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LITERACIES AND RACIAL IDEOLOGY: A BLACK COLOMBIAN YOUNG MALE'S
LEARNING AND PARTICIPATION IN AN URBAN SCHOOL

BY

BEATRIZ EUGENIA GUERRERO ARIAS

DISSERTATION

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Doctoral Committee:

Professor Arlette Ingram Willis, Chair

Professor Liora Bresler

Professor Emerita Georgia Garcia

Assistant Professor Christina DeNicolo, Wayne State University

ABSTRACT

This is a qualitative case study of the relationships between literacy and racial ideology in *Surgir*, a school in the city of Cali, Colombia. This study focuses on Yeison Daniel, a black Colombian young male's learning and participation in the school and in the classroom. His learning and participation are framed within his views on literacy as tied to racial struggles. Informants in this case study involve Yeison Daniel's aunt and grandmother, *Surgir*'s academic coordinators, fifth grade teachers and students, the librarian, and the principal. Data was documented in fieldnotes, through participant observations, interviews, conversations (face-to-face and virtual), artifacts, literacy pieces, screenshots, digital files, websites, and documents in the (a) fifth grade classroom, (b) the school space (offices, cafeteria, hallways, play zones, coliseum, library, teachers' lounge, and rooms), and (c) Yeison Daniel's home.

Findings showed that Yeison Daniel's views on literacy are linked to learning, participation, and racial identity. His views on literacy in the home setting represent a way to foster his racial identity as a black young male living-in-the-city who likes English, urban dance, and hip hop music. In the home setting, Yeison Daniel's literacies are used to convey a particular style and they are characterized by the use of Internet platforms like Instagram, Facebook, Google Translate, and Youtube. He understands literacies as ways of learning how to foster a black-living-in-the-city-identity, and learning as doing and participating.

In the school, literacies work as a tool for institutionalizing and contesting the school's racial ideology shown through the *mestizaje* racial frame. The *mestizaje* racial frame involves ideas about black people being rural, about ethnicity –not race– as the criteria for categorizing groups, and about a *mestizo* national identity that rejects blacks and indigenous peoples. This frame is institutionalized through the school official literacies. The *mestizaje* racial frame and the

literacies it uses were analyzed in a school event called the *Ethnic Week*. The *mestizaje* racial frame is also contested through literacies. These literacies, likewise Yeison Daniel's, are inextricably tied to identity, learning and racial struggles. In the classroom, literacy and racial ideology were institutionalized and contested in a different way. This was because the fifth grade teacher in Yeison Daniel's classroom is a black male who moved between having to teach content tied to the *mestizaje* racial frame and its literacies, and contesting it.

In the school, Yeison Daniel's views on literacy impact his learning and participation while hindering his academic standing. In the general school setting Yeison Daniel contests the *mestizaje* racial frame and its literacies with his opinions and non-participation in the *Ethnic Week's* activities that promoted the school racial ideology. In the classroom, his participation relates to instances of contestation that range from non-participation to peripheral legitimate participation, depending on the events' racial ideology weight. For Yeison Daniel, contestation is a peripheral legitimate participation in the community of black-people-living-in-the-city, and for the school, contestation are discipline misbehaviors.

Findings suggest that relationships between literacy and race in the school range from using literacy for institutionalizing the school's racial ideology, to using literacy for contesting it. The characteristics of the literacies used for institutionalization correspond with what I call Racialized Literacies of Domination (RLD) that are presented as generic, official, and as having an intrinsic value for all people to move forward. The characteristics of the literacies used for contestation correspond with what I call Racialized Literacies of Struggle (RLS) that are alternative, organic, varied, and tied to identities of racial struggle. The tensions of practicing these literacies represent tensions between structure and agency in the school.

This study calls for reflection on the important role the Colombian government places on official literacy and education for improving the living conditions of the black population living in poverty. This study highlights that understanding the role of literacy in the education of black students is much more complex than just increasing literacy rates. Due to the racialized character of literacies, understanding the role of literacy in the education of black children must be carefully reflected on as tensions between structure and agency, instead of seeing literacy as the salvation for all black students. Future research must include the analysis of literacies in light of practices of contestation, intersectionality, the role of the home setting for nesting identities of struggle, *mestizos*' racial enactment in educational settings, and institutional racial ideologies.

To my Father and to Yeison Daniel

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Chapter One

Researching Education, Literacy, and Race in Colombia

Researching race issues in Colombia, a country that on the one hand prides itself with *mestizaje* (the mixing of Black, Indigenous, and White peoples) and diversity, and on the other hand rejects blackness and indigenusness while praising whiteness and whitening (Wade, 2013), is complex. Making evident this contradiction uncovers how racial dynamics play out to structure different life chances for the racial groups and for the individuals who are placed in them (Bonilla-Silva, 2014). To investigate race issues in Colombia entails showing that for most blacks and indigenous peoples, life opportunities are qualitatively different than those of the dominant *mestizo* people (the unmarked, by default, mixed, tending to light-skinned population), which precisely confirms the contradiction above stated.

Educational policy and its praxis construct black people with a strictly ethnic view, which reduces blackness to the stereotyped cultural practices of black people who live in rural towns (Lozano-Lerma, 2013; Rojas & Castillo, 2005). Black people in Colombia have migrated and the presence of black people in the cities is now bigger than the one living in towns (Rodríguez, Alfonso, & Cavelier, 2009). For people living in towns, the government has established what is called *ethnic education*, which is the mandated policy for culturally and linguistically relevant education of black and indigenous peoples who live in their own reservations or towns. For black and indigenous peoples living in the cities, educational policy extends ethnic education programs to these settings (Secretaría de Educación Municipal, 2015) based on the *mestizos'* fixed stereotyped representation of black people's cultural ways (Lozano-Lerma, 2013). The education of black students in the cities has just started to be documented through research, and findings

not only question the relevance of the ethnic approach, but they also suggest that it supports the racism that permeates teachers' instruction (Valoyes, 2015).

In this frame, to study education, literacy, and race in the urban context implies to reflect not only on how literacies are practiced in different settings, by whom, the functions they fulfill, and the relations they mediate, but also on issues related to power and domination. To study education, literacy, and race in the urban context implies then to reflect on the role of literacies in the institutionalization and contestation of political, economic, social, educational, and cultural structures that create hierarchies in racial categories; it requires to inquire literacies' role in the maintenance and resistance of racial hierarchies through the mastering and rejection of official literacies; and it also demands to reflect on students' use of multiple and oppositional literacy practices.

In this chapter I contextualize this study that analyzes how a young *Caleño* (from the city of Cali) black male's views on literacy and race impact his learning and participation in the school, and how literacy and race are related in his school. First, I briefly discuss my use of the term "literacy" in the Colombian context. Second, I describe who are black people in Colombia, and their living conditions in the national and local contexts. Third, I present the policy that frames the country's view on literacy, and the education of black students under "ethnic education". Fourth, based on this picture I state the problem, the purpose, the necessity, and the questions of this study, and how I carried it out. Finally, I present the definition of key terms.

Defining Literacy for the Colombian Context

In the US, the dominant broad definition of *Literacy* involves a cognitive view that emphasizes on knowledge and literacy behaviors (Farr, 2009) more than on linguistic skills exclusively. In Latin America, ideologies of written language differentiate between linguistic

skills, and cognitive skills (Zavala, 2004). Due to this, not only different terms exist to refer to one or the other, but also the translation of the term *Literacy* is not totally transparent. Within the Spanish speaking countries in Latin America, among the terms used to refer to the linguistic skills exclusively are *Alfabetización* (alphabetization as the process of teaching/learning the alphabet, coding and decoding letters, like Freire's reading the word), and *Lecto-escritura* (a psychology term for linguistic skills in the school context). Among the terms used to refer to the not only linguistic, but moreover the cognitive behaviors are *Literacidad* (direct translation from the term in English), *Cultura Escrita* (Written Culture) and its plural version *Culturas Escritas*, and *Lectura y Escritura* (Reading and Writing). Thus, the use of a particular term in Spanish carries with it an ideological conception of it.

In Colombia the use of the term *alfabetización* (and the noun *alfabetismo*) with a basic skills tint to it, is evident in governmental reports through the binary *alfabetismo/analfabetismo* (literacy/illiteracy) that refers to knowing or not knowing the alphabet. The use of the term *literacidad* in Spanish captures a sociocultural approach to literacy (Mora, 2012), and it contributes to the growing body of research that uses the term in Spanish speaking countries to mean practices that address, but exceed those of the school institution (Niño-Murcia, 2004; Cassany & Castellá, 2010; Mora, 2011; Zavala, 2002).

In this research I use the term *Literacy/ies* to mean social practices mediated by texts, and *Literacy Practices* as the relationships between reading, writing, and broader social structures (Barton & Hamilton, 2000). I also use the term *alfabetización* whenever is necessary to cite, paraphrase or refer to how Colombian institutions define it. Since I also cite Latin American authors, I use the terms they use in preserving the ideological positions they refer to, and to show the different options that exist within the region. My take on literacy practices is a sociocultural

one precisely because addressing issues of education, literacy, and race in Colombia implies to understand and document literacy practices beyond those of the school setting.

Who are Black People in Colombia?

African descendants were forcibly brought to Colombia as slaves (Mosquera, 2003). The origins of African slaves are also unclear, but the Portuguese factories that had control over the Spaniard slave trade, were located in Cape Verde, Luanda (Angola), Saint Tomé Island, and Ouidah (Benin) (Arboleda, 2003). Many slaves died in the ships due to diseases, physical agony, or they committed suicide in the transatlantic trip. Once in Cartagena, slaves were abused for working in activities such as: mining, agriculture, animal husbandry, and construction (Arocha, 2003). By 1720, in *Nueva Granada* (how the country was named at that time), a contrast between people living in highland and lowland areas developed, along with the belief that highlands populated by *mestizos* (like the cities of Bogotá, Tunja, Popayán, Pasto) were more intellectually developed (Múnera, 2005). Slaves were taken to the lowlands of the Pacific coast to work in gold mines (Wade, 1995). Others remained in the Atlantic coast close to Cartagena where *mestizos* used –and abused– them for hard work. This movement of African slaves for economic reasons created a clear regionalization of race in Colombia in which the Caribbean and the Pacific regions harbored most of the black population (Wade, 1995).

African slaves explored different ways to oppose a system of servitude through their work, religion, music, rituals, and practices (de Roux, 2011). Slaves also resisted and pursued their freedom by rebelling and escaping their owners (McFarlene, 1991). The term “*cimarrón*” was used to refer to the slave who rebelled against servitude and oppression, and who escaped from the places they were enslaved to found autonomous communities. In Colombia (as well as in other countries in the Caribbean Sea like Cuba), these autonomous communities were known

as “*palenques*” and were placed in rural areas close to the Magdalena and Cauca rivers – two important rivers that help to connect the Atlantic and the Pacific regions (Múnera, 1998).

During national independence attempts, slaves were urged to participate in both armies (the Spaniard and the Republican) under the promise that if their side won, they would get their freedom. Simón Bolívar attracted African slave soldiers when he promised absolute freedom, thus creating in the slaves the possibility to change their lives: “indeed during independence wars, African descendants were not realistic, nor patriot; simply they pursued their freedom” (de Roux, 2011, p. 19). In 1810, independence was achieved, but only till 1821 the discussion on whether or not to free the slaves gained space. The process was difficult because slaves’ “owners” did not want to release them without receiving money.

In 1821 the manumission was approved and the “free birth” law was signed to allow children of slaves to be born free. That gave slave owners the possibility of not losing much money. Although discussions on the economic benefits of liberating slaves (it was cheaper to have free employees to be hired whenever employers wanted instead of having slaves, feed them, and giving them a place to live) were taking place, the conservative political party won elections in 1840 and they legalized the slave trade again (Friedemann & Arocha, 1986). In 1851 slaves were finally declared free in Colombia, and they had the same constitutional rights and duties as everyone else. The law was not welcomed by slave holders, who protested for their “right to property”, thus pushing the government to indemnify them. The black color was then tied to an inferior human condition, and African descendants as having no history, no memory, no culture, and no knowledge. The “new citizens”, with no access to education, health services, political participation, land, property, and opportunities, had to suddenly find and gain a space in a society that strongly rejected, denied, and reified them.

African descendants remained in geographical zones where they could work the land, and set up a living, staying in isolated regions far away from the *mestizo* mainstream society's control. In these lands in the Pacific and Atlantic Coasts, they were able to further explore and develop their cultures now mixed with the political and local elements of the new context (Friedemann, 2000). The cultural practices of black peoples in both coasts are then very different: "The Pacific coast became a mainly black region. The Caribbean coast developed a tri-ethnic mix with strong black and indigenous heritage" (Wade, 1995, p. 58).

In the early twentieth century, land's exploitation on the part of the government, affected black people's communities because they lost domain over the lands they had taken and in which they had been living (Wade, 1995). In addition, the concessions made by the government to foreign companies for agriculture, fishing, mining, and oil, resulted in damage to the environment, and to black people having to work and pay for the land they had been inhabiting after slavery (Múnera, 2005). The Pacific Coast of Colombia, for example, where black people settled, is rich in emeralds, gold, platinum, and silver. Therefore, this zone has been exploited through dynamite use for accessing metals and stones. This has negatively impacted the environment and the social structures established by the black people living in the zone (Sierra & Bernal, 2012). The abandonment of the Pacific Coast by the state (lack of budget for investing in education, health, infrastructure, while increased interest only in metals' extraction) facilitated the use of the land for illicit crops. This activity has been promoted by illegal armed actors and has created damage in communities by breaking identity links. According to Rodríguez et al. (2009), black people are the main victims of forced displacement in the country due to the armed conflict.

Defining black peoples and blackness in Colombia. In the United States, the consensus for defining general racial categories such as Black, Native American, and White, is established and agreed (Wade, 2013). In Colombia as well as in the Latin American context, racial categories are fuzzy due to the intention of building nations as *mestizas* mainly, which coexists with discrimination and rejection towards black people (Wade, 1995). Although the category *black* has been present in the everyday language of social actors in Colombia, during most of the twentieth century it “had no institutional space in the practices governed by citizens’ liberal ideologies” (Wade, 2013, p. 22). Usually, when studied, the focus was on slaves or slavery, but not on black peoples or blackness (Friedemann, 1984).

Thus, in Colombia, racial categories did not entail consensus and these were deleted in the twentieth century official texts. This situation “supported official imageries of a *mestizo* nation in which racial categories were not important issues” (Wade, 2013, p. 23). One example of this is that the different censuses in the twentieth century did not include the ethnic racial variable in it till the 1993 one. Although the state intended to push for a national *mestizo* identity by institutionalizing the irrelevance of racial categories in official discourses, it did push for a certain view of blackness (Wade, 2013). By dismissing the importance of racial categories officially, and with the everyday use of different terms to refer to black peoples and the social imageries attached to them, the state’s construction of blackness was negative and promoted its rejection.

