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## When Arabic is the ‘Target’ Language: Title VI, National Security, and Arabic Language Programs, 1958–1991

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*All of our efforts in Iraq, military and civilian, are handicapped by Americans’ lack of language and cultural understanding. Our embassy of 1,000 [in Baghdad] has 33 Arabic speakers, just six of whom are at the level of fluency (Iraq Study Group, 2006, p. 60).*

### *Abstract*

This article presents key findings from an interpretive policy analysis of the role that national security ideologies have played in the implementation of federal language education policies in the United States. To better understand this relationship, the study focuses on the case of Arabic language programs supported by Title VI between 1958 and 1991. Specifically, I argue that assessing how policy-relevant actors have enacted past language education policies explicitly linked to national security contributes to meeting two goals: 1) better understanding contemporary language education policies forged in the name of national security; and 2) helping clarify current debates about the most effective basis on which to advocate for language education, indeed for a more multilingual and just society.

In December 2006 the Iraq Study Group, a bipartisan panel convened by then President Bush to assess the U.S. occupation of Iraq, released its long-awaited report. Among other findings, the report documented a lack of U.S. personnel in Iraq who speak Arabic at any level of proficiency. Since the report’s release, two numbers cited above, six and 33, have taken on a life of their own in deliberations over reforming

foreign language education. That the federal government would be concerned, for example, with deficiencies in the language of a country it is occupying is self-evident.

In need of greater clarification, however, is how advocates for language education reform in the U.S. have employed these two numbers. Take for example the advertisement placed by the American Council on Education (ACE) in the January 8, 2007 edition of *Roll Call*, a Capitol Hill newspaper.<sup>1</sup> Citing the Iraq Study Group report, the advertisement features a disproportionately large ‘6’ at the top of the page, and explains just below the meaning of the number. The body of the advertisement reads in part, “It’s hard to represent America’s interests abroad when we can’t speak the language”. The ad goes on to name federal policies such as Title VI that promote foreign language education and advocates greater funding for them. By connecting this advocacy to the U.S. embassy in Baghdad and to the Iraq Study Group report, the generality of ‘America’s interests abroad’ becomes quite specific, namely victory in war and occupation. That an educational advocacy organization would employ such a rationale to call for greater funding of language education policies raises troublesome questions about the relationship among education, language learning, and the nation-state. To be sure, the dearth of linguistic expertise in the U.S. embassy in Baghdad exposes a certain imperial arrogance in not bothering to learn the language(s) of the countries one invades and occupies. However, scholars and practitioners of language education need to ask ourselves: is this an effective way to frame our advocacy for *language learning*? What consequences, both intended and otherwise, result from linking language education to national security?

This article is but one effort to address such questions. It presents key findings from an interpretive policy analysis of the role that national security ideologies have played in the implementation of federal language education policies in the United States. To better understand the interplay between national security ideologies and language education policies, the study focuses on the case of Arabic language programs supported by Title VI between 1958 and 1991. Specifically, I argue that assessing how policy-relevant actors have enacted past language education policies explicitly linked to national security contributes to meeting two goals: 1) better understanding contemporary language education reforms forged in the name of national security; and 2) helping clarify current debates about the most effective basis on which to advocate for reforms to language education, indeed for a more multilingual and just society.

## 1. Situating the research

Three points of background are required to illuminate the study reported here and its major findings. The first is a general overview of Title VI policy and the programs it has funded. The second identifies a gap in the literature regarding historical analysis of Title VI and the national security ideologies implicated in that policy. The third develops a theoretical framework by reviewing applied linguistic research on foreign lan-

guage education policy and advocacy, and identifying competing orientations to how each is framed.

## 1.1 Overview of Title VI

It is beyond the scope of this article to present a full policy history of Title VI (see Edwards, Lenker & Kahn, 2008; Slater, 2007). However, in order to make sense of the findings discussed below, a basic overview of Title VI is required. In August 1958 Congress passed the National Defense Education Act (NDEA), of which Title VI was one of ten sections. President Eisenhower signed the bill into law on September 2, 1958. The NDEA and Title VI are best known as a reaction to the Soviet sputniks, the first of which launched on October 4, 1957. The impact of that reaction can be seen in the opening section of the legislation:

The Congress hereby finds and declares that the security of the Nation requires the fullest development of the mental resources and technical skills of its young men and women. The present emergency demands that additional and more adequate educational opportunities be made available (National Defense Education Act, 1958, p. 3).

Cold War logic trumped long-standing Congressional resistance to federal influence on public education. Not only did the NDEA overcome such resistance, but also the legislation initiated one of the first comprehensive federal interventions into public schooling in U.S. history (Clowse, 1981; Ruther, 1994; Spring, 1989).

Title VI was divided into two main parts: Part A focused on programs for higher education; Part B focused on K-12 programs. Taken together, both parts authorized four principal activities: 1) language and area centers at universities (now called National Resource Centers); 2) modern foreign language fellowships (now called Foreign Language and Area Studies fellowships); 3) research on improving foreign language instruction and the creation of instructional materials; and 4) language institutes that delivered professional development for teachers, often held in the summer (National Defense Education Act, 1958). National Resource Centers originally were organized around geopolitical regions and, then as now, act as interdisciplinary intellectual hubs on sponsoring campuses. One of the primary charges for National Resource Centers is to teach the languages spoken in the respective geopolitical region. Although the scope of Title VI programs has changed over the years, the initial focus was on language instruction specifically (Brecht & Rivers, 2000).

The first ten years of Title VI reauthorizations and appropriations are considered the high point of the program in terms of relative funding and impact (Slater, 2007); thereafter, political conflicts related to the Vietnam War and economic recession left Title VI more vulnerable (Ruther, 1994). In 1980, the NDEA was allowed to sunset, with many of its provisions rolled into the Elementary and Secondary Education Act or the Higher Education Act, both of 1965. Congress shifted Title VI to the latter. Reauthorizations after 1980 afforded Title VI greater stability in terms of fixed compe-

tition cycles, even if relative funding declined. Title VI continues to this day, most recently reauthorized in 2008.

