future life goals and the value of education.

Researcher's Positionality

This research odyssey has taken me a long way from where I started. I am a *direct* victim of Rohingya genocide, by which I mean that I have witnessed the atrocities and persecution described earlier in this chapter. In fact, while I was writing this dissertation, two waves of genocide occurred in my country of origin, Myanmar, and the second of these waves disrupted my work. Over the course of my research odyssey, I have needed to transition to a location where I hear the voices of youths who were not *direct* victims of genocide. Therefore, this dissertation is not only a report of my findings with regard to the attitudes of refugee youths towards mainstream schooling, but also a story of my transformation from a victim of historical circumstances to a witness to the burden these circumstances impose on my children's generation.

When I started this work, I was an unmarried woman almost beyond marriageable age for the Rohingya community. I met my husband in Malaysia as a refugee, and after my family was accepted for relocation to Canada, he tracked me down and proposed marriage. I mention this circumstance because it turned out to be an unanticipated advantage for my research project: as a married woman; it was easier to gain acceptance into the homes of Rohingya refugees where my fieldwork and interviews were conducted.

Organization of Chapters

This dissertation is divided into seven chapters. Following this introduction, Chapter 2 discusses the concepts of *cultural capital* and *habitus* by Bourdieu (1977a, 1977b, 1992; Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992) and *language socialization* by Schecter and Bayley (2002, 2004) and relates

these themes to current conditions of Rohingya youths in Ontario, Canada. These two theoretical frameworks shaped my perspective on framing the research questions, collecting and analyzing data, and discussing the findings.

Chapter 3 is a review of previous studies related to my dissertation. It has two sections: language socialization and cultural identification, and schooling of refugee students. As I have mentioned, this is the first study which focuses on Rohingya youths in Canada: no studies in this area have been carried out on this cohort before. For these reasons, I have decided to include studies on refugees from other cohorts in North America and Rohingya refugees from Malaysia and Bangladesh in this review.

In Chapter 4, I describe my methodological approach including research questions, data sources, data collection, and data analysis. In addition, I provide personal background information on the participants and their families in Waterloo Region. As this is an ethnography, I also outline my procedure for embedding myself in the community and tracking my focal participants.

Chapters 5 and Chapter 6 focus on findings of the role of language socialization and schooling for Rohingya youths in Canada. In Chapter 5, I introduce the focal youths who are participants in my study in the context of their family backgrounds and socialization. Chapter 6 discusses current attitudes of Rohingya youths towards Ontario schooling, academic achievement, and life goals. In this regard, the chapter also sheds light on how students' past experiences contribute to changing or modifying their attitudes towards life goals and the value of education. Finally, in Chapter 7, I summarize my study's findings, draw together the theoretical implications for language use, cultural identification, and schooling, and provide some suggestions for future research.

Chapter 2: Conceptual Frameworks

The main purpose of this study is to explore the role and significance of schooling and academic achievement for Rohingya refugee youths in Canada. As the study aims to impact a disenfranchised and marginalized group, to pursue this research agenda I needed to consider this larger question in tandem with two major contextual conditions. The first condition beckons to a conceptual framework that explores how people's differential social positions and resources in relation to risk or privilege constrain and shape the choices that are both possible and thinkable for them. To assist with this exploration, I summon philosopher Pierre Bourdieu's (1977a, 1977b) perspective on *habitus* and *cultural capital*.

The second contextual condition considers the tensions between youths' linguistic and cultural socialization in the home and community and their experiences with Western schooling as a backdrop for how respondents orient to the knowledge and practices they will need to negotiate and/or pursue to conduct their future lives. To shed light on this perspective, I enlist recent relevant research in the area of linguistic and cultural socialization (Bayley & Schecter, 2003; Schecter, 2015; Schecter & Bayley, 2002, 2004). As both frameworks allow for a focus on values and viewpoints of target groups, they are appropriate for this inquiry which aims to explore how past and current life experiences of Rohingya youths impact the meanings these youths assign to education and schooling structures and the potential that these structures hold for future life opportunities.

Cultural Capital, Habitus, and Field

Cultural Capital

Bourdieu's (1977a, 1977b) perspective on cultural capital is centrally concerned with the connection between the individual and the broader social context, represented in the dialectic

between habitus (an agent's durable and structuring disposition [Bourdieu, 1992]) and field (configuration of relations with organizational logic [Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992]). Following Bourdieu, cultural capital consists of "objectified", "embodied," and "institutionalized" funds of knowledge. In this regard, embodied cultural capital refers to the knowledge acquired or inherited through socialization of culture and tradition. This kind of cultural capital is usually acquired over time as it influences individual characters and ways of thinking. One important aspect of embodied cultural capital is linguistic cultural capital which entails the mastery of language and communicative styles. Objectified cultural capital conveys ownership of properties, which is usually transmissible for economic profit. Institutionalized cultural capital comprises an institution's formal recognition of a person's cultural capital, usually academic credentials or professional qualifications. The greatest social role of institutionalized cultural capital is in the labour market (a job), wherein it allows the expression of the person's array of cultural capital as qualitative and quantitative measurements (which are compared against the measures of cultural capital of other people). Institutional recognition facilitates the conversion of cultural capital into economic capital, by serving as a heuristic (practical solution) with which the seller can describe his or her cultural capital to the buyer.

Cultural Capital and the School System

Bourdieu examines how culture impacts the class system and the relationship between action and social structure. This focus is concerned primarily with "the contribution made by the education system and family socialization to the reproduction of the structure of power relationships between classes, by contributing to the reproduction of the structure of distribution of cultural capital of these classes" (Bourdieu, 1977a, p. 487). The concept of cultural capital suggests that school culture mainly reflects experiences of the dominant class, as school is not a

socially neutral institution. In other words, the education system assumes that all the students have the ability to replicate and apply “educated” language. Hence, children from working-class and lower-class backgrounds need to acquire key social and cultural cues to negotiate or cope in school environments while those from the dominant class have an advantage as they have already acquired them through family socialization (cf. Heath, 1982). Here, Bourdieu (1977a) stated,

By doing away with giving explicitly to everyone what it implicitly demands of everyone, the educational system demands of everyone alike that they have what it does not give. This consists mainly of linguistic and cultural competence and that relationship of familiarity with culture which can only be produced by family upbringing when it transmits the dominant culture. (p. 494)

Accordingly, Bourdieu argued that children from working- and lower-class backgrounds are academically penalized due to their lack of intuitive familiarity with mainstream ways of those born to the upper and middle classes—this, even after learning the social, linguistic, and cultural competencies of these classes.

Bourdieu also points out that, despite inefficiency in “pedagogical transmission” resulting in a majority of students not possessing cultural capital, the consequences of academic assessments are regarded as legitimate for educational credentialing. In turn, these educational credentials held by individuals in dominant positions legitimize inequalities found in society. In this regard, Bourdieu (1974) claims that education plays a key role in promoting social inequalities and maintaining the status of those in higher ranks. Education, he writes, “is in fact one of the most effective means of perpetuating the existing social pattern, as it both provides an apparent justification for social inequalities and gives recognition to the cultural heritage, that is, to a social gift treated as a natural one” (p. 32).

In short, Bourdieu claims that cultural capital is possessed by upper-class households and allows children from those backgrounds to obtain higher educational credentials. This condition facilitates the maintenance by individuals from higher classes of their current positions and legitimizes the dominant positions that they typically continue to hold. At the same time, the limited number of individuals from lower social classes who succeed in the education system will strengthen it by supporting the impression of a meritocracy, instead of challenging the system on the grounds of inequitable access. Used as a rationale for legitimating class inequalities, Bourdieu (1977a) depicted a strong correlation between educational success and cultural capital in the family: “Among the pupils of the grandes écoles, a very pronounced correlation may be observed between academic success and the family’s cultural capital measured by the academic level of the forebears over two generations on both sides of the family” (p. 497).

In this case, Bourdieu indicates that both social class and educational attainment are strongly associated with participation in cultural activities such as book reading and buying and cinema, theatre, concert, and museum attendance, facilitated by parents from upper- and middle-class families (Bourdieu, 1977a). According to the framework, children of educated parents receive advantages not only because of direct parental assistance, but also because of their exposure due to their lifestyles to “high” culture as represented by the fine arts and classical music (Griffiths, 2006). In other words, parents transfer cultural capital to their children both by unknowingly exposing them to objectified and embodied cultural capital at home and by actively supporting them in their mastery of associated skills (Griffith, 1995; Lareau & Calarco, 2012; Smith, 1996). Consequently, such familiarity with dominant culture in a society becomes assets for future career development and social networking. In short, Bourdieu claims that cultural capital is both a resource on its own and can be converted into economic and social capital.

Habitus

When we discuss the cultural capital of a certain group, we also must consider the habitus developed in tandem. According to Bourdieu, habitus is the learned set of choices by which individuals adapt to the social world which is composed of “schemata or structures of perception, conception and action” (Bourdieu, 2002, p. 27). In this regard, Bourdieu claims that habitus is rooted in family socialization and structural circumstances that conditions the subjectivity of individuals. Additionally, it has been claimed that habitus determines parameters of individuals’ sense of agency and possibility by providing perceptual schemes of practicality in a stratified society. Based on these notions, we can say that the concept of a habitus is a highly personalized internalized disposition unique to each person that governs how this person behaves in social groupings.

Furthermore, Bourdieu argues that a habitus is made up of economic, social, and cultural capital, which leads to an overall *symbolic capital* that determines how an individual will behave and be treated in a given social context. Bourdieusian theory assumes that parents with high cultural capital contribute to their children’s learning in subtle ways, by transmitting cultural capital from an early age, which is then embodied and naturalized in the child’s habitus (Reay et al., 2009). Part of a middle-class habitus is a sense of entitlement and the “ease” with which middle-class students negotiate the education system (Reay et al., 2009). Bourdieu compares such ease with being “like a fish in water” (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992, p. 127).

In general, according to Bourdieu and Wacquant (1992), habitus installs generative principles of regulated improvisations and reproduces regularities. In fact, he suggested, all experiences that people encounter impact them both psychologically and physiologically to form and instantiate habitus. In this way, he determined that objective structures are the products of past

conditions which become principles of present or future constructions. A lighter form of this argument is that habitus shapes choices of individuals rather than programs them. In terms of individuality, Bourdieu (1990) stipulates,

The principle of differences between individual habitus lies in the singularity of their social trajectories, to which there correspond a series of chronologically ordered determinations that are mutually irreducible to one another. The habitus which, at every moment, structures new experiences in accordance with the structures produced by past experiences, which are modified by the new experiences within the limits defined by their power of selection, brings about a unique integration, dominated by the earliest experiences, of the experiences statistically common to members of the same class. (p. 60)

As a result, it is fair to say that we can neither escape our history nor are locked in by it. Therefore, those individuals who have experienced similar circumstances may have similar, but not identical, habituses, as they may have responded differently to these experiences. Here, Bourdieu (1994) claims that “just as no two individual histories are identical so no two individual habituses are identical” (p. 46). In other words, actions of individuals from similar habitus can still be different and innovative and their social origins will not necessarily determine their destination in life.

Based on Bourdieu’s notion of the effect of variant dispositions on academic achievement, Nash (2002) qualified a positive orientation towards schooling as “educated habitus.” Referring to evidence from his ethnographic research on high-attaining secondary school students, the researcher claimed that most of the advantages of educated habitus for academic achievement are noncognitive dispositions such as positive attitudes towards cognitive challenges, self-esteem in acquiring academic skills, and high career aspirations. According to Nash’s (2002) study, outstanding students exhibit a “distinctive concept of self-discipline” which includes attentiveness,

diligence, and self-discipline in academic performance. At the same time, he highlights that students of all social backgrounds do not necessarily appreciate the concepts of education and the educated person that inform the educated habitus equally. Here, Nash (2002) points out:

Many working-class students reject education regarded as superfluous to their perceived needs, which are primarily informed by a concept of relevance tied to their projected occupation, but it is not that they want to be “dumb”—they simply have a different conception of what is worth knowing than the school. (p. 34)

Nevertheless, he asserts that, in addition to arbitrary cultural impositions, schools also provide nonarbitrary educationally essential analytical and problem-solving skills which are rooted in the socialized “cognitive habitus” and affected by classed family environments (Nash, 2003). Most importantly, he stresses that if children experience literate forms of socialization in their early childhood, they will demonstrate higher mental functioning and semiotic code elaboration.

Here, we can see that habitus and embodied cultural capital seem similar as both are imbued with dispositions and skills. To clarify, Bourdieu (1977b) defines habitus “as a system of lasting, transposable dispositions which, integrating past experiences, functions at every moment as a matrix of perceptions, appreciations, and actions and makes possible the achievement of infinitely diversified tasks” (pp. 82–83); on the other hand, he characterizes embodied cultural capital as “long-lasting dispositions of the mind and body” (Bourdieu, 1977b, p. 47). Based on these descriptions, we can see that embodied cultural capital emphasizes that dispositions entailed by habitus are valuable assets or resources. In other words, they are complementary sides of the same socialization process which are not separate but rather continuous with each other.

The interconnection of embodied cultural capital and habitus is also taken up in Bourdieu's discussion of linguistic habitus. Highlighting the concept of language habitus and linguistic capital, Bourdieu (1991) recognized language as an instrument of power, stressing its connection to symbolic power relations among interlocutors in the process of language production. In other words, the notion of *legitimate language* (Heller, 1996) is based on symbolic capital, which is inseparable from the speaker's position in the social structure. Moreover, the education system, where the value of linguistic competence resides, is viewed as a monopoly of the production of mass consumers and transmitters of acceptable language. Bourdieu further connected this linguistic capital with variations of language used in multilingual and plurilingual situations, in which, he argued, the objective relationship between senders and receivers is of most importance. In particular, changes in linguistic registers are related to availability of linguistic resources and positions of speakers and interlocutors in the structure of distribution of specific linguistic and other forms of capital. His assertions on language habitus as a dimension of class habitus and an expression of position in social structure suggest that one's relationship to the language's market and values accorded to their linguistic productions govern judgments of sociability and the whole manner of conducting oneself in the social world.

Field

Bourdieu (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992) divides the society we inhabit into different spheres of actions which he refers to as *fields*. Whether the field is scientific, religious, medical, political, or academic, each field has its structure of internal power. The field also has a code of conduct which every member must abide by, and these norms help shape our behaviours while at work, at school, or at home. In other words, field includes informal and formal norms which determine activities of social spheres such as family, public school, art, and politics. Based on this

concept of field, Bourdieu argues that cultural capital is made up of the social assets of an individual which promote their social mobility in their society. These assets include a way of dressing, education, style of speech, and intellect. Furthermore, cultural capital provides one with a higher advantage in attaining a social status within the society. This helps mould the habitus of an individual and makes one behave like the people in their social class in the community. However, Bourdieu argued that the potential for social mobility resides in the capacity of disadvantaged students to acquire the cultural capital of upper social classes.

On the other hand, Thomson (2008) suggests that fields are relational in nature, being organized around specific forms of capital or combinations of capitals. In this regard, the argument is that capital could be both the process within a field and the product of a field. Furthermore, fields are said to be defined by their own particular rules or “logic of practice,” and there are power struggles to control rules in that field. Most importantly, the author highlights that interrelation between the habitus of an individual and the capital that can be activated in a particular field provides their positions within that field. Consequently, the interaction of people’s habitus and cultural capital within the context of a given field leads to a behavioural repertoire consisting of individual practices and actions that individuals are expected to follow. Fields can overlap; and there can be various levels such that smaller fields (e.g., families) are nested within wider fields (e.g., medical fields). According to Edgerton et al. (2013), in every field there are social patterns and practices, but also a certain degree of autonomy. The researchers also suggest that there is an overarching field of power which is governed by “two competing principles of social hierarchy: the distribution of economic capital and the distribution of cultural capital” (p.195).

Nevertheless, fields cannot always be congruent with dispositions of habitus. In this regard, if the conditions of a particular field align with disposition of the habitus, there will be less

disruption and individuals with such alignments have an easier time in being successful. However, if they do not align very well, only those with ability to adjust the habitus during this inevitable disruption will be successful. According to Bourdieu, a practical sense of operation of habitus guides the majority of our behaviours.

Although the concepts of cultural capital, habitus, and field are useful in defining a research agenda that can account for discordances between refugee students and the agendas of mainstream schooling, there are some limitations. For empirical research, some scholars pointed out a lack of conceptual clarity in measures of cultural capital as it has been represented as an objectified state (Goldthorpe, 2007; Van de Werfhorst, 2010). As a result, researchers need to specify operationalizations of cultural capital to relate study findings to the concept (De Graaf et al., 2000). As well, some researchers have emphasized the importance of community where wealth is a complementary source of cultural capital that can offer multidimensionality of resources and advantage of choices to youths from marginalized groups (Bennett, & Silva, 2006; Brock et al., 2010; Czerniewicz & Brown, 2012).

Still, for my research, embodied capital, which is acquired over time through a socialization process, is significant as it is directly impacted by education and represents a set of practices and dispositions that has become an integral part of the personhood of my respondents. In the case of Rohingya refugees who have experienced prolonged atrocities, their encounters with unthinkable conditions coupled with unanticipated resources in a plurilingual society create a pressing need to study how these contrasting contexts influence their orientations to their current situations—in particular, the life opportunities afforded by Western schooling. Undergirded by this conceptual framework, this research is interested in the roles that cultural capital, habitus, and social positions of youths play in structuring perceived options, choices, and opportunities in and through

education. In addition, this conceptual framework provides a venue for me to explore how these resources and social positions compete with other influences, including family and peer socialization, in shaping refugee youths' senses of life choices that have both possibility and value.

Linguistic and Cultural Socialization

Traditionally, researchers who have studied linguistic and cultural socialization have been concerned with how families and community members raise children and acculturate newcomers to present expected forms of communication, sociality, and competence (Schieffelin & Ochs, 1986). These processes are viewed as an outcome of synergistic engagement of children and novices with acknowledged sources of knowledge and opportunities. Studies under this framework point out that developing children are increasingly impacted by constituting and interpreting linguistic cues in different social contexts (Berman, 2014; Fader, 2009; He, 2001, 2004; Heath, 1983; Howard, 2012; Michaels, 1981; Paugh, 2012; Scollon, 1982; Shohet, 2013). Therefore, socializing activities become critical to children's acquisition of cultural and linguistic practices and knowledge while also establishing productive sociality. In general, the linguistic and cultural socialization framework is concerned with socioculturally informed analysis of life incidents and historical continuity and transformation as novices become socialized into novel activities in different aspects of life.

Within the framework of language socialization research, the process of language acquisition is viewed as a complex phenomenon located at an intersection of cognitive-linguistic and sociocultural factors (Gaskins et al., 1992; Ochs, 1988; Rogoff et al., 1993; Schecter & Bayley, 2004). Traditional language socialization research has focused on how language enables young children to be socialized into the linguistic norms and patterns of their culture. According to Schieffelin and Ochs (1986), "Language socialization refers to the linguistic and interactional

processes that mediate newcomers' participation in routine cultural practices, such as language and literacy activities, and facilitate their developing competence and membership in discourse communities" (p. 290). In this regard, the socialization process involves both childhood and adolescent experiences when individuals are socialized into interpretive frameworks for their culture. As a result, both the context of interaction and the cultural role of the participants are found to be significant in producing language forms and strategies in different situations (Duff & Hornberger, 2008), with the research revealing differing societal views of children as conversational partners (Heath, 1983).

A prominent strand of language socialization research has centred on the linguistic development of children and adolescents in bilingual and multilingual societies (Sommer, 1997), with many studies exploring the relationship between family language environment and the development of bilingualism in different sociolinguistic contexts. Within this body of research one may find studies on children's developing competence in various speech and literacy events such as reading activities in the Spanish language (Bayley et al., 1996), different types of verbal play (Eisenberg, 1986), and simultaneous translating for family transactional purposes (Pease-Alvarez & Vásquez, 1994). Other studies have focused on linguistic resources available for language acquisition of young children and how they choose from these resources based on their pragmatic and symbolic values. A case in point is Zentella's (1997) study of Puerto Rican Spanish and English varieties, used alternately through code-switching, all spoken by different inhabitants of the New York barrio block. One finds as well under the rubric of language socialization research an important strand of research documenting reported difficulties in maintaining endangered minority languages such as Inuktitut in the far north of Quebec (Crago et al., 1998) and Dyirbal in northern Queensland, Australia (Schmidt, 1985).

A significant number of researchers in language socialization have contributed detailed analyses of caregivers' interactions with children, documenting important child language practices in becoming a part of multilingual speech communities (e.g., Crago et al., 1998; Kulick, 1992; Schmidt, 1985). In a 1996 study, Schecter and colleagues highlighted the relationship between family language environment and the development of bilingualism in two sociolinguistic contexts in the U.S. southwest. Their analysis centred around caregivers' attitudes towards individual versus societal bilingualism and the reasons caregivers provided for their personal decisions with regard to home language use with their children. On a societal level, respondents favoured an arrangement defined by cultural pluralism and viewed individual bilingualism as a means to promoting this goal. Providing day-to-day examples of minority language uses, the authors identified different rationales provided by parents to explain their actions on behalf of minority language maintenance and specified multiple strategies used for developing their children's Spanish language proficiency. The authors found that caregivers committed to maintenance and preservation of Mexican or Mexican American heritage perceived language use in day-to-day life as the most salient factor contributing to their children's self-identification as social and cultural beings.

Presenting the relationship between language and cultural identity as manifested in the language socialization practices of Mexican-descent families, Schecter and Bayley (1997) provided an analysis of the patterns of meaning respondents associated with Spanish and English language use, the symbolic importance of these two languages framed by family and dominant societal ideologies, and the perceived role of schooling in impacting children's language practices. The authors found that different family orientations towards language maintenance acted as tools for individual identification processes and attributed many of the identified differences to the dynamics of the two sociocultural ecologies of the communities the families represented in Texas

and California. Interestingly, they concluded that language socialization practices of families from the same national origin do not provide a monochromatic picture. Indeed, the diversity of meanings attached to respondents' ideas of "Mexican" and "Mexican American" identity reinforce critiques of essentialist descriptions based on reductionist categories used to pigeonhole the educational needs of language minority children.

Schechter and Bayley's (2002) comprehensive ethnographic narrative of home language practices in Mexican background families in California and Texas contributed to a growing body of research which explores choice of language practices in complex societal contexts. Their study was more specific than previous works in the field as it involved elucidating processes of language maintenance and shift both within (synchronic) and across (diachronic) time. The researchers' findings led to a critique of previous language socialization research (Schechter & Bayley, 2004), with the authors insisting that researchers in the field had not given adequate consideration to the dynamic character of the sociocultural contexts in which language minority families find themselves. Focusing on vibrant language practices of individuals in different bilingual and multilingual societal and institutional contexts, the researchers documented changes in language priorities based on evolving individual, family, and community ideologies concerning identity and life options over time (Schechter & Bayley, 2004). Therefore, conditions impacting language maintenance and loss were shaped not by one-time decisions but by constant re-evaluation of circumstances in which parents confronted their own decisions for language choice in unstable contexts. Reconfiguration of envisioned identities could be seen with parents struggling to accommodate changes in situational circumstances such as divorce (Bayley & Schechter, 2003).

The inquiry also revealed that various enabling or constraining factors acted differently depending on the circumstances of actors' lives, influencing their individual choices regarding

language socialization. Finally, the researchers challenged existing language socialization frameworks by introducing an additional level of complexity in the interpretation of individual language behaviours over time by posing the question, “Who exactly is socializing whom?” Indeed, actors’ interpretive frameworks involved multidirectional input (i.e., focal child, family members, peers) and joint agency for construction of meaningful processes (as opposed to unidirectional input—parent to child, as previously engaged in the literature). Indeed, social practices of children, including their collaborative engagements in media culture, were found to strongly influence adult-child interactions.

Importantly, research on patterns of language maintenance, loss, and revitalization based on observations of home language practices provided an important bridge between home language socialization and literacy development at school. Language and literacy researchers (e.g., Cummins, 1996; Moll, 1994; Ruiz, 1997) designed and executed studies that demonstrated numerous affective and intellectual beneficial effects of heritage language maintenance for linguistic-minority students, including identity development and schooling success. Cummins (1996) and colleagues (e.g., Schecter & Cummins, 2003) stressed the process of negotiating identities that recognizes the importance of and enlists the support of language minority students’ home languages and culture.

Citing his cumulative research data, Cummins (1978) asserted that affirmation of students’ cultural identity and encouragement of native language maintenance were crucial to language minority students’ academic success in mainstream education, a point further underscored and illustrated in Schecter and Cummins’s collaborative book with practising educators, *Multilingual Education in Practice: Using Diversity as a Resource* (2003). This work, directed at an audience of professional educators, also highlighted the importance of engagement of parental participation

in schooling activities so that teachers are able to draw on students' relevant backgrounds and lived experiences as resources for academic learning. In addition, the authors claimed that creating opportunities for activities that promoted student identity negotiation within classrooms brought greater beneficial impact to culturally diverse students than the implementation of any institutionalized "multicultural curriculum."