The 1991 Constitution departed from acknowledging the multiethnic and multicultural character of the state. This led to acknowledge ethnic groups and the term *comunidad negra* (black community) started to appear in official documents to call attention on black people’s rights. For instance, Law 70 of 1993 guarantees the territorial distribution of lands historically

inhabited by the black community in the Pacific Coast of the country. Although the acknowledgement and conception of black community allowed activists to argue in favor of these peoples' rights in different institutional levels such as education, and the health system, the predominant ethnic cultural conception attached to blackness in the term *comunidad negra* and in official documents creates issues for addressing not only black people who do not live in towns in the Pacific Coast, but also black people who define themselves in social terms. Basically, the ethnic cultural view of black people limits and restricts their identities to rural practices that have been romanticized by the mestizo dominant group (Wade, 2013).

In this panorama, activists and academics have been using different terms to refer to black people, and each one has a different nuance of the type of vindication they pursue. The term *afro-descendiente* (Afro-descendant) has been used in Latin America with the connotation of highlighting individuals' African ancestors who were enslaved and abused in the continent. The term Afrocolombian is also used to not only emphasize on ancestors, the diaspora, and the African roots, but also to vindicate the right to be seen as Colombia's citizens. The two previous terms address the ethnic identity mainly without attending the skin color. In addition, they "invite people to identify with a culture of blackness that has been globalized and impacted by media. A culture associated with certain images and styles... and that owes its existence to consumption practices" (Wade, 2013, p. 32). *Mulato* is another term used to refer to the racial mixing of black with either indigenous or *mestizo*, and it highlights the racial mixing with a genetic not social base. There are different everyday terms used like *cafecito/a* (brown), chocolate, *canela* (cinnamon), *cafecito/a con leche* (coffee with milk), and *moreno*, that address the skin color by lightening it and without explicitly naming it as black. Thus, the mestizo power for omitting and

constructing blackness in Colombia is still determinant for creating the racial landscape in the country as not black, but varied, mixed, and tending to whitening (Wade, 2013).

Unlike in the US, the fuzziness of racial mixing and the avoiding of naming blackness in Colombia complicates the use and consensus on a term to refer to black peoples and blackness. Urrea, Viáfara, and Viveros (2014) proposes the term pigmentocracies to refer to the power and discrimination relations in which people with darker skin colors in Colombia negotiate their living conditions and access to different types of capital. In this research I use the term *gente/s negra* (black people/s) and *negritud* (blackness) to not only name blackness and vindicate the skin color, but also to avoid focusing on ethnic and cultural aspects that divert attention from understanding the social aspects impacting black peoples' multiple identities and living conditions.

Current living conditions of black people in Colombia. In Colombia, black people live in unequal conditions in relation to poverty, unsatisfied basic needs, coverage of basic public services, possession of goods, and access to education, among others (Rodríguez et al., 2009; Urrea & Viáfara, 2007). Infant mortality rate in the black population is higher than the national rate (48.1 for black men and 43.9 for black women vs. 26.9 for men and 21.0 for women), and their life expectancy at birth is lower than the national rate (64.6 for black male children and 66.7 for black female children vs. 70.3 for male children and 77.5 for female children). More than 60% of the black population lives in conditions of poverty and 25% lack money to buy basic food (Rodríguez et al., 2009). In regards to education, particularly, the *analfabetismo* (illiteracy) rate in black children is almost double than in mestizos, with the 10-24 age range being the group with a rate more than double than among mestizos (Rodríguez et al., 2009). In the department of Chocó (like states in the US), where 81% of the population is black, school attendance is

decreased for all ages. Not just preschool attendance is lower than the national average in this department (78% national vs. 62.8% black children), but also “20% of children in elementary school age said that they do not attend school” (Rodríguez et al., 2009, p. 257). These numbers increase for the secondary level (middle and high school in the US). The ministry of education does not include the racial variable in the implementation of standardized exams thus there are no data to understand the achievement of this population particularly. The only way to have an idea of it is by interpreting the results of standardized tests by departments and to relate them with the black population in them. In Colombia, the regions with the highest black population lag behind on standardized test results in relation to the national totals. The aggregated results of the ICFES exam (like SAT in the US) 2005-2010 show that towns with black populations are represented in the low, inferior, and very inferior scales of the exam (ICFES, 2010). Likewise, in the aggregated values of the SABER test (for third, fifth, and ninth grades) for language and mathematics 2005-2010, departments in the Atlantic and Pacific Coasts (with the highest black population) lag behind the national average (ICFES, 2010).

When in a society differences among racial groups are that marked, it can be said that those are racialized social systems and “generally, the more dissimilar the races’ life chances, the more racialized the social system, and vice versa” (Bonilla-Silva, 1997, p. 470). This generalized inequity relates directly to the history of slavery, vexations, and discriminations perpetrated with the black population since their forced arrival to the country (Urrea, Viáfara, & Viveros, 2014), during the construction of the state nation (Wade, 1995), and in the search for democracy (Friedemann, 1993). However, since racism changes with time, the racial structures brought with colonization and that were overtly manifested with the establishment of slavery (that ended in

1851) have changed, and nowadays racism is constructed in different subtle ways (Bonilla-Silva, 2015).

A microcosm: Black people in Cali, Colombia. In the city of Cali (third main city in the country) where the highest black population of the country (19.1%) is concentrated (DANE, 2005), there exists a pattern of socio-racial and socio-economic discrimination that impacts life conditions and access to opportunities for this population (Urrea-Giraldo, 2012). The city's total population is estimated to be 2.244.639 from which 26.2% self-identified as Afrocolombians in the 2005 census. 75% of the black population in the city lives in the east conglomerate (Urrea-Giraldo, 2012), zone not coincidentally characterized by low-low, low, and middle-low socio-economic status neighborhoods. The majority of the black population living in the east conglomerate of the city is located in the lowest socio-economic levels and “with at least half of black households residing in the poorest neighborhoods” (p. 143). In Cali, the higher the socio-economic status, the lower the presence of black households, and the higher the presence of non-black households (Urrea & Murillo, 1999). Correspondingly, the lowest the socio-economic status, the lower the school capital, and the higher the percentage of people with darker skin colors (Viáfara, Vivas, Urrea, Correa, & Rodríguez, 2014).

When monthly incomes in Cali and Colombia are compared for black and non-black people according to educational level, differentials show no gap in the lowest educational levels, but as these increase (secondary and university), differentials show a gap in which non-black people earn more. Thus “even though a higher educational attainment for Afrodescendants improves their income level, the non-Afrodescendants with the same educational attainment have an income level that is considerably higher” (Urrea-Giraldo, 2012, p. 149).

In the east conglomerate of the city, *comunas* (administrative divisions of the city that include groups of neighborhoods based on their locations) 13, 14, and 15 also known as the *Aguablanca* district, have the highest concentration of black population (75%). At the same time, *Aguablanca* represents the highest percentage (60%) of young male population under 30 years in the city (Urrea-Giraldo, 2012). Thus, it can be stated that there is “a strong association between poverty, young males and a high residential concentration of black people” (p. 145), that relates to complex dynamics in which hyper-masculinity, territorialism, competitiveness, and conflict are key to understand manifestations of violence (Urrea-Giraldo, 2012). At the same time, these *comunas* have the lowest life expectancy in the city in general, with the black male population in the bottom numbers. Likewise, black males in Cali from all age groups represent the higher mortality rates due to homicide and to other types of morbidity with almost 80% for those black males under 20. Not surprisingly in the light of these numbers, imprisonment rate for black population in Cali is higher than that of non-blacks for males and females, hence, “the prisons in Cali are collective spaces where black people, especially males, are held” (p. 158).

Literacy and the Education of Black People in Colombia

For the Colombian government education and particularly the increment in *alfabetismo* rates (literacy in its basic linguistic skills view) are essential in reducing inequities and poverty (Colombia, Reporte Ejecutivo, 2010). However, the country does not have a policy from the Ministry of Education that addresses literacy directly. There is a program called “*Plan de promoción de lectura*” (plan to promote reading), but it is an endeavor from the Ministry of Culture, in the section of Public Libraries. In Colombia literacy teaching is embedded in the teaching of the core area called *Lengua Castellana y Literatura* (Spanish Language and Literature, like Language Arts in the US), and the focus is on the teaching of texts’ construction,

texts comprehension, literature as the aesthetic aspect of language, other symbolic systems, and ethics in communication (Estandares Curriculares, 1996). These five aspects are addressed in each grade level and what changes is the difficulty for each grade. The standards for each core area are nationally mandated and assessed and they reflect the national official accepted knowledge.

Another issue is that in Colombia, the education of black groups is included in what is called “ethnic education”, which is defined as “education for ethnic groups offered to groups or communities that are part of the nation, and that have a culture, a language, traditions and their own and independent jurisdiction” (Educational Policy of Colombia, 1994). Ethnic education programs in rural towns have demonstrated to work positively for the education of black children when curriculums, content, and instruction are culturally relevant (Rojas, 2005). Although constitutionally, ethnic groups are guaranteed to an education that respects and develops their cultural identity, this view is problematic for black and indigenous peoples who do not live in reservations but in the cities, and whose identity is not defined by the ethnic cultural view promoted by the *mestizo* dominant group. For black people living in cities like Cali, the educational system simply extends the view on ethnic education to the cities. This extension of the policy without further analysis is risky in that it can promote static and stereotyped views of black people as all having one same identity (Lozano-Lerma, 2013).

Black people in Colombia represent a diverse population with particularities that impact their conceptualizations as group. Colombia’s policies address blackness as uniform and with an ethnic emphasis that “has intended to reduce all black movement demands to defending [exclusively] ethnicity. Furthermore, that defense... has been mainly framed within folklore, so it has not been a liberating policy of difference, it has on the contrary, reinforced stereotypes”

(Lozano-Lerma, 2013, p. 89). According to the author, it is important to differentiate black people who preserve their traditional ways of cultural production and who live usually in rural contexts, from black people who represent more openly sectors of cultural continuity since they have migrated to the cities and negotiated their cultural identities through the construction of what Hall (2003 cited in Lozano-Lerma) referred to as what remains, what is assimilated, and the myth of the promised land (Lozano-Lerma, 2013). In this context, however, the author calls attention on avoiding the essentialization of the black population, while at the same time working in a common grammar that mobilize them because “what they do share is the conviction due to their skin color, i.e., racism. The experience of racism has a substantial weight in defining a black identity” (p. 36). She proposes to construct black people in Colombia as a social, not as an ethnic group. This is important for avoiding the essentialization of black peoples as all having fixed identities that translate in likes for certain music, dances, and food, i.e., to avoid “essentializing through biology features that are cultural” (p. 91).

What the ministry of education has done is to mandate nationally the *Cátedra de Estudios Afrocolombianos* (Afrocolombian studies course) with the goal of including not only a course that will promote group identity within the black student population, but also that will foster reflection within the mestizo group on the history of black people in the country (Lineamientos Curriculares, 1996). However, the implementation of the course by the government has been minimal and limited to technical and economic support with no following to the creation and consolidation of innovative curricula (Rodríguez et al., 2009). Even though the course is an initiative for changing the education of black children and for the mestizo dominant group, it is not enough for changing the inequity shown in the above numbers, and even less if it is not being appropriately implemented. These attempts represent superficial solutions since they do not

question base racial structures in the school system, i.e., with this course race becomes a subject of study but not the acknowledgement that racial ideologies structure relations among racial groups to favor some and disfavor others.

Statement of the Problem

Summarizing, for the Colombian government, *alfabetismo* (alphabetization) and schooling solve inequity problems for all black peoples. Colombia is a country with racialized social structures and although literacy and education are variables for explaining black peoples' living conditions in the statistics, their ways of intersecting are not simple and have not been qualitatively studied. Explaining the role of *alfabetismo* and education in black peoples' unequal status is not as simple as saying that the higher the *alfabetismo* and the school levels, the lower the inequities because not only as shown above, black people earn less when in the same educational level as *mestizos*, but also because it disregards that as a social group, black people in Colombia have different identities. Although the statistics above permit visualizing the general relegated position of black people in the country, the numbers do not allow for a deeper understanding or characterization of their learning, and of how black students in different urban conditions mediate (resist, contest, and accept) the implicit and explicit literacies that constitute constant racial dynamics in the school experience. Explaining the role of literacy and schooling in black peoples requires then multilayered analyses that include among others, showing racial ideologies in the school system, documenting literacy practices in light of racial relationships, and analyzing black students' identities and how they impact their literacy practices and participation in the school life. Therefore, a study that inquires how a black young male's views on literacy and race impact his learning and participation in the school, and how that relates to how literacy and race are woven in his school, sheds light for reflecting on the role of literacy for

the education of black people, for reflecting on how literacy and education can, using Lewis' (2003) words, "change the odds".

Purpose of the study. This study intended to document, honor, analyze, and reflect on the literacy practices of Yeison Daniel, a black young male in *Aguablanca*, how his literacy practices relate to his views on race, and how that in turn impact his learning and participation in the school. By analyzing his literacy practices, I reflect on the tensions that his views on literacy and race create for his academic standing.

Need for the study. This study is important because reflecting on Yeison Daniel's views on literacy and race in relation to the school, can offer insights about not only how to understand the role of literacy for the education of black children, but it also foregrounds the ideological nature of literacies.

Research questions. This study discussed and responded to the following research questions:

Research question 1. How does Yeison Daniel's views of literacy and race impact his learning and participation in the school?

- How does Yeison Daniel participate in the school?
- How does Yeison Daniel negotiate literacy practices and racial ideology in the school?

Research question 2. How are literacy and race related in the school?

- What are the racial frames that circulate in the school?
- How do literacies relate to the racial frames?

To answer these questions, I observed and participated with students, teachers, and staff in the *Surgir* school in *Aguablanca*, and with Yeison Daniel and his family in the home setting

located in *comuna* 15. From April to October 2014, I collected data in the field, and from October 2014 to October 2015 I collected data through follow-up phone and text conversations. Data was documented in field notes, through participant observations, interviews, conversations (face-to-face and virtual), artifacts, literacy pieces, screenshots, digital files, websites, and documents in the (a) fifth grade classroom, (b) the school space (offices, cafeteria, hallways, play zones, coliseum, library, teachers' lounge, and rooms), and (c) Yeison Daniel's home. I interviewed the three fifth grade classrooms teachers, the principal, the academic coordinators, the librarian, and the family members.

Definition of Terms

In addition to the conceptual definition of terms like *afrocolombians*, *alfabetización*, *black people*, *ethnic education*, *literacy*, *mestizo/a*, and *mestizaje* that I have done so far in this chapter, throughout the following pages I will be using terms that, for the sake of clarity, deserve to be defined. In some cases, I define the terms in my own words.

Alternative literacies. Literacy practices inscribed in events outside of the formal official character of the school, and that are practiced in events in which contesting to the official ones is the main characteristic.

Cultural continuity. The process of migrating to the city space and having to negotiate cultural identities based on previous migrants' practices and new practices in the frame of hope for living in the new context.

Faru. A style in which people presume of themselves: how they talk, dress, and steal things from people on the streets.