## 1.2 Title VI and historical policy analysis

As 2008 marked the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Title VI, the policy has been the subject of multiple policy histories and commemorations (e.g. Edwards et al., 2008). The purpose of this article, however, is distinct in that I present a critical interpretive analysis of Title VI in order to draw lessons for contemporary language education reforms. As such, there is an acknowledged tension at the heart of this study: my interest in the relationship between national security ideologies and language learning is piqued by contemporary reforms, such as the National Security Language Initiative of 2006; yet the starting point for my analysis of that relationship is in fact historical. This preference for the historical is grounded in the literature, namely that historical analysis of the policy connection between national security ideologies and language learning is limited.

Among extant histories, those that take a socio-historical or critical perspective to policy analysis (e.g., Clowse, 1981; Spring, 2006) spend little time considering such policies as language policies and the impact they had on language education. Others (e.g., Edwards et al., 2008; Gumperz, 1970; Hines, 2001; Lambert, 1984; O'Connell & Norwood, 2007; Rutherford, 1994; Slater, 2007) treat initiatives such as Title VI as language policies insofar as they consider the language programs these policies supported. However, these studies do not critically assess the goals and outcomes of language education policies such as Title VI. Watzke (2003) offers the most comprehensive history of foreign language education in the United States from a critical perspective. The 100-year-plus scope of his analysis, however, means that discussion of Title VI and related policies is by necessity limited. In short, given the simmering controversy over language education reforms explicitly linked to national security (see below), there is simply not enough scholarship on what that nexus has entailed historically.

## 1.3 Theoretical framework: The resource debate

The example of the Iraq Study Group Report that opens this article reminds us that the contexts in which languages are learned extend far beyond the classroom. Which languages we learn, for what purposes they are offered and learned, who learns them in the first place, who teaches them, etc. – such questions have *at least* as much to do with socio-historical realities as with cognitive processes of language acquisition. This study is not the first to have arrived at this conclusion (e.g., Allen, 2007; Blake & Kramsch, 2007; Byrnes, 2008; Kramsch, 2005; Petrovic, 2005; Ricento, 2005). However, calls for a federal language education policy have grown more insistent since the events of September 11, 2001, underscoring the urgency in addressing such questions.

In scholarship and analysis of language education policy in service of national security, two key themes emerge. The first relates to terminology. In language education policy discussions, several labels for the language of instruction operate simultaneously. The term with arguably the least ideological baggage is *Less Commonly Taught Language* (LCTL). As the term suggests, languages are categorized by the extent to which they are taught at the K-12 or higher education level. Additionally, federal agencies use the terms *critical* or *strategic language* interchangeably and thus position capacity in such languages as instrumental for meeting U.S. military, economic, and political needs. There is no official list of critical languages. However, the list that appears most often in federal policy documents includes Arabic, Farsi (Persian), Hindi/Urdu, Japanese, Korean, Mandarin (Chinese), Pashto, Russian, and the Turkic languages (e.g., U.S. Department of Education, n.d.). Because this research focused on federal policies, which use the term *critical* languages, this article adopts that term.

Second, the predominant framework in the U.S. literature for understanding language education policy positions critical languages (and their speakers) as a resource, drawing on the seminal tripartite analysis of language policy orientations first elaborated by Ruiz (1984). Ruiz identified three language planning orientations – language as problem, right, and resource – that reflect underlying ideological assumptions about language and its place in society. Certainly, the resource metaphor has been widely promoted as an approach to language education policy because of its social justice implications. On the one hand, the resource metaphor reframes multilingual and/or non-English competency as an asset to cultivate, not a deficit to redress. On the other, it holds the potential to alleviate conflict between minority language speakers and English monolinguals insofar as both have valuable linguistic resources to share with the other. However, often left out of discussions of the resource metaphor is the second part of Ruiz’s definition, namely language as a resource for economic advancement, military preparedness and foreign policy. Already in this early elaboration of the language-as-resource orientation, we encounter various definitions of the orientation itself that beg the question: if language is a resource, then to what end and in whose interests? Moreover, can resource orientations to language education and multilingual proficiency serve multiple ends simultaneously? Or do some ends and interests count more than others? These very questions provide the theoretical underpinning of this investigation of Title VI and Arabic language programs.

In fact, the implications of these questions have been the subject of growing scrutiny. In exploring this debate in the applied linguistic literature, it is deceptively easy to frame it as two entrenched camps arguing with one another. For example, there is a segment of the language education community that has consistently advocated language education primarily to fulfill U.S. national interests (e.g., Brecht, 2007; Brecht & Ingold, 2002; Brecht & Rivers, 2000; Lambert, 1984; O’Connell & Norwood, 2007). In most cases, language education reform is subordinated to the larger concern

of the national interest. The words of Richard Brecht, currently the Executive Director of the Center for Advanced Study of Language at the University of Maryland, suggest the primary focus for this advocacy approach: “Our motivation is national security, not to improve education necessarily” (cited in Hebel, 2002, p. A26).

By contrast, a second set of language education policy research interrogates the resource metaphor and its connections to U.S. national interests. For example, Ricento (2005) questions not the resource metaphor itself, but rather how scholars, practitioners and policy makers employ it. He challenges language education advocates to clarify “hegemonic ideologies associated with the roles of non-English languages in national life” (p. 350) in how they frame their advocacy. Petrovic (2005) links his analysis of the resource metaphor to what he calls the conservative restoration of U.S. power. With respect to language education, this neo-conservative offensive centers on anti-bilingual education initiatives. Petrovic acknowledges that the resource approach attempts to counter attacks on bilingual education. But because such an approach identifies with national economic and political needs, it bolsters the same ideological framework that it wants to challenge.