Linguistic and Cultural Socialization Research and My Dissertation Study

There are two pieces of linguistic and cultural socialization research that have proved especially relevant to my dissertation study. The first is a chapter published in Routledge's *Handbook of Language and Culture* titled "Language, Culture, and Identity" (Schecter, 2015), with an updated version in the revised *Handbook*. In this article, the author identified three differentiated approaches associated with seminal research in the area of the relationship among language, culture, and identity. First, researchers from a social anthropology perspective viewed language and culture as closely related because cultural values are considered core parts of a language. As a result, they argued that cultural preservation was largely dependent upon intergenerational language transmission (Crago et al., 1993; Fishman, 1991; Hakuta & Pease-Alvarez, 1994). Other researchers within the same framework asserted direct associations between linguistic affiliation and individual identity (Myhill, 2003; Norton, 2010; Pavlenko & Blackledge, 2004). In this orientation, researchers have asserted a direct relationship between speakers' individual identities and cultural affinities based on a speaker's native language (Canagarajah, 2010; Davies; 1991).

The researchers within a second framework, termed a sociocultural perspective, stressed that individuals' identifications are determined by the context of interaction and culturally sanctioned roles. These researchers are interested in analyzing how individual and social identities

intertwine and interconnect synchronically through language and how they change diachronically over time. Scholars working in this area focus on the patterns of meaning in language use by individuals, families, and community, and the symbolic importance of different language varieties as related societal ideologies (Guerra, 1998; Schecter & Bayley, 1997, 2002; Zentella, 1998) and daily negotiations between dominant and minority groups (Zentella, 1998). Also, research under this perspective discusses identity construction as a complex process due to multilingual cosmopolitan settings, and family discontinuities involving different linguistic varieties (Schecter & Bayley, 1997, 2002).

The third framework, which the author titles an *interactional/participatory perspective*, is focused on usage-based linguistic techniques where identity is rooted in experience through participation and practice (Canagarajah, 2007; Norton, 1997; Pennycook, 2007). At the same time, identification depends on willingness and choice of individuals to become members in a certain group or more than one group by participating and experiencing cultural norms associated with these identities (Canagarajah, 2007). This idea is related to a concept termed “Third Space” where there is appropriation, translation, or negotiation of linguistic resources and social identity repertoires (Bhabha, 1994; Kramsch, 1998).

Schecter (2015) studied the academic literacy development of marginalized groups on the basis of this organization of the relevant literature into three differentiated approaches (a social anthropology perspective; a sociocultural perspective; and a participatory/relational perspective). In the study, the researcher indicated that access to the social resources and institutionalized standards of privileged groups within hierarchical society was fundamental for marginalized individuals and groups to achieve success in education. At the same time, she argued that institutions were capable of generating additional sources of cultural capital by appreciating

diverse languages, cultures, and experiences of minority groups and individuals. Furthermore, the researcher believed that it would be strategic to make a collective investment in the formation and maintenance of identity for linguistically and culturally marginalized groups in a way that linguistic diversity is a societal resource that may be nurtured for the benefit of all groups. It also has been demonstrated that such investment enables a more efficient use of society's human resources and generates opportunities for those who are treated as peripheral or illegitimate members to have a voice in the collective agenda.

A second instructive aspect of language socialization research for my own dissertation study is Schechter's (2012; Schechter et al., 2015; Schechter et al., 2021) research on the academic literacy development of Generation 1.5 students, that is, children born in Canada to immigrant parents or having arrived before the start of formal schooling. Like the Rohingya youths who participated in my study, these students did not have, and likely will not have, opportunities to develop literacy in the first or home variety. Therefore, like the refugee students in my study, these youths will not enjoy a "head start" in the development of reading and writing skills in the target language, English. Nor is this situation with regard to refugees unusual. Refugee students' mechanisms for coping frequently involve the need to adopt different language practices, with this condition inviting more complex language socialization frameworks demonstrating transnational influences (Schechter & James, 2022), as these youths have acquired multiple languages as they escaped from their homeland and resituated in various temporary societal contexts.

Adding to their particular predicament is that a majority of Rohingya refugees were not granted an opportunity to engage in formal education for generations. Therefore, their children who are now studying in Canadian public schools are unable to receive parental support for school literacy practices. Studies on cohorts who have experienced such circumstances are sorely lacking,

while desperately needed to refine linguistic and cultural socialization theory such that it may better inform the needs of persecuted minorities. In the final chapter of my dissertation, under Theoretical Implications, I make a modest contribution to this agenda.

Chapter 3: Literature Review

In this chapter, I review studies that have informed my dissertation research. This research is grouped under two thematic headings: language socialization and cultural identification and the role of academic engagement in immigrant and refugee students' life trajectories and aspirations. In this regard, the majority of studies are conducted on immigrants and refugees of other ethnicities as there are few studies of Rohingyas on the above themes.

Language Socialization and Cultural Identification

Studies of Mexican Americans

Emphasizing the links between familial patterns of language use and language socialization practices, Schecter and Bayley (2002) explored bilingual development of Mexicano children and their parents residing in California and Texas. Through narratives on five families (the Villegas, the Hernández, the Pacheco, the Esparza, and the Baez family) and focal children (Diana, Eduardo, Hector, Alysa, and Marcella respectively) from those families, the study highlighted that all families but the Esparzas viewed bilingualism as a positive attribute in the formation of cultural identity. While the Villegas, Hernández, and Pacheco families viewed Spanish as an important resource for maintaining their culture and identity, the Baezes used English exclusively in the immediate family and with relatives. However, unlike the Esparzas who stressed the need for assimilation, a value which was reflected in their family interactions, the Baezes still tried to reconnect with their Hispanic roots through community activities although these were carried out solely in English. Nevertheless, all the families exhibited a sense of belonging to Mexican American culture in different ways although their specific goals related to intergenerational transmission of Spanish language and culture varied widely.

Introducing six more families, the researchers (Schechter & Bayley, 2002) presented diverse strategies employed by parents and other caregivers to transmit a minority language to their children for the purpose of enacting Spanish language maintenance although, interestingly, their understandings of behavioural correlation of language maintenance varied significantly. Based on home observations and interviews, caregivers adopted very distinct strategies, such as imposing a Spanish-only policy at home, speaking Spanish at home and learning to read and write English at school, and establishing weekly Spanish lessons. In this regard, despite differences in their strategies, all the families felt that they had achieved some success with regard to minority language maintenance. Moreover, the study noted that participants' ideas for fostering the minority language came from the role of both Spanish and English in the family and the community.

Schechter and Bayley (1997) also studied multiple facets of the relationship between the requirements of formal schooling and family socialization practices. They documented the strategies caregivers used (self-reports of home language use and rationales offered by family members for their decisions and stances with regard to Spanish maintenance) to compensate for their perceived language and cultural limitations. In this regard, family resources and educational capital played an important role in successful parental involvement in their children's schooling, as parents strove to accommodate the academic and social agenda. Parents with less linguistic capital were found to be continually actively engaged in the areas in which they could participate and also sought and received assistance from extended families or other Spanish-speaking community members. Overall, focusing on how immigrant families were socialized into norms and patterns of their hybrid culture through their native and target languages, these studies of the relationship between family language environment and bilingual development highlighted issues

faced by immigrant students and their family members as a result of transnational migration and language socialization through a minority language.

Using diachronic and synchronic perspectives as analytical tools, Schechter and Bayley (2004) also analyzed the language socialization of two Mexicano women, Nilda Quintana and Mariana Villegas. Diachronically, variations of language use can be seen in the Quintana household across time as Nilda's personhood evolved from one position to another with regard to Mexican American culture with changes in her personal circumstances (e.g., marriage, divorce). Synchronically, Mariana seemed to find herself enveloped in multiple subjectivities as she held on to her place in upper Mexican society while negotiating a place within the Mexican American community. Language socialization in both families occurred in tandem with respondents' positioning in relation to their imagined Chicano communities.

Studies of Generation 1.5 Students

Focusing on Generation 1.5 students, that is, children who began their formal education in Canada but for whom the dominant societal language is not the primary idiom at home, Schechter et al. (2015) conducted a 3-year collaborative study of the use of home languages of 10- to 12-year-old students, at the junior middle school level, and their approaches to the processing of content and reading and writing practices at school. She found that the majority of the students in this cohort lacked opportunities to develop reading and writing skills in a minority language. Here, the study drew on Cummins's (1996) *interdependence principle* which suggested a strong relation between literacy skills in the first (L1) and second language (L2). Based on this concept of interdependence between L1 and L2 literacy, her study findings highlighted the situations of immigrant/refugee families who are unable to hold up institutional expectations for parental involvement, including reading to their children in the evening and checking homework. Most

important, the study asserted the pressing need for bridging distances between students' cognitive processing and academic objectives through mediating discourses that made connections with students' home environments and their cultural backgrounds.

Studies of Burmese Refugees

Despite their growing presence in North America, little research has looked into Myanmar immigrants' cultural and linguistic experiences. A relevant focus-group study on Burmese and Burundian refugees was conducted by Nawyn et al. (2012) through the framework of social capital. The study investigated how degrees of linguistic isolation affected the assimilation process of Burmese and Burundian refugees in Michigan. The study aimed to explore experiences of dispersed immigrants before they achieved functional bilingualism and started to overcome barriers to their integration. A total of 36 participants from Burundi and Myanmar who participated in the study were adults who had spent a similar amount of time in the United States. The researchers conducted face-to-face interviews with participants while representatives of the settlement agencies provided services which included ESL classes. Myanmar (Burmese) refugees in this study belonged to the Chin ethnic group and spoke the Chin dialect while Burundians spoke Kirundi as a native language.

Most of the participants were over 25; therefore, their responses were based on English language learning and access to health care and other services rather than schooling. Results from both cohorts indicated that linguistic isolation from the mainstream community caused anxiety primarily about health care and access to other community services even after the participants were gainfully employed. Participants also expressed displeasure with the resettlement agencies' services, including ESL instruction. They voiced frustration that they could not express their displeasure with anyone publicly and did not have recourse when they felt disrespected by the

agency. The researchers concluded that a lack of linguistic and social capital within immigrant/refugee communities introduced uncertainty into their lives that, in itself, represented a source of anxiety.

Another study on Myanmar refugees was conducted by Kelley (2014) using identity, language socialization, investment, and power dynamics as conceptual framing. The researcher investigated naturalistic second language encounters of Burmese (Chin) women from Chin state, Myanmar, living in Springfield or Battle Creek, Michigan. Through a questionnaire, the researcher collected basic biographical information, investment in the L2, and identity investment data related to participants, information later elaborated in their journal entries. Data from the questionnaire and journal entries were triangulated with responses from biweekly interviews. The results indicated that identity and power were two main themes in the data, both greatly influenced by participants' perceptions of their language proficiency. In this regard, low proficiency in English was found to affect their identity, including self-confidence as mothers, and to influence power dynamics within the group. In other words, participants' self-perceived ability to advocate for their children's education was influenced by their identities as mothers and being native (as in Chin) or nonnative (as in English) speakers of key languages used in their cohort.

Duran (2016) analyzed how transnational capital and language socialization in Karenni provided Kara refugees from Myanmar access to income and a sense of purpose in the new country. Based on a 2-year ethnographic study on the participants' multilingual practices, the researcher concluded that newcomers' transnational identities and their multilingual practices proved assets for their inclusion in the Karenni community and career development. Through participant observation and multiple conversations with respondents and other refugees, the researcher witnessed that transnational communities, multilingualism, and multicultural

understanding were fundamental parts of career advancement in the studied community. Similarly, another ethnographic study by Duran (2017) on Karenni children's socialization into the video gaming community emphasized how language learning and literacy development were fostered by multimodal and communal practices. The study attempted to demonstrate how meaningful access to video gameplay and its virtual community provided opportunities to participate fully in a space where participants' existence, interests, and needs were acknowledged and fulfilled while they made sense of their new country using resources placed at their disposal.

As compared with other refugee groups, the Rohingyas—according to the UN, the world's most persecuted minority—have few resources for their education and future careers when they arrive in third countries following persecution. Currently, no studies have investigated language socialization and schooling among Rohingya youths residing in Western countries such as the United States, Canada, and Australia; however, research on those who fled to Asian countries has highlighted their use of multiple languages to survive in different host environments. Barua (2019) conducted survey research on Rohingya students who were studying at an international school in Saudi Arabia with forged Bangladeshi passports. The study revealed that these expatriate students tried to speak Bengali rather than their own mother tongue or English as they needed to demonstrate Bengali speaking skills at the embassy to facilitate their ongoing use of Bangladeshi passports. Clearly these linguistic practices did little to reinforce respondents' identities as Rohingya. At the same time, participants showed no interest in Bangladeshi or Rohingya historical and cultural knowledge because they were uprooted from their homeland and did not know if they would be permitted to stay in the host country.

Focusing on language attitude patterns in the mother tongue and Arabic, the country's official language, Alsahafi (2022) investigated the sociolinguistic situation of Rohingyas in Saudi

Arabia. Through questionnaire and focus-group interviews with 65 second- and third-generation Rohingyas, the study found that the participants demonstrated positive attitudes towards both languages. In particular, these respondents believed it was their mother tongue which tied them to their origin, culture, and identity. At the same time, the country's official language, Arabic, acted as a door to integration into Saudi society. However, a lack of literacy support for the Rohingya language on the part of communication and statelessness of the Rohingyas who cannot visit their homeland was found to produce a decline in the use of Rohingya among second-generation parents.

Through a functional literacy and leadership development course, Ali et al. (2020) explored English literacy and leadership skills of Rohingya refugees residing in Selangor, Malaysia, and their challenges in learning the English language. The findings revealed that, due to zero English language proficiency, a different alphabetical system, and lack of former formal schooling, refugees experienced tremendous challenges in learning English literacy despite their keen interest. At the same time, the training for leadership was not effective due to lack of knowledge and communication skills in English, which is the second language of the nation and the primary language in which foreigners socialize in the host community and receive help to resolve difficulties and uncertainties as refugees. Furthermore, although the participants showed empathy and willingness to assist other refugees, they did not have past experience on which to base this assistance nor did they know how to access useful resources.

Researching digital literacy and linguistic capital, Netto and colleagues (2022) used a participatory action research approach (PAR) to conduct a study on a group of Malaysian Rohingya refugees whose ages ranged from 13 to 45. In this study, four workshops were employed to elicit information on refugee experience in Malaysia and their language use and engagement

using smartphones. The study revealed that digital literacy promoted literacy in the dominant languages of Malaysia (English and Bahasa Malayu), especially due to participants' resilient strategies using online services to navigate unfamiliar linguistic situations. However, those who did not have a formal education and evidenced low proficiency in Bahasa Malayu received only limited benefits from the use of smartphones. The study recommended that NGOs and mosques provide tools or applications which enable individuals with low literacy skills to access vital information through videos in Rohingya and other languages. Similarly, the study concluded that these refugees are in dire need of translation applications to access key information about sources of emergency and routine daily assistance.

Importantly, the Rohingya Language Preservation Project (2022) reported the continuing deterioration of Rohingya language, culture, and identity in Bangladesh refugee camps. This participatory action research used questionnaires and follow-up awareness sessions as data collection strategies. The questionnaires addressed issues of demographics, language assessment, and community opinions on Rohingya language and culture. The study concluded that after losing their citizenship, their homeland, and their culture, Rohingya refugees still remain committed to retaining their language. In this regard, the majority of participants (88%) in this study believed that it was extremely important to preserve the Rohingya language. However, due to the perceived necessity to assimilate into the Bangladeshi community, work, travel, lack of education, and interaction with Bangladeshi aid workers, 77% of the Rohingyas in the camps felt that they were significantly losing their Rohingya language skills. The study highlighted that being born in Bangladesh, duration of time in Bangladesh, level of education, and gender (being male) contributed to adoption of higher numbers of non-Rohingya terms (i.e, Chittagonian Bangla) in participants' speech.

Lokken et al. (2023) conducted an ethnographic study on language needs and interprofessional socialization of Rohingya interpreters and health care providers in Milwaukee, United States. The study found that it was challenging for health care providers to provide translation services as Rohingya was a new language for the local area. Furthermore, lack of a code for written transcription made it impossible for the health care workers to provide more in-depth description of medications, temperature requirements, dose timing, injections, and dose titration. Through the collaborative action framework of Rohingya interpreters, pharmacy students, and professional health care providers which used ethnographic interviews, the group identified gaps in Rohingya health care and developed a workflow plan to address those needs and weaknesses. Using the assembly line “to do” list, which was created based on the interview results, the group implemented culturally responsive medical education videos and a plan to disseminate this information to interested audiences both locally and globally. The study provided a model for future collaborations between community members and professionals in that this local pharmacy network’s interprofessional socialization addressed needs of cultural translation, rapport building, and patients’ health.

Studies of International Students

Although the following studies address a different demographic at a different schooling level, I am reviewing them as I have found several of the themes identified by researchers resonant with my own findings. Ortaçtepe (2013) examined a Turkish doctoral student’s construction of social identity as a result of his trajectory of language socialization in the United States. The study employed a narrative case-study design which explored the social identity construction of Erol, a Turkish international student, through journal entries, interviews, and follow-up emails. Based on the results, the study indicated that the participant’s weakening relationships in Turkey and his

lack of meaningful relationships in the United States led to the feeling of free falling in the case of socialization in the target language culture. The study pointed out that, since the respondent did not have access to any social networks, cultural capital would not change much in the respondent's life with respect to his socialization in connection with target-language speakers.

Similarly, Surtees (2018) showed that peers with international experience were more supportive conversation partners than native speakers with less international experience, based on her multiple case studies which investigated peer language socialization at an internationalized English-medium university in Canada. The study employed interviews and recorded interactions which revealed students' difficulties in forming peer relationships, despite their extracurricular engagement, and the importance of prior knowledge and linguistic resources for successful peer interactions. Although the results may not represent my demographic due to the differing sample, the author identified interactional resources, such as peer language experts and conversational activities, relevant for understanding norms around negotiating access to educational resources and membership in a learning community.

Studies of Immigrant Youths

As opposed to international students, many immigrant and refugee youths are forced to interrupt their schooling when they leave their countries of origin and arrive in countries such as the United States and Canada. In addition, they are faced with the task of developing English language skills in social and academic settings, where many of them have not had the opportunity to develop these advanced academic language skills in their first languages (Norton, 2000). Kim and Duff (2012) presented the interplay between the various contextual factors which contributed to the complexity of language socialization processes of immigrant youths, particularly with respect to English. Using the frameworks of language socialization and identity, this study focused

on the experiences of two female Generation 1.5 Korean Canadian university students who were participants in a larger longitudinal multiple-case study conducted by the first author. The data were collected through semistructured interviews, a background questionnaire, the researcher's field notes and reflection journal, interviews with first-year English course instructors at their university, and students' personal writings and other forms of individual correspondence such as emails and web messages on their high school and university experiences. The results indicated that, although the participants belonged to a privileged group of new immigrants with considerable social capital and ambition, there were challenges associated with peer influences and struggles to belong to both Canadian and Korean cultures, as well as stigma from being labeled as ESL students. The study explicitly portrayed the predicament of immigrant students who have to choose between Canadian and other identities and depicts Canada's mosaic approach to multiculturalism as superficial celebrations of "ethnic" traditions.

The Role of Academic Engagement in Immigrant Youths' Aspirations

Using the concept of habitus within cultural capital frameworks (Bourdieu, 2011), studies have pointed out challenges confronted by immigrant youths in educational and other social settings. In this regard, an emphasis on linguistic and cultural capital can be noted in Moskal's (2016) ethnographic study of Polish children in Scotland. Drawing on qualitative data from 65 in-depth interviews with school children aged 5–17 years and their parents and teachers, as well as observations in school and home settings, the study highlighted family support as important for encouraging young people to learn English and to socialize to acquire new cultural capital. In addition, the study showed that school personnel focused almost entirely on the English language skill deficits of migrant students and did not always take into consideration their other skills and

abilities in assessment. As a result, both teachers and students believed that there should be more resources made available to address the needs of underserved students in the school system.

Similarly, Brewer (2019) explored the role of social and cultural capital as refugee mothers transitioned their children from refugee camps in Turkey to schools in Ontario, Canada. The study was grounded in cultural and social capital theories that focused on the reproductive nature of the education system, whereby those who experience privilege are well served by the school system and those who have experienced oppression have their inferior social standing reinforced by the same structures. The study employed critical ethnography in which data were gathered through observational notes from a program called “Starting School in Canada” that aimed to assist transitioning children from newcomer families to mainstream schooling. From interviews on perspectives of refugee mothers, staff, and volunteers, the study’s findings underscored how the mothers’ own education, their socioeconomic status, and their trajectories as refugees had a significant impact on the transition process as these factors were interpreted as salient factors influencing whether mothers could meet the standards and expectations of the school.

Based on findings of a participatory visual literacy project, Schecter and Otoide (2010) reported on linguistically diverse parents/caregivers and their children attending a primary-junior school in Ontario. The researcher-practitioner collaborative project aimed to enhance the learning experience of linguistic minority students, familiarize immigrant parents with provincial expectations for their children’s academic performance, and create an institutional environment where diversity was welcomed by providing a community-referenced venue for discussion and exchange between parents and school personnel. The researchers used photography as a strategy for data collection to minimize the need for oral fluency. Through the photographs, photography logs, and discussion sessions, the researchers documented perceptions of caregivers about their

children's educational experiences and provided insights on resources that could stimulate their academic literacy development and address their daily extra-school challenges. The study also provided valuable insights into how schooling was tied significantly to many aspects of the lives of students and caregivers including their social relations, interpretation of linguistic and cultural norms, and opportunities for further integration in the community.

Focusing on the role of education for the purpose of social mobility, James and Taylor (2008) explored experiences of four racialized minority students in a university access program over 2 years through their application statements, life history interviews, weekly group sessions, and personal journal entries. Although aware of the structural realities of racism and other related barriers, these youths took a position consistent with the discourse of merit: that education had worked, was working, and would continue to work for them. They reconceptualized the access program as a scholarship program and affirmed pride in being university students, demonstrating a sense of indebtedness and obligation to their immigrant parents and a desire to "give back" to their communities.

Referencing findings of a study that was part of a larger project, James (2005) discussed how high school students from immigrant backgrounds residing in the Jane-Finch community in Toronto had hoped that education would serve as a conduit to pursue their future career opportunities. Narrations of seven high school students revealed educational and career aspirations that were inextricably linked not only to what their parents, teachers, and peers expected of them but also to notions of "paying back" a debt to their community. For respondents, pursuing a university education was not merely an opportunity to fulfill their personal educational and career goals but also a means of gaining the necessary knowledge and skills to work in and for the

community. Respondents also articulated a desire to change society's negative images of their community.

Focusing on refugee adolescents who recently arrived in Canada, Gagné et al. (2012) investigated how school social contexts impacted these youths' sense of belonging at school. Through the survey questionnaires on secondary students in the Lower Mainland of British Columbia, the study found that the newer generation of adolescent refugee students had more peers to hang out with in comparison to their older-generation counterparts given that almost half of the school population consisted of third-generation Canadians. The study author pointed out that this finding might also be related to perceptions of racial/ethnic and linguistic similarity. Those with similar backgrounds as other students received more peer support and personal help and, again, demonstrated a higher sense of belonging. In addition, adult support for personal and school-related matters contributed to a sense that these school-based campaigns helped to compensate for lack of time and familiarity with the educational system experienced by their newcomer peers.

Analyzing quantitative data, Hou and Bonikowska (2017) examined the educational attainment of immigrant students based on their vulnerability and access to resources. Using Canada's 2011 National Household Survey linked with immigrant landing records, this study found large differences by admission class in university completion rates for immigrant students. Children of skilled workers and businesspersons showed much higher university completion rates than children of refugees. The author claimed that advantages or disadvantages associated with the admission class of immigrant parents were passed on to their children, resulting partly from group differences in the education and language ability of parents and partly from the pre- and post-migration economic circumstances experienced by each immigrant class. The study concluded that

academic achievement of immigrant children was highly influenced by their parents' or caregivers' language skills and education levels.

Studies of the Education of Rohingya and Other Burmese Youths

There is a lack of research focusing on the education of Myanmar students due to the hostility of the Myanmar government to both national and international researchers. One of a few studies on Myanmar students was conducted in an internally displaced camp (IDP) by Swindell (2020), who examined how community-based nonstate actors were employed to provide education to children in IDPs who were affected by the conflict in Myanmar. Within the frameworks of Freirean pedagogy, globalization, and a human rights-based orientation, this participatory action research study investigated how members of a community involved in a nonstate education process designed and implemented a program and how this program was received. The study findings indicated that there have been adverse effects on teaching and creating responsive resources for the classrooms due to the lack of involvement of stakeholders such as parents and religious, business, and civil society leaders in the implementation process. At the same time, although the project aimed to focus on community engagement, there were some members additionally involved during the design phase. The study concluded that a sustainable bottom-up model based on local ownership, community engagement, and community-based knowledge creation and teaching is urgently needed in conflict-affected areas in Myanmar.

Similarly, there are few studies on the role of education in the aspirations of Myanmar refugee youths in their third countries in North America and Europe. One relevant study was conducted by Tervo (2017) in which students reflected on the importance of family support for their continuing postsecondary education. The participants in this study were six Burmese refugees enrolled in undergraduate programs at U.S. higher education institutions and one program director

at a community organization that served and empowered the local Burmese population. Based on findings from semistructured interviews, despite language barriers and cultural insecurities, students' motivation for further education and their academic achievement were highly related to support of family members and individual aspirations to pursue postsecondary education.