Forced displacement. In Colombia it refers to the forced movement of people from their homes, lands, and territories, due to the armed conflict.

Fracking. A way of doing high-scale mining with chemicals or explosions that contaminate the surrounding waters.

Melanin. It is a pigment present in different tissues that determines skin and hair color.

Minga. Term used by black and indigenous peoples to refer to collective community work.

Naturalization. As defined by Bonilla-Silva (2014), it is a racial frame characterized by the tendency to naturalize (as natural occurrences) the events in which black peoples have been discriminated against.

Official literacies. Literacy practices inscribed in institutional, official views of texts. Usually practiced in school settings, as well as in other societal institutions.

Parkour. A type of street sport in which individuals use the public space for moving and pass through obstacles. It developed from military training.

Social mobility. Process related to mobility of people from rural to urban contexts. More than referring to class (upward or inward mobility in English), this term refers to the movement of people as migration and the systems of places this impacts.

Swagger. A style in which people presume of themselves: how they talk, dress, and use music to perform identity.

Chapter Two

A Critical Frame and the Review of Literature

In this chapter I explain the theoretical framework I used to philosophically position my study in a particular view of knowledge and knowledge construction. I also present a review of relevant studies that represent antecedents for this study while explaining the gaps in the literature. Thus, in the first part of this chapter I present the theoretical framework, which I have denominated “critical” since I used critical theories for its construction. Then, in the second part of this chapter I review related studies and discuss how they are connected to this project.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework for this study is based on three critical theories that I relate to explain and reflect on the relationships between literacy and race in the education of Yeison Daniel: critical pedagogy, critical race theory, and critical literacy. The views I present here represent the philosophical, and theoretical stances with which I conceived, planned, developed, and wrote this research project. I chose critical frames because they allow for understanding the intersections and for bringing to the table the importance of accounting for struggles and resistance. Basically, I use critical theories as a theoretical foundation upon which to develop conceptual connections between literacy and race in the school.

I first broadly summarize critical theory from a European perspective in regards to its history and contributions to account for contexts, oppression, emancipation, and social transformations. Then I continue with critical pedagogy to position my perspective on education with discriminated groups and I address concepts such as identity, power, investment and ideology. Afterwards, I continue with critical race theory and explain how my take on race implies a structural approach evident in institutions’ racial ideology. Finally, I address critical

literacy to explain how literacy is not a neutral technology, but multiple practices that are inextricably related to power cultural structures. For the sake of clarity, I present these constructs separately in the theoretical framework, however, because I am interested in understanding their intersections, I further reflect on their interplay in the discussion section.

Critical theory. Critical Theory is related to the work of academics in the “Frankfurt School”, also known as the Institute for Social Research, located in Frankfurt-Germany. It started in 1923 “as the first Marxist-oriented research center” (Kellner, 2013, p. 2) under the direction of Carl Grunberg, a German philosopher. In 1930, Max Horkheimer as the director of the Institute gathered a group of theorists with the goal of studying theory and society for developing a supra-disciplinary social theory aimed at social transformations (Bronner & Kellner, 1989). The Institute intended to revise “the Marxian critique of capitalism and the theory of revolution in order to confront those new social and political conditions which had evolved since Marx’s death” (Bronner & Kellner, 1989, p. 1). In doing so, a “critical theory” of society was created to address the “aspects of social reality which Marx and his orthodox followers neglected or downplayed” (p. 1).

Horkheimer’s inaugural speech in 1931, establishes the tasks of the Institute, and the set of principles that guided their subsequent work (Kellner, 2013). Basically, Horkheimer’s speech delineates the Institute’s project and proposes that a supra-disciplinary approach opposing singular, intra-disciplinary, and positivistic accounts of social reality provides an “instrument for transforming politics, society, the economy, and everyday contemporary life” (Bronner & Kellner, 1989, p. 4). In his speech, Horkheimer poses the question for the interconnectedness between the economical model and society’s living conditions as a central question to the Institute at that moment:

In a definite time frame and in some particular countries, what relations can we delineate between a particular social group and the role of this group in the economy, the changes, in the physical structure of its members, and the thoughts and institutions created by it which influence it as a whole through the social totality? [underlines added]

(Horkheimer, 1975, p. 33).

Horkheimer points out that the Institute's interest during the 1930's decade in Germany corresponds with "skilled labor and white collar employees, and continue after that with the corresponding segments in the other highly developed European countries" (p. 33). In Horkheimer's above question it is possible to notice that among the central concerns in his proposal are time, place, institutions, and totality (underlined in the quotation). The other main concerns address human groups, economy, movement, physical structure, and thoughts. The ideas expressed in the question are developed in the works of the first generation members of the Institute: Horkheimer, Adorno, Marcuse, Lowenthal, Pollock, and Erich Fromm, in psychology, music, and literature, among others (Bronner, 2011). Subsequent members brought with them different views, although in general, the principles of critical theory remained as the basis (Giroux, 1983; Lozano-Lerma, 2013).

In seeking to answer the question "what it means for social theory to be critical?", Horkheimer (1977) differentiates between traditional theories and critical social theories. Traditional theory has strictly separated theory and praxis, and has explained facts as universal laws to be confirmed or disconfirmed through the application of the particular into the universal (Horkheimer, 1975). Under this light, knowledge is a reflection of reality presupposing that there is an objective structure of the social world. In contrast, critical social theories reject this notion of objectivity in knowledge by arguing that knowledge is inscribed in social and historical

processes: “The facts which our senses present to us are socially preformed in two ways: through the historical character of the object perceived and through the historical character of the perceiving organ” (Horkheimer, 1977, p. 200). To that extent, critical theory divorces from ideas about knowledge’s impartiality, because knowledge can only be created from a group of individuals that are not disembodied entities (*Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, 2013, p. 4). Thus, the idea that knowledge mirrors reality separates theory from practice, individuals from knowledge production, and in Horkheimer’s words, the perceived object from the perceiving organ. Critical theory precisely proposes to understand that knowledge is humanely produced, and should be therefore understood:

...Critical theory characterizes itself as a method which does not fetishize knowledge, considering it rather functional to ideology critique and social emancipation. In the light of such finalities, knowledge becomes social criticism, and the latter translates itself into social action, that is, into the transformation of reality (*Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, 2013, p. 4).

In this regard, critical theory intends to make evident the interconnection between critical approaches and transformative action, defined as individuals and groups’ possibilities of transforming their own realities. This interconnection leads to propose theory and practice as a dialectic unit that helps to overcome universal fixed categories and oppositions (Horkheimer, 1977). Critical theory has thus the goal of problematizing humans’ conditions in modern societies, while searching for liberation from reification of humans’ experience. To do so, there are key elements to the theory, a set of principles that I refer to as *problematizing contexts*.

Critical theory’s principles: Problematizing contexts. Critical theory highlights the value of a constant critical reflection of societies, the constant goal of humanizing humans, and the

search of paths for their liberation. In other words, critical theory refers to self-critique and to the development of a discourse of emancipation and social transformations “that does not cling dogmatically to its own doctrinal assumptions” (Giroux, 1983, p. 8). To do so, critical theory must critically reflect on the values it represents and the limitations it entails.

Since “traditional theory uncritically reproduces the existing society” (Kellner, 2013, p. 8), critical theory entails a permanent questioning and suspicion of ideas or assumptions that are seen as natural and that relate to official institutionalized versions of the world. To that extent, critical theory emphasizes abandoning naïve conceptions on impartiality in regards to knowledge and its construction. Thus, claims on objectivity (seen as universal truths resulting from experiments) in knowledge and research, must be deconstructed in light of what they pretend to perpetuate as power structures and maintenance of the *status quo*. In venturing into more complex understandings of humans’ experience, critical theory also proposes to always connect micro and macro social scales. Bronner (2011) explains that “critical theorists learned to interpret the particular with an eye on the totality” (p. 2), thus guaranteeing more exhaustive accounts that affirm difference and reject the essentialism of reducing oppressed individuals or groups’ practices to mainstream accounts.

Critical theory re-conceptualizes context as a temporal line. According to Kellner (2013), it is important to reject versions tied to determinism and reductionism that impede the conceptual space to analyze “the important causal role of cultural factors in history and society” (p. 6). Critical theory states the importance of understanding the present, as tied to the past. Social processes are tied to the history of societies and to how diverse economic, political, and cultural aspects impact them. Attempts to explain particular current practices must then account for the historicity behind them. In addition, accounting for social transformations aimed at reaching

communities' preferred futures is essential. Thus, context is better understood as a temporal line that includes past, present, and future. As Bronner (2011) explains, "critical theory was always concerned not merely with how things were, but how they might be and should be" (p. 2). This includes the search for new possibilities for liberation.

One of the most important aspects of critical theory is that theory and practice are conceived as a dialectic unit that problematizes transformations: "The mission of critical theory, though, is not exhausted by a theoretical understanding of the social reality; as a matter of fact there is a strict interconnection between critical understanding and transformative action: theory and practice are interconnected" (*Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, 2013, p. 5). This highlights the value of knowledge construction as a political effort because theory must work as inherently impacted by the context in which it is thought, although theory can never be reduced to only that context (Giroux, 1983).

Critical theory as developed by the first generation members has been further developed and there is no one single critical theory, but a common interest in evaluating and critiquing forms of domination and oppression in the frame of capitalism, and of addressing struggle and emancipation (Giroux, 1983). Although critical theory advanced the thinking of the time in regards to the role of humans in modern contexts, is it necessary to acknowledge that the white male authors framed their discussions of humans within the workforce in Europe without attending to issues related to race, gender, or sexual orientation. Thus, the first critical theory's authors "did not fight for the right to difference but for equality" (Lozano Lerma, 2013, p. 30), which relates to the liberal thinking that sees "the common interest as the sum of particular interests" (p. 19) and to orthodox Marxism "that considers the proletariat as the subject of emancipation" (p. 19). Willis, Montavon, Hall, Hunter, Burke, and Herrera (2008) call attention

to this by emphasizing that “from a historical perspective, early theorizing ignored and marginalized the critical consciousness of people of Color and women, and when it did mention them, it perpetuated stereotypical and deficit ideas” (p. 2). According to them, the identification of tensions within critical theorizing, particularly in regards to how different oppressed people experience oppression(s), expands critical theories. To that extent, critical theory’s principles have been further developed, reframed and incorporated into different theories in social sciences. In what follows, I review three of those critical theories.

Critical pedagogy. This theoretical perspective was first proposed by Paulo Freire, and has been further developed by other authors among which are Henry Giroux, and Michael Apple. Critical pedagogy intends to make evident relations of oppression and contestation by using them as frames for pedagogical models. By reflecting on oppression and its causes, education is thus considered as the practice of freedom (Freire, 1999). In this libertarian pedagogy, students are active participants in the process of liberation, which cannot equate with moving from oppressed to oppressors since that only perpetuates abusive structures (Freire, 2000). Critical pedagogy questions “naturalized” versions of reality, and sees reality as the history to be named, created, and problematized by the oppressed (Freire, 2013). In this view, reflection is needed to explain action, and to activate consciousness of future action, which leads to the constant search for possibilities of liberation.

The libertarian critical pedagogy opposes what Freire (2000) calls “the banking system” (p. 72), which is the system that focuses on transmission or depositing of knowledge (as defined by the teacher or the system), and students’ archiving of that knowledge. The banking system is based on memory learning, not necessarily in critical discussions of knowledge –who defines it, how it is presented, and what it represents (Freire, 1997). Thus, education becomes a depositing

act that alienates ignorance because with transmission methods students learn from the experience narrated by the teacher, exclusively.

On the contrary, in critical pedagogy, dialogue is the channel that promotes reflection on action while it redefines the roles of teachers and learners in a dialogic dynamic of co-constructing knowledge that Freire (2000) calls generative themes. The search for generative themes establishes a research process in which the micro and macro tensions from students' communities are the basis to define what to teach, how to teach it, and with which goals (Freire, 1997). Research is then the means for knowledge construction with the students and the community. In evidencing oppression and contestation, teaching and learning are the processes by which people problematize their existence in the world, their liberation, and their everyday praxis.

Thus, critical pedagogy questions the neutral nature of the schools, the school system, and the curriculum. It addresses knowledge, how to teach it, the conception of students and teachers, and relationships among them as aspects defined by political and economic power dynamics that favor certain groups at the expense of others. Critical pedagogy makes visible the political nature of knowledge and of academic culture while valuing the knowledge that takes oppressed groups to reflect on their situation as a group situated within particular relations of domination and subordination (Giroux, 1983). This politization of knowledge links education and schooling to self-critique and emancipation, to liberation and to ongoing reflection. To that extent, critical pedagogy opens possibilities for considering the role of schooling in changing oppressed groups' participation patterns, and in practicing resistance.

Theorizing domination and resistance. One of the main ideas in critical pedagogy is the understanding of school and education as social processes that incorporate history and present,

and as spaces in which individuals are limited and enabled to mediate culture, knowledge, and power (Giroux, 2011). Thus, understanding schools as social processes requires framing the role of schooling in a macro social context. The role of education in broader social contexts has been explained in terms of the school as reproducing labor force for economic interests (Althusser, 1971; Bowles & Gintis, 1976); the school as not simply mirroring society but as part of the larger group of institutions that reproduce the dominant culture (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977); and the school as reproducing class relations through messages of social control (Bernstein, 1977).

Although highlighting the role of the school in more political terms, these accounts lack the understanding of how individuals and oppressed groups develop dynamics for resisting and reacting to domination. In short, these accounts leave no space for explaining agency and individuals' complex interests in educational projects, nor for reflecting on the domination matrix oppressed people have participated in and contested to (Giroux, 2011). Since schools cannot be analyzed outside of their social context, nor they can be seen as completely determining individuals' trajectories, a frame for reflecting on education needs not only an understanding of the constant recycling between structure and agency, but also an approach for theorizing resistance, accommodations, and struggles. In other words, a frame for theorizing the understanding of schools as sites of not only domination, but also of contestation. This is so because identifying hegemonic discourses of discrimination is not enough for improving pedagogical models. The identification of counter-hegemonic orientations is essential for better capturing new pedagogical possibilities (Bartolomé, 2008). This is essential for redefining the nature of domination and the hope for change and transformations (Freire, 2002).

Then, another important aspect of critical pedagogy includes the understanding of structure and agency not as two opposite forces, but as two forces that although different impact

each other. In this regard, the understanding of how individuals negotiate their beings, meanings, and interests within these two forces sheds light for a better analysis of power relations in the schooling process. This constant recycling between structure and agency, between the micro and the macro contexts, is better captured with five constructs, namely identity, ideology, investment, participation, and power.