More often though – and, curiously, in scholarship from critical perspectives – considerations of language education reform and its relationship to national security are contradictory. For example, Kramsch (2005) reviews the historical intersection between foreign language research and economic, cultural and national defense interests. She scrutinizes the history of how linguists have found themselves entangled in these national interests. As her analysis turns to the post-9/11 context, however, the argument shifts. Kramsch does critique the “current appropriation of academic knowledge by state power ...” (p. 557), referring to language policies tied to national security. In the same paragraph, however, she argues that, “no one would deny that it is the prerogative of a nation state to rally the expertise of its scientists for its national defense” (ibid.). These statements are contradictory: if such a right is undeniable, then on what basis do we evaluate what makes one appropriation of academic knowledge for national defense reasonable and another risky?

A second example, Reagan (2002), relates more specifically to critical languages, although the author uses the term LCTL. Reagan wages a compelling argument acknowledging the profound impact that race, class, and language variation have on language education. Nevertheless, as he turns to critical languages, Reagan invokes “the geopolitical aspect” of language education and argues that it is in society’s interest to develop linguistic capacity “in the various national and regional languages that are used in areas of national political, economic, and strategic concern” (p. 42). Referencing the events of September 11, 2001, Reagan continues:

*Our* need to understand others in the world provides another justification for studying the less commonly taught languages, since the languages themselves play an essential role in *our* ability to understand the speech communities that use them (p. 42, emphasis added).

The sharpness of Reagan's earlier discussion dulls once the conversation turns to critical languages and national security. Now, it seems there exists a set of undifferentiated interests – *our* interests – at play. Because *our* is not defined, we are left to wonder if the racial, class, and linguistic differences Reagan analyzes earlier are subordinated to dominant national identities and interests, of which Reagan was earlier so critical.

I would argue that much commentary and scholarship on language education policy and national security is found in these muddy waters. The literature reflects an unsure mix of critical arguments and those that subordinate language learning to ill-defined national interests. Moreover, the lack of historical perspective on this nexus of national security ideologies and language learning muddies the waters further still. In short, the discussion about language education policy and national security is a deeply conflicted one in need of clarification at theoretical and practical levels. Precisely this process of clarification is at the heart of the study presented here and starts with an historical analysis of the original federal language education policy tied to national security, namely Title VI.

## 2. Research design and methodology

The conceptual framework argued in the literature review above generated two research questions to frame an historical analysis of the policy connections between language learning and national security ideologies. Those research questions are: 1) how have national security ideologies influenced historically the enactment of federal language education policies in the United States; and 2) what have been the implications of that influence for critical languages such as Arabic?

### 2.1 Interpretive policy analysis

To address my research questions, I conducted an interpretive policy analysis as defined by Yanow (2000). This approach to policy analysis assists in identifying policy-relevant actors, those charged with implementing given policies, as well as those affected by policies, whether formal and overt or not. Interpretive policy analysis seeks to identify the meaning these constituencies make of a given policy, both symbolically in the form of words and objects, and concretely in terms of how a given policy is practiced. Interpretive policy analysis employs a number of conventional qualitative research methods, such as document analysis, semi-structured interviews, and participant observation.

#### 2.1.1 The case

In designing this study, I was most interested in understanding the relationship between national security and language learning with an eye on its implications for critical languages. To approach this relationship in terms of all critical languages, all fed-

eral language policies, and across the K-16 system would have been an impossible task for one project. Therefore, I limited my investigation of this relationship specifically to Title VI Arabic language programs in higher education in a historical context.

Several considerations justified this choice. First, although the original scope of Title VI was across the K-16 system, since 1980 it has functioned solely as a higher education language policy. Second, an extensive body of literature establishes that the experiences of Arab Americans and Muslims (and those assumed to be such) stand out as particularly contested ones, especially since World War II (cf. Allen, 2007; Findley, 1985; Newhall, 2006). As Stake (1994) posits, it is often from studies of atypical cases that we learn the most about a particular phenomenon. The third question regarding the case was bounding it in time. The starting point was clear: the first generation of federal language education policies begins in 1958 with Title VI of NDEA. I chose to end the analysis at 1991, the year in which a second generation of policies (e.g., the National Security Education Program and the National Security Language Initiative) with different stated policy goals and administered by different federal agencies initially appeared.

### 2.1.2 Interpretive communities and data sources

A central task in designing an interpretive policy analysis is identifying specific interpretive communities who have a stake in the enactment of the policy being researched. For this study, I defined three: official policy actors (e.g., elected officials, representatives of federal agencies, and spokespersons for lobby groups involved in the legislative process); university actors (e.g., National Resource Center directors, Arabic instructors, and former students in Arabic programs associated with Title VI Middle East centers); and critical language community actors (e.g., Arab Americans both as students and professionals in Title VI Arabic programs, representatives of professional organizations for Arabic and Middle East studies, representatives of advocacy and professional groups for Arab and Muslim Americans involved in Title VI deliberations).

Document sources comprised the greater share of data and included: 1) formal policy texts; 2) Congressional documents and transcripts; 3) policy briefs, newsletters, opinion pieces for the media; 4) program evaluation reports; 5) surveys and questionnaires; 6) conference and meeting proceedings, especially plenary addresses to professional and scholarly organizations given by policy-relevant actors; and 7) secondary literature.