In the same vein, there are few studies which portray the lives of Rohingya youth in North America. One relevant study by Magan and colleagues (2022) explored how Rohingya students in Chicago coped when they were shifted from in-person to online learning, a COVID pandemic response that brought additional uncertainties and challenges. Through Youth Participatory Action Research, the researchers interviewed 15 participants regarding the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on education and socialization of Rohingya youth. The study indicated that limited computer literacy and difficulties maintaining reliable internet connections hindered the students' online learning. In particular, as refugees were resettled in poor housing with limited space, they did not have personal space and could not turn on their microphones and cameras, impacting their participation in classroom activities. Furthermore, the study highlighted the importance of understanding family context, as regardless of gender, firstborn or eldest-child status gave the youth additional pressures and responsibilities such as taking care of their siblings. At the same time, the study acknowledged that the youths were positively oriented in assisting their family members and viewed such responsibilities as a learning opportunity. Overall, the study concluded that Rohingya youths' attitudes towards these responsibilities reinforced their resilience and identity grounding as they sought to integrate into the schooling system of the United States.

In the case of Rohingya refugees in Malaysia, based on the results of her ethnographic study in two learning centres facilitated by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, Letchamanan (2013) argued that there was a huge gap in education for Rohingya refugee students

aged 6 to 13 who were studying at the primary level. Through participant observation and interviews, the researcher investigated students' access to education, learning conditions, and relevance of the curriculum for their future careers. The researcher concluded that there needed to be immediate attention paid to the educational needs of Rohingya children in Malaysia as their situation was unique in comparison with other refugees. In particular, Rohingya refugee parents have been living in Malaysia for over 30 years without rights to study and work legally. As a result, many Rohingya children perceived no relevance of the Malaysian curriculum used in the learning centres, nor could they associate their investment in schoolwork with future survival in Malaysia. At the same time, having lived under the ongoing genocide in Myanmar, Rohingya parents who generally had minimal formal education did not have sufficient skills to assist their children with schoolwork, including English language learning.

Regarding nonformal education for Rohingya in Malaysia, Palik (2020) reported challenges and opportunities experienced by Rohingya refugees based on her observation and interviews at two community-based schools, Sekolah Komuniti Rohingya (SKR) and the United Arakan Institute Malaysia (UAIM). The study reported that, as residing with the local community is illegal, Rohingya children were denied access to Malaysian public education. Also, the researcher highlighted Rohingya refugee children's limited access to quality nonformal education in Malaysia (which was largely coordinated by UNHCR), due to lack of teacher training, withdrawal of older students to support their parents financially, and child marriage in the case of female students. The study recommended more teacher training and identifying dropout timing and consequences and requested that Malaysia and other host states allow Rohingya refugee students access to public education.

Studies focused on the situation of Rohingya children in Bangladesh, where the Rohingyas are confined in the world's largest refugee camp, pointed out that lack of formal education for the children is one of the major challenges they experience. In this regard, Nilsen et al. (2023) reported scarcity of resources and challenges experienced by children and educators through their survey of 17 general education networks, seven private centres, and three madrasa education networks. In this study, the respondents stressed the importance of teaching the Myanmar curriculum as they hoped to be repatriated to Myanmar soon and their children could continue in Myanmar government schools. In addition, the majority of respondents stated that there should be more resources and funding to accommodate female students as they needed private spaces to study due to their traditional upbringing. Most importantly, the study found that the majority of the Rohingyas did not trust the credibility of learning centres provided by NGOs and suggested camp agencies seek consultation and engagement from refugee networks for more transparency regarding equivalency.

Focusing on the restrictions on education for Rohingya communities in Myanmar and Bangladesh, Cupi (2021) conducted an oral history interview to understand the Rohingya situation from a first-person viewpoint. The study indicated that the Rohingyas did not have the right to equal access to education and had to study in separate schools where there were numerous discrepancies in their professional environment as the teachers, who were volunteer Rohingyas from the community, did not have access to appropriate training. It also reported that, after residing in Bangladesh refugee camps, 400,000 Rohingya children faced many restrictions from the Bangladesh government such as blocking aid groups for Rohingya youths inside the camps, banning children who want to attend schools outside the camps, and prohibiting the use of Bangladeshi curriculum. The study concluded that, with the situation of the Rohingyas under the

campaigns of ethnic cleansing, deprivation of education was a living reality that needs to be addressed to avoid the children becoming a lost generation.

In a comprehensive report, Esveld and Neff (2019) presented the current situation of the Rohingya children in the learning centres provided by UNICEF. Highlighting insights from extensive interviews with students, parents, service providers, and NGO representatives and reviews of policy documents and announcements by Bangladesh authorities, the report revealed barriers experienced by Rohingya refugee children such as discrimination in hours of instruction and lack of formal curriculum, certification, and access to secondary education. The report also stressed that, unlike other refugee children from Myanmar who had got opportunities to study under the Myanmar curriculum and received recognition when they went back, the Myanmar government did not approve the use of the Myanmar curriculum for the Rohingyas, which added an extra burden to refugee teachers in the camp to develop new materials. At the same time, the Bangladesh government did not give permission to use its national curriculum in fear of a future influx of Rohingyas in the camps. Based on additional policies and restrictions on developing a new curriculum for the Rohingya refugees in the camps, the report stated that the main barrier to schooling for the Rohingya children was the Bangladesh government's policy of deliberate deprivation of education to prevent the refugees from integrating.

Providing an analysis of the experiences of aid workers and educators working in the Kutupalong refugee camp in Bangladesh, Bakali and Wasty (2020) explored educational realities of the Rohingyas through a critical ethnographic lens. Employing open-ended and semistructured interviews, the study found that the curriculum was still in the developmental stage and covered only the primary level, which made students at higher levels unable to continue with their education. In addition, due to absence of teacher training and professional development, there were

educational deficits such as incompetence in transmitting subject matter knowledge and lack of standardization and coordination of teaching materials and strategies. As well, as a result of a lack of assessment and tools, outcomes of the curriculum being used could not be measured, and consequently no certificates were issued to attest to the students' abilities. The study also pointed out less attendance on the part of females in the informal learning centres in the camps. In this regard, it noted that, prior to the current crisis, to compensate for impediments to government education, families had access to madrasa-based learning classes which provided religious education in safe spaces. Therefore, the researchers suggested that there could be more participation if the religious learning centres in the camps were used to integrate contemporary educational agendas.

In a more recent study, Rahman et al. (2022) depicted the negative experiences of Rohingya children in Myanmar government schools and the learning centres of Bangladesh refugee camps. The main purpose of the study was to evaluate the cause for the disproportionately high percentage of Rohingya child refugees residing in the unregistered Kutupalong refugee camp who did not obtain basic education. Referring to intersectionality theory, culture of mistrust, and the 4As (Availability, Accessibility, Acceptability, and Adaptability) concept, the study indicated that a single source cannot explain the deprivation of child refugees' education rights. These refugee children possess multiple identities, including features associated with statelessness, poverty, and age, which prevent them from receiving basic education. Furthermore, the study claimed that the children lost their trust in the education system due to their experiences in Myanmar, lack of a national identity, and refugee status, which rendered them the most deprived group in Myanmar and Bangladesh. In the social context, the study believed that the government's exclusion of Rohingya children from learning under the curriculum of the host country rendered the situation

more difficult as the teachers in learning centres did not have sufficient resources and time to develop a new curriculum suitable for these students. As a result, the researchers argued that the new curriculum, which was not standardized, was ineffective and did not fulfill the expectations of the ethnic community in relation to education.

Summary

Existing literature on Myanmar refugees revealed the possibility of different forms of language socialization based on individual backgrounds (Schechter & Bayley, 2002) and the role of availability of resources and students' home culture and other backgrounds for language socialization (Duran, 2016, 2017; Kelley, 2014; Nawyn et al., 2012). Studies on language socialization of Rohingyas in Malaysia, Bangladesh, and Saudi Arabia suggested that the native language of the respondents, the Rohingya language, has been degraded due to their safety and daily survival in these countries (Ali et al., 2020; Alshahafi, 2022; Barun, 2019; Netto et al., 2022; Rohingya Language Preservation Project, 2022). However, there are no studies of language and cultural socialization of the Rohingyas in North America, where they have more freedom to practise their own culture and express their identity.

Similarly, previous studies highlighted the importance of family support, the social and cultural capital of parents, and the availability of resources for the schooling of immigrants (Brewer, 2019; Hou & Bonikowska, 2017; Schechter & Otoide, 2010; Tervo, 2017). In addition, James and Taylor (2008) stressed the role of education for the purpose of social mobility for marginalized students. At the same time, studies on schooling of Rohingyas in Malaysia and Bangladesh highlighted restrictions on education for Rohingya communities; inconsistency of teaching practices; lack of formal curriculum, resources, and expertise; and other issues (Bakali & Wasty, 2020; Cupi, 2021; Esveld and Neff, 2019; Letchamanan, 2013; Nilsen et al., 2023; Palik,

2020; Rahman et al., 2022). Although there were a few studies on the role of education for Myanmar refugees in North America, no study has been carried out on the Rohingyas who have significantly different linguistic and demographic backgrounds from other ethnic groups in Myanmar. In particular, the lack of studies focusing on younger members of these ethnic minorities regarding their language socialization and schooling reveals an important research gap.

In this research, using an ethnographic perspective, I investigate language use and socialization of Rohingya youths in Canada focusing on the perceived role of schooling in their current lives and future aspirations. Several factors are assessed through operationalized concepts based on Bourdieu's (2011) notion of cultural capital and the rubric developed by Schecter and Bayley (2002) to study language socialization. The construct, language use, is measured by investigating the youths' experiences of using the home language (Rohingya), the language of their second country (Bengali or Malay depending on their refugee experience), and Canadian English in different situations. As concerns the role of schooling for the Rohingya youths, the study explores these youths' experiences regarding different resources they have accessed and previous life experiences and interactions with community members, educators, and school friends and classmates in different settings such as school and out-of-school venues and how these influence their perceptions of the importance of educational attainment and its relevance to the shaping of their future life goals and aspirations.

Chapter 4: Methodology

In this chapter, I discuss the design elements and procedures for conducting this research. The discussion includes elucidation of my main research strategy—an ethnographic case study approach. The overall goal of my dissertation study is to investigate how the habitus and social position of Rohingya youths play a role in structuring their choices and opportunities in education. In addition, I explore how these resources and social positions impact on these youths' language socialization and schooling. Based on these goals, I use the following three research questions as heuristics to inform my study.

1. What are the past experiences of Rohingya school age youths studying in Waterloo Region's public schools with regard to education and language socialization?
2. How do the past experiences of Rohingya school age youths contribute to their current attitudes towards life goals, Ontario schooling, and academic achievement?
3. In what ways do Rohingya youths' experiences in Ontario schools contribute to changing or modifying their attitudes towards life goals and the value of education?

Research Paradigm and Methodological Approach: An Ethnographic Case Study

In this study, I seek out a transformative perspective in which I apply values guided by the community and address social justice and power structures (Tashakkori et al., 2020). Here, a transformative approach emphasizes understandings based on participants' subjective experiences rather than values perceived by the researcher (Mertens, 2008). According to Creswell (2003), a transformative research tradition focuses on “the needs of groups and individuals in our society that may be marginalized or disenfranchised” (p. 39). In other words, the purpose of transformative research is to initiate political or social change to the benefit of marginalized groups. In this regard, a mixed-method research approach allows me to access the insights of the community and the

perspectives of its individual members. In addition, rather than following the postpositivist notion of youth in racialized communities, I explore experiences, feelings, and values perceived by the Rohingya youths who are participants in my study. Through a critical perspective, I investigate how Rohingya youths in Waterloo Region perceive the role of education.

Ethnographic Approach

For this purpose, I use an ethnographic research approach, which provides me with an opportunity to immerse myself in the community and record participants' behaviours, utterances, and actions in a natural setting. An ethnography is a descriptive account of a community or culture in which the researcher participates in the daily lives of people for an extended period of time, observing what happens (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007). Ethnographic studies attempt to investigate certain aspects of people's lives and to discover the meanings that these happenings in different situations hold for individuals and how they relate such situations to others. It is a research methodology that allows us to develop "an abstract understanding of how a place is organized and confirmed socially and culturally and look to the role of language and discourse to develop richer understandings about the social construction of a place and its political ramifications." (Stokowski, 2002, p. 379).

Within this research paradigm, the concept of *reflexivity* allows me to provide emphasis based on values and interests conferred by different sociohistorical locations. Unlike positivist and constructivist approaches, reflexivity in social research rejects the assumption that knowledge must be based on some pre-established foundation (Hammersley, 2018). In particular, this research stresses the importance of understanding the perspectives of the people under study, and of observing their activities in everyday life rather than relying solely on their accounts of behaviour or experimental simulations of it. Furthermore, under reflexive epistemology, the purpose of this

ethnographic research is production of knowledge rather than serving particular political causes or practical ends.

The researcher, myself, is an ethnic Rohingya and a native speaker of Rohingya and Burmese languages, and thus perceived as a member of this community. Similarly to Rohingya refugee youths in Ontario, I have spent early stages of my life negotiating between my home culture and expectations of institutions in Myanmar. Hiding my identity as a Rohingya, I tried hard to excel in “Burmese Literature” during my high school days. This enthusiasm encouraged me to further absorb several localized varieties and master different styles of talk (royal, religious, official, colloquial) in Burmese. However, as Burmese is symbolized as the primary language used to perpetrate the Rohingya genocide, I would rather speak in Rohingya or English in my community so as not to be mistaken for a traitor. Similarly to other refugees who have been exposed to cultures of neighbouring countries, I learned Malay as a survival language when I was a refugee in Malaysia before my arrival to Canada. In general, I am accepted as one of the community members due to similar diasporic experiences, although no one else in the community had the opportunity to pursue formal education in Myanmar as I did.

Using principles and procedures of reflexive ethnography, I obtained data from participants at the research site to provide a detailed report of the lives of the individuals under study with a focus on beliefs about and attitudes towards schooling. I use standard categories for cultural description (e.g., family life, communication network) and represent the participants’ views through field notes and closely edited quotations (Creswell & Poth, 2016). The study also includes detailed accounts by focal participants who are followed by the researcher in physical and virtual places (Epstein et al., 2013). Being an ethnography, this study records people’s actions and accounts in everyday contexts, rather than under conditions contrived by the researcher. In other

words, the researcher has the responsibility of rendering the perspective of those who inhabit the culture or institution they are studying, or an *emic* perspective. As the purpose is generally to explore a single setting or group of people, small-scale data collection facilitates in-depth study.

Case Study Approach

At the same time, this ethnographic study uses a case study approach. According to Schwandt and Gates (2017), ethnographic case studies employ “ethnographic methods focused on building arguments about cultural, group, or community formation or examining other sociocultural phenomena” (p. 344). While the purpose of ethnographies is to promote embedded research through close-up observation and pay attention to detailed experience, case study research facilitates “exploration of a phenomenon within its context using a variety of data sources” (Baxter & Jack, 2008, p. 544). Consequently, ethnographic case studies share features with both parent approaches. For example, it is important to use data triangulation such as participant observation, fieldwork, reflective journaling, and ethnographic interviews to ensure that findings are valid and reliable. As well, case study research privileges “thick description” (Geertz, 2006): because there are fewer participants than in full-scale ethnographic studies; investigation may be deeper. Geertz (2006) stressed the need for “thick description” so that aspects of individual and group practices may be connected with wider meanings.

Researchers have used both qualitative and quantitative methods to collect data for ethnographic case studies. For the purpose of triangulation, although a range of resources, including documentary evidence, is employed in this research, questionnaires, participant observation and interviews are major strategies for collection of data. According to Becker (1958), participant observation helps the researcher to be aware of specific phenomena relevant to the focus of the study. At the start, data collection may be loosely structured, as categories for

interpreting utterances and events are generated out of the data analysis process rather than through a pre-established research design. In this study, interpretive work involves implications of functions and consequences of human actions and institutional practices in local or wider social contexts.

Study Design

Research Setting

The research setting is Waterloo Region, where the majority of Rohingyas in Canada are currently residing. There are several small pockets of Rohingyas in the region. As a permanent member of one of those pockets, I have better access to the Rohingya community in this region than in other parts of Canada. Therefore, it is the best choice for reasons of purpose and convenience (Tashakkori et al., 2020). Good transportation, employment opportunities, and a diversity of cultures make this region a typical urban area which hosts people from various backgrounds.

Waterloo Region, covering 1,369 square kilometres, is a metropolitan area situated in southern Ontario which includes the cities of Cambridge, Kitchener, and Waterloo (KWC or Tri-Cities) and the townships of North Dumfries, Wellesley, Wilmot, and Woolwich. According to 2021 Census data, there are 587,165 residents. The Tri-Cities area is the 10th largest Census Metropolitan Area in Canada by population, and was rated Canada's third-best area to find full-time employment in 2016 (Statistics Canada, 2022).

Many newcomers reside in this region due to availability of resources, career opportunities, and reasonable living expenses (Prepare For Canada, 2024). As a result, it is a densely populated melting pot with diverse ethnicities, cultures, and lived experiences. According to the 2016 Canadian Census, 22.6% of the region's total population are immigrants while 19% are visible

minorities, which include people from South Asia (9.56%), Africa (4.59%), the Middle East (3.73%), Southeast Asia (2.85%), and Latin America (2.21%). Apart from English, residents in this region speak Punjabi, Mandarin, Arabic, Spanish, High German, Portuguese, Serbo-Croatian, Urdu, Gujarati, Persian, Hindi, Vietnamese, Romanian, and Polish as their mother tongues. Based on my initial observations, although there are many ethnicities from different cultural backgrounds, they concentrate more in their own pockets rather than intermingling with people from other groups. In the same manner, Rohingyas in the region also carry out their daily communication and occasional celebration only with people from their own group. In terms of opportunities, while the region is referred to as “Canada’s Silicon Valley” and is home to many tech companies (Bay Street Bull., 2015), the majority of Rohingya immigrants work in factories as labourers.

Most of the data collection took place in participants’ homes, at community events, and through social media, which I explain in more detail in the procedure and instrumentation section. People in Waterloo Region reside in detached or semidetached houses or highrise apartment buildings (Prepare For Canada, 2024). Most newcomer Rohingyas, including some of my participants, live in highrise apartments in the Chandler Mowat area. Although this area is famous for higher crime rates as compared to other places (Chandler - Mowat, Kitchener, ON Crime Rates, 2020), many newcomers have no choice but to live in this area due to high rent and difficulty in receiving approvals from landlords in other locations in the region. In addition, some of the Rohingyas who applied for government-assisted housing around 2007 were granted appropriate shelters in a short time; however, due to the increased volume of applicants, it is difficult to get a place in government-assisted housing nowadays (Region of Waterloo, 2024). Several Rohingya

families have managed to buy their own houses by securing two or three jobs. Most of these individuals work more than 12 hours per day and 7 days a week.

Participants

Using an ethnographic case study approach, I conducted this study to explore the role of schooling and academic achievement in the goal aspirations of Rohingya youths from Waterloo Region. Participants were selected purposively: some of the participants came from Bangladesh refugee camps and the others from Malaysia during the last 5 years, so that the results cover both cohorts of Rohingya refugees who arrived recently in Waterloo Region. As a majority of Rohingya refugees fled to Bangladesh or Malaysia before they were relocated to third countries, it was important to cover experiences of both cohorts to reflect the role of education for these youths. For participant observation, I selected six families with school-aged youths and met frequently at their home, at community events, and through online platforms (Facebook and Instagram). In addition, a total of five Rohingya youths attending public schools (who may or may not be from focal families) were selected for the questionnaire and ethnographic interviews based on their backgrounds and ability to reflect realities of the local community.

Following are details associated with the participants selected for this research:

- Alia was born in Kutupalong refugee camp, Bangladesh. She is 14 years old. She arrived in Waterloo Region in 2008. She was 11 months old when she arrived in Canada. She speaks Rohingya and English.
- Amal was born in Kutupalong refugee camp, Bangladesh. She is 18 years old. She arrived in Waterloo Region in 2008. She was 4 years old when she arrived in Canada. She speaks Rohingya, English, Hindi, Urdu, and Bengali.

- Hasan was born in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. He is 20 years old. He was a refugee in Malaysia for 18 years together with his family. He arrived in Waterloo Region in 2019. He was 18 years old when he arrived in Canada. He speaks Burmese, Rohingya, English, and Malay.
- Farhad was born in Kutupalong refugee camp, Bangladesh. He is 17 years old now. He arrived in Waterloo Region in 2008. He was 3 years old when he arrived in Canada. He speaks Rohingya and English fluently, and can also speak Urdu and Hindi.
- Reza was born in Maesot Township, Thailand. He is 14 years old now. He arrived in Waterloo Region in 2007. He was 5 months old when he arrived in Canada. He speaks only English. He understands some Rohingya and Burmese words.

Table 1*Summary of Student Respondent Information*

Name	Birth Country	Age at Arrival	Current Age	Spoken Language(s)
Alia	Bangladesh	11 months	14 years	Rohingya and English
Amal	Bangladesh	4 years	18 years	Rohingya, English, Hindi, Urdu, Bengali
Hasan	Malaysia	18 years	20 years	Burmese, Rohingya, English, Malay
Farhad	Bangladesh	3 years	17 years	Rohingya, English, Hindi, Urdu
Reza	Thailand	5 months	14 years	English

Procedures and Instrumentation

For this research, I used participant observation, a questionnaire, and ethnographic interviews for data collection. In a first phase, field notes and quantitative (questionnaire) data on factors contributing to Rohingya youths' education and their language use were collected and analyzed. Then, in a second phase, through qualitative data—journal entries and ethnographic interviews—I focused on how these factors are contributing to the perceived experiences of Rohingya youths regarding their education and language socialization in Canada. The data elicited during this second phase are based on quantitative results from the previous phase. This sequential design is a procedure for collecting, analyzing, and integrating quantitative data and different types of qualitative data at stages of the research process within a single study for the purpose of gaining a better understanding of the research problem (Creswell, 2003).

The participant observation focused on how the families use their native languages, Canadian English, and other languages, along with participants' orientation towards Ontario schooling, other daily activities, and life opportunities. These initial observations helped the researcher to determine specific indicators used in the study. The majority of observations took place in focal families' homes in evenings and on weekends, as most of the parents work full-time in local restaurants and factories. In this manner, I discovered how family members spent their evenings and weekends and interacted with one another on topics such as schoolwork, language use, home activities, and life goals. Additionally, I observed how the youths share their thoughts on social media and socialize with outsiders using online platforms. In particular, I followed their posts for language use, daily activities, struggles, success, and future perspectives. To further observe their language and cultural socialization at the societal level, I participated in monthly potlucks and events at the community centre where they usually go.

The questionnaire (Appendix A), based on the results from participant observation, elicited youths' perceptions on issues such as language use, schooling, and socialization in Canada as well as previous countries where they have resided. I adapted previous questionnaires used by Kormos et al. (2014) and Kelley (2014) on language use and interview questions used by Kim and Duff (2012) on habitus and cultural capital. As mentioned earlier, there are no extant data on the role of education for Rohingyas—either adults or youths. Therefore, participant observation and subsequent elicitations highlighted important areas and topics to focus on in the ethnographic interviews. Data from both participant observation and questionnaires were analyzed to inform the study with significant past experiences which contribute to Rohingya youths' language socialization and schooling in Canada. Before their interview sessions, participants were given opportunities to reflect on their opinions expressed in journals regarding their choices in questionnaire items. I gave some guidance for participants to elaborate previous responses on their past and current attitudes towards language socialization and schooling (Appendix B).

The purpose of the ethnographic interviews was to elaborate on results from the previous phase. Using my three research questions as heuristics, I designed interview protocols for participating youths. Beyond initial census-type information (age, grade, number of children/siblings, when arrived in Canada, how long at current address, etc.) designed to warm up respondents, each subsequent elicitation was constructed to gain access to aspects of issues articulated in the larger research questions. For example, the material in the sections of the dissertation that addressed linguistic and cultural socialization of youths came mostly from a series of elicitations that asked parents and youths questions about decisions regarding language usage in the home and actions to maintain cultural and/or religious practices associated with the Rohingya community (or different communities, if applicable). Similarly, the material in the

sections of the dissertation that addressed communication between home and school and attitudes towards schooling experiences, academic engagement, and formal education in general was generated from a section of the protocol that addressed the relationship with and perceived value of schooling. The interviews were of a structured, sequenced variety: that is, I asked all participants within the same cohort the same questions in the same order. However, because these interviews were conducted in participants' homes, and because I was familiar with members of the Rohingya community and had visited with participants previously in home and community venues, the discussions were of a conversational nature. So, to summarize, my initial set of categories came from the interview protocol I had refined at the outset, plus some additional categories that emerged as important—or, to use Freire's (1970) term, generative—themes as the work progressed.

The interviews also elicited information of the “who speaks what language to whom where” (Fishman, 1965) variety. I framed my elicitations in terms of “Let's talk a little about what life was like once you got to...” to open different topics of discussion on socialization and schooling. The interviews, questionnaire, and journal were carried out mostly in English unless participants felt more comfortable speaking in Rohingya. The data were analyzed by organizing participants' responses into emerging themes. First for each case, and then across the cases, converging themes were identified. The results from participant observation, questionnaires, journal entries, and interviews—and quantitative and qualitative analysis—were triangulated so that the final results reflect the experiences and attitudes of youths regarding their language socialization and schooling in Canada.