Identity helps to explain the learning process as mediated by micro and macro power relations that impact students' interests in learning, and that in turns, helps to shape identity (Norton, 2000). Identity is then defined as to "how a person understands his or her relationship to the world, how that relationship is constructed across time and space, and how the person understands possibilities for the future" (p. 5). In this definition, subjectivity becomes an important construction to depict subjects' relations and perceptions of the world. Thus, identity has three main principles in this framework. First, it is conceived "as multiple rather than unitary, decentered rather than centered" (p. 125). This means that subjects have different identities according to the social contexts, and to the roles they play in them. Second, identity must be thought of as a site of struggle, as the constant tension between the subject's perception of him/herself, and the society's perception of the subject, which in turn impacts the subject's perception of him/herself. This characteristic refers to a constant pull and push between the forces shaping one's identity. Finally, the changing over time characteristic of identity, which allows believing in change and transformations. This means that identities are not static; they change as the subject participates in different contexts with different power forces.

Ideology, as an interface between structure, agency and discourse, refers to "the basis of the social representations shared by members of a group" (van Dijk, 1998, p. 8), the framework of thought used for rationalizing a certain social order (Bartolomé, 2008). Ideologies are natural

occurrences in social systems and “represent the way people live and interpret interactions in their daily lives” (Rothstein, 1991, p. 16), the natural and normal way of thinking and acting. This entails that ideologies as principles, represent ways of organizing beliefs about people’s social life and they can organize or impact understandings of the world. Usually, ideologies are “self-serving and a function of the material and symbolic interests of the group” (p. 8), one of which is domination to other groups, and also resistance against that domination. Ideologies then work in the macro structure of how institutions are organized, and also in the situated practices of everyday life (van Dijk, 1998). In the educational space, ideologies play an essential role because they provide the rationales not only for educational practices (Rothstein, 1991), but also for the organization of the educational system itself. In other words, ideologies help us to understand the function and the mechanisms of schooling, explicit and implicit in micro and macro contexts. In addition, analyzing ideologies contributes to understand that “solutions to many of the educational challenges facing subordinated students are not purely technical or methodological in nature, but are instead rooted in typically unacknowledged discriminatory ideologies and practices” (Bartolomé, 2008, p. ix). In this regard, examining racial ideologies in the school as frameworks of thought that impact the concrete actions and experiences of individuals and groups within the setting is a must for better reflecting on how dominant ideologies are constructed, maintained, and contested (Bartolomé, 2008).

In defining investment, it is necessary to do so in relation to motivation, which is a concept focused on the individual’s character, personality, and willingness to learn as something that depends only on the learner’s volition (Norton, 2000). In contrast, investment “signals the socially and historically constructed relationship of learners to the target language, and their often ambivalent desire to learn and practice it” (Norton, 2000, p. 10). Norton takes Bourdieu’s

notion of “cultural capital” to explain the concept of investment. Cultural capital is one form of capital and it refers to the “knowledge and modes of thought that characterize different classes and groups in relation to specific sets of social forms” (Norton, 2000, p. 10). Then, if students “invest” in a certain educational project, it is because with it they can increase the range of symbolic and material resources they have access to, thus increasing their cultural capital. Then, contrary to the unitary, static, and ahistorical learner proposed by the concept of motivation, investment depicts a much more complex analysis of the learner that includes his/her history and multiple identities: “The notion presupposes that when language learners speak, they are not only exchanging information with the target language speakers, but they are constantly organizing and reorganizing a sense of who they are and how they relate to the social world” (Norton, 2000, p.11). Although Norton develops this construct in regards to second language learning, it can be applied to any learning project.

Participation is a concept related to learning. Lave and Wenger (1991) and Wenger (1998), propose to conceptualize learning as mainly social, situated, and as a process of participating in a certain community of practice (Lave & Wenger, 1991). To conceive learning in this dimension opens possibilities to discuss processes of learning as processes of moving from what the authors define as legitimate peripheral participation, to full participation. The goal of learning is to become a full participant in a sociocultural practice, that of course, involves the learning of skills, but it certainly goes far beyond those, to account also for how participation in that community increases and evolves (Wenger, 1998). Participation then is a condition for learning that is based on situated negotiation and re-negotiation of the learner in the world, and on the process of making own the culture of the particular practice. Thus, from a wide peripheral perspective, learners gradually assemble a general idea of what constitutes the practice of the

community: how, when, and about what learners need to learn to become full practitioners (Lave & Wenger, 1991). Wenger (1998) also develops two more concepts to account for participation and learning: peripherality, and marginality. According to Norton, “our relations to communities of practice involves both participation and non-participation, and our identities are shaped by the combinations of the two” (2001, p. 161). Wenger defines peripherality as the learner’s voluntary decision of non-participation in the practices of the community to which the individual does belong. Therefore, this non-participation does not hinder the membership of the participant because “some degree of non-participation can be an enabling factor of participation” (Norton, 2001, p. 161). Marginality refers to the learner’s voluntary decision of non-participation in the practices of the community to which the individual is in the process of moving from peripheral to full participation. Thus, marginality “is a form of participation that prevents full participation” (p. 161).

For Bourdieu (1986), power can be analyzed in relation to individuals’ capacity to access different forms of capital. Power refers then to the “socially constructed relations among individuals, institutions, and communities through which symbolic and material resources in a society are produced, distributed and validated” (Norton, 2000, p. 7). Then, power is not the material resource itself, but the relations, and values constructed around it. This entails that power is not something a person possesses; instead, it is socially constructed through discourse and it is a force that “works both on people and through them” (Giroux, 1983, p. 63). Norton (2000) states that “relations of power can serve to enable or constrain the range of identities that language learners can negotiate in their classrooms and communities” (p. 9). This happens because there are collaborative and coercive relations of power, looking for empowering or marginalizing students’ identities. In this regard, schools must be further considered as part of a

bigger group of social institutions that “control the production, distribution, and legitimation of economic and cultural capital in the dominant society” (Giroux, 1983, p. 62), and that intend to control the range of identities students appeal to. At the same time “educational institutions provide one of the major mechanisms through which power is [not only] maintained... [but also] challenged” (Apple, 2004, p. vii), therefore, schools are essential sites for struggle, conflict, and resistance.

Critical race theory. Critical Race Theory (CRT) places race at the center of analysis (Dixson & Lynn, 2013, p. 1) to account for inequities and oppressive experiences of people of color. It has also been defined as a movement “interested in studying and transforming the relationship among race, racism, and power” (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012, p. 3). It takes issues related to race and analyzes them in a perspective that considers broader economical, emotional, historical, political, and social narratives. In the US, CRT started with scholars and activists in the field of legal studies and then extended to other fields like education and health, as well as to other countries.

CRT has two groups of activists in general. On the one hand there is the group of ideologists holding “that racism and discrimination are matters of thinking, mental categorization, attitude, and discourse” (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012, p. 21). In this group race is a social construction that can be therefore changed by altering the ways it is constructed through language. On the other hand, the realists content that even when words and images are important, racism is much more than negative impressions about a group. For them, “racism is a means by which society allocates privilege and status. Racial hierarchies determine who gets tangible benefits, including the best jobs, the best schools, and invitation to parties in people’s homes”

(Delgado & Stefancic, 2012, p. 21). These two stances relate to each other and represent extreme poles in the ideology-material discussions around race.

For CRT racism exists; it is ordinary because it represents “the usual way society does business, the common, everyday experience of most people of color” (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012, p. 7). Thus, even if racism is a linguistic ideological construction, or a material reality evident in social structures, it exists in that it mediates, restricts and enables, the experiences of people of color (Brown & Jackson, 2013). Race is seen as a social construction because “races are categories that society invents, manipulates, or retires when convenient” (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012, p.8). Therefore, race “whether construed as biological or social, is a reality that exists locally and globally” (Willis et al., 2008, p. 11). One of the first constructs developed in CRT is called the interest convergence, and it explains how racism is manipulated based on the needs of white elites and Caucasian working class segments of society (Bell, 1980). The interest convergence reflects on the level of legitimacy with which changes around racism have occurred. This relates to differential racialization, which is defined as “the ways in which dominant society racializes different minority groups at different times, in response to shifting needs such as the labor market” (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012, p. 9)

CRT also highlights the importance of a revisionist history as a way to vindicate discriminated groups through the creation of their history and their reality. To that extent, CRT commits to a constant critique of liberalism since it exposes a color-blind perspective in which equality and equal treatment for all people will supposedly guarantee democracy and social participation (Bonilla-Silva, 2015). In this light, CRT defines structural determinism as the system’s inability to address mistakes and the historical racial wrong since its structure and vocabulary represent the views of the dominant group (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012).

One of the most important tenets of CRT is intersectionality (Crenshaw, 1991), which is defined as the “examination of race, sex, class, national origin, and sexual orientation, and how their combination plays out in various settings” (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012, p. 57). This construct is essential for reflecting on the discrimination and oppression experiences of people of color because when broad concerns are addressed in regards to them, the particular needs of subgroups (women of color, black people with disabilities) can end up unaddressed. Intersectionality foregrounds that “many races are divided along socioeconomic, political, religious, sexual orientation, and national origin lines each of which generates intersectional individuals” (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012, p. 61).

CRT presents essentialism and anti-essentialism as the dialogic strategy for pursuing transformations. Essentialism inserts the idea of a unifying theme for oppressed people, and anti-essentialism calls for attending to individual experiences. This means that it is important to understand oppression as the common denominator for discriminated groups, while accounting for the diverse experiences of oppression and how individuals attribute meaning to them (Lozano Lerma, 2013).

CRT proposes to carefully analyze the white-black binary in which other groups of color can remain invisible since “binary thinking... focuses on just two groups, usually whites and one other, can thus conceal the checkerboard of racial progress and retrenchment and hide the way dominant society often casts minority groups against one another to the detriment of all” (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012, p. 79). In this line, CRT defines white privilege as the benefits and social advantages individuals have for belonging to the dominant race, and questions whiteness as perspectiveless, neutral, transparent, and innocent.

CRT has been further developed to account for the particular experiences of different groups like Latino Critical Thought, Critical Race Feminism, and Queer-Crit Theory. In education, CRT was introduced by Gloria Ladson-Billings and William Tate IV in 1995, and has been then further developed by different authors such as Daniel Solórzano. CRT in education intends to study the relationship between educational inequities and race to uncover how race creates oppression experiences for students of color (Dixson & Lynn, 2013). In this endeavor, language becomes important since “it often serves as a racial marker” (p. 4). Critical pedagogy relates to CRT because the former informs one’s take on CRT by inviting reflection on oppressed racial groups’ participation and existence in the particular educational system.

Racial theorizing. Within the ideology-material continuum for problematizing race, Bonilla-Silva (2015) developed a structural understanding of race that accounts for both material and ideological levels. If we state that race is a social construction (Bonilla-Silva, 2014; Delgado & Stefancic, 2012; Willis et al., 2008) then the positioning of individuals within racial categories is not a natural biological occurrence, but a social one. In other words, “actors in racial positions do not occupy those positions because they are of X or Y race, but because X or Y has been socially defined as a race” (Bonilla-Silva, 1997, p. 472). In its social base, the importance of race can be dismissed under the argument that since it is a social construction, it does not exist, or it is not real for analysis because academics make it real by using the category (Bonilla-Silva, 2014, p. 8). Race has also been approached as real, and differences in living conditions, standardized tests, and crime rates are then explained as “if they were truly racial” (Bonilla-Silva, 2014, p. 8), therefore contributing to “racist interpretations of racial inequality” (Bonilla-Silva, 2014, p. 8). This is the case when deficit-oriented explanations are used for explaining disproportionate low academic achievement rates among discriminated groups (Bartolomé, 2008). However, the

definition of race I use here recognizes that race is a social category, but as such, it creates real material and symbolic consequences for individuals, it “produces real effects on the actors racialized as black or white” (Bonilla-Silva, 2014, p. 9). Race refers usually to phenotypic aspects like skin color, face traits and hair (Ladson-Billings, 2013).

This classification of people in racial categories is a political act related to political practices like colonization, slavery, and labor immigration to justify exploitation of the racial other (Bonilla-Silva, 1997). The invention of these categories implies a dialectic construction in which by creating a category for “other”, a category for “same” is created too. When the linking of people with racial categories is established, “race becomes a real category of group association and identity” (Bonilla-Silva, 1997, p. 472) that draws racialized subjects’ chances and triggers practices of racial opposition. Thus, races are also “the effect of racial practices of opposition –‘we’ versus ‘them’– at the economic, political, social, and ideological levels” (p. 472).

Societies whose economic, political, social, and ideological levels are partially –or completely– structured by the placement of actors in racial categories or races, and in which a racial discourse is accompanied by social relations of subordination and superordination between races, can be defined as racialized social systems (Bonilla-Silva, 1997). Social dynamics within racialized social systems create status differences among the groups and with it, contestation and social struggle for changing how rewards are distributed. A society’s racial structure can be defined as “the totality of the social relations and practices that reinforce... [certain race group’s] privilege” (Bonilla-Silva, 2014, p. 9). Racial structures remain because the racial privileged group obtains material benefits from the racial order and they think and act to maintain the

system. In contrast, the racial subordinated group struggles to change the system. Thus, racial structures “exist because they benefit members of the dominant race” (p. 9).

At the base of this structure, a racial ideology is developed. Racial ideology refers then to “the frameworks used by actors to explain and justify (dominant race) or challenge (subordinate race or races) the racial status quo” (Bonilla-Silva, 2014, p. 9). Racial ideology corresponds with the rationalizations developed to narrate and create the status of the races to perpetuate privilege or contest it. However, even though all races can develop racial ideologies, “the frameworks of the dominant race tend to become the master frameworks upon which all racial actors ground (for or against) their ideological positions” (p. 9). Racism is then “the segment of the ideological structure of a social system that crystallizes racial notions and stereotypes. Racism provides the rationalizations for social, political, and economic interactions among the races” (Bonilla-Silva, 1997, p. 474). Racism as racial ideology is material and consequential because it is connected to domination and it allows for the materialization of power relations to subordinate people (Bonilla-Silva, 2015).

For analytical purposes, racial ideologies are formed by three elements: frames, styles, and stories (Bonilla-Silva, 2014). According to Bonilla-Silva, the analysis of these elements sheds light on understanding the material manifestations of racial ideologies and how they work to articulate real conditions of the race groups. Frames are the roads, the philosophical basis to tie together the representations of racial groups and how then, society should work in correspondence. The styles are the linguistic tools and rhetorical strategies with which frames and stories are articulated. Finally, the stories are narrations of cases that support the frames.

Bonilla-Silva (2014) identified four racial frames in the US racial ideology, which he calls color-blind racism. Color-blind racism poses that equality and equal treatment for all

individuals are guarantors of democracy and social participation. In other words, “a colorblind society is one in which racial or ethnic group membership is irrelevant to the way individuals are treated” (Schofield, 2010, p. 260). In this racial ideology the color is not themed because individuals’ social participation is linked to democracy and to individual achievement, therefore, a society that does not see color.