The second set of data sources comprised semi-structured interviews (Seidman, 2005) conducted with members of each interpretive community listed earlier. Because the world of language education advocacy is quite small in the U.S., and because the world of Arabic language education is smaller still, there were few options in terms of whom to approach for interviews. With respect to university actors, I developed a purposeful sample by including Title VI Middle East centers that met these criteria:



1) universities with Arabic programs preceding Title VI; 2) universities that used Title VI seed money to initiate an Arabic program as part of a Middle East center; 3) a balance between private and public institutions; 4) and a reasonable geographic distribution. Additionally, one-third of the 15 interview participants were Arab American, and a roughly equal proportion of men and women were interviewed.

There is a significant limitation to report with respect to the interview data. It relates to those small worlds of language education advocacy and Arabic instruction. Namely, were I to describe the interview participants in any greater detail, their identity would be obvious. This limitation impacts one of the foci of Seidman's (2005) approach to interviewing inasmuch as life histories form a fundamental part of the interview and the analysis.

## 2.2 Data analysis and verifying claims

Analysis of the data followed the systematic approach (Miles & Huberman, 1994) of data reduction, data display, and drawing and verifying conclusions. I conducted three rounds of content analysis (Merriam, 1998), each time coding for emerging and disconfirming themes contrasted to previous analysis, and triangulating each round of analysis across the multiple data sources. Because interview participants' careers often traversed multiple interpretive communities, I re-analyzed the transcripts and my interview field notes in the context of each interpretive community to which the participant may have belonged. Finally, I conducted multiple member checks, inviting interview participants to review not only the transcripts but also my preliminary and final data analyses. What emerged were eight major themes, four of which are presented below.

## 3. Findings

The findings are structured around four major themes that emerged from the analysis described above. Where relevant, disconfirming evidence is presented in conjunction with the finding. I pursue the implications of that disconfirmation in the discussion section. This section begins with findings related to Title VI's impact on Arabic instruction, and then moves to the data concerning national security ideologies implicated in Title VI.

### 3.1 Uneven Title VI programmatic support for Arabic

This first section of findings draws primarily from document data in U.S. Department of Education (ED) archives, *The Linguistic Reporter* (the now-defunct newsletter of the Center for Applied Linguistics), interview and some secondary sources to demonstrate the extent of Title VI programmatic support for Arabic language programs between 1958–1991. In some cases sufficient data do not exist to draw warranted conclu-

sions. However, based on the extant data, the most significant finding with respect to this programmatic support is its unevenness across the four program types sponsored by Title VI.

Insofar as we can connect Arabic instruction to Middle East National Resource Centers (although some African studies centers supported Arabic as well), the region was among the least funded in the first ten years of the program. A table in ED archives dated July 1968 documents funding for Title VI Middle East centers, and its relation to overall language and area center funding. The table indicates waning support for Middle East centers in the initial years of Title VI. For the period 1959–1967, Title VI allocated \$ 4.34 million to fund a total of 12 Middle East centers. This represented 13 % of overall language and area studies center funding over the period, and placed Middle East centers the fifth-most funded out of eight funded regions. However, from 1973 onward, the Middle East as a funded region has counted as one of only four regions to average more than 12 centers. In fact, since 1975 Title VI has funded between 11 and 17 Middle East language and area studies centers (O’Connell & Norwood, 2007).

Table 1: Title VI Summer Institutes for Arabic, 1961–1970

<i>Year</i>	<i>Total # of institutes</i>	<i># for Arabic / # of languages offered</i>	<i>Host institutions</i>
1961	55	0 / 6	n/a
1963	16	2 / 28	Harvard, Utah
1964	22	3 / 33	Harvard, UCLA, Utah
1965	19	2 / 34	Harvard, Michigan
1966	24	3 / 40	Columbia, Harvard, Utah
1967	21	3 / 36	Michigan, Princeton, Utah
1968	21	2 / 44	New York Univ., UCLA
1969	21	2 / 47	UC-Berkeley, Univ. of Penna.
1970	21	3 / 45	Columbia, Indiana, Washington

Data compiled from The Linguistic Reporter, Vols. 3–15.

By contrast, Arabic was not a well-supported language within the summer institute program. Title VI did augment support for the Center for Advanced Study of Arabic (CASA), an Arabic language program housed at the American University of Cairo and run by a consortium of universities. By 1967, CASA had expanded to include a full-year course of study in addition to a summer program. In fact, CASA remains one of the most successful programs for Arabic supported by Title VI (see McCarus, 1992 for a history of CASA). Beyond CASA, however, Title VI did little to support summer institutes in Arabic. Table 1 reports the number of summer institutes that Title VI sponsored for Arabic, and which institutions hosted them. The last year reported is the

summer of 1970 because the institutes were rescinded during the budget battles over Title VI that year.

However, Arabic was among the best-funded languages in terms of research and project grants. Email communication with one participant, an Arabic instructor and researcher at one of the first Title VI Middle East centers, stressed the extent of this support. He wrote:

As you can see the federal language education policies have been of great value to the development of Arabic teaching materials focused on modern standard Arabic, the dialects, Arabic for specific purposes, technology-based multimedia program, and the national Arabic Proficiency Test ... In brief my interpretation of the historical federal language education policies is clear: POSITIVE ALL THE WAY (Participant 10, personal communication, January 17, 2008; emphasis in the original).

Most interview participants echoed the sentiment, namely that the cadre of Arabists and teaching materials that do exist in the U.S., no matter how limited, would not have been possible without Title VI.

In terms of research and materials projects for Arabic that Title VI supported, *The Linguistic Reporter* documented the extent of support over the years, compiled in Table 2. Because the 1980 reauthorization of Title VI ended this portion of the legislation, the data is only reported through 1979.

Table 2: Total Number of Title VI Research Projects per Language, 1959–1979,  $n \geq 10$

<i>Language</i>	Total number of <i>projects</i>
Arabic	41
Chinese	38
<i>Cantonese</i>	2
<i>Mandarin</i>	6
French	24
German	15
Hindi	17
<i>Urdu</i>	14
Japanese	22
Korean	12
Russian	22
Spanish	20
Thai	14

Data compiled from supplements to *The Linguistic Reporter*, Vols. 2–24.