Participant observations and the questionnaires were used to identify significant schooling experiences, including social positions and available resources, which influenced youths' language

and cultural socialization in Canada and in transit countries before they were relocated to Canada. Ethnographic interviews explored how these past and current experiences contribute to their attitudes towards life goals, Ontario schooling, academic achievement, and the value of education. Both the questionnaire (Appendix A) and the interview protocol (Appendix C) included specific items to reflect the purpose of each stage of the research.

I conducted a pilot study with one of the youths in the community. During this process, I found out that the participants did not share much about their past experiences and insights. Therefore, I decided to cultivate a deeper relationship with potential families before I continued my data collection. For the next 4 months, I tried to mingle with the community members through events happening in the community such as weddings, birthday parties, picnics, potlucks, and religious activities. My purpose was to get into the inner circle of the community so that I could develop a trusting connection with the youths. During such events, I understood language as an integral part of social cohesion. Therefore, with the help of my husband, I learned the rural dialect of the Rohingya language, which is quite different from what I had acquired since my childhood. I used this rural dialect to communicate with the youths. Being the descendant of 1943 genocide victims, my husband was born outside of Myanmar and has lived in the Rohingya diaspora all his life; therefore, his dialect and culture are closer to those of this community, and this relationship acted as a bridge for me to get into the innermost part of the community. The rural dialect helped me to understand the culture of the community and its socialization experiences.

After having multiple talks with the parents and the youths, I changed some of my questionnaire and interview items to reflect the current situation of the community. As I developed closer relationships with the community, one of the women suggested teaching the adult women some functional spoken English usages such as introducing themselves, sharing their daily

routines, and talking with health care personnel, as they claimed that they were just lost in their small pockets and not in touch with the outside world. This language facilitation was later developed into a separate SSHRC project led by my supervisor, Professor Schecter, which also helped me significantly in building connections with the community.

Data Analysis

For questionnaire data, I summarized respondents' answers in a table showcasing the number of languages the youths use, their level of confidence in using their native language and other languages, their parents' educational background, their access to resources for schooling, and their attitudes towards Ontario schooling. Based on these data, I provided tokens for the number of youths for each category. The factors regarding language socialization and schooling found from this section were used to triangulate with findings from other instruments.

For the qualitative part of the data (i.e., results from participant observation, journals, and interviews), I put the responses into Otter.ai, a transcription and notetaking program, and coded the data into different categories by using the highlighting function in the software. Since my respondents were compelling storytellers, I decided to write up my findings in the form of case study narratives. I constructed the narratives around youths' interpretations of their life experiences and the influences these interpretations had on their life aspirations (Franzosi, 1998). There are two overarching approaches for narrative analysis: inductive and deductive (Azungah, 2018). I applied an inductive approach. That is, I looked for patterns in the data, trying not to have preconceived notions. This is a bottom-up approach through which I observed the patterns and interpreted them in the context of youths' narratives about their experiences and life aspirations. By comparing the different narratives, I identified themes related to the different strategies adopted by the youths to acculturate to Canadian society. I paid special attention to how my youth

participants self-identified and coded respondents' various choices with respect to this issue. Based on these interpretations, I came up with conclusions related to the objectives of my research. The following were the steps taken for the qualitative parts of data analysis: (a) coding the responses; (b) grouping the responses; (c) creating narratives; (d) comparing different narratives; and (e) presenting the analysis.

I identified places in the interviews where responses of parents and youths differed—and, moreover, where parents did not seem aware that their children did not entirely share their perspective (e.g., about Desi subculture). I also followed up on tangents where parents seemed largely unaware of the academic issues with which their children were dealing (e.g., credit and course requirements for entrance into higher education programs). These areas of cognitive dissonance generated additional categories/themes that I documented—categories related to strategies youths used to get their academic needs met, or at least to get by, absent adequate support inside or outside of school.

Another important theme that emerged was cultural influences on youths of which parents seemed largely ignorant—e.g., in the areas of food and music and, importantly, social life and support (yes, the parents were aware of the pervasiveness of Desi influences, but it was always other people's children who were under these influences, not their own). I noted a certain asymmetry in my field notes in that the youths seemed more aware of the parents' perspectives than the parents did of the youths'. For example, the youths were aware that their parents disapproved of Desi cultural influences; however, the parents were not aware of the extent to which these influences permeated the daily lives of their children. Another example led to a personal breakthrough: the youths were cognizant of the extent to which the horrors of the Rohingya experience in Myanmar and transition locales permeated their parents' consciousness, whereas

parents seemed largely impervious to the burden this condition of being a genocide survivor imposed on their children's psyches and life aspirations. In the end, those cognitive dissonances became integrated into my reports of findings during subsequent writing stages.

Validity and Quality of the Research

For the purpose of validity, before conducting the study, the survey questionnaire and interview questions were checked by piloting them with members of the community. Also, these multiple data sources, including social media, manifested in the triangulation of my findings (Tashakkori et al., 2020). In addition, my position as a permanent member of the community, further engagement with other community members for a prolonged period of time, and checking inferences with some participants (i.e., member check) strengthened credibility and trustworthiness of the findings (Maxwell, 2013; Tashakkori et al., 2020).

Ethical Considerations

As narratives and responses of the participants are based on their traumatic lived experiences, I made sure there was informed consent (Appendices D and E) before the beginning of data collection and at each stage by informing the participants of the aims, objectives, methods, anticipated benefits, and potential risks and discomforts of the study. Also, I made sure that participants understood and rationally evaluated the contents of the consent form. As well as that, I informed the participants that they could refuse to answer any questions or provide any responses if they chose and that they could terminate participation at any time. Moreover, I provided some notes in the consent document that respondents needed to answer some questions based on their lived experiences in previous countries so that they could consider refusing to participate further if they felt the possibility of some degree of distress after the interview. For the purpose of privacy, I used pseudonyms and let participants and parents of participants know that their responses would

be represented in the study. I believe that activities under this research are therapeutic as many Rohingya youths need to talk to someone who has the same historical legacy as they do and could ensure their anonymity. Ultimately, participants decide for themselves whether the benefits of participating outweigh any risks.

In the case of a formal process for ethical considerations, I applied for approval to York University's Human Participant Review Committee (HPRC). As the study was carried out during the time of the pandemic, the committee instructed me to provide rationales as to why the research must be conducted in person at that time and why virtual methods could not be used. First, it was for the sake of the integrity of the data. Based on the nature of ethnographic research, I needed to investigate what individuals said in which language in a particular situation and only in-person observation could provide an opportunity to get these details. Although the world has witnessed the Rohingya genocide and, according to United Nations, the Rohingyas—the participants I observed—were the most persecuted people in the world, most of the research focused on their suffering in the refugee camps but not their lives in North America. In other words, this is a new community with no previous research data. Therefore, I placed special emphasis on the value and authenticity of data for my research, which will contribute to the Canadian curriculum for future development and guide how issues they are facing can be addressed by academia.

Second, the community I investigated was illiterate (the Rohingyas have been blocked from formal education in their home country by the government for many decades), and technology was a big barrier for the parents and uneducated members of the family, who found it difficult to behave and talk naturally in front of the computer. I proceeded to the in-person interview after the observation. The committee accepted my rationales and provided the approval. I followed the provincial guidelines for the COVID-19 pandemic during the time of data collection.

Summary

In summary, I employed an ethnographic case study for my research study. As the study seeks out a transformative perspective, I made sure all the stages (framing the research questions, design, and data collection and analysis) of the study focused on listening to the youths' voices, and also opened avenues for my own transformation (Tashakkori et al., 2020). Being a permanent member of the community who has spent almost three decades in Myanmar fulfilled the reflexivity of the study as well (Maxwell, 2013). To get into the innermost circle of this diasporic community in Waterloo Region, I devoted most of my time to mingling with the community through different events. Ultimately, I am confident that my research provides valuable insights into the youths' perspectives on Ontario schooling and academic achievement.

Chapter 5: Family Background and Socialization

In this chapter, I introduce the focal youths who are participants in my study in the context of their family backgrounds. In addition, I discuss their linguistic and cultural socialization, which I connect with their schooling and identification in the next chapter. As mentioned, all the participants are high school students and children of Rohingya refugees who have escaped from Myanmar.

Alia at Home

I always try to talk in Rohingya most of the time with my parents, but sometimes if I don't know how to say it in Rohingya, I'll say it in English and then they will ask what I said in English in Rohingya. I will describe them in English.

Family Background

Alia and her family reside in Waterloo Region, Ontario. She has four siblings: one brother and three sisters. The family, except for the youngest, Safia, arrived in Waterloo Region from Bangladesh in 2008. The family is very active in all the events of the Rohingya community every year. Her brother, Arman, is 19 years old and one of the youths who have performed in the play *I am Rohingya*. This play portrays struggles faced by Rohingya refugees as they escaped from Myanmar. Arman is a polite teenager who has finished high school. Similar to other young men in the community, he is currently working at a meat factory which he finds very tiring. At first, the parents, Sharuk (the father) and Nabila (the mother), encouraged him to work rather than to continue his education as the income he makes is motivating for the family. However, lately, as Arman talks about how his work is exhausting, the parents are starting to consider the role of education for their son getting a better in the future.

Alia, the focal participant, is 14 years old and currently attending Grade 10. She talks very little, but always stares with eyes wide open whenever there is conversation in her house or at a community event. Like her siblings, she usually wears hoodies and sweatpants at home and at the playground where she plays with her neighbours. Her mother, Nabila, knows how to sew and make beautiful traditional dresses for her daughters to wear at community events.

Samaira and Aisha, the two younger siblings who are 12 and 10 respectively, are active girls. Most of the time, when I visited their home, they were playing at the playground in front of their home. They both speak English with Standard Canadian dialect. Unlike their sister Alia, they both engage in conversation with anyone very openly. The youngest daughter, Sufia, is only 3 years old and always follows her mother whenever she cooks or visits in the Rohingya community. All the children talk in Rohingya with their parents and in English with their siblings. At the same time, we can hear a lot of code-mixing between English and Rohingya in the family's (including parents') conversation. All of the children, except Arman, are Generation 1.5 students as they started their primary education in Canada and speak a language other than English in their home (Schechter, 2012).

Whenever I enter their house, I am treated to wafts of traditional curries and roasted chili. Sharuk's wife wears a traditional Myanmar dress covered with a large hijab (shawl) and is usually occupied in the kitchen. The children spend much of their time watching movies in the family room. The father shouts to his daughters to put on hijabs to cover their heads as a form of respect whenever I visit them. Nabila cooks Rohingya traditional dishes such as chicken curry, beef curry, fried vegetables, and chili salad. Both husband and wife enjoy these dishes and share them with the guests. However, the children eat their favourite sandwiches by themselves for their lunches and dinners. Nabila confides that the parents put sandwiches in their children's lunchboxes so that

they do not have to worry about the smells from the traditional foods. As a result, the children are more attached to sandwiches and other Western food than to traditional rice and curries.

Both Nabila and Sharuk were illiterate when they came to Canada from Bangladesh. Sharuk has learned some spoken and written English through a job training program offered by the meat factory he works for, but Nabila still cannot communicate very well in English. Maybe because both parents have no formal education, they always express great expectations for their children's education. At the same time, they admit that they are incapable of supporting or providing advice for their children's future education. Sharuk states,

I do not understand a lot about education, but I am ready to support my daughter. I am not forcing them to be doctors or engineers. If they are really interested, becoming a nurse is also fine. I am very tired working at the factory, so I want my children to get respectable professions and careers. As long as they don't get a factory job, I am fine. I will tell my daughter [Alia] to ask for some help from you. I know she is struggling with her schoolwork.

Initially, as this family embraces traditional values and the mother's daily routine is culturally not different even after settling in Canada, I thought the family would train the daughters to be proficient in cooking and housekeeping. However, after several conversations and close observations, I noticed that the parents have no concerns about marketing the standard skills for Rohingya women expected by the Rohingya community. In fact, they never ask their daughters to do any house chores. Instead, Nabila is concerned about her daughter's future prospects in education. Nabila mentions, "I have a lot of expectations for Alia. If she can get some scholarship and grants, it will be very helpful when she attends the university. But, I am not sure if she will

get it. Do you know if her marks are good? Did you ask her? If she is successful in education, I will be happy. But I am not sure.”

Alia says that her parents have a great wish to see her excel in education, but they seem to be in a hopeless position as they do not know how to support her. They are aware that she is not coping well academically, and frequently shout and push their daughter to study harder and seek help wherever possible. The parents also comment to me that their daughter does not respond when they question her about her schooling. They stress their dissatisfaction regarding communication with Alia about her schooling.

Socialization

At home, Alia’s parents speak Rohingya most of the time. Their English is minimal and they cannot speak any other languages apart from Rohingya fluently. The family were locked in Bangladesh camps after escaping from Myanmar and did not have any facilities to communicate with Bangladeshi locals, so they did not learn the Bengali language. The parents understand the importance of English but also would like to maintain the Rohingya language skills of Alia and other children in the family. As a result, Alia and her siblings communicate with their parents in Rohingya most of the time. Alia says,

I always try to talk in Rohingya most of the time with my parents, but sometimes if I don’t know how to say it in Rohingya, I’ll say it in English and then they will ask what I said in English in Rohingya. I will describe them in English.

Alia is expected to act as an interpreter for her parents whenever they communicate with the outside world and also help them with translating documents written in English. She says,

My parents need me to translate for them. Like when my father needs help like reading an email or something, I read it in English. And if he doesn't understand what it says I would tell him in Rohingya.

Although she is slow in talking and action as compared to the other daughters, because she is the eldest daughter the parents depend on her. During my visits, I find the parents push her to be active and shout at her to perform faster.

With her siblings, Alia mostly communicates in English, but here again frequent code-mixing is observed. For example, whenever Alia's eldest brother, Arman, explains to her the school lessons she does not understand, it is usually in a mixture of Rohingya and English, with English dominant in their conversation. However, if the brother needs to explain more deeply and cannot do this in English, he will switch back to Rohingya. She stresses,

We mix Rohingya and English together. So, like one word we say in English and then the other word we say in Rohingya. We talk in that way. However, it is more English than Rohingya.

During my visit to their home, the most audible language between Alia and her siblings is English. Alia's spoken language is short and often ungrammatical. However, she volunteers, "I am more comfortable speaking in English than Rohingya."

Alia is one of the students who joined the First Rohingya Language School under the Heritage Language Program, where some educated Rohingyas taught reading and writing in Rohingya for 2 years. However, she did not learn much from that program, which was terminated recently due to low numbers of students. She says, "I only know the Rohingya alphabet. They are easy to learn but difficult to write them down."

In the case of English, she is not an avid reader. She comments, “I don’t read a lot of books, but if I feel like a book is interesting. I will take it and read it.” One of the branches of the public library is just at the corner of their street but she does not seem to visit there frequently. She volunteers, “I did one time from that library. I also borrowed from the school library. I take one at a time and finish it because I’m a slow reader and I can’t finish a lot of books.”

Alia does not have much communication with her cousins or other children in the Rohingya community, partly because she is in her adolescence. The parents in the Rohingya community prohibit their daughters from mingling with males when they enter adolescence. This causes the daughters to be more reserved whenever they come in front of guests or the community members. Alia attends potlucks, birthdays, and other parties in the Rohingya community. Based on my observation, during these family reunions and other parties, Alia talks to the parents of other youths and children in Rohingya while English is the dominant language among the children. She mentions, “I talk with Jasmine [one of her cousins], but I don’t really talk with others.” She continues,

She's my cousin, you know, so like whenever they come home, I talk to her parents in Rohingya. Jasmine and I usually talk in English all the time. We talk about our favourite things to do like what is their favourite thing to watch and stuff like that where like what do you like doing. We speak in Rohingya whenever something interesting happens in the family. In English, we talk about my favourite movies like we tell each other like why our family favourite movies, our favourite TV shows? While we like doing all that free time and stuff like that. And like about school.

Her other interactions outside the school are with the youths in her neighbourhood and they are usually in English. Almost all the youths in her neighbourhood are immigrants from

Afghanistan, Iran, Syria, India, and Pakistan, and they communicate in English. Alia meets with her neighbourhood female friends at the playground near their residence most evenings and weekends. They play volleyball and other types of sports.

Hasan at Home

We can say more inside words in Burmese, but I don't know many words in English so most conversations are not straightforward and need a lot of additional explanation as we usually lost each other.

Family Background

Hasan's family, together with another ten families, arrived in Canada in 2019 through the sponsorship of the Islamic Circle of North America and the Rohingya Association of Canada (Jackson, 2019). Similarly to other refugee families, they had no idea how to survive in Canada during their first year. In this condition, the sponsor organization took care of their basic needs such as food and accommodation expenses. Now it has been 3 years, and these families are quite settled.

Hasan's family live in a highrise building located near the Chandler Mowat Community Centre in Waterloo Region. The area around this community centre is called "Rohingya Fara" (Rohingya Village) because most Rohingya newcomers settled there and many government-assisted buildings are situated around the area. There are seven Rohingya families living in the building where Hasan's family live. For most nonimmigrant Canadians living in Waterloo Region, this area is notorious for its frequent crimes. There have been many reports which state issues with the safety of inhabitants in this area. However, for newcomers without employment, it is very difficult to have a place to live in a decent neighbourhood. Therefore, many Rohingyas who are

mostly illiterate have no other choice but to live there due to easier access and proximity to the community centre and the food bank.

Hasan's family is one of a few Rohingya families that prefer to speak Burmese, Myanmar's official language, rather than Rohingya in the Rohingya community. The father, Asharaf, is a Burmese and the mother, Nusaiba, is a Rohingya. The family lived most of their lives outside of Arakan before they left Myanmar, so their talking styles and behaviours cannot be distinguished from those of typical Burmese. All family members can speak both Burmese and Rohingya fluently. However, they choose to speak Burmese at almost all times at home. The only time they speak Rohingya is with Hasan's maternal grandmother, who is almost 90 years old and living with them. They try to communicate in Burmese with anyone who can speak this language in the community; however, most members of the community are not comfortable with this arrangement. Similarly, Hasan's family is highly Burmanized and do not enjoy the company of most members of the Rohingya community. Whenever they take part in any events or visits, the children stay away from other children of community members. Indeed, the children frequently recount how they avoided the Rohingyas and associated with Burmese in Malaysia, their transit country, after escaping from Myanmar. Asharaf, the father, expounded on this theme several times:

We are different from these Rohingyas. Although we were refugees, we did very well in Malaysia. My children learned to live in Burmese culture, so they were fine with everyone in Malaysia. My children did Burmese very well in UN schools. They all know how to read and write in Burmese. There, Rohingya children could not speak Burmese but tried to learn Burmese literacy. It was very difficult for them.

Asharaf works at a factory in another city east of Waterloo Region. His wife, Nusaiba, is a homemaker. As a skillful carpenter and electrician, Ashraf receives extra income by doing

freelance work in different houses in the community. He has a reputation as a competent and responsible professional. After 3 years, the family still live in the same building and seem settled. Whenever I visit their small apartment on the ninth floor of the highrise building, I notice the delicious smell of curries. Unlike with other families' residences, their house excludes a Burmese aroma rather than spicy Rohingya smells. Asharaf, the father, always welcomes me very warmly with a wide smile. I see several children's books on the chairs. When I ask who reads them, Hasan replies, "My younger brother and sister bring them from the library." The home is a three-bedroom apartment, and I find the place looks very crowded with different materials such as books, water bottles, plates, and other objects distributed throughout.

The focal participant, Hasan, is already 19 years old but still studying in Grade 9 as he did not have a chance to attend school in Malaysia as a refugee. He learned English only after moving to Canada. He is the oldest sibling and has a younger brother (Grade 5) and a sister (Grade 7).

Regarding schooling, the father stresses the urgency of getting more support and resources for his children's education as both parents do not have literacy in English. He explains,

I do not know how consonants and vowels in English work together. If I know that, I can learn English very easily. As you know, we have to start learning the alphabet only after we have arrived in Canada, so it is quite difficult for me. Also, as we do not know any English, it is very difficult to get resources for my children and thrive in this country. English is very important. Only if I know spoken and written English, we can do many things for our life and children very quickly. We know what to do and how to do, but language is a great barrier.

Hasan says that his father feels very proud of him as he has memorized the holy Quran by heart at a traditional Islamic school in Malaysia. As for his education, he admits that the parents cannot help him due to the language barrier, but at the same time they are confident that Hasan is doing well.

Socialization

Hasan is a multilingual who can speak four languages: Burmese, Rohingya, Malay, and English. However, he does not think there are many benefits in being multilingual; rather, he sees English as the most important language needed to be successful in Canada. He maintains,

Here there are Rohingya youth, but we always speak in English. At home, we speak a few Rohingya, and mostly Burmese just at home. I am not speaking in Malay anymore ... There is no benefit in knowing many languages. Knowing how to speak in English will help me to be successful in Canada, but there are a lot of English words I don't know so there is still difficulty.

Burmese is the most widely used language in Hasan's family. All family members communicate in Burmese almost all the time, except with grandma. It is the mother who mostly communicates with the grandma, and it is always in Rohingya.

Unlike other Rohingya youths, Hasan places less value on his Rohingya language skills. Most interestingly, he claims that after Burmese, English is his second language for him, not Rohingya, although he spent almost 18 years with the Rohingya refugee community in Malaysia and he learned English only after arriving in Canada.

Hasan highlights the importance of language in his socialization. He recounts how he could engage in deep conversation with his Burmese-speaking friends in the past:

We can say more inside words in Burmese, but I don't know many words in English so most conversations are not straightforward and need a lot of additional explanation as we usually lost each other.

Amal at Home

When we speak with my siblings, ... English just took over and I feel like sometimes I don't care about our motherland or mother language. Which is very sad.

Family Background

Amal's family lives in Waterloo Region. Her father's name is Hussein and her mother's name is Saleha. The family arrived in Canada from a Bangladesh refugee camp in 2010. The family does not mingle with the Rohingya community very much. I do not see them at many activities. Amal has four sisters. All the girls are charming and polite; however, except for Saleha and her eldest daughter, they do not participate in Rohingya potlucks and celebrations. I sometimes see Saleha and her eldest daughter at the house of my neighbour, who rents Hussein's youngest brother's property. Their eldest daughter, Nisha, did not go to school in Myanmar and is currently studying ESL at an adult school. The second daughter, Hanifa, is studying at Conestoga College to become a nurse. The focal participant, Amal, is 16 years old and in Grade 12. The two younger daughters, aged 14 and 11, are studying in Grades 9 and 6 respectively. Everyone except the eldest started their primary education in Canada.

When I arrive at Amal's house, her father welcomes me at the gate. The mother is similarly hospitable, greeting me at the entrance of the kitchen. I notice the smell of traditional Rohingya curries when I enter the house. On the wall of the living room, there are landscape pictures drawn by Amal. It was Ramadan and they were all fasting when I first met with the family in their home.

After I chat with the family for a few minutes, Amal addresses me directly.

Amal: “Oh you are the teacher from Pathways. Do you remember me?”

Hnin: “Oh Amal. Of course. I remember you.”

Amal is wearing a black skirt and a blouse with some glitters. She speaks very fluent English in Standard Canadian dialect. She is very welcoming and presents as motivated to answer my questions. As the room is very noisy with her parents talking with my father, we decide to move into her room. The room is situated in the basement and the three younger sisters live in the same room. One of her sisters is being tutored by a friend in the bedroom as we enter. On the wall, there are more pictures drawn by Amal. Here I see both portrait and landscape art. According to Rohingya Muslim culture, it is not appropriate to display pictures of humans in the home. Many Muslims believe this will impede the visit of blessing angels to their houses. I see that this family does not seem to hold that belief and that many human portraits are kept in the bedrooms.

Amal’s parents state multiple times that they are very proud of their children’s education. Similarly to other Rohingya parents, they cannot support their children in their studies as they are illiterate, but they express how they feel satisfied with their children’s education. Hussein says, “We don’t know English and did not study, so we have no ability to help them in their studies. But my three daughters are very smart. They work part-time at Tim Hortons and McDonald’s. With their earnings, they hire some tutors to explain the school lessons they do not understand.” The father also stresses how they are financially unable to support their children’s education and that his daughters are supporting themselves. He indicates, “I do not need to pay anything for my second daughter’s college expenses. She has several part-time jobs and supports herself.”

Socialization

Amal's parents speak the Rohingya language natively. Their English is very minimal. Although both of them have caught some English words to communicate with outsiders, they use only Rohingya to communicate with their children. In the same way, Amal's oldest sister uses Rohingya to communicate with her family members while communicating using some survival-level English outside the home. Apart from her, the rest of the siblings communicate in English with one another at home. Amal can communicate in both English and Rohingya very well. She can understand and speak some Hindi and Bengali too. For Amal, English is the most comfortable language for communication. She states,

As we speak English all the time you would have parents who speak English, and they understand us. But they often reply back in Rohingya and, in some time, when they don't understand us, we just say Rohingya, but speaking English helps them learn and pick up more English and understand more. My dad, he acts like he doesn't seem to understand very much.