One of the racial frames identified by Bonilla-Silva (2014) in the color-blind ideology is abstract liberalism, which proposes equality for all people. This frame allows for white people to rationalize things like reverse racism, reject affirmative action, and argue that things should follow a natural course to dismiss interventions because “nothing should be forced upon people” (Bonilla-Silva, 2014, p. 82). Under the premise of equality, this frame omits the historical conditions under which some racial groups live currently and proposes that since we are all equal, then laws and actions should follow that rationalization. One example of style is “I am not racist, but they are lazy”, the negation of a negatively sanctioned conduct (being racist), followed by a statement that portrays the racial other as being the problem for society. This rhetorical move has several linguistic elements such as placing the emphasis on what goes after the “but”, the gauging of we (the good ones), and them (the problem) favoring the “we”, and the focus placed on the racial other by saying what they are (lazy) versus a “we” that is defined in terms of what they are not (I am not). According to Bonilla-Silva (2014) the stories that illustrate a certain frame include characters that are not directly related (“a friend of a friend”), improbable information (“many qualified applicants and they gave the job to the black guy just because he was black”), and the urge of not reviving or acknowledging the past (“I didn’t own slaves, so why do I have to pay for what they did”).

The other racial frames identified by Bonilla-Silva (2014) are the cultural, minimization, and naturalization. The cultural frame is formed by culturally based arguments presented to justify the living conditions of the racial other in society. Bonilla-Silva (2014) states the cultural frame has explained “biological inferiority”, and currently health conditions of discriminated racial groups. The minimization of racism frame works in decreasing the impact racism has in racial groups, while also diverting attention from racism as a central aspect for explaining racial groups’ unequal living conditions and limited possibilities. Finally, the naturalization frame naturalizes racism and historical abuse as natural occurrences, as events that happened to favor the nation’s development and the search for democracy, equity, and freedom.

Critical literacy. The term literacy refers simultaneously to the more restrictive aspects of reading and writing (alphabet, coding, decoding, word level) and to broader cultural aspects (Kalman & Street, 2009). According to them, using the term “literacy” places the speakers and writers in a wide spectrum of discussions of what literacy means. In addition, using the term in Spanish also has implications for what the word means in Hispanic America.

In 1960 academics from different areas started to inquire the differences between oral and written ways of thinking. Starting in 1960, six pieces addressing this concern were published in France, England, and the US (Kalman & Street, 2009; Zavala, Niño-Murcia, & Ames, 2004): “the savage mind” by Levi Strauss (1966), “the consequences of literacy” by Goody and Watt (1963), “the Gutenberg galaxy” by McLuhan (1962), “animal species and evolution” by Mayr (1963), “preface to Plato” by Havelock (1963), and “orality and literacy” by Ong (1982). These pieces promoted the debate on the impacts of written language in the communicative, intellectual, scientific, cultural, epistemological, economical, and political development of human beings” (Kalman & Street, 2009, p. 10). These studies formed the line of thought known

as “the great divide” between orality and literacy (Gee, 2004), and they presented the idea that “orality and literacy were two different systems both formal and functionally... to delineate different ways of thinking” (Zavala, Niño-Murcia, & Ames, 2004, p. 7). In general, the studies presented an evolutionist view to compare oral and literate cultures. Ong (1982) basically stated that using written systems impacts the cognitive structures by separating the individual from the immediate context of orality. This dichotomy orality/literacy presented literacy as an independent, autonomous, elaborated system, or as Street (2004) states, “in technical terms, treating it as independent from the social context: an autonomous variable whose consequences for society and cognition can result from its own intrinsic character” (p. 85). The great divide stated that literacy related to higher cognitive skills, which was based on studies by Luria and Vygotsky that compared literate with illiterate individuals on abstract reasoning tasks (Gee, 2004). However, these studies did not address the extent to which the differences in the results were due to literacy or to schooling.

From 1980, another set of studies arose to question the dichotomous view orality/literacy, and to reflect on the different cultural ways of using them. There are four studies that are considered seminal in this regard: “the Psychology of literacy” by Scribner and Cole (1981), “literacy in theory and practice” by Street (1985), “narrative, literacy and face in interethnic communication” by Scollon and Scollon (1981), and “ways with words” by Heath (1982). These studies investigated literacy practices in particular cultural contexts and explained the connection between orality and literacy under a different light (Gee, 2004). Basically, these studies emphasized the idea that there is no one exclusive way of reading and writing, but multiple ways of interacting with them through the use of tools, technology, and contexts.

Street (1984, 2004, 2009), precisely explains that an ideological model is needed to account for the political aspects underlying literacy conceptions. Thus, he proposes to understand literacy approaches as related to two models, the autonomous and the ideological. The autonomous model conceives of literacy as independent of the social context, as divided from orality. Basically, the autonomous model views literacy as sufficient in itself, therefore as able to contribute with decreasing inequities through its teaching in the school. Of course, the teaching of the standard accepted conception of literacy that serves the economical and political interests of the national policy (Street, 2009). The autonomous model is already ideological, but under this model literacy is presented as if it is neutral. On the other hand, the ideological model understands literacy as something “inextricably linked to the cultural and power structures in society, and... [it] recognize[s] the variety of cultural practices associated with reading and writing in cultural contexts” (Street, 2004, p. 88). The ideological model studies the practices and not literacy itself, and questions the neutrality attributed to literacy in the autonomous model, neutrality that “masks its importance for distribution of power in society and for authority relations” (p. 82).

The conception of literacy practices and the ideological elements mediating their uses are the basis for conceptualizing what is known as the New Literacy Studies (NLS). NLS is a field that intends to study and reflect on literacy as a social practice, as “embedded in the social structure whose use is mediated by power relations, tensions, and inequities that characterize social, political, and institutional lives” (Zavala, Niño-Murcia, & Ames, 2004, p. 9). Within the NLS, it is essential to study not only the diverse literacy practices, but also “to elucidate the different ways in which those practices carry authority in social and institutional contexts, and

provide or limit access to resources and opportunities” (Zavala, Niño-Murcia, & Ames, 2004, p. 9).

Street (2009) refers also to the necessity of assuming an ethnographic approach towards literacy. An ethnographic approach understands literacy as local, not universal, and not uniform. This approach helps to avoid simplistic and ethnocentric views towards literacy practices (Street, 2009), views that point at what others are not, do not do, or do not have: illiterate, or *analfabeto/a* in Hispanic America. Usually, policy on literacy in Latin America tends to emphasize the binary *alfabeta/analfabeta* while showing an autonomous view of literacy that highlights a decontextualized source of higher thinking skills that causes inequities to end (Kalman & Street, 2009; Street, 2009).

In regards to the use of the word literacy in Spanish, the selection of a particular term relates to an ideological view of literacy too. The term *alfabetización* (alphabetization) was coined by UNESCO for teaching reading and writing to adults so that they could enter the work force (Mora, 2012). Although a praiseworthy interest, it is problematic because relating reading and writing to work limits the sense of agency, and also carries with it the term *analfabeta* which focuses on the lack of knowledge of standard alphabetic literacies (Mora, 2012). *Alfabetización* was subsequently used for referring to programs, politics, and statistics of reading and writing, and to divide people who knew how to read and write –in the reduced level of decoding skills– from those who did not. Basically, the term *alfabetización* currently “relates to a technical, decontextualized learning in the school space” (Zavala, Niño-Murcia, & Ames, 2004, p. 10). The term *lecto-escritura* (read-writing) is broader in that it understands reading and writing as integral, as not only for adults, and as not only with the goal of incorporating people into the workforce (Mora, 2012). However, the term has been linked to the school space exclusively,

therefore not acknowledging and valuing alternative ways of using reading and writing in other social practices. Indeed, in Latin America traditionally the school decides what counts as reading and writing, and with which purposes (Zavala, 2004). Due to this, it is important to put on the table the value of reading and writing inside and outside of the school context (Street, 2004).

On the other hand, the term *literacidad* (literacy) is the one that in Spanish, better captures the evolution and understanding of practices with written texts in the last years (Zavala, 2004). There are other terms like *escribalidad*, *escrituralidad*, *literalidad*, *literacia* or *cultura escrita* (written culture), however “these have not become widespread in the fields of sociolinguistics, anthropology, or cultural studies” (Zavala, Niño-Murcia, & Ames, 2004, p. 10). In addition, the term *literacidad* has started to be increasingly used in the academic production in Spanish (Niño-Murcia, 2004; Cassany & Castellá, 2010; Mora, 2011; Zavala, 2002). In Colombia, Mora (2012) proposes the use of the term *literacidad* (literacy) to continue building on the social situated extended (beyond the school) character of practices around written texts. Nevertheless, what is important to emphasize is that the use of a particular term places the speakers and writers in the variety of discussions about what literacy means.

Theorizing literacy. Within the ideological understanding of literacy, Barton and Hamilton (2000) define it as “a set of social practices, that can be inferred from events which are mediated by written texts” (p. 8). Thus, literacy practices foreground the relationship between reading, writing, and social structures (Barton and Hamilton, 2000). This relationship involves at least four issues. First, the “general cultural ways of utilizing written language... [and] the values, attitudes, feelings, and social relations” (p. 7) related to them, i.e. how people conceive and attribute meaning to literacy in their groups. Second, social processes that create and shape shared cognitions evidenced through ideologies and social identities (Barton and Hamilton,

2000). These social processes are regulated by rules that determine texts' distribution and access to produce them (Barton and Hamilton, 2000). Third, the different literacy manifestations within a community and the uses and meanings attributed to them. Fourth, people's relationships within groups or communities and the way written texts mediate them (Barton and Hamilton, 2000). Thus, literacy practices are present in different social spheres, so they are not restricted to only educational contexts; and teaching literacy is more than teaching to decode isolated words.

For understanding literacy as social practices, three concepts deserve to be defined: events, practices, and texts. For the sake of clarity, I begin by explaining practices, then events, and finally, texts. The concept of literacy practices ties literacy activities with the social structures in which they are embedded (Barton & Hamilton, 2000), social structures that are formed by institutions. Literacy practices are the cultural generalized ways of using texts in societies, and they do not represent observable units of behavior, but ways of conceiving and using texts that entail ideology and social identities (Barton & Hamilton, 2000). Literacy events are activities in which texts are the center and they do represent observable units of behavior. Literacy events are inscribed in literacy practices in that events are determined and formed by practices (Barton & Hamilton, 2000). Literacy events are mediated by texts, which can in themselves use a variety of systems of representation, and they can be used within varied semiotic systems. Within a social view of literacy, it is not only texts, but also events and practices what helps to understand how people attribute meaning and social value to the group of practices in which texts are embedded.

Critical literacy is then the intentional "analysis and critique of the social structures that create inequality and the texts that embed these unequal relations, as well as the active engagement in the reconstruction of these social structures and their corresponding textual

representations” (Johnson & Rosario-Ramos, 2012, p. 50). Critical literacy then involves a critical view towards social structures that maintain inequities and domination, and the role texts play in creating, maintaining and contesting unequal social hierarchies. The term *Literacies* in plural, precisely addresses the necessity to acknowledge that current contexts demand for more than one set of rules for constructing meaning through written texts.

Review of the Literature

This part of the chapter situates my study in relation to a body of research on literacy and race, the education of black children in Colombia, and on ways to improve the education of black children. I also talk about what these studies have concluded in regards to literacy and race so that I place my study within areas of work. Since my study focused on black population, this review includes studies that addressed literacy and race in relation to this population mainly. However, some of the studies I included in this review discuss the use of certain conceptual categories that are important for my study, and not all of those studies addressed black populations. In addition, the research on literacy and race I include in this review is the most relevant to contextualize the field, understanding that my study was carried out in Colombia.

The search for this review was done using two main sources: the Education Resources Information Center (ERIC) through the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, and databases in the Colombian Public library Luis Ángel Arango. I used search words such as *contestation, domination, education, identity, literacy, participation, and race*. All these words were used in their singular and plural variations, in English and Spanish in order to cover all possibilities. I did not focus only on peer-reviewed articles because most of the studies addressing race in Colombia are published in books. For both articles and books, I chose to include in this review the ones that were more relevant. For this review I tracked authors and

publications (the Afro-Colombian collection) to access original sources. I did not limit the search to a particular year-range because that restricted what I could find about black Colombians in Spanish.

This review has three parts. First, I discuss research on literacy and race. For these studies I discuss the extent to which their focus on literacy although fruitful, lacks the racial approach, and vice versa. I discuss the few studies that do include literacy and race as their emphasis, and studies that highlight critical literacy instruction with black students. Second, I review studies on identity, learning, and participation that have addressed practices of domination and contestation. Finally, I discuss research on black Colombians, and on the education of black children in Colombia, which has emphasized mainly the cultural aspects of some black groups in the country.

Literature on literacy and race. Although literature on literacy and race is a growing body, the literature that examines them separately is more common. First, I discuss research on literacy from a critical approach. For these studies I reflect on their contributions, and the extent to which they adopted a race consciousness or critical race theory approach if they addressed black populations. Second, I discuss studies on race and racism in the school. For these studies I reflect on how they address race from a critical approach, their contributions and shortcomings. Finally, I discuss the studies that address literacy and race together to reflect on their scope and possibilities.

Research on critical literacy. As stated in the theoretical frame, critical literacy aims to analyze and critique how texts relate to the creation and maintenance of unequal social structures (Johnson & Rosario-Ramos, 2012). Researching literacy from a critical perspective entails to challenge inequality and to advocate for social justice (Willis et al., 2008). Research on critical

literacy reflects on the hierarchical relations that exist in societies not by constructing absolute categories of oppressors and oppressed, but by making evident the nuances and the way power relations manifest in different spheres and different contexts (Willis et al., 2008).

Critical literacy published in English. Few studies address directly literacies with critical lenses since the predominant pattern in literacy research is that it lacks the discussion on “the interlocking systems of power domains and how they support or sustain social injustice and inequality” (Willis et al., 2008, p. 128). However, some studies do contribute to uncover instances of inequality for black populations that are maintained or contested with literacy education.

Some studies have addressed the classroom space for showing the normative imposition of the school official literacy and how this along with the stereotypical view towards black students impact literacy instruction (Dyson & Smitherman, 2009). The result of this formula is children disengaging from classroom learning. The authors highlight the necessity of knowing the historical context and the learning conditions of the students’ community. According to them, these changes require professional development, pedagogical action, and a curriculum that normalize and contextualize variations. Dyson (2003) studied a group of African American first graders and how they negotiated their literacy learning through activities related to the movie *Space Jam*. Her findings emphasized the necessary character of a permeable curriculum that includes the varied experiences of children of color because children develop a sense of who they are in the world through the different cultural practices they experience in the settings. Although this conclusion confirms that children’s ways of knowing in the classroom relate to how they interact in different settings like home, she does not directly address the home setting.

There are studies that indeed have addressed the home setting to better capture the practices in it and to more effectively relate those with what children practice in school. Heath (1988) investigated why black children in a community were being referenced by their teachers as having low academic achievement. She documented black students' low achievement as a cultural mismatch between teachers' lack of knowledge about the ways in which black children were used to participate through questions in the home setting. In fact, black families' practices with questions were not only different from those of the school, but also sophisticated and elaborated in that children were placed as participants who could offer their opinions instead of just repeating verbatim answers. Heath's study points out not only the school's disservice towards black students since the school's expectation about children's participation during reading was that they answered verbatim questions during reading, but also the necessity of better understanding students' home language and literacy practices. This study represents a seminal work in the ideological view of literacy that challenged the deficit conception about black students while showing how teachers and school's expectations had a white cultural way of understanding black children's participation during reading at loud.