One difficulty in comparing support for Arabic to that for other languages is that languages and language varieties are labeled with considerable inconsistency. Neverthe-

less, by combining all varieties of Arabic listed in *The Linguistic Reporter* supplements and comparing that to other languages, grouped similarly by related language varieties, Arabic remains second only to the Chinese language group as the target language for the greatest number of research and materials development grants awarded by Title VI. Underscoring the significance of this support is that only 10 languages/language groups received 10 or more project grants over roughly 20 years of funding.

Assessing the impact of Title VI on Foreign Language and Area Studies fellowships for the period defined in this study is virtually impossible. There is little systematic data on the fellowships; in fact, inconsistent data collection would become one of the consistent complaints lodged in Congress during hearings about Title VI. In addition, ED archival records on Title VI have been thinned out with each move of the office responsible for oversight of the program. Consequently, the original data, as incomplete as they were, are even more so today.

### 3.2 Arabic and intrigue

Related to the programmatic unevenness described above is a consistent interpretation of this halting support in terms of the relationship between the U.S. and the Middle East. For example, the Arabic expert at a national research and advocacy association explained the unevenness in these terms:

Arabic has always been [*pause*] the intriguing language, I guess that's what to call it. It comes up in conversation. But it has always been this kind of language that nobody wanted to deal with ... I think there is this sort of whole sense of equating it with the Muslim world and the Arab world, and so therefore having a love-hate relationship with the language ... So the small group of people in the 70's ... kept at it, but in a very low-key sort of way. But they've always been relegated to the back of the bus, always ... [T]hey were small compared to what was happening in other languages (Participant 2, transcript 3, lines 26–43).

This participant suggests that notions of the Arab and Muslim worlds explain the intrigue around Arabic and its second-class status in comparison to other languages targeted by Title VI.

Nikki R. Keddie, in her 1981 presidential address to the Middle East Studies Association (MESA), was more explicit in terms of locating the source of intrigue. Keddie, a specialist in Iranian and women's history who taught in conjunction with the Title VI center at the University of California, Los Angeles, stated:

Concerning the above matters, one frequently voiced complaint from my respondents was that sources of funding are rarely openly stated and explained, whether one speaks of a Near East center, a conference, or any other activity. Given the current administration's efforts to extend CIA, FBI, and other covert activities, this is a particularly serious matter, especially to those of us who remember McCarthyism and also the use of spurious foundations and the subsidization of publications by the CIA ... My guess is that most people in our field, aside from those who run [Title VI Middle East] centers, have little idea where money in the field comes from. The

most direct issue ... is the direct and knowing use of academics by the CIA and other partly secret agencies to gather data, especially abroad. I know several academics who worked for the CIA either full time or as informants, usually in the belief that they could influence U.S. policy. I do not know one who thinks he did influence that policy in any important way (Keddie, 1982, p. 6 f.).

Kemal H. Karpat (1986), in the same forum in 1984, continued with the theme Keddie initiated three years earlier. Karpat, a Turkish historian involved with the Title VI center at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, said:

Another even more crucial problem is the development of confidential, contractual relationships between some Middle East scholars and various government agencies – notably intelligence ... What makes it so vital that this problem be addressed is the threat the existence of such relationships poses to the viability of the entire field of Middle East studies ... Fortunately, we have seen that the work produced through these hidden subsidies is often qualitatively inferior to work of the same kind produced by scholars who have chosen the subject out of sheer intellectual interest and scholarly dedication (p. 4).

Yvonne Haddad (1991), in the same forum in 1990, quipped: “The real threat for many in the business might actually be the possibility that peace could break out” (p. 2). In each case, participants locate the intrigue surrounding Middle East centers not just in questionable funding, but also in direct manipulation of scholarship tied to the Middle East Title VI centers by federal agencies in pursuit of U.S. interests in the Middle East. Moreover, the frequency with which MESA presidential addresses took up the issue of the subordination of Middle East studies to U.S. national interests is alone indicative of where some leading scholars in the field located the intrigue.

What complicates these interpretations of Arabic as the intriguing language is a set of data that challenge the assumption that Arabic or Title VI Middle East centers were manipulated in pursuit of U.S. national interests. In fact, these data suggest that federal funding had little direct influence on the content or execution of Title VI Middle East centers or their related Arabic programs. One example comes from an interview with a participant who has played multiple roles as a Title VI policy actor over the course of her career. She reflected on her time as a student of Arabic through a Title VI center and explained:

All of the Title VI funding was for us, it was just kind of there. And we were grateful for it, but it wasn't something that impinged a lot on what we did. I don't think the awareness of government policy and the effect of government of policy on education is, well I think graduate students certainly are more aware of it now than we might have been ... We were, we didn't care, it was money. It was funding. You know, you applied for everything you could get, you could think of, dropped everything in a box and hoped for the best (Participant 4, transcript 2, lines 121–128).

Moreover, in an interview with an Arab American director of a Middle East Title VI center, I asked him to describe how the content and scope of the courses offered through the center were determined. My question flummoxed him, as it was so obvious from his perspective that only the faculty at his institution made such decisions.

Finally, the scandal in the early 1980s surrounding the Title VI Middle East center at the University of Arizona disconfirms the Arabic-as-intriguing interpretation in complex ways. The case itself has already been documented (Findley, 1985) and involved a campaign between 1980–1983 waged by the Tucson Jewish Community Center against the Title VI center. The scandal involved two allegations: 1) that additional funding for the center from Arab-owned oil companies had an undo influence on the center's work; and 2) that its K-12 outreach course, Oriental Studies 497nx, used anti-Semitic curricular materials. To give a sense of the scandal, the main figures behind it alleged repeatedly that a faculty member in the Middle East center had been an officer in the Nazi *Wehrmacht*. This claim was disproved yet never publicly retracted. Two external panels of experts assessed the allegations and found them to be baseless. The second panel's only recommendation was for more direct faculty oversight of the Title VI center's K-12 outreach courses (ibid.).