As new Canadians, the parents encourage their children to assimilate to Canadian society. The children, as well, try every possible way to be a part of English-speaking Canadian society. Amal does not speak much in the Rohingya language, and so her Rohingya language skills are lower than her English, but she says that she is starting to feel obligated to maintain the Rohingya language:

When we speak with my siblings, ... English just took over and I feel like sometimes I don't care about our motherland or mother language. Which is very sad. Sometimes we just don't speak in Rohingya. We need to. There's not many of us and if you forget one language, how will the new generation know our language?

At the same time, she stresses the usefulness and importance of English in Canada for her future career. She says, “Competence in English is as crucial as having a degree in showcasing intelligence.” In addition, the fact that there are common words between Hindi/Urdu (Hindi and Urdu are two varieties of the same language) and Rohingya helps her to pick up the Hindi/Urdu language easily. She states,

We also learned from watching a lot of Bollywood movies. Popular culture. Yeah. Since we were younger, we have been watching Bollywood and also like, there’s a lot of similar words in our Rohingya and Hindi.

She says that she always carries out code-mixing between English and Hindi whenever she talks with her Indian friends and enjoys such types of conversation. Also, she uses “Hindglish” (transliteration of Hindi with the English alphabet) whenever she texts in social media such as Facebook and Instagram. As her family had to spend several years in Bangladeshi refugee camp, almost all of them have basic Bengali communication skills. However, she mentions her worry about her grammar and appropriateness in communicating with native speakers in both Bengali and Hindi. Overall, she claims that her multilingualism helps her to understand people more and to build a closeness with them.

Farhad at Home

I can speak both Rohingya and English languages equally, but other youths in our community are not like that. They all have learned English, so the conversation is always in English.

Family Background

Farhad lives in Waterloo Region with his parents, Shafiq (his father) and Rahima (his mother), and three siblings. They arrived in Canada from Bangladesh in 2008. Their family are

active members of the Rohingya community and participate in almost all the celebrations and events. As Shafiq has his five siblings and their respective families living in the region, their voices are influential in decision-making processes in the community. Having many relatives also means increased access to different educational and career opportunities as compared to other community members. The family often extol how much they have accomplished since they arrived in Canada in 2007.

Both Shafiq and Rahima are working in a factory where they pack frozen meat. The couple work full-time and do overtime on weekends as well. Although they were illiterate when they arrived in Canada, both husband and wife can communicate in English very well now. Indeed, Rahima communicates in English more than many women in this community. Recently, Rahima shared the news that she is going to work soon as a caregiver for elderly people. She is very proud of this accomplishment as almost all the people employed in this community are working in the factory. Rahima has taken part in many events organized by other organizations outside of the Rohingya community such as Pride March and Women Rising. Although her education is only at the primary level, she is very eager to contribute to the Rohingya community and participate in activities that empower women.

The eldest daughter, Fahima, is studying to be a practical nurse and currently working part-time as a caregiver for elderly people. When she was in high school, I supported her at Pathways through tutoring English, math, and science. Unlike many other students who came to the centre for food, drinks, Wi-Fi, or basketball, she focused on her studies and accepted the support of the tutors whenever she could. Her graduation and enrollment in the nursing program at Conestoga College was an incredible moment not only for her family but also for the whole community as they had never seen such accomplishments by children who were brought up by villagers.

Farhad is the second oldest child of the family. The family is very proud of him for his education, courage, and popularity in the community. He is 16 and studying in Grade 11. He is quiet in nature but has taken many important roles for Rohingya Association Canada such as master of ceremonies in demonstrations and a Rohingya youth leader for many cultural events. The most prominent activity was that he acted as one of the characters escaping Myanmar in the play, *I am Rohingya*, which was inspiring for Rohingya and refugee youths in different parts of the world. Taking after his elder sister, he studies regularly at Pathways every evening and finishes his schoolwork every day. In general, he is a very ambitious and hardworking young man who has many wishes for his family and community.

The two younger children, Suhaiba (age 12) and Hanis (age 10), are attending Grade 6 and Grade 4 respectively. All the children except the eldest started their schooling in Canada. Suhaiba loves painting and most of the walls of their houses are covered with her paintings. She mostly paints flowers, human faces, and landscapes. She sometimes also paints in abstract styles which are unique and evoke different emotional states. The parents are hopeful that she will be a famous Rohingya artist who will make everyone proud of her. In every demonstration for the plight of the Rohingyas, all the children participate and fulfill different duties. Whenever I visit their house, the parents recount the traumatic incidents they experienced as they escaped from Myanmar. Rahima says,

We have experienced the worst things in our lives. When I was in Arakan, my younger sister was taken by Ntala villagers. I really miss her. I have witnessed how my uncle was killed by Myanmar soldiers, too. All these experiences are still haunting me. I have learned English, but I cannot concentrate a lot. My previous experiences keep disturbing my mind. That's why I want my children to be educated and work hard for the community.

(In the 1990s, the Myanmar government created Nataka villages near Rohingya villages and put Burmese prisoners who were arrested for crimes such as murder and rape in these villages. These settlers have been troubling Rohingya villagers since then.)

At first glance, it looks like the father is the one in charge and the most powerful in the family as he is always shouting at his children to behave nicely or to perform some chores. However, as I delve deeper into family conversations and past experiences, Rahima, the mother, seems to be the most authoritative, providing rationalization for every course of action of the family. She drives her own car and visits different places independently. Although she looks like a traditional woman from her clothing choices and hijabs, she enjoys considerable freedom in her decisions and actions. At the same time, husband and wife collaborate in family management decisions such as how to economize and save money for their children's future.

Similarly to other Rohingya parents, Rahima and Shafiq say that they do not have any academic qualifications to support Farhad's education but share the steps they are taking to help him succeed. Shafiq says,

As I do not have education, I cannot do much for my children. I cannot teach anything. But I am supporting him financially and mentally.

Rahima adds how she feels about her son's education:

We have no education, but we are really proud of our child's education and really want him to be educated. I pray to Allah to fulfill my wish for our son to be educated. If you have any links for scholarships, please help us. Whatever he wishes for his education, we are supporting. I do not worry if he will fail or pass. With Allah's will, my son is doing the best whatever he studies. He focuses a lot on his study. My son always tries to finish

whenever he has something to study. As he is studying well, I am fine with whatever I am spending for him.

Socialization

Farhad's parents come from a remote area of Arakan Region, Myanmar, and embrace traditional practices of the region at home. The parents can speak basic English and communicate very well with native-born Canadians outside. At home, Rohingya is the primary language for the parents to communicate with Farhad and other children. Whenever I visit their house, the rural dialect of Rohingya is the only audible language.

Farhad can speak both Rohingya and English fluently. He can speak Hindi, Urdu, and Bengali at a modest level too. He is the only participant who answered my interviews in both languages while the others talked only in English. He shares that his younger siblings cannot speak in Rohingya as competently as he:

I can speak in Rohingya very well. But, my younger siblings, Laila and Farooq, cannot speak very well. They start forgetting the language. My younger siblings are very smart, but when they speak in Rohingya with outsiders, the language is not coming. They speak in English. But, if they speak in English, how can they describe things in their head very well? That's what I am scared of. I am fine as my parents trained me very well to speak in Rohingya. Sometimes I forget too, but as I am helping newcomers so my Rohingya language skill is not that much decreasing.

He also points out that the fact that everyone understands English contributes to the outcome that the younger siblings forget their Rohingya language:

The problem is everyone understands English. Therefore, it is convenient for them not to use Rohingya. Even our grandma understands English, and she can respond to them by gestures such as shaking head

As a result, although he can speak in Rohingya almost all the time with his parents and older sister, Parmina, he has no choice but to communicate more in English with his younger siblings. Also, in the community, his cousins and other youths prefer to speak in English, so it is difficult for him to maintain conversation in Rohingya with them too. He comments,

I can speak both Rohingya and English languages equally, but other youths in our community are not like that. They all have learned English, so the conversation is always in English. I did try to communicate in Rohingya, but it takes so much time because they do not have enough vocabulary to communicate in Rohingya, so they are not patient. Just to move on the conversation faster, it becomes solely in English.

Farhad was enrolled in the Rohingya language program provided by First Rohingya Language School for 5 years. He learned in this program how to read and write in Hanifi script, one of the Rohingya written languages. He claims that children who went to Rohingya school have better Rohingya skills than those who did not:

A lot of the kids who went to Rohingya school with me typically speak more Rohingya at home. They speak Rohingya without an English accent, but the younger kids, they don't speak as much as mostly English. And I've noticed that I have developed a better connection with the ones that speak Rohingya as well because it's easier to make jokes and easier to talk to them on a more personal level in the Rohingya language, because that is

my language.... When I was young I didn't feel that much importance of the Rohingya language. I just speak it, but as I grow older, I understand our responsibility to maintain it.

As for English, he speaks at a native speaker level. He sees it as one of the official languages of the country and therefore of pragmatic necessity:

I'm happy not to have an accent when I speak English. But it's also like, I wouldn't care if I did. English is just a language in this country. Honestly, it doesn't hold any identity for me or whatever. English is the language that I have to learn in this country, as the native language in this country, and I respect it as such.

Reza at Home

My father always wanted me to learn Rohingya even more now. Like it's a stronger feeling to learn now than like back then And it's something like our culture and our heritage that is missing from me.

Family Background

Reza's father, Amir, arrived in Canada from Thailand in 2000. While he was a refugee in Thailand, he learned English and worked as an interpreter. After relocating to Canada, Amir finished his high school and bachelor's degree in information technology. Reza's parents are among the few educated community members. They also place a great emphasis on their children's education. Reza's father, who is now an IT professional and an activist in Waterloo Region, contributed tremendously when Rohingya newcomers arrived in 2008 from the Bangladesh refugee camp. His wife, Shahina, who has achieved a business management degree and is currently working as a Rohingya-English interpreter, has supported and contributed to her husband's social work in the community. For more than 10 years, both Amir and Shahina have devoted most of

their time to promoting their community's development. They have three sons and Reza is the eldest. He is 15 years old and attending Grade 10. He is an outstanding student and was selected for the International Baccalaureate program. His younger brothers, Ayuf and Ayas, are 12 and 10 years old and students in Grade 7 and Grade 5 respectively.

Amir, the father, has founded an organization together with some friends in the community. Members of this group advocate for justice for Rohingya victims. The association has organized several campaigns such as "Write for Rights," a campaign proposing that Canada take action on the Rohingya genocide, and "Time to Act, Rohingya," an exhibition of Rohingya genocide photography, and testimonies at the Canadian Human Rights Museum and genocide remembrance activities. The association has also sponsored many community events such as picnics and potlucks. Whenever such activities happen the children participate, enjoying them as their recreational activities. Many community members regard Reza's family as one of the most respectable families in this Rohingya community.

When I visit the family, I find that the house is full of children's books, workbooks, and nonfiction books. Unlike with other Rohingya families, the children are occupied with reading books they have borrowed from the library. Every Sunday, Shahina and her children visit the library and spend time reading books and enjoying children's activities offered there. Every week, they borrow many books from the library too. The children always look forward to these weekly library visits.

Reza's parents have always taken his education very seriously. Being a graduate, his mother has trained him to excel in literacy and numeracy since primary school. In addition to the school curriculum, the mother purchases many guidebooks which include multiple quizzes to

enhance reading comprehension and mathematics skills that Reza practises every day. Shahina recounts,

I read them story books when they were infants. When they become toddlers, I take them to the library and, gradually, reading becomes their hobby. Nowadays, you can see how they love reading books. I have used all my time for my children's education.

Whenever I visit her house, I can see the mother is always busy with her children. Whenever she goes outside for shopping or an event, she is in a hurry to return home to her children. She maintains,

Many women in this community do not care what their children are doing. They are busy chatting or gossiping. I always try to take my children to whenever there is a community event and spend time with them rather than gossiping with other women. My children are very precious and the most important to me.

There is a community centre near the house and the family regularly visit there to check facilities for their children. The children join activities such as martial arts, basketball, and painting classes. As the centre is attached to a park, this playground is one of their recreational places. The children also join after-school clubs for sports and music. The parents take the children to different museums and other significant places, providing opportunities for learning. They are always seeking opportunities to develop their children's knowledge and skills. Whenever they see any advertisements for art, science, math, or other competitions in newspapers, they encourage their children to participate. As a result, the children are very confident in communicating with the outside world as well as cooperating with people outside of the Rohingya community. As for the

family, they are content and confident with the support they are providing to Reza and express hope regarding his future academic career.

Socialization

Reza is the only participant who speaks only English at home and outside. His parents speak in Burmese with each other and in English with their children at home. In fact, Reza's father is a university graduate and a multilingual who can speak Rohingya, Burmese, Bengali, English, Urdu, Hindi, Thai, and Malay as he was in Bangladesh, Thailand, and Malaysia before he was relocated to Canada. Reza's mother, who is also a university graduate from Myanmar, speaks Burmese as a mother tongue, and her Rohingya and English skills were moderate by the time she married Reza's father. She tried to improve these two languages after arriving in Canada.

During Reza's early years, his mother was trying to catch up with Canadian English, and as a result, she practised talking in English with Reza. She has read stories in English to Reza since he was an infant. Although she tried to introduce some Rohingya words to him, her Rohingya skills were lower than English at that time, so this practice was not successful. As days went by, the medium between mother and son became solely English. At the same time, the parents did not teach Burmese to Reza and other children because they were very active in advocating for the Rohingyas and believe that Burmese is the language of genocide and not worthwhile to teach to their children. Reza explains,

They always help my school lessons in English because that's the main language that I understand. If they just speak fully Burmese, I might not be able to, because like there's some words I can understand the context of the thing, like because of the other words surrounding it, but specifically one word I might not be able to understand.

Although the mother's Rohingya skills have reached an advanced level, the family does not change their way of communication because she becomes used to communicating in Burmese with her husband while always talking in English with her children. Reza can figure out the meaning of some familiar Burmese words, but most of the time he has no idea about the details. He explains,

When my parents speak to us in English, they include Burmese words, too. I think just for the sake of like habit and just [they are] learning [English]. And I can understand Rohingya a bit. But I can't speak it at all because I haven't learned it properly. The only time they speak Rohingya is when they talk with the community members.

He voices his inability to communicate in Burmese and Rohingya many times during our conversation. Whenever his parents, aunts, uncle, and grandparents engage in conversation, he expresses his curiosity, especially whenever his name is mentioned. He also mentions that his parents, especially his father, have a strong desire for him to learn Rohingya. He explains,

My father always wanted me to learn Rohingya even more now. Like it's a stronger feeling to learn now than like back then. Well, merely because of the fact that he saw our culture, it's his home culture, is it his mother tongue as well? And it's something like our culture and our heritage that it's missing from me.

However, Reza has no desire to learn Burmese, the national language of Myanmar, as it means little to nothing now for the family and himself:

For me it was just one language so we just kind of ignored it because even for French you have to learn French to get better. But for Burmese, there wasn't that kind of forced learning.

Regarding multilingualism, he claims that it is very normal to know more than one language because many people belong to a racialized background:

I'm guessing the amount of people I've seen is not even fully white. Some have a Hispanic background and Asian background, and African background and so many other places from the world. Look, I'm not even surprised if they're bilingual or multilingual. So like the fact that they know okay, you can speak another language like you can speak Chinese or Japanese or something like that doesn't surprise me or really surprise anyone else. Because that's kind of expected.

Chapter 6: Rohingya Youths' Attitudes Towards Education and the Role of Schooling

In this chapter, I discuss attitudes of Rohingya youths towards Ontario schooling and the value of academic achievement. In addition, I address how students' past experiences contribute to their formulating or modifying their attitudes towards cultural self-identification and the determination of life goals. Before I discuss the details of each youth's schooling experiences and life aspirations, I summarize their responses to the items in the survey questionnaires in Table 2.

Table 2*Rohingya Youths' Language Socialization and Perception of Schooling*

Participants	Number of Languages	People you use Rohingya with	Comfortable using Rohingya	People you use English with	Comfortable using English	Parents' education background	Access to resources in Schooling	Attitude towards Schooling
Alia	2	Parents	-	Siblings and outsiders	+	No previous training	+	+
Hasan	4	Grandmother	-	Outsiders	+	No previous training	-	-
Amal	5	Parents	-	Everyone who can speak English	+	No previous training	-	+
Farhad	4	Parents, siblings, and Rohingya community members	+	Everyone who can speak English	+	ESL Level 4	+	+
Reza	1	None	-	Everyone	+	University graduates	+	+

In terms of language socialization, all the youths except Reza can communicate in more than one language. Three youths (Alia, Amal, and Farhad) use the Rohingya language to communicate with their parents, while Hasan uses it only with his grandmother. Farhad uses Rohingya also with siblings and Rohingya community members while Reza cannot communicate in the Rohingya language at all. Among them all, only Farhad showed positive attitudes towards using the Rohingya language while the rest expressed negativity. As for the English language, they use it with everyone who can speak English and all of them are comfortable using this language. In this regard, we can see that the majority of the youths (four out of five) are not comfortable using the Rohingya language and those who can speak the Rohingya language only use it with adults or elderly people. Findings from participant observation and in-depth interviews indicates that their cultural affiliation with Rohingya identity such as language practice is related to respect and love of their parents rather than their own identification. In other words, they are using it to satisfy their parents and the older generations.

The last three columns focus on schooling. In this regard, the parents of three youths, Alia, Hasan, and Amal, have no previous training or education while Farhad's parents have achieved Level 4 in ESL training. The parents of only one youth (Reza) are university graduates. Three youths (Alia, Farhad, and Reza) expressed a positive attitude towards access to resources for Ontario schooling, and the other two (Hasan and Amal) were negative. Despite Alia's positive remarks about access to resources in schooling, after the observation and in-depth interview the data point out that she does not even know what she needs in schooling and is not getting what she needs. In the case of Farhad and Reza, they get what they need, but they are highly proactive. It is not that their educators are meeting their learning needs or paying attention to them, except when they have to. These two students get what they need by struggling to get access to the resources.

In other words, they are insisting on getting what they need. Finally, in the last column, we can see the majority of the students showed positive attitudes towards Ontario schooling. However, based on my participant observations and in-depth interviews, they are facing many issues in academia, but they are not questioning the schooling system.

Alia: Education as Elusive

I want to be successful in education, but I don't know how to do it. (Alia, age 14)

Schooling

During one of our private conversations, Alia mentions that she feels uncertain about her future. She recounts how she has been struggling with reading and writing since she was in primary grades. Later, she was identified as an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) student. She explains,

When I first started school, I was getting ESL help and they noticed that I was struggling on, like, how to spell and how to make sentences. So that's how I noticed I had IEP. I needed ESL support in Grade 1 and Grade 2. I stopped getting ESL support in Grade 3.... I also had a program where we would go every week to, like, pronounce how to say words and write words. Like we had a program every week, like once a week and the teacher will help us how to say where it's pronounced.

She also adds that she sometimes needs to leave the class and get special assistance from the teachers. She murmurs,

And if I need more days to finish an assignment or something, I ask the teacher to go to the room where there are teachers to help me and I'll just work in that room until I'm done.

According to Alia, her poor literacy skills have negative impacts on subjects other than her English courses such as geography and history where critical thinking and paragraph writing are

important. She asserts that these subjects require much essay writing, and that it is difficult for her to organize all her thoughts and put them into words and sentences:

Geography, when I do it, is hard for me because, like, thinking about ideas for what to write, writing essays, and practically just writing stuff, ... I have the difficulty with putting it together, the teacher doesn't like how I put it together. Like she thinks, like they think that I don't have enough ideas.

As an IEP student, she gets extensions for schoolwork and additional explanations whenever she requests these, but there is no other regular extra support available to her. She shows me her mathematics worksheet and explains that she is struggling in mathematics; so the teacher gives her easier worksheets which are different from those given to her classmates. She reports feeling upset regarding her current level of academic skills:

Since I am Grade 10, they give me worksheets from lower grades. Like worksheets from lower grades. Sometimes, when I feel like I know how to do it, I'll ask them to like, put me into the same grade and give me that work. And if I can't do it, I keep the same. I am still under the IEP program as when they explain something, it's like, I get it slowly. So, like my understanding of knowledge. I learned slowly.... When they are talking fast, I don't really get what they're saying. So then when they're done teaching, I ask them to explain it to me again slowly and they will.

When Alia needs support in education, she relies on her classroom teacher and close friends to help her. She says,

I ask the teachers for help, and if I work on it and I still don't get it, I'll ask someone close to me to help me understand.... Read the question over, and if I still don't get it, I will ask

a friend. And if they don't get it then I'll go to the teacher ... or something like my guidance counsellor. Apart from that, no one really helps me.

When I ask her about her attitudes towards schooling, she replies,

It is like meeting people and learning new things every day. School is helpful.... My parents do not talk about schooling all the time. They just see if we are doing good and they are happy for us. If they see low marks, they just say to try harder. I am not good at geography so I get like 50, 60.... I like school more than before. When I was younger, I wouldn't know a lot of English. But now, like I feel like that I know more than I used to know. That's why. When I was younger, I wanted to be a vet. I love animals.... Now, I want to be a doctor or a nurse. My parents suggested it to me.... But I am still in Grade 10 so I don't know what kinds of courses I need to take to join those programs. I will ask my guidance counsellor next year. I still have 2 years of high school. I want to be successful in education, but I don't know how to do it.

Based on my observations at her home and at community events, Alia rarely voices any requests to address her academic or any other needs. She is quiet and does not express her feelings. When she talks, her voice is barely audible. In the family, there is no one to support her schoolwork, as her elder brother struggled academically during his high school years as well. Unlike other immigrant children who need academic support, she does not go regularly to Pathways to Education where she can receive free tutoring. Due to the pandemic, the teaching centre is not open this year, but students can still request one-on-one support online. Alia admits, "I haven't requested any one-on-one support this year." Neither does she provide any indication that she will request assistance in the future.

All of Alia's friends at school are immigrants from the Middle East and South Asia. She does not have any white friends (people of European background) and has little interaction with white youth. She opines,

All my friends are immigrants. I never have a chance to be friends with white classmates.

They don't want us. We don't care about them, either.

At Alia's school, there are no Rohingya students who can communicate with her in her native language, Rohingya, but there are many immigrants. Unlike other study participants, Alia cannot speak Hindi, Urdu, or Bengali so she cannot communicate in those languages with immigrant classmates. Therefore, her language of communication at school is usually English. However, Jasmine (one of her cousins) also joins whenever she hangs out with her friends. At these times, she chooses to speak in Rohingya more frequently. She mentions,

Whenever I say something in Rohingya cuz I hang out with Jasmine. She knows our language too. Sometimes when I talk to her in our language that I don't want anyone else to know. They asked what I said to her? And they want to know what we say to each other sometimes.

Alia says that her friends always praise her for knowing another language. She says, "They say it is cool." Arabic is also part of Alia's linguistic repertoire. Many of her friends are Muslim; she feels it brings mutual understanding and confidence whenever they share Arabic religious words, such as *salat* (prayers) and *wudu* (ablution). She claims, "We understand each other when we talk about our religion and stuff like that. We are happy because we understand each other."

Cultural Identification

Regarding her bilingualism, Alia is ambivalent but acknowledges the usefulness of knowing two languages. She says,

I feel happy that I know two languages and not just one. Just felt like that I'm different, like some people are different. They know lots of languages and stuff like that. But sometimes I don't. Why I don't? Because, like it's kind of hard for me to speak in Rohingya. Sometimes it's hard, like some words that I don't know.

Although she finds difficulty in speaking Rohingya all of the time, she self-identifies firmly as a Rohingya. She explains,

Firstly, I am a nice and kind person. And I am a Rohingya. I want people to know that I'm not just Canadian. I know. I came from a different country.

She highlights how her ways of talking in English and celebrations are different from other Canadians at her school and says that she does not feel she is a real Canadian. She elaborates,

Like when I pronounce something it sounds different to them. But I always try to sound like how they will say it but ... because they have different relations and how much language they can speak or tradition like they get to celebrate everything. But we get to celebrate one thing. Another thing is that when we go out to a special event or something we have to put nice clothes on and stuff like that, but they just wear normal clothes.

Alia mentions that she is proud of being a part of the Rohingya community. She is more comfortable at the picnics and celebrations held by the Rohingya community than those held by her school. She explains,

I am happier in Rohingya events because you get to gather with your family and friends. At school they just do holiday events like fall events, and they do different activities like finding the pumpkin and scavenger hunt like that. There, it is like nobody cares about each other. It is like the whole school takes part. Like if we work as a team, one person doesn't listen, and it comes into a big fight and everything like that.

Hasan: Don't Ask, Don't Tell

The teachers handle everyone in the class the same way.... They just follow the curriculum by school, but never check the students' needs. (Hasan, age 19)

Schooling

Regarding his schooling, Hasan mentions, "I have difficulty in the English subject as there are words and structures I do not understand, but there is not much additional support." In addition, he claims that the teachers do not pay attention to the outcome of their teaching, especially in English:

The teachers handle everyone in the class the same way. They do nothing special for me. As far as I am concerned, the teachers use the same method as they do for Canadian-born students.... I do not like how English teachers teach in the class. They don't really care if we learn or not. They don't show how to read the lessons very well. They just follow the curriculum by school, but never check the students' needs. They teach as they like, and when the time comes, we are moved to the next grade.

That said, Hasan appreciates how his current English teacher helps him in developing résumés and seeking volunteering locales. He currently works at a coffee shop as a part-time worker and the same teacher serves as his reference. His low English proficiency skills also seem to impact his

academic performance in other subjects. He does not show much passion for his academic studies. He shares,

I have no favourite subject. I don't like difficult subjects. I like only easy ones. I liked science before, but now it is difficult, and I don't like it anymore. English has become difficult nowadays, too. Paragraph writing is really difficult.