Taylor and Dorsey-Gaines (1988) investigated the literacy practices of black children in a group of families living in conditions of poverty. They analyzed how the children's family practices incorporated the school literacies although the latter were not genuine and designed for practical use. In this regard, the authors call attention to the fragmentation that occurs in the home – school literacies, fragmentation characterized by the presence of authentic and useful literacies in the home setting, and generic literacy practices in the school. Compton-Lilly (2011) studied the relationship between multiple discourses, literacy and schooling in one family in relation to time. She documented how different circulating discourses related to the history of

family members, connection to past events, and sayings about race, fairness and authority connected to the family literacies. Her findings highlight the complexity of meaning construction around ideas and practices of literacy, racial identity, and schooling. The complexity lies in that these constructions are based on “pre-existing understandings of the world” (p. 247) to then frame meanings in the present based on people’s experiences. Reflecting on this “heteroglossia” (p. 247) as the articulation of different voices in one’s own discourses contributes to better understand how meanings attributed to literacy, schooling, and racial identity are constructed across time. She emphasized on the complex character of literacy practices’ meanings and their relationship to belonging, family, identity, and time. She highlights that children negotiate meaning from the available discursive repertoire, mostly from family, friends, and school. This study shows a discursive approach to literacy and race that helps to further characterize how they are defined in the family setting. However, the study does not place this analysis in a broader societal and institutional frame in which to understand fragmentation with school discourses.

These studies (Compton-Lilly, 2011; Dyson, 2003; Dyson & Smitherman, 2009; Heath, 1988; Taylor & Dorsey-Gaines, 1988) document the importance of analyzing the home and cultural practices of black students and families to better frame how they learn and negotiate knowledge in the school. This is so because the home setting represents a foundational space in which children start to make sense of who they are. Although these studies represent important steps in documenting inequities and injustices tied to literacies, they do not deconstruct the nature of the racial hierarchical relations that create the mismatch.

Critical literacy also entails a view of social transformations. Research addressing transformations is scarce because it implies not only fieldwork, but also actual commitment with the community members. Johnson and Rosario-Ramos (2012) describe different community

projects developed by a school in a Puerto Rican community that appealed to social justice and cultural vindication of this community within the larger space of the city. The study shows how youth can develop critical literacy perspectives when involved in real activities that relate community and school for developing counter narratives about their own communities. This work challenges the role of schools as isolated bubbles while positioning them as institutions that can work as counter-storytelling places for re-constructing master narratives that question inequities. In this study, literacy was not just a tool for learning, but for transforming communities' realities.

All the studies mentioned above, although not focused on a critical race theory approach directly, did address the literacies of black or colored individuals and they show how they are characterized by a mismatch with those of the school. Nevertheless, the authors do not contextualize these literacies in relation to broader racial structures and how black people's literacies can be placed in a relationship of tension between structures and agency.

Critical literacy studies in Latin America. The necessity to document and honor diverse literacies of discriminated groups and how they represent differences with official school versions of literacy is also the common denominator of recent research on literacy in Latin America. In Latin America critical literacy research has emphasized research on the history of colonization and cultures' encounters (Collins & Blot, 2003), the ideology of alphabetic literacy as social marker of privilege (Kalman, 2011), indigenous' voices through their languages and texts (Zavala, 2014), and the power of alphabetic literacies being imposed by the national curriculum (Kalman, & Street, 2009).

In regards to research that documents the literacies of Indigenous peoples, Niño-Murcia (2009) documents the literacy practices of a community in Tupicocha, a community in the

Peruvian Andes in which every community activity that gathers all the members is a literate practice. She discusses these literacies in light of the decontextualized official literacy validated by the school. Zavala (2002, 2004) has studied the relations between the predominant school alphabetic view on literacy for teaching Spanish to indigenous peoples, and the extension of this to the teaching of literacy in Quechua in Perú. The author emphasizes that the cultural encounter triggers the application of dominant language and literacy ideologies to Quechua speakers' view of their language. Basically, in light of the rules for teaching alphabetic literacy in Spanish, Quechua speakers start to consider they do not know how to speak or write Quechua. These studies have focused on indigenous groups whose literacy practices intersect with their speaking of an indigenous language, and the tensions that it represents in light of national interests of documenting indigenous languages through literacy practices.

In Latin America, research on cultures' encounters also document the literacies that represents hybrids, as well as how these literacies foreground the necessity to rethink literacy education. Kalman (2009) describes letters written to San Antonio de Padua (Saint Anthony) to analyze "the coexistence of multiple social fields within a particular context that is highly decorated with multimodal representations, religious symbolism, and diverse artifacts" (p. 131). She discusses how texts' changing characteristics, due to cultures encounters and flows, represent an important point for reflecting on teaching literacy as the teaching of the practices and the social dimensions, instead of focusing on the teaching of texts *per se*. Sichra (2009) describes how in Bolivia most of the Indigenous languages that have survived in contexts of historical, social, political, and educational tensions are characterized by multiple contradictions. However, the government urges that indigenous languages have their written system so that they

survive. She discusses how indigenous peoples must have the right to choose on their own destiny based on the development of critical consciousness.

In this regard, the prevalent official view of literacy in Latin America privileges alphabetic literacies as the teaching and learning of skills (Farr, 2009). Cragolino (2009) analyzes ideological characteristics in the discourse that presents the dichotomy *alfabetismo/analfabetismo* (literacy/illiteracy) in a media article in Argentina. The author states that media presents access to literacy as an individual phenomenon omitting the social and political dimensions that constrain or facilitate social participation through reading and writing.

These studies (Farr, 2009; Kalman, 2009; Niño-Murcia, 2009; Sichra, 2009; Zavala, 2004, 2004) are important because they not only honor varied literacies, while documenting the mismatch between rural communities and the macro national and Latin American context, but also they place this discussion in a historical and political context of exclusion that reveals how literacy can work as a marker with which to include some and exclude others, with which to point at those who do participate in the written culture of the dominant group, and to forget those who remain in the periphery. However, the studies that address the literacies of black peoples in Latin America with a critical view are limited. Most of the literature focuses on governmental reports that account for *alfabetismo/analfabetismo* (literacy/illiteracy) levels with a basic skills approach (Rodríguez, Alfonso, & Cavelier, 2009), or with a cultural view of black groups (Rojas & Castillo, 2005). These studies will be reviewed in the section that discusses studies on the education of black children in Colombia.

Research on critical race theory and education. Research on critical race theory in education is a growing body. Research has been carried out in educational policy (Buras, 2007; Gillborn, 2008) to document the structural and contradictory character of racial domination in the

schools as mediated by policy. Others have reflected on the weight for black children's education and schooling of the inequity behind the entire educational system that points at black male students as problematic (Anderson, 2008; Nasir, 2012; Noguera, 2008; Watts & Everelles, 2004).

In a study of the colorblind perspective in the school, Schofield (2010) documents the impact it has on the school's dynamics. Her findings show how both black and white teachers' in a low socio-economic status school framed their teaching beliefs under the idea of imparting "middle-class values and modes of behavior to lower-class students so that they could break out of the cycle of poverty and become middle-class persons themselves" (p. 264). What is interesting is that although the student population was mostly black, race was not even a theme. She discusses how in the school race was invisible and a taboo topic since informants stated their inter-personal relationships in the school were based on individuals and they did not see skin color. Among the consequences the colorblind perspective had in the school's dynamics are that conflict was not themed in the curriculum, discomfort was avoided and minimized, cultural and racial differences were ignored, and response to diversity was inexistent. The researcher concludes that the colorblind approach sets the environment for people to act in discriminatory ways. According to her, incorporating diversity in the curriculum and making color relevant and visible is essential for schools to better serve black students. This study is important because it uncovers the impact of the colorblind perspective in the school's dynamics. However, the study does not conceptualize the colorblind perspective in an ideological-material continuum with which to discuss material consequences in black students' lives.

Literature on critical race theory in education has also focused on studying everyday racial dynamics in the school to reflect on how racism permeates the curriculum and determines the lives of black children. Vaught (2011) studied a series of high schools in a district to

document the complex functioning of schools' practices and policies that foster racism and disserve black and brown students. She analyzes how black students are purposely used for obtaining funding while their educational needs are disregarded since children are exposed to implicit and explicit messages about their low academic achievement. This study represents an open effort of applying critical race theory to question commodification of black students and how that coexists with discourses of hate that represent white supremacy.

In another ethnographic multisite study, Lewis (2003) studied the negotiation of color in the classrooms and schools. She analyzes classroom and school practices to describe in detail micro instances of racial discrimination in which black and brown students negotiate their learning. These micro instances occur in the classroom through instruction and racialized patterns of expected behavior, and in the teachers' launch through teachers' comments on their expectations of black students' academic achievement. This study is important because it shows how to understand the impact of race on curricula and schools focusing on everyday practices is essential for capturing repeated patterns of thought and action that represent racist school ideologies.

Vaught (2011) and Lewis' (2003) studies also portray the situations black and brown children experience in the school that impact not only their academic achievement, but also their wellbeing by triggering everyday stress for these students. Precisely, this type of stress related to how people of color in formal educational settings, whether students or teachers, have to deal with everyday situations in which their presence or actions must be validated over and over, has been conceptualized as racial battle fatigue (Martin, 2015). Micro racial aggressions represent the basis for documenting the racial battle fatigue people of color experience for participating in predominantly white institutional structures. Duncan-Andrade (2009) refers to the post traumatic

stress disorder created in students of color that have to negotiate their everyday learning and participation in the school under conditions of neighborhood violence and poverty. His metaphor of “growing roses in concrete” captures the difficulties in addition to racism and structural discrimination, in which students of color experience learning in the school setting.

These studies (Lewis, 2003; Schofield, 2010; Vaught, 2011) based on critical race theory in education address the intersectionality of race and class by foregrounding how different forms of oppression impact students of color’s education. Other studies address race and gender as hetero-normativity (Brown, 2005), and even, the complex intersection of race, class, and gender (Crenshaw, 2009). Critical race theory in education questions the default character of white educational normativity to foreground the different conditions in which educational systems and policies promote racist practices, and restricted opportunities for students of color.

Within critical race theory, Bonilla-Silva (2015) proposes new directions for research based on the existing literature. Although he does not address particularly research on educational settings, these directions represent important pathways for the scope of this research. One of the proposed directions is related to documenting how racial socialization for racialized individuals “happens indirectly and contextually” (p. 82) to reflect on the different ways in which youth undergo racial socialization. The other direction he suggests is research on local racial formations, i.e., how racial formations operate in local, everyday contexts, and how they interplay with the structural level. Analyzing local racial formations sheds light on the different nuances of racial ideology in varied contexts and what elements relate to the variation.

Research on critical literacy and critical race theory. Although the above studies’ findings contribute to the body of literature for reflecting on the experiences of students of color in educational settings, few studies have documented the intersection of critical race theory with

literacy (Willis et al., 2008). Using critical racial approaches to literacy is complex because it highlights the Eurocentric and white owned characters of literacy (Ladson-Billings, 2003; Willis, 2008) that translates into a “pervasive silence” in literacy research related to issues of race (Rogers & Mosley 2006). However, this is precisely what has to be reflected upon in regards to the education of students of color, the extent to which official school literacy practices represent a view of literacy linked to racial domination, and the degree to which these students’ varied literacies correspond with practices of contestation.

Kirkland and Jackson (2009) analyzed the literacy practices of a group of 11 – 14 year old teenagers who called themselves “the cool kids”. They analyzed how these boys constructed their masculinity through the different literacy practices they created in the group. What they show is that those literacy practices are hybrids between school formats and what they produce as “being cool”. The authors criticize how the school is disinterested in acknowledging these black masculine literacies, but also how the school saw them as negative and as interrupters for the learning process. To that extent, Kirkland and Jackson propose to contextualize these practices as the students’ act of resistance toward the system that disregards them. Although the authors did not contextualize how “the cool kids” practiced the official literacies in the classroom, this study is important to start reflecting on the use of literacies to mark an identity of struggle.

Using a critical race approach does not entail focusing on students of color exclusively. Indeed, documenting ways in which the dominant group promotes its racial supremacy within the school setting and through literacy is an important inquiry to understand practices of domination. Rogers and Mosley (2006) studied a group of white second grade students to illustrate how they talk about race in the classroom, and how that relates to literacy instruction.

The authors focused on documenting how “students’ literate positions are acquired and constructed through the lenses of whiteness and race” (p. 465). Although students and the teacher used literacy to enact white privilege and to validate liberal philosophies, this finding confirms the potential use of literacy to challenge whiteness in relation to social justice, i.e., to use literacy purposely for putting racial domination on the table, and for rejecting it with the students, even in second grade.

In another study, Rogers and Mosley (2008) analyzed the discursive and stylistic use of what they call racial literacy in a book club with pre-service teachers. According to them white pre-service teachers focused on marking blackness while unmarking their own race. On the contrary, black pre-service teachers used a variety of linguistic resources to manifest their stances towards race, racism, and anti-racism. They conceptualize racial literacy as the set of semiotic tools used by black pre-service teachers to enact their racial positioning as well as that of others, which they refer to as social action. Racial literacy impacted black participants’ ways of being, interacting, participating, and representing themselves in the book club. The authors call attention on the necessity to account for interactions in context to document the linguistic resources used by racial actors. In the case of educational settings, they conclude on the importance of doing this to reflect on racial tensions and to further improve teacher education, and the educational settings in which they perform. This study emphasizes on the racialized character of literacy and on the linguistic elements tied to it.

Critical race theory and literacy allow for questioning that racial supremacy is founded in the idea of a default pre-social white body (Kitching, 2013). Kitching foregrounds the role of the physical body as enacting race and as “repeatedly co-constituted with literacies” (p. 377). Bodies as texts, literacies inside and outside the school, and the unmarked character of whiteness in

bodies and texts, become an important focus of inquiry for critical race literacy research. These ideas highlight the role of “the body” in critical literacy research, that is a field precisely characterized for the lack of inclusion of the physical body (Kitching, 2013), which is what indeed refers to racial categories. This analysis places the body into critical race literacy research as unit of analysis along with text and identity. At the same time, critical race literacy research highlights the role of practices as not only things that happen, but also as things practiced and performed by bodies, by racialized bodies.

Thus, research on critical race theory and critical literacy is promising for unveiling the role of literacy in promoting racial domination, for documenting the role of literacy in fostering identities of racial resistance, for foregrounding the role of the physical body into race and literacy, for reflecting on the dominant race unmarked body in literacy, and for emphasizing on the importance of practices. The nuances captured by the research whose approach is critical race theory in combination with critical literacy are meaningful for characterizing how literacy and race intersect in the lives of the students of color.

Research on critical literacy and race teaching. Some authors have started to document and to reflect on pedagogic possibilities for addressing literacy instruction with critical race lenses. Based on the possibilities that intersecting literacy and race represent, the studies that have addressed pedagogical reflections can be considered as contributions and efforts, although there is still much research needed in this regard.