My own research in ED archives uncovered extensive documentation of this scandal. In fact, it was the single-largest collection dedicated to one topic among archived materials and comprised four 4-inch thick file folders labeled 'UA: Time of Troubles'. Allies of the community group were successful in getting their senators and representatives to write letters, archived in these folders, to ED officials requesting an inquiry. ED officials responded multiple times, both to the community group and to their representatives, that because the Title VI center in question had recently been re-approved for funding, no further action would be taken. Findley (1985) argues that the Tucson case was part of a larger campaign of civic organizations to discredit Middle East studies in general and Title VI centers specifically. However, extant ED records suggest that federal authorities took a hands-off approach. In that sense, the Tucson case challenges other interpretations that locate the source of intrigue around Arabic and Middle East centers with federal agencies, while suggesting that such intrigue may have been generated in other civic or political organizations, or simply among the broader public.

### 3.3 Foreign language education as essential

The third major finding concerns how Title VI policy actors positioned foreign language education as an instrumental part of realizing U.S. interests internationally. While it is hardly surprising, given the context of this study, that policy actors generally rationalized foreign language education in terms of the national interest, they did so in particularly emphatic terms. Foreign language education was not simply a resource for national security, to recall Ruiz's (1984) metaphor, but rather was an *essential* component for realizing such security. Policy actors generally made this connection in broader terms, not specifically in reference to Arabic. However, U.S. interests in the Middle East were at times invoked in connecting foreign language education and Title VI to national security.

An early example of this connection can be found in a speech that Lawrence Derthick gave to the Modern Language Association (MLA) at its 1958 annual meeting. President Eisenhower had just signed the NDEA into law three months earlier. Derthick, then the U.S. Commissioner of Education, would be the first administrator of the NDEA. In the closing speech to the MLA convention that winter, Derthick stated:

All of us are wondering how, individually and collectively, we can do our part to implement the goal of this new Act – defense of our nation against every enemy of body, mind, or spirit that time may bring. This is a challenge to the patriotism of all of us – and especially to members of associations like yours ... It was not, believe me, a rhetorical or promotional stunt, when the Congress decided to call Public Law 85-864 the National *Defense* Education Act. It was a way of saying that language teachers, among others, have an important patriotic duty to perform (Derthick, 1959, p. 51; emphasis in the original).

Certainly, that an administration official (indeed the highest-ranking person charged with implementing the NDEA) would frame the policy in this way might be read as a simple extension of his job. What is interesting to note, however, is the extent to which this interpretation is repeated among other policy actors and across time.

For example, John S. Badeau, former director of the Title VI Middle East center at Columbia University, invokes specific U.S. interests in the Middle East in his testimony on behalf of Title VI before a House subcommittee in March 1971. As discussed earlier, by the early 1970s the economic and political costs of the Vietnam War had impacted Congressional debates about international and language education policies tied to national security (Ruther, 1994). Defining security in military or defense terms had become politically less viable, leading to an emphasis on security as a function of economic competitiveness. Badeau's testimony reflects that shift in rationale:

The United States will certainly continue to be deeply involved in world affairs. However, the forms of American involvement are changing and will increasingly be in the field of cultural, economic and commercial activities and less in military, defense, and Government-sponsored technical assistance programs. It is precisely because of this that it is essential to the American world position to have a continued supply of people trained in the language, culture, and comprehension of important foreign areas and available both to Government and to private agencies ... American petroleum interests in Libya are important and the fact that the oil companies have on their staff Americans trained in Middle East studies and languages now is, more than ever, an asset to them (Office of Education and Related Agencies, 1971, p. 83).

The *Strength Through Wisdom* report in 1980 provides a later example from the data with respect to how foreign language education was positioned as a central component to realizing U.S. national interests. The report was the work of a commission established by President Carter in 1979. Members of the commission included Congress-people and administration officials, leaders of education advocacy organizations, university administrators and professors, and labor union leaders. Their charge was to review all federal international and language education policies, including Title VI. The summary of the commission's report positioned language education thus:

Our vital interests are impaired by the fatuous notion that our competence in other languages is irrelevant. Indeed, it is precisely because of this nation's responsibilities and opportunities as a major power and as a symbol of ideals to which many of the world's people aspire that foreign languages, as a key to unlock the mysteries of other customs and cultures, can no longer be viewed as an educational or civic luxury (Strength through Wisdom report, 1980, p. 12).

Two characteristics of this finding stand out as noteworthy. The first is the consistency with which it occurred, as much across data sources<sup>2</sup> as across the time period included in this analysis. The second is the flipside of that consistency: there were virtually no instances in 33 years' worth of document data in which policy actors, Arab American or otherwise, attempted to frame foreign language education in another way. Even in the few instances in which language education, and Title VI's role in supporting such, is framed in terms of mutual understanding, the dynamics of U.S. hegemony often lie just beneath the surface. Take as one example this excerpt from an article by Kenneth Mildenberger assessing the impact of Title VI on African studies. Mildenberger had long been in the leadership of the Modern Language Association but had moved to the U.S. Office of Education to administer Title VI in its first years. In a section of the article entitled 'Language Development and the Cold War', Mildenberger (1960) maintained:

American responsibility is to secure continued freedom of the new African nations as they emerge onto an international scene of somber and ominous crisis. To do this, we must establish mutual respect and understanding. Fundamental to this task is the achievement of effective communication (p. 20).