Hasan wishes to exit academia as soon as possible and start making money. He says,

My goal is just to finish high school. I do not want to go to university. I do not want to spend 3 years or 4 years there. After high school, I just want to be a realtor and make a lot of money. The co-op program from my school says that I can attend a realtor course and get the licence after high school graduation. It is not necessary to go to university to become a realtor, either. A certificate course for a licence is enough. It is just 6 or 7 months. I just want to do shortcuts and fast.

Although he experiences difficulties, Hasan does not seek help with his academic studies from outside of the school. The community centre which provides space for one of Pathways' free-tutoring branches is just beside his house; but he has never been there. He murmurs,

I hear the community centre has free tutoring service, but I have never been there. I have never heard of Pathways. Is the tutoring service called Pathways? I don't know.

He says that there is a student support worker from the YMCA who volunteers in his school but there is no individual support. Every Thursday the support worker will meet with the students and ask them if they need any assistance. He mentions,

Most meetings focus on career opportunities and job preparation. How to write cover letters and résumés, etc. Also volunteering opportunities as well as job perspectives.

He stresses that lack of individual support in the classroom hinders the progress of many students like him:

The teacher will just teach in front of the classroom but there are students who do not know how to follow. If they can provide some extra support in the classroom it will be really beneficial.

Given these conditions, Hasan focuses on the career he aspires to after high school rather than continuing with his academic studies. He proclaims, “I just want to finish high school as soon as possible.”

Hasan always stresses the importance of English for his education and future career, but still mentions at some point, “My teachers praise me for being multilingual as Canada is a country with diverse cultural backgrounds.” At the same time, within his friends group, as most are bilingual or multilingual, he is of the view that no one sees anything special in their multilingual language abilities.

There are no Burmese and Rohingya students in his school. After spending some months in Canada, when he sees other newcomer friends with the same English level, he gets more courage and talks with them. He says,

I usually help my newcomer friends by translation whenever they go to the school office or need to communicate with the teacher. It is an English-to-English translation. I understand very quickly whenever they want to say something, but it is not the case with the teachers.

The majority of his schoolmates are from immigrant families from the Middle East, Somalia, Kenya, Eritrea, and other places, but there is less socializing with white students. “I don’t understand their slang words at all. But it is okay. We enjoy ourselves,” he recounts. He does not have much social time outside the school because he is occupied with his part-time work at Tim Hortons and house chores after school and during weekends.

Cultural Identification

Regarding his identity, he expresses a strong connection with the Burmese community:

If there are picnics in three communities, Burmese, Rohingya, and Canadian, at the same time, I will go to the Burmese picnic. Because Burmese is my strongest language. I am the most affiliated to Burmese culture. And of course, the food. Burmese is the best for me.

Hasan has mingled only with Burmese throughout his life and identifies himself as a Burmese. He frowns when saying,

I do not have any Rohingya friends in Malaysia, where I was a refugee for 18 years. We live in Burmese Muslim community. Here, in Canada, too, I don’t feel very connected with Rohingya youth.

Most interesting is that, during one of my visits, he claimed that Burmese is his first language and English is the second one. I was very surprised because he acquired Rohingya at home during his early childhood but learned English at school only in his late teenage years when he arrived in Canada. Based on my observations in the community, the family socializes primarily with Burmese Muslims and those Rohingyas who affiliate with Burmese culture. Family members’ frequent negative remarks about the Rohingya community and their culture cause Hasan to be unwilling to associate with this community.

Amal: The Student as Scavenger

To help me with that [grammar and spelling], I use phone technology ... You can also go online and see different tutors, which you need to pay hourly. (Amal, age 16)

Schooling

Regarding her schooling, Amal claims that she is coping very well with the academic demands, but points out her difficulty with academic English:

I am pretty fluent [in daily conversational English], but my spelling and grammar are really bad. But, to help me with that, I use my phone technology. It is really a great help. And I use Grammarly [a punctuation and grammar correcting tool] to help me with spelling mistakes and everything.

When I ask if the school offers any support for her English, Amal replies, “Schools don’t really care about that. To be honest, like they don’t ever acknowledge.” She further adds that new students with difficulty communicating in English will be put into ESL classes. However, once they finish ESL classes, there is no further additional assistance for academic English. She notes, “My grammar does not always make sense.” She continues,

In ESL classes, the teachers just use the same curriculum every year. They don’t really check what we need to learn. To be honest, they [the teachers] just say it, and they don’t really like adjusting that much. There are very very few teachers who would like to try to help you.

Additionally, she states that there is little effort on the part of the teachers to make the students aware of other people’s culture which causes her experience of schooling to be difficult:

Canadian high school students do not understand other people's culture. And the teachers never care to educate the students about other people's cultures, too.

She also indicates there is almost no parental involvement in her education as her parents are beginners in English:

They give me a lot of motivation, but they don't really speak good English. My dad really tries to get English and so does my mom, too. There is no extra support at school, either. Pathways usually help me. You can also go online and see different tutors, which you have to pay hourly. You can do that. But you really need to have money. You can ask your friends, too. Literally, it is Pathways which really you have.

When I ask her about her orientation to subjects at school, she points out several subjects she likes and dislikes:

I think I like English. I took a law class last year for some credits which I really enjoyed because I love law but I like criminal law. All that investigation. I like art. I love doing painting and art as you can see, I'm painting everything, and I also love the gym. Subjects I have difficulty with? Math and a little bit of science. Oh my God, math is so hard. I don't understand. I have some basic math but then once it's after basic math is just so difficult. They're just so much more brain to handle.

Her biggest disappointment is that there is no clarity for the types of subjects she needs to take for her higher education. She claims that the school pushes many immigrant students to applied courses; as a result, they cannot be accepted at the university they want even after receiving their high school diploma:

My elder sister is already admitted to nursing program at Conestoga College, but she needs to retake academic chemistry and maths because she took applied math and chemistry during her high school.... I am now in Grade 12, I am planning to apply a medical program at Conestoga College but could not apply because I did not take academic biology. This is really annoying and a waste of time. I feel really upset for my sister. She is now already in her nursing program but, being busy with high school courses again.... In general, schooling is expensive for us. It is a struggle. We are struggling very hard for our education.

She admits that she did not care much about schooling and academic achievement during her primary school years but has become more serious as she grows older:

In the beginning, I felt like I didn't really know what was going on. I would just go into school learning just to speak English. And then that was actually good as a child, but then once you start growing up, I have to learn more and to better get good grades, because there are people, so people are really smart nowadays. And there are also really tough people too, but like it's a hassle in school. There's always competition. So yeah, right now I'm more determined to do well in school, get better grades hopefully, and because that's for the future.

Regarding her future academic studies, she shares that she wants to study criminology because she does not need to take any courses again for this program. She said that she took a law course last year and became interested in choosing this program. Also, she wants to follow this program because a career in criminology will afford her a good income and there is another reason for her interest in criminology:

I will take criminology for my undergraduate program and later go to a law school. This profession makes a lot of money. I want to make a lot of money. I make my dad not work up again because he is old, and I want him to stay home. I will work and buy a house or just pay off the mortgage for this house. I want to pay off our mortgage too. Also, we need female lawyers in our Rohingya community. We have a lot of rape victims in Myanmar and we need to talk on behalf of our women and fight for justice. Currently, I am struggling with my studies and working part-time to support myself financially, so I do not have much extra time for the community. However, in the future, I really want to help my people with my knowledge and skills.

In general, I observe that Amal and her siblings are struggling to succeed in their education, with parents that can provide little support for their education except for verbal encouragement. As well, estrangement from the Rohingya community makes it difficult for Amal to seek or receive any guidance or suggestions from the educated members.

Being multilingual, Amal is confident about communicating with people from different cultures. Adjusting her hijab, she says, “All my school friends are multilinguals. They speak more than two languages. I have Somali, Afghan, and Indian friends.” She also mentions several times how her multilingual skills help her to mingle with school friends from different cultures and make it easier to understand their practices.

Cultural Identification

When I ask her how she identifies herself, she replies with a combination of ethnicity and her birthplace:

I am a Rohingya. I was born in Bangladesh. My parents are from Burma. I will say I am a Rohingya and a refugee. My parents will say that they are Rohingyas. They fled from Myanmar because of the attack and everything and they escaped to Bangladesh.

Recounting her parents' reflection on horrifying experiences in Myanmar, she states that the "Burmese "kick us out of the country. I don't want to identify myself as Burmese."

Also, Amal stresses her deep attachment to brown or *Desi* culture (the culture of India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nepal, and Sri Lanka):

I am affiliated most with Indian culture and brown culture. We have a lot of things to celebrate such as Ramadan and Eid. [Actually, this is Islamic culture.] Canadians do not have culture. Their culture is kind of dead.

When I ask about her involvement in the Rohingya community, she says,

Nobody knows me; it is just home, work, and school. Um, but I do want to make a difference. I speak the Rohingya language and maybe I can help with translation. When I do have the time, inshallah.

Notwithstanding her preferred commitment to Rohingya culture, I have never seen Amal and her younger siblings at Rohingya community events. As she is spending most of her free time working to earn money to support her personal expenses, she does not have much time to mingle with her school friends. Here, we can see that although she has no communication with the Rohingya community and does not participate in any of the community events, she still claims to be a Rohingya and wishes to support the community. Based on her social media contributions such as TikTok and Instagram, it is apparent that she is highly influenced by brown or *Desi* culture and is accepted by and identifies strongly with this community.

Farhad: Education as Duty

If there is support, it is better. But if you already know how to push yourself ... you can handle it by yourself ... I want to be a dutiful son. (Farhad, age 16)

Schooling

Farhad highlights how he feels satisfied with his parents' effort by pointing out non-academic support he is receiving from them:

They are very supportive. As long as I continue with my education, they are fine. The one thing that we worry about is how we can support our education financially. We are not rich, but they work hard and support my education and tell me not to worry. But I still do. I will try my best.

He shares with me that his parents also repeat multiple times how education is important not only for upward mobility but also for their family and the community in bringing justice for what they have lost back home because they believe only educated people can advocate effectively for the cause of the Rohingya. His mother always tells him that "education is the only hope."

Regarding his future academic and career trajectories, Farhad is in a dilemma as to whether to be a graphic designer or a civil rights lawyer. He explains,

I always like technology and working with computers. That is the reason for my wish to be a graphic designer. But a civil right lawyer is something I wanna be not just for myself, but also for the Rohingya community. Just like fighting for people, helping people. Fighting for human rights is always in my mind. Fighting for the community. I would like to help my community with my own hand. If I am a human right lawyer, I can solve the problems by myself if something happens in my community.

Farhad says that both Rahima and Shafiq are unsure when it comes to making suggestions for Farhad's higher education; however, he believes his parents are happy with decisions their son makes regarding his future: "My mother says any specialization! They really wish me very well."

He adds,

My father will accept whichever path I go for my education. He supports whichever direction I go.

Farhad explains that he is the first person who will go to a university in their family, an accomplishment that was beyond their parents' imagination in the past. In Myanmar, with state-sponsored segregation and poverty, they did not even dare to dream of studying in universities.

Unlike many Rohingya youths, Farhad is resourceful and knows how to get advice about important decisions. He claims his good rapport with the student support worker from Pathways gives him many advantages and opportunities for resources and techniques in education:

When I have questions, I go to Raiz, my SSW from Pathways. I also go to Amir Mamu [the community leader]. I asked about what I should do. He is educated so he knows how I should do. He is very helpful as well. Also, my uncle, Ahmed, he is very helpful. He is very busy, but whenever I message him, he always replies.

Based on my observations at Pathways, Farhad is resourceful and quite independent in doing his schoolwork. This impression is borne out by the fact that he was selected for the International Baccalaureate (IB) program because of his outstanding performance. He says,

If support is there, it is better. But I am pretty independent and I like to do things by myself. Even though it is sometimes hard. If there is a lot of support, it is helpful. Sometimes, having those support but being on your own is the best. If you already know how to push

yourself, if you already know how to do everything by yourself, you can handle it by yourself. I still get good grades. If someone else has to support you all the time, you are like a kid. Nothing wrong with that. But they are not with you all the time.

He is particularly motivated to excel in science subjects, and claims that he wishes to pursue a science program at the university. He also shares how he enjoys taking part in chemistry lab experiments:

Math and science is involved in every aspect of life and also it was heavily influenced by Asian culture, since you must do good in those subjects to be admitted to a STEM program in university. ... Chemistry is my favourite subject. I enjoy doing labs such as titration and other experiments. I have seen such kinds of experiments in television and now, I am a part of my team. It is really cool.

He opines that creating interest in academic learning also depends on teaching methods and strategies used by the teacher:

If you are interested in a school subject, you do not feel tired. For example, I took computer technology last year and my teacher was really awesome. There were activities on Wednesdays and movies related to computer technology on Fridays. We learned easily by having fun.... I learn better when the teacher instructs us as a group rather than as an individual. I perform better when there is collaboration with other students. The teachers should provide more project-based activities.

He adds that the IB program also trains him to think critically with extra lessons and independent learning:

I believe in the IB curriculum and IB side of my high school. There's a lot of things that really help me, because I learn things past the high school level. And it makes me more critical. It helps me grow my knowledge. It helps me understand things better, and look at things outside the box, and inside the box and just look at things in all different types of ways. And it really helped me in school because it doubled up the habit of looking at things all at once and trying to figure it out step by step. And we're all also taught how to do things quickly.

Regarding his perceptions on schooling, he explains how education is prioritized in his life. He also indicates how his attitude is different from that of his friends and his parents:

Schooling is very important for me. Education is my priority. It is more important than sports. It is more important than having fun. It is more important than a job. For me, education is most of my time.... I have immigrant friends and white friends. Most of them do not give any feeling for education. They do not care about education as I do. Most of my Rohingya friends are more interested in sports.... My parents did not have any chance for schooling, so they are very proud of my achievement.... Since my childhood, I have been hungry for education, and I still have the same hunger as my childhood.

Through observations at community events and on social media, I have found that Farhad is a young man with his own mission who is not easily influenced by the environment. At this time, many high school students from the Rohingya community are discontinuing their education and focusing on making money and having fun. Regarding this condition, Farhad asserts,

It is tempting. They are making money. They are spending money. They are going there. I don't know where they get the money from. They are enjoying life. It is tempting, but I

think education is more important. A lot of kids my age, you know, they are trying to get money first. In fact, making money is not a fast process. It takes time. I would like to be educated, and money will come eventually. Money is not the biggest goal in life. If my parents are happy with me, I will be happy. That is the biggest goal in life. My parents want me to be an educated person. I want to be a dutiful son.

At school, Farhad has a Rohingya friend, and they communicate in both Rohingya and English. For private conversations, they code-switch to Rohingya, and some of his non-Rohingya friends (i.e, Middle Eastern, African, Indian, Bengali, and white) are surprised whenever they do that. As it is their mother tongue, they feel very connected by code-mixing with the Rohingya language. He says,

As we speak, we both make a mix of both. A lot of times in English, but we just mix in both. Sometimes, some words are easier to say in Rohingya. So we sometimes just speak in English and then we say some words in Rohingya. Most of my non-Rohingya friends [he means whites here.] do not react very much if we speak in Rohingya. Some of my friends are surprised that I can speak a different language, especially Hindi and Bengali speakers. As you know I understand their languages, but they do not understand Rohingya, so I get a very weird reaction from them.

Farhad says that he has good communication with students from all cultures and backgrounds. His friends are of Indian, Bengali, Pakistani, Kenyan, Syrian, Somali, and Iraqi origin in addition to Rohingyas; a mix of Desi, in the lingo of the youths. He has many white friends too. He claims that knowing many languages helps him get many friends from different cultures:

Having the ability to understand Hindi and Bengali allowed me to actually make more friends.... One time the teacher was teaching about a chocolate factory and some of my Indian friends say, “The teacher keeps talking about the chocolate factory, but does not give us any chocolate.” in Hindi. I turned back and told them “*Hamara chocolate kaha hai?*” [Where is my chocolate?]. They were surprised and said, “Oh, you understand our language.” Another time, I said to my Rohingya friend, “I am ugly” in the Rohingya language and one Bengali girl understood the word *ugly* and replied, “No, you are not ugly.” She thought I could speak Bengali, but I explained to her that I was just speaking Rohingya. It really makes friendship stronger when we understand each other’s language.

Cultural Identification

When I ask him how he identifies himself, Farhad articulates a strong affiliation to both his Rohingya and Canadian identities. For that, he points out his lived experiences and compares them with other Rohingyas:

I identify myself as a Rohingya Canadian. The reason I identify myself as a Rohingya Canadian is because I don’t call myself a full Rohingya person. Because I can’t say that I have received, or I got injured, the pain, suffering that Rohingya people have in the camps. And I haven’t experienced in Canada all the traditions of the culture that the children gain in the camps. So I grew up in Canada, I remember my life in Canada. So, I am a citizen of this country. So that’s the reason I call myself a Rohingya Canadian.

Farhad also points out how he appreciates joining Rohingya celebrations in the community where he gets to partake in cultural food and customs:

I can see my school friends whenever I want. That's not difficult for me. Trying to see my Rohingya friends is actually harder for me; typically, it's harder. And when we have these annual events or whatever, it's easier to, to meet them and get along and be part of the unique culture that we have. Canadian celebrations outside of the Rohingya community such as school parties are something that I've already experienced many, many times. I am a little bit more comfortable in Rohingya celebrations because it's my people, they understand me. And we do stuff we eat, the way we eat, the way we dress, the way we speak, and the way we act is that I was familiar with.... I found I am as Canadian as I am Rohingya. But I am just affiliated with the Rohingya culture more.

When I ask him how he sees himself in the Rohingya community, he focuses instead on how other people view him due to his accomplishments in terms of education. Although he shares these achievements as extraordinary for the Rohingya community, he feels this is the norm in his school environment:

But I've been told I'm more of a role model in the community. And being one of the older guys, in my cousins and my community, a lot of kids look up to me in terms of education, and in terms of how to build up respect within the community and help other Rohingyas.... I feel like that's my role, trying to get people motivated and just be a role model. And Canadian society, I just honestly feel like another member of society. I don't feel like a role model. Nor do I feel like I am something extraordinary when it comes to my group of friends in Canada.

Based on my observation during home visits, his parents go to considerable lengths to ensure that the children have a strong connection with their Rohingya identity. As for Farhad, it

seems that the Rohingya identity is directly related to having a traumatic experience in Myanmar. Regarding his parents,

They deserve to be called as 100% Rohingyas. What I mean is that they are deeply connected to the Rohingya community. They have experienced all sorts of suffering in Myanmar and in the refugee camp. They encourage me to speak Rohingya all the time. My parents say my Rohingya has improved over the years.

Farhad repeatedly mentions the importance of language maintenance in the community and cites data showing that more and more people are forgetting the Rohingya language, especially the younger generation. Also, he recognizes that the Rohingya language is connected with the history and the sufferings of the Rohingya people in the past, and to remember the latter one must learn the former:

I hope I don't forget it over time. Because unfortunately, more and more people within the Rohingya community are forgetting it. And they're not speaking Rohingya that much. And whenever you interact with them, English comes first. Which I do understand is a native language here, but you are a Rohingya, so you also need to speak Rohingya in a native tongue. It is very important for my people, due to what happened to us, and how we were treated. I hold it very high.

Although he shares no social activities with his non-Rohingya school friends outside of school, most of his weekends and holidays are filled with different events from the Rohingya community. Since he was very young, he has joined advocacy works organized by the Rohingya Association of Canada. He has participated in more than 40 marches on the plight of Rohingyas.

In 2016, he participated in the play *I am Rohingya* as a Rohingya youth survivor from Myanmar. In 2019, he performed as one of the narrators for the event “Time to Act, Rohingyas.” He says,

I am very delighted to have this opportunity. I get to know about our history and what our parents suffered back home. As well as that, by participating in these events, I feel more connected to my community and my responsibility to fight for the justice of my people.

Regarding fighting for justice, he refers to the International Court of Justice, which recently has undertaken the case of the Rohingyas. He says he wishes to become a lawyer and fight to get justice for what has happened and what is continuing to happen to Rohingyas in Myanmar. Here again, he stresses the benefits of knowing the Rohingya language, such as getting respect from the community members, including elders.

Knowing Rohingya actually helped a lot to grow in the community.... For a lot of Rohingya people in my community, especially the adults and elderly, they mainly only speak Rohingya with a little bit of English. So, when you speak with them in Rohingya, it allows you to fulfill a better relationship with them.... Instead of trying to explain in any simpler English, you can talk to them in Rohingya, and they typically respond better when you speak with them in Rohingya and it creates a sense of relationship and of importance within yourself because it's like, I speak English fluently, and Rohingya fluently. So, it's like intercultural.

Since 2018, he has taken the role of MC at the Rohingya Genocide Day (August 25)' demonstration every year. I also see him at every potluck or feast organized by the community, socializing with Rohingya youths of his age. He is one of the youths who has founded Rohingya Youth Canada to have more communication and create activities such as picnics, football matches,

and other celebrations. Every year, there is a Rohingya football match organized by these Rohingya youths that invites Rohingya youths from other parts of North America to participate.

He says,

We founded Rohingya Youth Canada for the cause of Rohingya youth in this community.

I want to create more activities, but I don't have much time. I have a great wish to work for this community after finishing my studies.

Farhad is passionate about helping the Rohingya community during his free time. Since he was a Grade 9 student, he has helped the Rohingya kids in his neighbourhood with their schoolwork. Based on my observation, he guides the children with important strategies for handling mathematical problems and other issues. He provides the following rationale:

I have a great responsibility to help my community. I really admire Uncle Amir [Reza's father] and Uncle Suhail [Farhad's father's younger brother] who are working hard for the community. I would like to be like them in the future, too. They are educated and also help the community in days and nights. Really respectable.

Reza: Education as Continuous, Lifelong Learning

Education basically means life. And this thing is for my future. (Reza, age 15)

Schooling

Reza is an International Baccalaureate student. He is doing very well at school. He spends most of his time at the reading table in his bedroom working on his schoolwork or practising additional lessons from the guidebooks bought by his mother. He stresses,

Education basically means life. And this thing is for my future. Because if I don't learn now, I probably won't be able to get a job in the future. And if I don't have that, then I

won't be financially stable, and I won't be able to probably afford the things that I want. And I won't be able to do much in life. I want to be a lawyer when I'm older. I also want to help my community when I become a lawyer. So, I have to take education very seriously.... If I cannot be a lawyer, I want to be a scientist. I love science, too.

Similarly to Farhad and Amal, Reza's ambition to be a lawyer is connected to his desire to help the community. He explains Rohingya history and the background behind the persecution to attendees at every Rohingya Genocide Remembrance event where he volunteers. He claims that not all his friends are as serious about education, but that he loves to mingle with all types of people:

Not all my friends think the same way as I think. So, like in a broad range. Some of them are like, okay, I just need education to live in the future, at least just to get money and a sustainable life.

His love for reading seems to have had a positive impact on his schoolwork. Based on my observations in the home, he enjoys working on his English homework. During these times, he locks his eyes on the screen for more than an hour, busily typing his essay homework. One time, he asked me to proofread his essay. It is an essay based on a movie he had watched. He quotes significant lines from the movie. After an hour of working on the essay, he shows it to me to get my opinion:

I love working on my English assignments. Math is a very easy subject for me as I have done the lessons multiple times during the summer. As for science, it takes time because I think practically about how it is useful in our daily lives. I sometimes argue with my mom

about different concepts, and sometimes, the work does not finish just because we keep arguing a lot.

After working on the essay for one more hour, he informs me, “I still need to study for my geography exam.” For one more hour, he engages with geographical concepts, connecting them with his lived experiences in Ontario. He works on all the sample quizzes without apparent difficulty.

While Reza has no worries about his studies, he does not feel comfortable with how the principal and some teachers treat him and other racialized students:

Being a racialized student is not good. Even if someone else’s mistake, you may get punished. Racialized students get more punishment. The principal is biased. One time, a white guy from my class waited for me at the bus stop and threatened me. After this incident I was suspended from school for 2 days. The principal and the teachers do not take our words seriously as compared to white students.

Reza also says that his mother has visited the school and confronted the principal and other school personnel; however, the situation has not improved significantly. He explains,

My mother just advised me to keep a low profile so that other students will not come and mess up with me as it is very important to finish high school. She doesn’t want me to become a high school dropout just because of some bullies from my school. Once I am at the university, everything will be fine.

At school, Reza says that he mingles with all types of students. Especially, he claims that he enjoys the companionship of his Desi (Indian, Pakistani, Bangladeshi) friends. He states that he

feels close to the cultures and lifestyles of these friends. This may be partly because his family watches Bollywood movies at home, which makes Desi culture familiar to him. He says,

I see the word *Desi* associated with people from Bangladeshi, Sri Lanka, etc. So, at some point you just pick up the word and oh! We technically fit there because of a lot of similarities in culture and food. To be honest, it is easier to communicate with my Desi friends than those from other cultures.