Some research documents pedagogic strategies for addressing literacy instruction that while acknowledging the connections of literacy and race, focus instruction on traditional literature (Wood & Jocius, 2013). These efforts are important because they highlight the role of equitable learning opportunities as decreasing the gap in reading for black students. However,

this focus does not question the racial structural basis in which literacy instruction content is embedded. At the same time, addressing critical literacy and race in instruction calls attention on the importance of teachers' training so that their teaching is more honest and critical for students of color (Sealey-Ruiz & Green, 2015). These authors propose to use popular visual images to deconstruct racial stereotypes about black people with pre-service teachers to impact their attitudes towards black young males. The potential of improving teacher education in this regard is meaningful for guaranteeing more critical teachers. In addition, using popular images is the opportunity for pre-service teachers' understanding of these materials for teaching purposes.

Indeed, acknowledging the relevance of hip hop culture for the lives of youth in regards to class, gender, and race challenges policies and curriculums as these resist to include changes brought by transcultural encounters and digital possibilities (Alim, Baugh, & Bucholtz, 2011). Several authors agree that the impact of hip-hop in the lives of young students is undeniable (Childs, 2014; Hill, 2009; Kynard, 2008; Morrell & Duncan-Andrade, 2002). These authors document and reflect on the possible use of hip-hop culture materials for triggering consciously racial literacy activities with the students such as storytelling communities with hip-hop literature groups, using rap for poetry and storytelling, exploration of racial stereotypes through popular culture, and the use of black rhetoric for designing classroom methodologies. They propose different literacy-based classroom activities for cultural and racial relevant instruction. Childs (2014) even develops activities for the social studies classroom. Morrell (2002) poses to understand the role that hip-hop culture represents for youth and how appealing to it through a critical pedagogy founded in students' local realities can help to improve education for black children. All of these authors conclude on the effective use of these literacies to improve students' critical awareness, engagement and learning.

The above studies are important in that they take further the role of literacy and race with highlighting hip-hop culture. In addition, they use hip-hop as a way to include popular imagery that represents alternative views in the classroom. However, it is also important to further account for black students' literacy learning as negotiating domination and contestation in the school setting.

Research on identity, learning, and participation. Understanding how identity as individuals' subjectivity, relates to learning and participation is important for better detailing not only everyday classroom practices, but also students' existence in the educational system, and their relation with content, curriculum, and with the general school structure. This literature represents a complement for a more thorough account of how literacy links to identity and to learning processes.

Norton (2000) studied the relationship between identity, language and participation. She analyzed the relationship between students' identities and investment for learning and participating in the classroom. She found that what teachers might perceive as students' lack of motivation, engagement and willingness is much more complex. The complexity lies in that non-participation in the classroom relates to students' gauging the extent to which learning contributes to increasing their identities and imagined communities of practice. The author concludes that students' non-participation in the classroom can be conceptualized as "acts of alignment on their part to preserve the integrity of their imagined communities. Non-participation was not an opportunity for learning from a position of peripherality, but an act of resistance from a position of marginality" (p. 165). The author discusses non-participation patterns as acts of resistance that for students who represent oppressed groups and within the schools' structural oppression, marginalize them even more. Although with an adult population,

this study is important in that it documents students' practices of non-participation in the classroom as acts of rejection of domination.

Conceptualizing students' resistance through non-participation practices sheds light on the complexity of learning processes for students in oppressed groups. McKay and Wong (1996) studied four Mandarin teenagers' use of literacy to show their resistance to ESL courses in the US. For example, what teachers saw as lack of commitment to learning was analyzed as intentional non-participation by the students, who did not find their multiple identities validated in the classrooms. The four teenagers used literacy to show their resistance to the ESL courses' mismatch with their imagined communities. The authors emphasized the importance of problematizing diverse children's learning because "they exist in extremely complex social environments that consist of overwhelmingly asymmetrical power relations and subject the learner to multiple discourses" (p. 603). They discuss the importance of seeing the learner's subjectivities as sites of struggle and to not see their ambivalent desires as simple distractions or lack of motivation. This study also shows the importance of accounting for non-participation beyond motivation as an individual (and isolated from social and political aspects) decision that comes exclusively from the learner's volition.

Documenting and reflecting on students' participation as complex patterns related to their identities and affiliations is essential for characterizing learning as tied to differential investments (Miller and Zuengler, 2011). Research on identity, learning and participation helps to deconstruct students of color low achievement as lack of interest. Instead, this literature highlights that practices of resistance and non-participation have to be carefully analyzed in light of students' positioning in the classroom, positioning that is determined by not only social, economical, historical, and cultural conditions, but also racial structures.

At the same time, positioning teachers as subjects with multiple identities is important to better frame educational practices. However, research on how teachers' ideologies rationalize the existing social, racial, ethnic, and gender orders, is scarce (Bartolomé 2008). According to her, acknowledging that teachers' ideological frames are important aspects for reflecting not only on instructional practices in the schools, but also for improving educational processes, is just starting to be investigated. Based on the necessity to have educators with political and ideological clarity, Bartolomé and Balderrama (2001) documented the positive outcomes of developing these constructs with Latino teachers. Ideological clarity is defined as "the process by which individuals struggle to identify and compare their own explanations for the existing socioeconomic and political hierarchy with those propagated by the dominant society" (Bartolomé & Balderrama, 2001, p. 48). Political clarity refers to "a never ending process by which individuals achieve an ever-deepening consciousness of the sociopolitical and economic realities that shape their lives and their capacity to transform such material and symbolic conditions" (p. 48). According to them, educators have been addressed as apolitical and non-ideological, and that has had consequences in how teachers perform instruction. The authors conclude on the importance of developing political and ideological clarity with teachers so that they can also work as active participants in questioning the racial order that limits students' of color possibilities.

Research on black Colombians and on the education of black children in Colombia.

Due to the complex racial dynamics that in the country value *mestizaje* as foundational for the country while dismissing black and indigenous peoples (Wade, 2013), research on black Colombians is a recent growing body. Some studies have focused on making visible this population through demographic analysis of number of residents, living conditions, and

correlation with poverty and violence (Barbary, Ramírez, & Urrea, 2004; Bruyneel & Ramírez, 1999; Urrea-Giraldo, 2012; Urrea & Murillo, 1999). Other studies have addressed black Colombian women and feminism (Lozano-Lerma, 2010), black people in the cities (Urrea, 2010; Urrea & Quintín, 1998), cultural practices of black people in regards to tradition (Friedemann, 1989; Friedemann & Arocha, 1986), family dynamics (Urrea, Arboleda, & Arias, 1999), history of slavery and its impacts (Múnera, 1998, 2005), migration patterns (Barbary, 2004), racial dynamics in the country (Wade, 1995, 2013), racism in the health system (Mosquera, 2015), and the stereotypes of black people's sexuality (Viveros, 2002). In regards to education particularly, studies have addressed the educational experiences through ethnic education (Rojas, 2011; Ruíz & Medina, 2013), educational policy for black groups (Rojas & Castillo, 2005), literacy and race (Castillo, 2011), and mathematics and race (Valoyes, 2015). In what follows I discuss the most relevant literature for this study.

Racial dynamics in the country. Racial dynamics in Colombia have been defined as complex and intricate (Wade, 1995, 2013). In Colombia, indigenous and black peoples were racialized differently according to the economic interests of the Spaniard crown regime. Indigenous peoples populated their own lands and they were therefore harder to enslave, and it was more expensive; whereas black peoples were uprooted from their homelands, therefore easier to enslave and more exploitable (Wade, 2013). The result of this was a more paternalistic view towards indigenous, and a dehumanizing one towards blacks. In 1991, with the new national Constitution, diversity (ethnicities, languages, and practices) was acknowledged as the richness of the country, however, this occurred in light of the necessity to portray a positive image of the country based on a continental interest for validating *mestizaje* as the marker of the Latin American identity (Wade, 1995).

The interaction of these views is the coexistence of two connected ideologies in regards to racial order and national identity (Wade, 1995). On the one hand, there is the view of *mestizaje* as the unique characteristic of the country in which black, indigenous, and white peoples are mixed to create and celebrate the particular identity of the country. On the other hand, black and indigenous peoples are discriminated against. Thus, *mestizaje* is understood as a “morally neutral convergence of three races onto a nonhierarchized middle ground” (p. 19). In this ideology, the neutral convergence aspires to whitening “by envisaging a future in which blackness and indigenusness are not only absorbed, but also erased from the national panorama” (p. 19).

Studies on racial dynamics in Colombia are useful to depict the complex relationships that shape how black people are perceived by the dominant *mestizo* group. Wade’s findings are fundamental for understanding how the national educational system understands its commitment to the education of black students. At the same time, Wade’s analysis on racial dynamics contributes to understanding schools’ focus on *mestizaje* as diversity.

Black people’s migration patterns, their family structures, and their presence in the city and in the health system. Literature on how black peoples’ existence in towns and in the city documents their flows in the country in terms of not only statistics, but also of practices. Likewise, research on family structures describes the particular characteristics of family networks that relate precisely to migration patterns. The Afro-Pacific migration (Barbary, 2004) documents the movement of black people from the towns in the Pacific Coast of Colombia to the cities. He discusses how spatial mobility impacts the system of places it connects, more precisely, how territorial organization and exchange relationships between places, is influenced by migratory processes. System of places is defined as “the addition of interactions between

places, generated by people and material and symbolic goods' circulation; which constitutes a system from the space perspective" (p. 114). Thus, black people living in the cities integrate a system of places that includes their towns of origin, with city dynamics. However, generations of black people born and living in cities whose contact with their families' towns of origins is less frequent, integrate differently the system of places. For them, the city's landscape has more weight in the understanding of places.

In regards to black people living in the city, Urrea (2010) discusses the gradual formation of black middle classes in Cali and Bogotá. He states that even though education and cultural capital have allowed the creation of black middle classes, skin color is still a ghost that acts "despite the whitening strategy" (p. 39) of interracial marriages. In Cali, the high presence of black people in the poorest parts of the east conglomerate of the city confirms the slow gradual character of black people living in middle class' economic conditions (Urrea-Giraldo, 2012). Indeed, black people's presence in the city is increasing, but for swelling numbers related to poverty in the cities (Urrea-Giraldo, 2012). In fact, first generation migrants did not access higher educational capital and their position in Cali's occupational ladder is for the low paid jobs (Urrea, Arboleda, & Arias, 1999).

The high concentration of black people in the east conglomerate of Cali is associated with poverty and with high concentration of young male population. This high residential concentration of black people relates to dynamics of hyper-masculinity (exaggerating stereotypical male behaviors), territorialism (struggle over mastering the physical space), competitiveness (interest in exceling for the ability to increase types of capital), and conflict (Urrea-Giraldo, 2012). These dynamics in black young males in *Aguablanca* relate to complex historical, economical, and cultural conditions. The fight over a place for living, the city's

privilege of competitiveness for improving, along with *machismo* and racism, detonate hyper-masculine identities that are not only hegemonic identities in the District, but also marginalized identities (Urrea & Quintín, 1998) since for the *mestizo* dominant group, black males in *Aguablanca* are problematic and violent.

Most of the black population in Cali lives mainly in conditions of poverty and violence. This emotional stress has started to be related to black people's health and wellness (Mosquera, 2015). High blood pressure, diabetes, and sickle cell disease are deconstructed as racial diseases to expose the socio-economic character of those conditions (Lucumí, 2014). Racism also impacts the health system since ethnic or racial categories for categorizing black people in journals of medicine, are used mainly for maintaining the stereotype of black people linked to endemic diseases in genetic-like explanations (Mosquera, 2015).

In regards to family structures, households formed by black people in the east conglomerate of Cali are networked and they work in a flexible process of re-composition (Urrea, Arboleda, & Arias, 1999). Urrea, Arboleda, and Arias characterize family networks as “group of individuals that self-recognize and establish, through several generations and life cycles, different types and levels' kinship nexus, either akin, ritual, neighborhood, or sense of belonging to a same locality or origin” (p. 183). Black family networks are formed by different households and their dynamics relate to how members perceive their social roles with other black migrant people in regards to hospitality and solidarity.

These studies that address the living conditions of black people in Colombia are important because they contribute to understand their practices in the contexts, as well as to show racism's impact on their lives. These studies form a body of research in a variety of fields whose review is important for framing studies that intend to not only question inequality related to

racial structures, but also to further document the tensions these structures create for black people in different areas of their lives.

Black Colombians and education. Literature addressing the education of black Colombians has focused on black groups in rural towns and on an ethnic view of education (Rojas, 2011; Ruíz & Medina, 2013). These authors document and reflect on ethnic education for black groups living in rural towns as a right established by the constitution. They describe the challenges ethnic education has for its implementation in rural conditions while recognizing innovative pedagogic practices created for these challenges.

The pedagogic experiences framed in the mandated Afrocolombian course have shown positive results in regards to culturally relevant content and means for addressing the education of black students in rural towns (Rojas, 2011). However, the experiences are scarce and funds are more limited every year. At the same time, focusing on the education of black students with an ethnic view is risky in that it can reaffirm the *mestizo* dominant groups' stereotypes of black people as rural and intellectually incapable (Valoyes, 2015). Rojas and Castillo (2005) precisely propose to account for local histories, tradition, and knowledge in interaction with the national educational policy for reflecting on the education of black students in rural towns to avoid the promotion of racial stereotypes through ethnic education.

Another risk related to focusing the education of black children within an ethnic approach is that while honoring the ways of black groups in rural towns, it does not question the racism that pervades the school structure. In this regard, in the only study that addresses literacy and the education of black students in Colombia, Castillo (2011) proposes to acknowledge the role of textbooks created by black teachers to counter the racist discourses in the official ones. She states that the school as a societal institution is the main creator and promoter of racist discourses, and

official textbooks and school structures are key for this endeavor. Castillo analyzes the relevance of textbooks that have been created by black Colombians in different areas (history, literature, social studies, and sciences) for countering the weight of institutional racism. She also analyzes the extent to which structural organization of the schools (official events with a script, playing the anthems, and celebrations) reinforce and are part at the same time of racist discourses. She concludes on the urgent task of documenting and promoting a black pedagogic culture tied to black written production that forms a black Colombian pedagogy for reflecting and acting on this population's education.

Critical race theorists in Colombia (Lozano-Lerma, 2013; Viveros, 2000) call attention on the necessity to understand black groups not as cultural, but as social. In this regard, literature addressing directly the education of black children as social groups is just starting to be produced. This is so because fighting the weight of the ethnic education programs that foreground cultural elements sounds contradictory as they show to be working in rural contexts (Rojas & Castillo, 2007). However, within critical race theorizing, balancing essentialism and anti-essentialism is key to account for individual experiences of oppression, while finding a common grammar for generalizing it. To that extent, research that addresses the education of black students in the city is necessary for further understanding not only different oppression manifestations, but also the reflection of black students' needs as social groups.