Calling for the development of effective communication skills to foster international understanding certainly implies a social justice basis for defining security. What complicates this reading, however, is that Mildenberger continued in the following paragraph to cite quantitative data describing Soviet efforts to develop capacity in multiple African languages. He compared the extent of Soviet radio broadcasts in African languages (including Arabic) to those of the U.S., primarily its Voice of America program. In both cases, he laments how far behind the United States is. In essence, a complete reading of his argument brings us right back to Cold War competition implicated in Title VI policy from its inception.

### 3.4 The refrain

The fourth major finding occurred in the data with similar consistency across time and data source. Specifically, Title VI policy actors cited an ongoing lack of linguistic capacity in languages needed for the pursuit of U.S. national interests. Of course, it is thoroughly unsurprisingly that the original rationales for Title VI centered on concerns over insufficient linguistic capacity in critical languages such as Arabic. One example is in the testimony of Kenneth Mildenberger, then still director of the MLA's Foreign



Language Program, during the first NDEA authorization hearings. In written testimony to Congress he stated:

Although it is a commonplace that the United States now occupies a position of world leadership, it is still not sufficiently recognized that in order to meet, on a basis of mutual understanding and cooperation, not only the diplomats and military men but also the common people of the other nations of the globe, the United States does not yet have nearly enough persons adequately trained in the languages (Scholarship and Loan Program, 1958, p. 1824).

What is perhaps more surprising is that these concerns appeared in Title VI advocacy so consistently over time, that is, even after decades of Title VI funding. One example is from an article by William Jones in the *Chronicle of Higher Education*, which was entered into the Congressional record in April 1970. The timing of the article and its inclusion in the federal record is significant in relationship to political conflicts described earlier over Title VI funding because of the Vietnam War. In fact, President Nixon's 1970 budget cut all funding for Title VI (Ruther, 1994). Jones' article was part of written documentation used to advocate for restoration of that funding. In the article, Jones quotes a speech given in 1966 by John K. Fairbank, a Sinologist at Harvard University:

Not only have we been caught with our pants down, but with our pants off ... We have this terrific fire power, and we tear things up. But we don't know what the people are saying ... It's absolutely incredible to me that the American academic community has responded so slowly to such a clear need. The net result is a scandal (Office of Education Appropriations, 1970, p. 301).

A similar complaint is found in a 1980 book entitled *The Tongue-Tied American: Confronting the Foreign Language Crisis*, written by the late Senator Paul Simon (D-IL). The book was updated and released in a paperback edition 12 years later. In the introduction to that edition, Simon (1992) wrote, in reference to the Gulf War of 1991:

During the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, our military had only forty-five linguists with any knowledge at all of Iraqi dialect – and only five of them were trained in intelligence. International understanding is a fundamental component of national security. Perhaps war would not have been necessary if we had communicated more effectively with the Iraqis in the months preceding the conflict (p. x).

Later in the first chapter, Simon revisits the complaint about insufficient linguistic capacity. He develops the argument by counter posing the amount of funding made available for weaponry versus international and language education. Simon wrote:

While it continues to be relatively easy to get appropriations for bombers and submarines and nuclear weapons, we move much less swiftly, if at all, on measures that contribute to real security – a world of adequate communications and cultural understanding, which together could eliminate, or dramatically reduce the need for those bombers and submarines and nuclear weapons. In 1977, Navy Lieutenant Howell Conway Ziegler, assigned as a U.N. military observer in the Middle East, averted a confrontation by speaking to both sides in Hebrew and Arabic. But how few we have encouraged to develop that type of knowledge (p. 7).

Across the 33-year time period included in this analysis, then, we encounter with remarkable consistency a refrain among Title VI policy actors that the U.S. lacks essential capacity in critical languages. Ironically, this refrain appeared most often in advocacy contexts such as Congressional testimony, program reviews and secondary literature. In other words, complaints about lacking proficiency were employed to defend and extend Title VI, a long-standing policy charged with producing that linguistic capacity in the first place.

#### 4. Discussion

The findings discussed above identify two specific ways in which national security ideologies have influenced the enactment of Title VI. On the one hand, if also less commonly, national security ideologies have formed the central basis on which policy actors explained their sense of controversy or intrigue surrounding Arabic language education in the U.S. On the other, and with remarkable consistency, policy actors in fact used national security ideologies as the core of their advocacy for formation, implementation, maintenance and expansion of the policy. As I have suggested above, it is neither surprising nor especially interesting that the formation of Title VI policy in the late 1950s implicated Cold War logic. One might adopt a political science framework and interpret the connection between national security and foreign language education as pragmatic expediency to take advantage of the political openings that one encounters in any policy process. Or one might take an historical approach and see Title VI as part of a broader project of post-World War II federal policy formation in relation to the Cold War. Both readings are accurate in their own way and drive the analysis of many histories and program evaluations of Title VI and NDEA more broadly (e.g., Clowse, 1981; Edwards et al., 2008; Lambert, 1984; O'Connell & Norwood, 2007). However, far more confounding is that policy actors continued to use national security ideologies in their advocacy for Title VI for decades to come. In other words, linking Title VI to national security ideologies coalesced into a common sense about foreign language education policy as a resource for national interests that held across the time period included in this analysis.

With respect to the second research question pursued in this study, the central question is what the implications are, based on evidence in the data reported here, of framing language education policy as a resource for national security. In vulgar terms: did the resource orientation as Ruiz (1984) defines it work? On one level, the data presented here seem to indicate that a resource orientation to reforming language education through policies tied to national security did work. Although financial support for each of the four programs for Arabic sponsored by Title VI was uneven across the period reported here, both document data and interview participants made clear that such funding was indispensable. Without Title VI programs, it is unlikely that the United States would have the cadre of Arabists and Arabic teaching materials that it currently

does, no matter how limited both may be. However, those positive assessments did not include any description of leveraging that cadre or those materials to create substantial capacity in the language.