In addition, based on my observations during the home visits and at community events, Reza is a great fan of food, especially Burmese, Rohingya, and South Asian cuisines. Similarities within foods from these cultures also contribute to his easier socializing with people from Desi culture. He says,

I cannot say just one single type of food I love most. I love both Rohingya and Desi food. We mix it all. We intertwine a lot. It's like saying a square is also a rectangle. The rectangle is Desi food, the square is Rohingya food because a lot of those foods mix a lot.

Cultural Identification

When I ask Reza how he identifies himself, he has several answers: “a Rohingya”, “a Muslim”, “a Desi”, “a male,” and “a Canadian.” He also connects these identities with different life experiences:

When you say how you identify yourself, there are so many things you can connect it with. Like you could say your culture. You could say your religion. You could say things like your personality traits. You could say your gender. You could say your size or like something. So culturally, I am a Rohingya but branching off from Rohingya, you could say the religion, you could say I'm a Muslim. For character traits, you could say a person you're

easy to talk to. Someone funny and have fun. And athletic. Gender is male obviously. You're like you could identify so many things.

However, he claims that his identification as a Canadian refers mainly to nationality:

I'm a Canadian. But that's a nationality like where you're from. Yes, I'm a Canadian, but like, doesn't mean much. Why? Well, cuz that's only where you're living right now. Or like, what is your citizenship? But I don't have any predominant characteristics people are looking for in a Canadian. For example, I don't say eh, eh.

Regarding being a Desi, he points out how his family loves Indian songs and movies and how he feels he is a match for the people who identify themselves because of his brown skin and other physical features. It is important to note that he cannot even say a single word in Hindi, Urdu, or any other South Asian language. He explains,

That's our culture. For me, when they say what's your background? It's like, oh, okay, it's Burmese. I identify as Muslim as well. If it's around my brown friends I say, "Yes, I'm a Desi" because I'm technically one. Because our culture is so literally similar to Pakistan and India. They were practically the same. My mama and baba will sing Hindi songs randomly at home. You see what I mean? When I was younger, we watched a lot of Hindi movies as well. So that's also predominant in my childhood. So, you're able to relate to them.

He also confides that being one of a few educated Rohingya families in the community, their family is unique and there is no one to relate to much. He says, "We are Rohingyas, but are we really related to anyone else? Like no, we are unique, that's good. But sometimes you need to fit yourself with other things."

Being community leaders, his parents arrange demonstrations on the plight of Rohingyas frequently and he has been participating in these events since he was a baby. In addition, due to the nature of his family who always stay close to the Rohingya families, Reza maintains a strong attachment to the Rohingya community:

They are my cousins [in reality, there is no blood relation.]. We always talk in English but sometimes, when they forget English words, they substitute them with Rohingya words. I usually don't get what these words mean. I called Brother Farhad "*Boda*" ["great brother"]. I really admire him. When he is selected for the IB program, I also feel encouraged to study harder for that and, finally, I am also selected for the IB.

Based on my observation at community potlucks and other events, Reza is constantly playing or in conversation with other children and youths from the Rohingya community. Although he cannot speak Rohingya, he communicates very well using his English with them. However, there are some negative opinions he has regarding his role in the community. He says,

I don't like my self-image in the community at all to be honest.... The pain is that what I have to do is, even though I want to help, is sometimes annoying because it's manual labour, and I get tired easily. And I have other things that I want to do. Because sometimes if we're helping someone I have to go because apparently that's how, like your older son is supposed to do, even though I don't see anyone else's.

Summary

I distilled five prototypes or patterns in this study based on the perceived role of education for participating youth. Categorization of these prototypes is based on participants' appreciation

of the role of education, their perceptions of ways of connecting with education, and their knowledge of how to use education as an instrument for advancement.

Table 3

Patterns Regarding the Perceived Role of Education for Rohingya Youths in Ontario

Pattern	Name of Pattern	Sample Quotes
1	Education as Elusive	“I want to be successful, but I don’t know how to do it.” (Alia)
2	Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell	“The teachers handle everyone in the class the same way.... They just follow the curriculum by school, but never check the students’ needs.” (Hasan)
3	Student as Scavenger	“To help me with that [grammar and spelling], I use phone technology ... You can also go online and see different tutors, which you need to pay hourly.” (Amal)
4	Education as Duty	“If there is support, it is better. But, if you already know how to push yourself ... you can handle it by yourself ... I want to be a dutiful son.” (Farhad)
5	Education as Continuous and Lifelong Learning	“Education basically means life. And this thing is for my future.” (Reza)

The first pattern can be observed in Alia’s case where the student does not know what she does not know. She does not understand how to ask for assistance with her education. She is clueless about the education system and does not know how to use it to her advantage. It seems to her that the whole world of education is encoded. Whenever I ask questions regarding educational matters such as “What is your favourite subject?”, “Where do you seek help for your education?”, “Why do you want to be successful in Math or Science?”, she is silent for a long time until I move

on to the next question. She has no insight into how to start to improve her academic skills and has difficulty distinguishing one aspect of learning cognition from another.

A second prototype is represented by Hasan in the case study titled “Don’t ask, don’t tell.” In this pattern, the student has difficulty in accomplishing their academic tasks. At the same time, Hasan understands what he does not understand and which skills he needs to improve. In addition, he is dealing with teachers who could easily ask whether he can do well in academic tasks and could explain these tasks if the students informed the teachers of their inability to understand. However, as Hasan describes, his teachers are not interested in assisting students, as this would involve extra work on their part. Therefore, the teachers do not ask students whether they understand. Also, the teachers never inquire what kind of support the student needs, and importantly, Hasan does not inform the teacher that he needs additional support.

The third prototype, represented by Amal, is “student as scavenger.” Here, the student is aware of their lack of understanding related to a task or some needed concepts for doing a particular assignment. However, they are missing pieces of the whole puzzle that will allow them to proceed successfully. As a result, the student scavenges for assistance from friends, siblings, and other people. Amal also seeks assistance from her cell phone to get the answer from external sources. Note that the one source the student will not approach for assistance is the teacher. She too claims that the teachers are not interested in helping individual students. In short, the student is able to fill in some knowledge gaps and piece together information they are missing through the cell phone, and, importantly, identify individuals in the form of friends and siblings from whom they can seek help. The latter group would exclude parents who have no experience with formal schooling and have not acquired literacy skills.

The fourth prototype, which I described as “education as duty,” can be observed in Farhad’s case. During the conversation about his education, Farhad always mentions how he wants to be a dutiful son for his family and the community. Based on the fact that he was selected into an IB program and on his testimony, he seems to perform relatively well in school. His parents are not well educated although they can read and write some English. As a result, he is missing some parts of the puzzle regarding resources for education. As he has a partial perspective, he uses community resources to supplement his knowledge base. Importantly, he feels a duty to perform well in school and his parents are supportive of that attitude. In addition, he has good social skills and is well liked in the community so he can reach different people and build up a share of resources, including the free tutoring centre, to assist him in being successful in education.

The last prototype, which I term “Education as continuous and lifelong learning,” is illustrated by Reza’s case. Reza’s parents, who are university graduates and professionals, have encouraged and supported their children’s education since they were babies. Their daily activities are filled with knowledge seeking for their children’s schooling. Both the parents and Reza are always seeking opportunities for extracurricular activities and competitions that will serve to enhance Reza’s academic knowledge. Reza’s learning objectives involve not just getting high marks but also learning for the sake of knowledge itself. Reza’s study room is like a mini-library with different study guides, workbooks, test preparation guides, and educational games. Reza is surrounded by a world where education is a paramount value.

I would note that while the above five cases are representative of the patterns I have observed among youths in the larger Rohingya community, I have found no cases where students’ academic goals or future aspirations involving education were wholly, or even adequately, addressed by representatives of mainstream schooling. My analysis uncovered discrepancies in the

extent to which my participants were aware of the distance between their understandings and the expectations of the education system as well as differences in the strategies, if any, that participants used to remedy these shortcomings and close or compensate for knowledge gaps. This said, none of the youths who participated in my study were of the view that the Ontario education system was designed with their academic or social integration needs in mind. Although the youths expressed positive attitudes towards Ontario schooling during the questionnaire survey and interviews, they were not getting what they needed. The teachers did not seem to know much about their culture and did not seem to track their learning needs.

The youths expressed an overall positive attitude because they were generally happy in Canada as compared to what they experienced elsewhere, while they were finding alternate ways to have their needs met. They all were to a greater or lesser degree aware of their estrangement from the mainstream model and the need to deploy strategies—be they academic or social—to make the best of their situations as they strove to adjust their life aspirations to their New World environment. Thus, they negotiated an uneasy truce with the educational system of Ontario—acknowledging its limitations in providing refugee students with adequate resources to succeed academically, while appreciating its advantages in opening up gateways to opportunities that enhanced their quality of life, including the ability to identify as independent individual and social beings.

Chapter 7: Discussion and Conclusion

Discussion

Overview

In this chapter, I summarize the findings of my dissertation research, discuss the theoretical and applied implications of my study findings, and indicate potentially productive directions for future investigation. To recap, using qualitative research methodology, my study explored Rohingya refugee youths' orientations towards language socialization and Ontario schooling. To guide my investigation, I employed the following three research questions as heuristics for exploration:

1. What are the past experiences of Rohingya school age youths studying in Waterloo Region's public schools with regard to education and language socialization?
2. How do the past experiences of Rohingya school age youths contribute to their current attitudes towards life goals, Ontario schooling, and academic achievement?
3. In what ways do Rohingya youths' experiences in Ontario schools contribute to changing or modifying their attitudes towards life goals and the value of education?

In Chapters 5 and 6 I discussed the data that informed my first two questions. In this final chapter, I continue my analysis of Rohingya youths' experiences in Ontario schools and how these contribute to forming or modifying their attitudes towards life goals and the value of education (Question 3). Additionally, I contemplate the implications of my findings as a contribution to expanding the body of theory and practice related to the education of refugee students, especially those who are children of victims of persecution and trauma. Finally, I provide suggestions for future research and explore the limitations of this study.

Between Home and School: Bifurcated Identities

Based on the case studies, I have found that knowing the Rohingya language does not in itself guarantee that these youths will identify with Rohingya culture or form a personal commitment to maintaining Rohingya heritage. (See, in particular, Hasan's case.) Nor is there any guarantee that youths who tend to associate themselves with Rohingya identity and Desi subculture will know the Rohingya language or a Desi-associated language very well. (See Alia's and Reza's cases.) We see here how language may be a relevant but not sufficient element to determine the self-identification dispositions of individuals who are children of refugees (Schechter, 2015).

At the same time, I have collected data from participants who live far from the areas where clusters of Rohingya immigrants are currently residing, but who show a strong affiliation with the Rohingya community and a willingness to serve it. (See Amal's case.) In sum, living in the heart of a Rohingya-populated area does not guarantee an individual's affiliation with the community. (See Hasan's case.)

In Reza's, Farhad's, and Amal's cases, participants expressed an affiliation with a subculture they refer to as "*Desi*." According to the Cambridge dictionary, the word *Desi* designates "a person who comes from or whose family comes from India, Pakistan, or Bangladesh but who lives in another country." If we look at the literal meaning of this word, it comes from the word *Desh* which means "country"; the word "*Desi*" refers to "from the country." We can see that people from above-mentioned countries often call each other "*Desi bai*" (brother from the country) whenever they meet in other locales. In the markets, we can see "Desi food" which usually refers to sweets and cuisines from the Indian subcontinent and "Desi dress" which refers to the sari, kurta, kurti, and other attire that is associated with those countries.

Based on the comments of Reza, Farhad, and Amal, their reference to *Desi* corresponds closely with the above general definitions. Interestingly, these three participants also include themselves in this category even though their parents do not come from the Indian subcontinent and certainly do not so self-identify. In the cases of Farhad and Amal, both claimed affiliation with *Desi* people due to their knowledge of Hindi, which is one of the languages used in the Indian subcontinent, and their preference for music, films, and culture rooted in this region. As for Reza, although he does not speak any *Desi* language, his strong affection for *Desi* food and *Desi* classmates from his school are reasons he provided for his self-identification as a *Desi*. Clearly, there is a generational split between the youths and their parents' generation regarding attitudes towards the *Desi* identity, with the younger generation considerably more positive in orientation.

Parents appear negatively oriented for a number of reasons. One of these reasons is that the parents may associate *Desi* identity with victimhood, while the youth definitely do not, not being direct victims of the genocidal policies executed by the Burmese army or independent guerrillas. A second reason is that the name *Desi* is synonymous with the word "*Kalar*" which generally means "migrant from a foreign country." This designation applies to people who come from the Indian subcontinent and have dark skin, prominent noses, and big eyes, features which are repulsive to many Myanmar people who favour a lighter, East Asian look. In Myanmar, during British colonial times, the British brought many migrants from India. They included soldiers, police officers, doctors, and other employees who worked under the British government; merchants, shop owners, labourers, and farmers. In other words, these migrants came from different socioeconomic levels. However, with the rise of extreme nationalism during the late British period and after independence, literature and media in Myanmar often dehumanized these migrants. They portrayed these Indian migrants as servants or potty cleaners even though they

belonged to different class levels. Due to media, literature, and movies which focus on hatred and demonization of descendants of Indian migrants using the word “*Kalar*,” the majority of Myanmar people looked down on them in daily life.

In this regard, although the Rohingyas have been living in the Arakan region for centuries, they are also called “*Kalars*” by the government, the media, and the public, especially by Rakhine Buddhists who are the dominant community in the Arakan region. Their rationale for calling Rohingyas *Kalars* is rooted in the government propaganda that the Rohingyas are illegal immigrants from Bangladesh or descendants of migrant workers during the British time. As a result, the Rohingyas, especially those who have lived inside Myanmar before they are relocated to Canada, understand that identification as a Desi will be the same as affirming these accusations of the government, the media, and the public.

The preceding notwithstanding, all the youths seem to be struggling to appropriate a concept of victimhood that their parents are pressing them to adopt, but that is not part of their direct experiential reality. To resolve this cognitive dissonance, and “get along” with the elders of their community, they settle into a stance of victim by proxy. When my participants discuss Rohingya victimhood it is always in the context of their parents’ experiences and the youths’ feelings of responsibility to carry forward that legacy. Farhad clearly articulates how he is not in good conscience able to self-identify as a victim because he did not personally experience these traumas. Similarly, Reza expresses his ambivalence about supporting the community although he participates in his parents’ activist work and understands the importance to his parents of valuing the Rohingya heritage and helping its members. The youths love their parents and would like to accommodate the identities ascribed to them as members of the Rohingya community by their caregivers, but they do not share the same degree of personal experience of victimhood as their

elders. In this vein, Amal proclaims her responsibility to work for the Rohingya community; however, these words appear vacuous given that she never participates in any community events. Neither Alia nor Hasan provides specific information concerning the suffering of the Rohingya people that is related to either their own experience or their parents' although their testimony indicates they are aware of the narrative. Using the Rohingya language selectively for the adult members of the family and the community indicates that the youths' affiliation with Rohingya identity is connected with their parents' lived experience rather than their own identification.

In summary, notwithstanding that as Rohingyas the youths who participated in my study are ascribed an identity of victim by the adults who have socialized them in their early years, none of them appear to self-identify as victims. Instead, at least half of my study participants gravitated to self-identifications based on personal experiences and participatory practices, closer to the third model outlined by Schechter (2015) in the Routledge article, as opposed to ethnic origin, religion, or parents' background (the first model) or even language use (the second). However, it is clear from my study data that at least several of the youths feel a large responsibility to their parents because of all the hardships the latter have endured. This said, none of these expressions of empathy make for agentic assertions regarding identity choices, which brings me to one of the most important findings of my dissertation research. Rohingya refugee youths' greatest source of support with regard to schooling issues are their Desi friends, a finding that gestures to increased diversification and expansion of the youths' social networks beyond the Rohingya community.

These tensions and "pulls" weigh heavily on my participants as they seek to reconcile the freedoms they experience within Ontario society to negotiate their identities creatively with entreaties from home to maintain the Rohingya culture and legacy. These youths stand at a crossroads, where every relevant choice is fraught with its set of challenges. Consulting one's Desi

peers on one's course selections may well constitute the path of least resistance, especially in the face of insufficient or inattentive guidance on the part of the school; however, this decision could also result in a need to retake a year of secondary to meet the prerequisite conditions to qualify for admission to a professional program of one's choice. As for the adults in their world, including their caregivers, although none I have encountered identify with Western ways, they have not entirely resolved these issues either, as some hold on steadfastly to what they have always known and others see their past slipping away along with their parental authority.

A further finding is that although my focal participants were well aware of the weaknesses of the school system in terms of provision for their learning needs—citing inadequate ESL support and guidance for academic career decisions, lack of intercultural awareness and efforts to promote interculturality among students, they didn't seem especially surprised by these inadequacies, nor did they expect that improvements were imminent. No one overtly questioned the fairness of the system. Their positive attitudes towards education meant their happiness in Canada as compared to horrible lives in refugee camps or Myanmar, notwithstanding deficiencies in meeting their academic needs. My participants understood that they were dependent on their own resourcefulness in finding compensatory ways to meet their needs. Some chose to make the best of resources available in the home (especially Reza, with his parents' English language skills and educational levels more advanced than those of other participants); others proceeded to identify alternate sources of support—mostly from peers.

Conclusion

Theoretical Implications

Linguistic and Cultural Socialization. This study uncovered subtle but important differences between children and parents with regard to attitudes towards linguistic socialization

and cultural maintenance. Parents' home language practices and testimonies revealed how closely they aligned their native language and culture with their identity and their high degree of commitment as members of the Rohingya expatriate community to linguistic and cultural maintenance. While it may be argued that this situation was produced because of pragmatic circumstances—all of the parents except for Reza's cannot speak English very well and have no other languages apart from their native one in which to communicate in their daily lives—my focal participants' testimonies revealed that the adults' perspective went beyond a commitment to minority culture preservation, enveloping an ideological imperative and emotional need to “remember.” Yet, at the same time, parents were unable to wholly impose their beliefs and practices on their children, a situation I attribute largely to their general inability to provide support or guidance on issues related to education and schooling.

In theoretical terms, the parents' perspective on linguistic and cultural socialization conforms to a social anthropology perspective, which maintains that there is a direct association between linguistic and ethnic origin and individual identity and that cultural preservation is dependent upon intergenerational language transmission (Crago et al., 1993; Fishman, 1991; Hakuta & Pease-Alvarez, 1994; Myhill, 2003; Norton, 2010; Pavlenko & Blackledge, 2004). On the other hand, the youths who constituted my study participants had a more nuanced perspective with regard to their self-identifications and the role of linguistic and cultural maintenance. The majority of youths in my study identified themselves as Desi because of their hemispheric affiliation with other students of South Asian origin in their school, as well as their extended friendship networks and the practicality of using Hindi/Urdu in getting a good proportion of their academic and social needs met. Their practices align (although not completely, since they are overwhelmed by a sense of responsibility to a legacy they have not experienced directly) with an

interactional/participatory perspective focused on usage-based linguistic practices where identity is rooted in experience through participation and practice (Canagarajah, 2007; Norton 1997; Pennycook, 2007). For these Rohingya youths, self-identification is derived from a willingness and choice to affiliate with a broader hemispheric community by endorsing cultural norms and participating in cultural practices associated with Desi culture.

Cultural Capital and Habitus. As discussed in Chapter 2, this research is affiliated with concepts of embodied cultural capital and habitus which are acquired over time through a socialization process—a process that is directly impacted by practices and experiences associated with youths’ formal education—and represent a set of dispositions that have become an integral part of the personhood of my respondents. In this regard, we note two aspects of habitus acquired by the youths who participated in this study: their parents’ traumatic backgrounds and personal histories in Myanmar and neighbouring countries as refugees and their own experiences as newcomers to Canada, experiences which predisposed them to affiliate with an immigrant culture from South Asia. With regard to the former, we can see that the youths openly acknowledge their parents’ traumatic experiences and, moreover, the moral imperative of making the world aware of this horrific and singular historical legacy. At the same time, when my informants discussed these atrocities and tragic experiences, they associated them with their parents’ identities, not their own, struggling with the painful question of their personal responsibility towards the preservation of this institutional memory. Here, and below, I pose another question, one with an ethical dimension: is it fair to bequeath to refugee youths who are members of minority cultures the burden of tying decisions related to language preservation and cultural continuity to a moral imperative to remember?

Another important theoretical implication is that, although the youths come from similar family backgrounds, their knowledge about education and the role of schooling is not homogeneous. In other words, their understandings of the school system and how to obtain academic resources are different from one another. We can relate this to Bourdieu's (1992) claim that "just as no two individual histories are identical so no two individual habituses are identical" (p. 46). Although the Rohingya youths in this study have experienced similar circumstances and have similar habituses they responded differently to their schooling experiences. Therefore, the social origins of Rohingya youths will not necessarily determine their destinations in schooling and life, although to be sure their embodied cultural capital is still significantly different from that associated with institutional culture.

A final theoretical implication of my study findings relates to my research methodology, in particular as concerns studies involving refugee communities. Few, if any, researchers have reached the conclusions of my study regarding the tensions I have outlined within the Rohingya community for the reason that extant studies have not used children or youths as focal participants. (Schechter and Bayley's extensive language socialization research with Latinx communities in California and Texas do rely on children as key informants; however, these scholars investigate phenomena of language and cultural identity in immigrant—not refugee—populations.) Findings from the research I could locate (see Chapter 3) on persecuted refugee communities are based on interviews with adult caregivers, findings that I see as reductionist in that they underscore a simplistic bifurcation between home and school values and attitudes. Notwithstanding the difficulty of gaining access to youth/child informants from a research ethics perspective, given the stark dilemma confronting the youths in my study, I find gaining direct access to members of the focal demographic to be a necessary condition going forward.

Applied Implications

There were multiple occasions in my study where participants articulated the lack of knowledge on the part of school personnel and their fellow students about Rohingya and other immigrant cultures. Clearly, if schools aim to promote multiculturalism and equity, it is crucial for professional educators to learn about the cultures of immigrant groups represented in their student demographic. In this manner, immigrant children and youths will understand that their cultures and backgrounds are appreciated, and their learning will be more successful (Schechter & Cummins, 2003; Moll et al., 2017). Beyond the preceding implication, it behooves school personnel to appreciate that like other adolescents, these youths are actively involved in negotiating their identities. In so doing, they are balancing influences from their home culture, the institutional culture of schooling to which they are being introduced, and a subculture, *Desi*, to which they have turned for comfort, support, and camaraderie. The youths' affinities and predispositions—with regard to food, music, forms of expression, style of dress, and so on—are therefore more complex than can be anticipated as a result of a cursory intake conversation with immigrant parents facilitated by an interpreter. They deserve to be explored, if only to gain access to strategies and practices that work in facilitating immigrant students' learning.

After all, if for Rohingya youth *Desi* subculture—which is different from mainstream schooling culture and also from their parents' culture—is supplanting resources normally acquired through parental requests for extra school help, in effect usurping the role of tutor, it may be worthwhile for school personnel to inquire into what the youths actually do and say when they congregate together and talk about school-related issues. In other words, I have come to appreciate the practical value of solid ethnographic field work (Schechter, personal communication). Towards this end, it would be beneficial for schools to facilitate reading groups for teachers where they read

studies related to the lives, aspirations, academic success, and school engagement of the demographics of students that they are teaching and their activities outside of the school with their peers and in the community. As well, they could also get involved in participatory research projects where issues related to a particular student demographic are taken up. For example, this reading group could be part of a participatory action research project that has as its goal to foster the school engagement and learning of Rohingya refugee students.

Finally, it cannot be ignored that my study's findings point to a shocking failure on the part of schooling culture to generate meaningful interactions between native-born Canadian and immigrant youths. (For the refugee youths who participated in my research, this situation is further exaggerated by the extra-school residential and linguistic segregation that they experience.) Indeed, it was not unusual for my participants to volunteer comments such as the following: "Most of my friends are immigrants. They [i.e., native-born peers] don't care about us and we don't care about them, either. It is like two sections in the classroom." This situation results in a lack of exposure to the kind of linguistic modelling that immigrant youths could gain from their native-born peers; and, of course, native-born students also lose the opportunity to learn about the world beyond their borders (Suárez-Orozco, 2011). Here, schools play an integral role for immigrant students in the adaptation process with the local community, but federally supported integration policies could disintegrate at the local level as in schools (Basu, 2006).

I find this situation especially unsettling given that "the province of Ontario is a benefactor of the Canadian vision of cultural democracy that has been inscribed over the last 40 years in Canada's constitution and legal fabric" and that the Ontario educational system difference is supposedly "inscribed as a conceptual lens through which to view the application of societal policy regarding cultural pluralism and integration" (James & Schecter, 2000). This situation can be

addressed by intercultural awareness through citizenship education classes. What is needed here is explicit instruction on intercultural sensitivity through modules and civics courses students take in the secondary school curriculum. Through the introduction of models and modules in their civics and citizenship courses at the secondary level, teachers can afford this kind of linguistic exposure and promote interculturality. They can also modify the course to suit the students in their schools, and this can apply where native speakers and nonnative speakers exchange in English, so they have exposure to Canadian English and exchange information on their cultural practices and traditions.

As Racco (2024) has pointed out in her dissertation study, the citizenship education curriculum can be modified and expanded to provide students with diverse opportunities. This will also more beneficially use civics and citizenship education curriculum time than did the teacher signalled by one of my participating students: “During our civic class, whenever the topic is on Afghan wars, 9/11, and terrorism, the teacher looks at me as if I am the person who has done that. It is really annoying. As you know, I wear hijab, so it is obvious that I am a Muslim.” Furthermore, a participatory action research initiative can also be used to ensure the inclusion of diverse perspectives on interculturality for creating the reenvisioned curriculum. In this way, experiences and social histories of participants would be integrated to define the problems and determine actions for facilitating the engagement of all voices within a specific community (Kemmis & McTaggart, 2003; MacDonald, 2012; Maguire, 1987; Racco, 2024; Schechter & Bell, 2021).

Contributions and Limitations

With its ascension as a welcoming country for those seeking refuge from religious and ethnic persecution, Canada now confronts new challenges (SSHRC-CRSH, 2023) with regard to

educational provision for increased numbers of refugees with limited experience of formal schooling who arrive via indirect, often truncated trajectories.

I intend that this study will illuminate the academic, social, and cultural issues confronting refugee youths enrolled in Canadian public schooling systems. In particular, my findings will shed light on the factors involved in the coming of age and identity negotiation of Rohingya youths in Ontario. I hope that my study's findings also will allow for future comparative analyses of the interconnectedness between the predicament of Rohingya refugees and other dispersed, persecuted communities with regard to social integration.

This researcher believes that it is beneficial for the Rohingya community, especially caregivers, to gain a solid understanding of how past and present experiences of these youths impact their socialization and perceptions of the role that schooling can play in their life opportunities. More generally, this study's findings may be useful to other immigrant and refugee communities in Canada and other host countries, informing their interactions with societal gatekeepers. Related to the preceding, findings from this study may stimulate discussion about ways in which communities may mobilize to develop approaches that will foster immigrant caregivers' confidence and agency in their roles as advocates for their children's schooling needs.

Finally, these findings should be helpful to professional educators in engaging with immigrant and refugee youths to develop approaches to address their children's learning needs. In particular, the study yields important insights into the perspectives of youths whose parents were denied educational access in the past regarding the value of and social mobility afforded by education and academic literacy, in this manner making a contribution to the field of culturally relevant pedagogy. The findings from this study may also assist social workers and organizers from organizations such as Pathways to Education and Muslim Social Services in their efforts to

assist the community with tutoring, mentoring, and cultural adaptation by providing professionals with insightful knowledge about how past experiences may impact the life aspirations of youths.

As for the limitations of this study, there are several. First, as I carried out data collection in participants' residences, Pathways to Education study rooms, community centres, parks and social events, participant observations were limited to those areas. Also, since I interviewed only parents and focal youths, my perspective may not fairly represent the stances of school personnel and community workers who are currently working in service of these youths and their family members.

Another limitation is related to my positionality as the primary researcher. As a genocide survivor who has spent 3 decades in Myanmar witnessing the atrocities, persecution, segregation, and discrimination suffered by my people, I began this inquiry from the perspective of the parents in terms of my expectations for the future generation, and it took me a good while to set aside my personal biases and actually listen to and consider the perspectives of the youths who were the focal participants in my study. Nowhere is Hammersley and Atkinson's (2007) sober reminder about the key aspect of reflexivity—that as researchers we are part of the world we are studying—more relevant than with regard to my own study (see also Maxwell, 2013). To the extent that this research may be considered “transformative” in that it seriously considers the youths' perspectives, it is my own transformation that emerges as the most significant.

Areas for Future Research

In this research, we have witnessed diasporic refugee youths being torn between their assigned home and institutional cultures and a South Asian subculture they choose to inhabit as adolescents. Clearly, it would be of value to follow these youths to see whether and in what ways they resolve these various tensions. A longitudinal study would be of particular interest with

reference to this student demographic, given the deep sense of responsibility that they hold towards their parents and members of their family and community who have undergone many atrocities to preserve their history and maintain the Rohingya culture.

Beyond the useful linguistic and cultural agendas that could be addressed through continued research of this nature, I also would value an opportunity to engage in a more robust discussion with colleagues about the ethical dimensions of allocating responsibility for cultural continuity to children of victims of persecution and genocide. On days of remembrance assigned to commemorate events that represent instances of humankind's worst debacles and cruelties (Cambodian genocide, Holocaust), I witness youth exhorted to "never forget" events and circumstances that may be indelible only to the persons who experienced them directly. Before this project, these exhortations, spoken in the form of moral imperatives, struck me as representing positions of decency and moral righteousness; and I never questioned them or, more precisely, the obligation to fulfill them. But as I embark on a new adventure of parenthood and have come as close as I was able, through ethnography, to inhabit the perspectives of other persons who, while they have not witnessed the horrors I have, face their own related demons, I am less certain of where such responsibility for remembering lies. Perhaps the collective consciousness would be the wisest repository.

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Appendix A: Questionnaire

(Adapted from Kormos et al. [2014], Kelley [2014], and Schecter and Bayley [2002])

1. Demographic Information

Name:

Gender:

Age:

Birth Country: Myanmar, Bangladesh, Malaysia

Transit Country:

Bangladesh, Malaysia, Thai, -----

2. Languages

	Speak	Understand	Read	Write
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1) Rohingya

2) Burmese

3) English

4) Malay

5) Bengali

6) Others

3. Canadian Experience

i. Where do you live now?

ii. How long have you been here?

iii. In which language, do you communicate at home?

- iv. In which language, do you communicate outside?

- v. How do your conditions in Canada influence using Rohingya?

- vi. How do your conditions in Canada influence using English?

- vii. How do you feel about communicating in the Rohingya language?

- viii. How do you feel about communicating in English?

- ix. Are there any conditions which encourage using the Rohingya language?

- x. Are there any conditions limiting using Rohingya?

- xi. Are there any conditions which encourage using English?

- xii. Are there any conditions that limit using English?

xiii. How do you feel about your access to education and academic life in Canada?

xiv. Are your parents receiving any education training? Explain.

xv. Are you siblings receiving any education or training? Explain.

xvi. What does your education mean for you?

xvii. What does your education mean for your parents?

4. Let's talk a little about when you got to Malaysia/ Bangladesh.

i. How long did you stay there?

ii. In which language did you communicate at home?

iii. In which language did you communicate outside?

- iv. Did you receive any professional training/schooling in that country? Explain.
- v. Did your parents receive any professional training/schooling in that country? Explain.
- vi. How did your conditions in Bangladesh influence using Rohingya?
- vii. How did your conditions in Bangladesh influence using Bengali?
- viii. How did you feel about using the Rohingya language at that time?
- ix. How did you feel about using Bengali at that time?
- x. Were there any conditions which encouraged using Rohingya in Bangladesh/Malaysia?
- xi. Were there any conditions which limited using Rohingya in Bangladesh/Malaysia?
- xii. Were there any conditions which encouraged using Bengali/ Malay in Malaysia?

xiii. Were there any conditions which limited using Bengali/ Malay in Malaysia?

xiv. How did you feel about your access to education and academic life in Bangladesh?

xv. How did you get the chance to be relocated to Canada?

Appendix B: Journal Instructions

Recall your responses for the questionnaire and write a reflection. You may provide reasons, contexts, and any further details for your previous responses regarding language use and schooling.

Appendix C: Interview Questions

1. Academic Life in Canada

- A) How does bilingualism influence your academic life?
- B) Do you think your school is supportive of your bilingualism?
- C) Could you share any incidents regarding your bilingualism at schools?
- D) Is there any chance that your parents or family members help you with schoolwork?
If so in which language?
- E) What kinds of academic support do you receive from people outside the schools?
- F) What kinds of academic support do you receive from your community or society?
- G) How do you feel about your schooling? Do you feel hopeful?
- H) How do your parents feel about your schooling?
- I) What does academic achievement mean to you? What does academic achievement mean to your friends?
- J) What challenges do you face academically in Ontario?
- K) What kinds of academic support do you receive from school?
- L) What kinds of academic support do you receive from your community or society?
- M) How do your parents support your education?
- N) Could you share any incident regarding your schooling?
- O) Are there any conditions which encourage your school engagement?
- P) Are there any conditions which discourage your school engagement?

2. Social life in Canada

- A) How does your bilingualism influence your social life with friends?
- B) Do you think your friends are fine with your bilingualism?

C) Could you share any incidents regarding your bilingualism with friends?

3. Language Use in Canada

A) How comfortable is it for you to use your home language or English at home?

Outside?

B) Do you get much chance to read in Rohingya or English? Or any other languages?

C) How did you learn those languages?

D) What language do you think in? You think in the same language in all contexts?

E) In which situations do you speak in your home language with your parents?

F) In which situations do you speak in English with your parents?

G) In which situations do you speak in your home language with your friends?

H) In which situations do you speak in English with your friends?

I) In which topics you speak better in a certain language?

J) Are there any conditions which encourage you using your home language or English?

K) Are there any topics which limit you using your home language or English?

4. Attitudes

A) How do you feel to be a bilingual?

B) Are there any changes in your attitudes since your childhood regarding speaking in

English or Rohingya?

C) What is your perception on associating with those languages at home or outside?

D) What is your parents' perception on associating with those languages? Are there

any changes in attitudes since your childhood?

E) Are there any changes in your attitudes since your childhood regarding your

academic achievement and life goals?

5. Identity

- A) How do you identify yourself?
- B) How do your parents identify themselves?
- C) With which culture are you affiliated most?
- D) How do you see yourself in your community and larger society?

Appendix D: Informed Consent Form

Date: 10 May, 2021

Study Name: An Uneasy Truce: The Significance of Schooling and Academic Achievement for Rohingya Refugee Youths in Ontario

Researcher name:

Hnin Pwint Phyu
Faculty of Education
Doctoral Candidate
York University
zaitun@yorku.ca

Purpose of the Research:

This study aims to explore how the contexts from which the Rohingya youths come and the resources they receive in Canada influence their experiences of language use and schooling in Canada. The data will be integrated to find out experiences which contribute to language use and education of the youths.

What You Will Be Asked to Do in the Research:

I will conduct this study to explore the role of schooling and academic achievement in the goal aspirations of Rohingya youths from Waterloo Region. For participant observation, I will select six families with school-aged youths and meet frequently at their home, community events, and online platforms (Facebook and Instagram). In addition, a total of eight Rohingya youths attending public schools (who may or may not be from focal families) will be selected for the questionnaire, journal, and ethnographic interviews based on their backgrounds and possibility to reflect realities of the community. Data collection will include audio recordings and pictures. The duration will be six to eight months and each participant will receive \$30 gift cards.

The researcher will limit the observation at home visit to 1 hour per week (for three weeks) taking physical distancing. There will be three meetings with each family (participant observation + giving questionnaire form, participant observation + collecting questionnaire form, participant observation + interview) on weekends. Each family and focal participant needs to sign every time before data collection begins. There will be approximately six families and, due to the nature of ethnography, the researcher needs to study/transcribe the data after each stage of meeting for the next stage. Therefore, there will be gap periods between stages.

The researcher will observe the participants at social media and outdoor events. It is a big community, so their anonymity will be ensured, and the researcher will not provide their real names anywhere. However, if the participants feel uncomfortable with that, the observation will be cancelled.

Risks and Discomforts:

As part of narratives of students will focus on their past experiences, participants may refuse to share if they feel discomfort. Apart from that, we do not foresee any risks or discomfort from your participation in the research. Also, the research will limit home visit time to one hour to avoid discomfort. If the participants feel uncomfortable in any parts of the research, they can refuse. The researcher will cancel the home visit if participants feel discomfort or want to withdraw.

Benefits of the Research and Benefits to You:

The activities will be therapeutic because Rohingya youths need to talk to someone who has the same historical legacy as they do but still can ensure their anonymity. The primary researcher, myself, is an ethnic Rohingya and a native speaker of Rohingya and Burmese languages, and similar to Rohingya refugee youths in Ontario, I have spent early stages of my life negotiating between my home culture and expectations of the institution in Myanmar.

Voluntary Participation and Withdrawal: Your participation in the study is completely voluntary and you may choose to stop participating at any time. Your decision not to volunteer, to stop participating, or to refuse to answer particular questions will not influence the nature of the ongoing relationship you may have with the researchers or study staff, or the nature of your relationship with York University either now or in the future. If you decide to stop participating, you may withdraw without penalty, financial or otherwise, and you will still receive the promised inducement. In the event you withdraw from the study, all associated data collected will be immediately destroyed wherever possible. Should you wish to withdraw after the study, you will have the option to also withdraw your data until the analysis is complete.

Confidentiality:

We will be collecting personal contact information that we must retain in order to follow up with you and/or conduct contact tracing if you may have been exposed to COVID-19. Contact information will be kept separate from data collected through the research study to allow for de-identification of the research data. All the data in hardcopy (hand-written notes) will be stored in locked facilities while electronic data (audio and pictures) will be protected with passwords. In addition, all the devices, laptops, recorders and digital cameras, which include the data will be stored in a locked cabinet. Any personal information given in a research study that could be used to identify them will not be linked to other information about them (e.g. health, employment, or educational records). The data will not be made available to anyone except the researcher, the supervisor and the committee members of this project. The data will never be released to anyone outside the study. Data will be stored securely until 31 December 2028 and then will be destroyed. All information you supply during the research will be held in confidence and unless you specifically indicate your consent, your name will not appear in any report or publication of the research.

Confidentiality will be provided to the fullest extent possible by law.

The data collected in this research project may be used—in an anonymized form—by members of the research team in subsequent research investigations exploring similar lines of inquiry. Such projects will still undergo ethics review by the HPRC, our institutional REB. Any secondary use of anonymized data by the research team will be treated with the same degree of confidentiality and anonymity as in the original research project.

COVID-19 Precautions

We are taking all safety precautions to reduce the risk of spread of COVID-19 and expect you to follow public health directives as well.

Only research involving participants considered “low risk” may proceed at this time. If you feel that you are from a vulnerable group with respect to COVID-19 effects (e.g., senior, immunocompromised), please discuss your participation with the research team before consenting.

As always, regardless of your relation to the researcher, you are under no obligation to participate and there will be no negative consequences if you change your mind about participating in the research. If at any time you feel pressured to participate, please contact the researcher **Hnin Pwint Phyu a.k.a Zaitun (zaitun@yorku.ca)**. Your safety and comfort are of paramount importance.

Before each home visit, the following safety protocols must be followed, as per Occupational Health and Safety:

Before every visit, I will screen if the researcher (myself) and the participants have the following symptoms.

1. fever or chills
2. difficulty breathing
3. cough
4. sore throat, trouble breathing
5. runny nose/stuffy nose or nasal congestion
6. decrease or loss of smell or taste
7. nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, abdominal pain
8. not feeling, extreme tiredness, sore muscles

If there is any of above symptoms, the home visit will be cancelled.

Also, before each visit, I will check if the researcher (myself) or participants have travelled outside of Canada in the past 14 days or close contact with a confirmed or probable case of COVID-19. If so, the visit will be cancelled.

I will wear face masks all the time and sanitize my hands upon arrival at the houses.

For the observation, physical distancing (5 metres) will be maintained all times.

During the interview, physical distancing (2 metres) will be maintained and both the researcher and the participants will wear facial masks.

- We will be collecting personal contact information that we must retain in order to follow up with you and/or conduct contact tracing if you may have been exposed to COVID-19 in coming to the research site.
- Contact information will be kept separate from data collected through the research study to allow for de-identification of the research data (if applicable, as detailed in the protocol).

You maintain your right to withdraw from the study at any time, including research data. If you do withdraw, we will continue to maintain your contact information and will only give it to Occupational Health if required for contact tracing.

We cannot guarantee anonymity as the personal contact information identifies you as a participant.

Questions About the Research? If you have questions about the research in general or about your role in the study, please feel free to contact me at zaitun@yorku.ca or my supervisor, Sandra R. Schechter, at sschechter@edu.yorku.ca. You may also contact the Graduate Program in the Faculty of Education at gradprogram@edu.yorku.ca.

This research has received ethics review and approval by the Delegated Ethics Review Committee, which is delegated authority to review research ethics protocols by the Human Participants Review Sub-Committee, York University's Ethics Review Board, and conforms to the standards of the Canadian Tri-Council Research Ethics guidelines. If you have any questions about this process, or about your rights as a participant in the study, please contact the Sr. Manager & Policy Advisor for the Office of Research Ethics, 5th Floor, Kaneff Tower, York University (telephone 416-736-5914 or e-mail ore@yorku.ca).

Legal Rights and Signatures:

I, _____, consent to participate in the study, "An Uneasy Truce: The Significance of Schooling and Academic Achievement for Rohingya Refugee Youths in Ontario", conducted by Hnin Pwint Phyu. I have understood the nature of this project and wish to participate. I am not waiving any of my legal rights by signing this form. My signature below indicates my consent.

Signature

Participant

Date

Signature

Principal Investigator, Hnin Pwint Phyu

Date

Additional consent (where applicable)**1. Audio recording**

- I consent to the audio recording of my interview(s).

2. Use of photographs

I _____ consent to the use of images of me (photographs), my environment and property in the following ways (please check all that apply):

In academic articles	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
In print, digital, and slide form	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
In academic presentations	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
In media	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
In thesis materials	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No

Signature:**Date:**

 Participant: (name)
3. Consent to waive anonymity

I, _____ <<insert participants name>>, consent to the use of my name in the publications arising from this research.

4. Consent to be observed at social media

I _____ consent to be observed at social media.

5. Consent to be observed at home

I _____ consent to be observed at my house.

6. Consent to be observed at outdoor community activities

I _____ consent to be observed at outdoor community activities.

Signature:**Date:**

 Participant: (name)

Appendix E: Informed Consent Form (Parents/Guardian)

Date: 10 May, 2021

Study Name: An Uneasy Truce: The Significance of Schooling and Academic Achievement for Rohingya Refugee Youths in Ontario

Researcher name:

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Attention: Participation in the study is completely voluntary and you may choose to stop participating at any time. There will not be any consequences for refusing to participate or giving any responses, answers and feedback during the research.

Purpose of the Research:

This study aims to explore how the contexts from which the Rohingya youths come and the resources they receive in Canada influence their experiences of language use and schooling in Canada. The data will be integrated to find out experiences which contribute to language use and education of the youths.

What You Will Be Asked to Do in the Research:

I will conduct this study to explore the role of schooling and academic achievement in the goal aspirations of Rohingya youths from Region of Waterloo. For participant observation, I will select six families with school-aged youths and meet three times at their home. In addition, a total of eight Rohingya youths attending public schools (who may or may not be from focal families) will be selected for the questionnaire, journal, and ethnographic interviews based on their backgrounds and possibility to reflect realities of the community. Data collection will include audio recordings and pictures.

The researcher will limit the observation at home visit to 1 hour per week (for three weeks) taking physical distancing. There will be three meetings with each family (participant observation + giving questionnaire form, participant observation + giving journal, participant observation + interview) on weekends. Each family and focal participant need to sign every time before data collection begins. There will be six families and, due to the nature of ethnography, the researcher needs to study/transcribe the data after each stage of meeting for next stage. Therefore, there will be gap periods between stages. As a result, the duration will be six to eight months and each participant will receive \$50 gift cards.

The researcher will also observe the participants at social media and outdoor events. It is a big community, so their anonymity will be ensured, and the researcher will not provide their real names in anywhere. However, if the participants feel uncomfortable with that, the observation will be cancelled.

Risks and Discomforts:

As part of narratives of students will focus on their past experiences, participants may refuse to share if they feel discomfort. Apart from that, we do not foresee any risks or discomfort from your participation in the research. Also, the research will limit home visit time to one hour to avoid discomfort. If the participants feel uncomfortable in any parts of the research, they can refuse. The researcher will cancel the home visit if participants feel discomfort or want to withdraw. The researcher may observe the participants at outdoor activities and social media (Facebook & Instagram). If the participants feel uncomfortable, feel free to refuse it.

Benefits of the Research and Benefits to You:

The activities will be therapeutic because Rohingya youths need to talk to someone who has the same historical legacy as they do but still can ensure their anonymity. The primary researcher, myself, is an ethnic Rohingya and a native speaker of Rohingya and Burmese languages, and similar to Rohingya refugee youths in Ontario, I have spent early stages of my life negotiating between my home culture and expectations of the institution in Myanmar.

Voluntary Participation and Withdrawal: Your participation in the study is completely voluntary and you may choose to stop participating at any time. Your decision not to volunteer, to stop participating, or to refuse to answer particular questions will not influence the nature of the ongoing relationship you may have with the researchers or study staff, or the nature of your relationship with York University either now or in the future. If you decide to stop participating, you may withdraw without penalty, financial or otherwise, and you will still receive the promised inducement. In the event you withdraw from the study, all associated data collected will be immediately destroyed wherever possible. Should you wish to withdraw after the study, you will have the option to also withdraw your data up until the analysis is complete.

Confidentiality:

We will be collecting personal contact information that we must retain in order to follow up with you and/or conduct contact tracing if you may have been exposed to COVID-19. Contact information will be kept separate from data collected through the research study to allow for de-identification of the research data. All the data in hardcopy (hand-written notes) will be stored in locked facilities while electronic data (audio and pictures) will be protected with passwords. In addition, all the devices, laptops, recorders and digital cameras, which include the data will be stored in a locked cabinet. The data will not be made available to anyone except the researcher, the supervisor and the committee members of this project. The data will never be released to anyone outside the study. Data will be stored securely until 31 December 2028 and then will be destroyed. All information you supply during the research will be held in confidence and unless you specifically indicate your consent, your name will not appear in any report or publication of the research.

Confidentiality will be provided to the fullest extent possible by law.

The data collected in this research project may be used—in an anonymized form—by members of the research team in subsequent research investigations exploring similar lines of inquiry. Such projects will still undergo ethics review by the HPRC, our institutional REB. Any secondary use of anonymized data by the research team will be treated with the same degree of confidentiality and anonymity as in the original research project.

COVID-19 Precautions

We are taking all safety precautions to reduce the risk of spread of COVID-19 and expect you to follow public health directives as well.

Only research involving participants considered “low risk” may proceed at this time. If you feel that you are from a vulnerable group with respect to COVID-19 effects (e.g., senior, immunocompromised), please discuss your participation with the research team before consenting.

As always, regardless of your relation to the researcher, you are under no obligation to participate and there will be no negative consequences if you change your mind about participating in the research. If at any time you feel pressured to participate, please contact the researcher **Hnin Pwint Phyu a.k.a Zaitun (zaitun@yorku.ca)**. Your safety and comfort are of paramount importance.

Before each home visit, the following safety protocols must be followed, as per Occupational Health and Safety:

Before every visit, I will screen if the researcher (myself) and the participants have the following symptoms.

1. fever or chills
2. difficulty breathing
3. cough
4. sore throat, trouble breathing
5. runny nose/stuffy nose or nasal congestion
6. decrease or loss of smell or taste
7. nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, abdominal pain
8. not feeling, extreme tiredness, sore muscles

If there is any of above symptoms, the home visit will be cancelled.

Also, before each visit, I will check if the researcher (myself) or participants have travelled outside of Canada in the past 14 days or close contact with a confirmed or probable case of COVID-19. If so, the visit will be cancelled.

I will wear face masks all the time and sanitize my hands upon arrival at the houses.

Physical distancing (at least 2 metres) will be maintained all times. Both the researcher and the participants will wear facial masks.

- We will be collecting personal contact information that we must retain in order to follow up with you and/or conduct contact tracing if you may have been exposed to COVID-19.
- Contact information will be kept separate from data collected through the research study to allow for de-identification of the research data.

You maintain your right to withdraw from the study at any time, including research data. If you do withdraw, we will continue to maintain your contact information and will only give it to Occupational Health if required for contact tracing.

We cannot guarantee anonymity as the personal contact information identifies you as a participant.

Questions About the Research? If you have questions about the research in general or about your role in the study, please feel free to contact me at zaitun@yorku.ca or my supervisor, Sandra R. Schechter, at sschechter@edu.yorku.ca. You may also contact the Graduate Program in the Faculty of Education at gradprogram@edu.yorku.ca.

This research has received ethics review and approval by the Delegated Ethics Review Committee, which is delegated authority to review research ethics protocols by the Human Participants Review Subcommittee, York University's Ethics Review Board, and conforms to the standards of the Canadian Tri-Council Research Ethics guidelines. If you have any questions about this process, or about your rights as a participant in the study, please contact the Sr. Manager & Policy Advisor for the Office of Research Ethics, 5th Floor, Kaneff Tower, York University (telephone 416-736-5914 or e-mail ore@yorku.ca).

Legal Rights and Signatures:

I, _____, consent _____ to participate in the study, "An Uneasy Truce: The Significance of Schooling and Academic Achievement for Rohingya Refugee Youths in Ontario", conducted by Hnin Pwint phyu. I have understood the nature of this project and wish to participate. I am not waiving any of my legal rights by signing this form. My signature below indicates my consent.

Signature

Parent

Date

Signature

Principal Investigator, Hnin Pwint Phyu

Date

Additional consent (where applicable)**1. Audio recording**

- I consent to the audio recording of the interview(s).

2. Use of photographs

I _____ consent to the use of images of _____ (photographs), the environment and property in the following ways (please check all that apply):

In academic articles Yes No

In print, digital, and slide form Yes No

In academic presentations Yes No

In media Yes No

In thesis materials Yes No

Signature:

Date:

Parent: (name)

3. Consent to waive anonymity

I, _____ <<insert parent/guardian name>>, consent to the use of _____ name in the publications arising from this research.

Signature:

Date:

Parent: (name)