The gap between extant expertise and materials for Arabic language instruction and capacity challenges us then to interrogate the resource orientation at a deeper level; as Ricento (2005) describes it, to clarify hegemonic assumptions about the resource metaphor. To do so in this case, we must square the following findings from the data against one another: 1) the stated aims of the policy; 2) the common sense that emerged between 1958–1991 that Title VI language programs, including those for Arabic, were essential tools for realizing U.S. national interests; and 3) that policy actors consistently complained that Title VI failed to produce such foreign language capacity, thus threatening U.S. national interests and security.

As described above, Ruiz (1984) originally defined the resource orientation to language policy in two ways: as a tool for realizing social justice and as a tool for realizing national interests. There is virtually no evidence in the data analyzed in this study that Title VI and its Arabic programs were ever described in social justice terms. Two findings discussed above hint at the potential for social justice orientations of the resource metaphor, yet a closer read dispels the promise. The first concerns Kenneth Mildenberger and his analysis of U.S. versus Soviet language capacity in African languages, including Arabic. The rapid rhetorical shift from support for fledgling democracies in Africa to competition with the Soviet Union wiped away any veneer of social justice concerns, and instead revealed a more dominant Cold War political logic. Second, there were few instances (e.g., the *Strength through Wisdom* report, 1980) in which the data referred to language minority communities who speak critical languages targeted by policies such as Title VI. To recall Ruiz's (1984) social justice orientation to the resource metaphor, construing language as a resource in the U.S. holds the potential to recognize the linguistic capital held by both language minorities and by English monolinguals insofar as each benefits from the assets of the other in bilingual education programs. Yet even the few instances from the data in which language minorities received attention, policy actors construed language minorities as a resource to improve language programs tied to the national interests, not language programs as a resource for language minority communities themselves.

By contrast, as the findings indicate, the resource orientation to foreign language policies such as Title VI has been dominated almost exclusively by framing language capacity as a resource for realizing U.S. national interests abroad. Two points underscore this conclusion. First, Title VI policy actors continued to invoke national security ideologies even during the Vietnam War era. To recall, political conflicts and resistance to the Vietnam War jeopardized the legitimacy of educational programs tied to national security. Rather than re-imagine Title VI advocacy, policy actors simply stressed more emphatically the usefulness of language education to national security.

Even as the crisis surrounding the Vietnam War came to a head, Title VI policy actors tended to argue that expanded language capacity could aid the rehabilitation of U.S. hegemony abroad.

Second, there is little evidence that policy actors embraced the national security ideologies implicated in Title VI policy out of any sort of coercion, despite fears of such expressed by many policy actors (especially those directly tied to Middle East centers). The data reflect no specific instances of federal officials meddling in the administration of Middle East Title VI centers or the related Arabic language programs. The fact that Title VI policy actors across the interpretive communities in this study (i.e., not just Congressional and governmental actors) framed their interpretations in terms of U.S. national interests and security suggests a much more complicated ideological dynamic at play.

Those ideological dynamics regarding foreign language education seem to parallel the dynamics Petrovic (2005) identified with respect to bilingual education and the resource debate, as discussed in § 1.3. To recall, Petrovic argues that most efforts to reframe political support for bilingual education<sup>3</sup> under the auspices of the resource metaphor ultimately reinforce an ideological framework that undermines language rights and bilingualism in the first place. His read on this devil's circle is particularly revealing for this case of framing language education policies as a resource for national security. On every other front in the time period included in this study, one would have to conclude that invoking national security proved at least politically expedient in advancing an agenda. The federal highway system, the massive expansion of public higher education, even the military industrial complex itself, which for decades has received the most funding, both in raw and proportional terms, than any other industrialized country – in each of the areas and more, invoking national security has proven expedient to see concrete progress that has affected the lives of millions of ordinary people. The same cannot be said necessarily for foreign language education, especially in critical foreign languages. This last point is likely the most controversial, but an inevitable conclusion to draw based on the findings of this study. That is, the yardstick by which I claim the 'success' or not of Title VI is not multilingual proficiency among large swaths of the U.S. population. That was never the stated goal of Title VI, and it was certainly not the outcome. Instead, Title VI seems to have been ineffective in meeting its own goal of expanded proficiency in critical languages, such as Arabic, in direct service of national interests. The refrain discussed in § 3.4 makes this clear: despite decades of targeted funding for Arabic and other languages, policy actors continued to register their concern that the U.S. lacks sufficient capacity in critical languages. In short, *even on its own terms* a resource approach to language education reform in the service of the national interest seems to have been ineffectual.

In order to better support these conclusions, two additional steps are required. The first speaks to an obvious limitation to this study, that it examines only one language

funded by Title VI in the given time period. Additional comparative studies are needed to determine whether any of these conclusions hold. Moreover, if national interests and national security have dominated as the focus of the resource orientation to language education reform, then to help verify the conclusions argued here, language education advocates might specifically frame a series of language education reforms and policies in which the social justice orientation to the resource metaphor is privileged. In this way, we can assess empirically whether Ricento (2005) was correct: can we make use of the resource metaphor as long as we clarify hegemonic ideologies that undergird it? Or must we find another orientation altogether that allows us to reform language education in the United States in ways that actually lead to societal multilingualism?

#### Notes

1. *Roll Call* has as its primary audience members of the U.S. Congress and their staff.
2. Because interview participants often discussed this issue in contemporary terms, these data are not included in this discussion.
3. 'Bilingual education' in the United States most often refers to dual language programs for English and a non-dominant language, such as Spanish. Most bilingual education models in the U.S. are compensatory and aimed at improving English language skills and academic performance for immigrant children or the children of immigrants. 'Bilingual education' does not generally refer to elite dual language programs.

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