Valoyes (2015) studied practices for teaching algebra and teachers' expectations about black students' learning in three schools in Cali, including one in *Aguablanca*. She compared teachers' views and practices in schools that represented three different socio-economic statuses. Valoyes analyzed dominant racial ideologies through racial frames to confirm that for *mestizo* teachers, black students are not good for math. This ideology impacts teachers' instruction, who

position black students in their classrooms as incapable of logical thinking contrary to how *mestizo* students are positioned. The non-presence of black students in the school representing the higher socio-economic status leaves pending the analysis of what happens with black students in schools with higher socio-economic status. Nevertheless, this study foregrounds the weight of racial ideologies in math instruction for black students in low and middle socio-economic levels. This study is important also because one of the three schools Valoyes targeted is a school in *Aguablanca*, which represents an antecedent for my study.

Summary and importance of this study's research questions. This literature review confirms the importance of intersecting critical race theory and critical literacy research. The studies that address black Colombians' education tend towards a cultural view of this group that does not account for the experiences of students in city contexts. Precisely, due to the complex racial dynamics that praise *mestizaje* and dismiss blackness, understanding how these dynamics play to impact the educational experiences of black students seems necessary. In light of literacy education, research in Colombia is minimal and understanding how black students attribute meaning to literacy and how that impacts their education gains importance due to the capital role the government puts on literacy for improving black people's living conditions. That is why a study that questions how a young black male student's views on literacy and race impact his learning and participation in the school, and how literacy and race are related in his school, might shed light for documenting not only alternative literacies, but also for reflecting on tensions between structure and agency in regards to literacy and race.

Chapter Three

A Qualitative Case Study of a Black 13-year Old Male Student

Black Colombians face inequities and most of them are relegated in all living condition levels. For the government, education and *alfabetización* (alphabetization) are keys for solving this situation. However, this solution is problematic. In regards to education, policy that addresses the education of black students defines black people in cultural, not social terms. This cultural approach tends towards essentialist, stereotyping, and monolithic views of this population. In relation to *alfabetización*, the idea is limited and simplistic because it highlights the dominant alphabetic literacy in its basic skills aspect. Precisely, due to the traditional use of literacy for judging groups of people as superior or inferior (Smith, 2012), and to the necessity of vindicating the legitimacy of alternative ways of writing and being, it is important to reflect on literacies' complex and oppositional manifestations. In this study, it is important to document the relations between literacy and race, and how they shape a black student's learning and participation in the school.

For carrying out this interest, I chose the path that better helped me to inquire informants' literacy practices and racial views, the path that better helped me to see the perspectives of black and *mestizo* informants. This path had to be one that allowed me to integrate power dynamics, domination, resistance, and hope. In this chapter I explain the research design with which I crafted my work in regards to the philosophical assumptions I brought to the study, the selected strategies of inquiry, and the research methods that include the different forms of data collection, analysis, and interpretation. I also introduce the settings and my informants, as well as detailed descriptions of the procedures and rationale for them. Finally, I discuss how I positioned myself within the study.

Research Design

In Chapter 1 I depicted the way black people in Colombia represent a discriminated group in the statistics related to living conditions, education, and occupation, among others. I also stated that although telling and important, these statistics do not allow for an in depth understanding of how literacies constitute possibilities of racial oppression and resistance that in turn, help to explain black students' learning and participation in the school. Therefore, this study intended to characterize the relationships between literacy practices and racial frames, to reflect on how these relationships shaped Yeison Daniel's learning and participation in the school. Thus, the research design I used in this project is one that allowed me to not only inquire about informants' experiences, actions, and conditions under which action and experience occur (Carspecken, 1996), but also one that allowed me to analyze them in relation broader social structures.

Qualitative research. This project's design was based on qualitative research because it represents "a means for exploring and understanding the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social human problem" (Creswell, 2009, p. 4). The reasons why the qualitative approach worked for this study are mentioned as follows.

- Understanding how literacy and race are related and how that shapes black students' education are topics that had not been explored in the context of Cali-Colombia. Since qualitative research is exploratory, this design was helpful for understanding the problem and adding to what is already known about the education of black students.
- The goal was to understand how informants attributed meaning to literacies in relation to racial frames as defined by Bonilla-Silva (2014). Thus, categories were identified based on the collected data, and not based on pre-conceived variables.

- At the same time, the qualitative design is useful for identifying shared patterns of behavior in regards to literacy practices and racial frames that allowed me to portray the bigger racial school ideology, and how Yeyson Daniel interacted within it.
- Most data collection happened in the field to capture the tensions and dynamics in the natural setting. I was able to talk to people and to observe them behaving and acting within the spaces in which they carried out their daily activities.
- I used multiple sources of data in the form of fieldnotes through participant-observation, interviews, literacy pieces, and artifacts. Participant-observation and interviews were important for engaging with informants' daily activities, thus gaining perspective on their acting and behaving. Literacy pieces and artifacts were important for documenting the variety of literacies and artifacts in the settings, and how they related to racial frames.

Critical theorizing. However, since my interest also involved analyzing power relations of oppression and how they are maintained and contested, I adopted a critical framework by which I collected and analyzed data. In this sense, my theoretical framework informed my methodology, which involved a value orientation towards inequities. I therefore incorporated elements of critical theories to explicitly position my role as researcher, as entailing cultural criticism. Key ideas of my theoretical framework that informed my methodological approach include that thought and action are mediated by power relations that are socially and historically constituted (Carspecken, 1996), events are inscribed in values and ideologies (van Dijk, 1998), socio-economic dynamics impact knowledge construction (Smith, 2012), language (oral or written) is essential in forming subjectivity (Norton, 2001), due to several reasons some groups are privileged over others (Freire, 2000), oppression has many faces and it is reproduced through structures and ideologies (Bonilla-Silva, 2014), focusing on only one form of oppression fails in

understanding interconnections (Crenshaw, 1991), contestation and agency explain individuals' resistance (Giroux, 1983), and traditional research might reproduce systems of oppression (Bonilla-Silva, 2014; Carspecken, 1996).

Critical race theory. I also had a critical race theory view towards research (Parker & Roberts, 2005; Solórzano & Yosso, 2002; Willis, 2008) because I contextualized the particular experiences of a black young male and how his literacies related to the racial ideology in the school. In analyzing the tensions, I uncovered instances of everyday racism that pervaded the school setting in which Yeison Daniel negotiated his learning. This means that I placed informants' experiences and actions within racial power relations, relations that in turn are inscribed in a particular dominant racial ideology. In addition, I explained how knowledge construction around literacy is related to socio-economic dynamics in which racial oppression materialized through the racial ideology in the school structure. By focusing on literacy, I dug into one important aspect for subjectivity to reflect on its use for explaining agency, struggle, and racial identity. Finally, I chose to focus on a black Colombian student that represents a non-privileged population and its connection to class inequities.

Strategy of Inquiry

This project's approach corresponds with a single, nested and layered, instrumental case study (Mertens, 2015; Patton, 2002; Stake, 1995; Stark & Torrance, 2005). Case study is a strategy defined by its focus on the object of study, on "the particular instance (object or case) and [the] reaching an understanding [of it] within a complex context" (Mertens, 2015, p. 245). Basically, it focuses on the case and how it interacts with components of the phenomena, how it acts under different situations and circumstances. Stake (2005) states that the case is an integrated, specific, unique, bounded system (p. 445), and that its study uses different methods

for data collection. I define this case as single (Stake, 1995) because it focused on the single case of Yeison Daniel to understand how his literacies related to racial issues. However, this case is also nested and layered because although it is a single case study (Yeison Daniel as the primary case), its understanding required me to relate it to different smaller cases (individuals and events). This case is also instrumental (Stake, 1995) because Yeison Daniel's case worked for studying something else. In other words, studying Yeison Daniel was instrumental for understanding how literacy and race related in the school and how that shaped his participation in this setting. The case study approach worked for this research for several reasons:

- I endeavored to understand Yeison Daniel's case, his literacy practices, their relation to racial issues, and how his views on literacy and race shaped his learning and participation in the school.
- For understanding how Yeison Daniel interacted with the settings (classroom and entire school), I layered his case with understanding other informants' views and actions, events' characteristics, and settings' rules and routines.
- Yeison Daniel's case called my attention for two reasons: his teacher referenced him as not being strong in reading and writing, and at the same time he had a personal journal for drawing black US singers, and for writing in English. Thus, I wanted to maximize what I could learn of how literacy and race related with his case.
- I used progressive focusing (Stake, 1995) to change the questions as I gained more understanding of Yeison Daniel's case during my fieldwork and analysis.
- I privileged in-depth inquiry over coverage, and used different data collection methods to explore Yeison Daniel's case, which includes data on his life history, the informants he related to, and the settings he participated in.

- In looking for depth, I also placed Yeison Daniel's case in the social, historical, political, and cultural elements of the settings.

Research Questions and Purpose

In the preliminary oral examination I proposed a set of questions that included the inquiry of language, literacy practices, and learning trajectories in the lives of black Colombians in *Aguablanca* who had migrated from the Pacific coast of the country to the city of Cali. In the process of accessing the field and collecting data, literacy practices and racial ideology were more salient than trajectories and migration *per se*. Nevertheless, family history and migration as initial lenses for approaching the field were useful for starting to think about the black students in the fifth grade focal classroom as groups of cultural continuity that negotiate their identities in urban settings. Thus, the initial questions guided my approach to the field and initial interactions in it, but once there focusing on literacy practices and how they intersected with the school racial ideology, seemed not only a more salient issue, but also a more relevant one.

To that extent, I refined the initial questions and moved from inquiring learning about trajectories, to inquire more thoroughly the literacy practices of a black male student in the fifth grade classroom, and how they related to the racial ideology in the school setting. The initial questions were also focused on understanding the meanings my informants attributed to literacy, trajectories, and education, and although these processes were changed to literacy and racial ideology, the focus of understanding how they attributed meaning to those constructs remained an important aspect of this study. To inquire how informants attributed meaning to literacy and race was essential for understanding the relations between them, and their weight in shaping Yeison Daniel's learning and participation in the school.

The questions were then refined after the sixth week of fieldwork (May 31 – June 2), when I had already visited Yeison Daniel’s family twice and the school weekly. This refining helped me to better plan observations, interviews and conversations with my informants in the different settings throughout data collection. Focusing on Yeison Daniel started on my third week of data collection, as a progressive interest that increased as I learned more from him. However, the questions I introduce in this chapter are based on further refinements I did when I had finished data collection and looked at the fieldnotes again. This last set of questions gave me the rationale for the in depth data analysis and interpretation I present in this study, in which I focused on Yeison Daniel. The main research questions and the sub-questions are as follows.

Research question 1. How does Yeison Daniel’s views of literacy and race impact his learning and participation in the school?

- How does Yeison Daniel participate in the school?
- How does Yeison Daniel negotiate literacy practices and racial ideology in the school?

Research question 2. How are literacy and race related in the school?

- What are the racial frames that circulate in the school?
- How do literacies relate to the racial frames?

Purpose. To document, honor, and reflect on Yeison Daniel’s literacies, how they relate to the school’s racial ideology, and how they shape his learning and participation in the school.

Settings

For this project, the main research settings were the school and Yeison Daniel’s home, both located in the *Aguablanca* district. In what follows I describe the District, Yeison Daniel’s home, Yeison Daniel’s school, the field entry, and recruitment procedures.

The Aguablanca District. The city of Cali is organized in *Comunas*, which are administrative divisions of the city that include groups of neighborhoods based on their locations. *Comunas* allow for the city's administrative decentralization and offer different public services to people: health centers, schools, and legal offices. The east conglomerate of the city is formed by a group of ten *Comunas* (6, 7, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, and 21). The *Aguablanca* District corresponds with the group of *comunas* 13, 14, and 15. Districts are territorial entities with special characteristics for administrative purposes. *Comunas* 13, 14, and 15 are among the more populated in the city with 447,999 inhabitants, which make 21.9% of the total city's population (Alonso, Arcos, Llanos, Solano, & Gallego, 2007). In each *comuna* in *Aguablanca*, there are concentrations of people with socio-economic status that include low-low, low, and low-middle. The population pyramid for these three *comunas* is broader in the base, which means their population is younger than that of other *comunas*. The following table shows some demographic characteristics of the three *comunas* that form *Aguablanca*.

Table 1

Population in Aguablanca

Comuna 13	Comuna 14	Comuna 15
169.959 inhabitants	151.544 inhabitants	126.496 inhabitants
8.3% of the total city's population	7.4% of the total city's population	6.2% of the total city's population
15 neighborhoods	6 neighborhoods	4 neighborhoods
6 schools	3 schools	3 schools
26% of the <i>comuna</i> 's population is low-low SES, 64% low SES, and 10% low-middle SES	68.4% of the <i>comuna</i> 's population is low-low SES, and 31.6% low SES	41% of the <i>comuna</i> 's population is low-low SES, 39% low SES, and 20% low-middle SES

(Alonso et. al., 2007).

The black population of Cali that is mostly located in the east conglomerate of the city (75%), and the black population in *Aguablanca* (60%) (Urrea-Giraldo, 2012), came mainly from

the Pacific rural Coast and their descendants who have been born in the city. Settlement of the east conglomerate of the city started in 1970 as the migrants' struggle for getting a place to live, and the efforts for getting sewer, water, and electricity systems have been carried out by community leaders (Urrea & Murillo, 1999). The black community in *Aguablanca* has been characterized as having a complex functioning in which *paisanaje* (relationship between people based on their place of origin) establishes links of solidarity and hospitality, and migration patterns (Urrea & Murillo, 1999).

Yeison Daniel's home. The house located in the neighborhood *Mojica 2* in *Comuna 15* in *Aguablanca*, has two floors. The first floor is Felipa, Yeison Daniel's grandmother's house. It has 75 square meters (246 square feet). The construction is finished, some of the walls are not painted, and the floor is cement. The house has a living room, kitchen, three bedrooms, and a front yard. Felipa has a TV in the living room and another one in her room. The TVs are old models. She has furniture in the living room and the bedrooms also have beds. Yeison Daniel's room has a bunk bed. He sleeps in the lower bunk and his brother in the upper one. In the front yard there are stairs for going up to the second floor. The second floor's construction is not finished, it is raw and the walls are bricks with cement. The second floor has space for a living room, a kitchen (but they are not furnished), and it has two bedrooms. Both bedrooms have beds. There is a computer in the living room. They have a phone line, Internet, electricity, gas, sewage, and water system, but the services are frequently stopped due to lack of payment.

The *Surgir* School and the 5-1 classroom. The official name is *Institución Educativa Pública Surgir* IES (Public Educational Institution *Surgir*). IES is located in the intersection of the streets that separate *comunas* 13, 14, and 15, that is, in the heart of *Aguablanca*. It was inaugurated on June 8, 2011 by Jorge Iván Ospina, the Mayor of the city (2008-2011). The

school's construction was part of his project of improving the city's infrastructure, and of creating changes in the educational model of the city's public schools. The *Modelo Incluyente de Modernización Educativa* MIME (inclusive model of modernization in education) entailed to understand public schools' curriculum in light of the local needs of the students' contexts. The process of designing the MIME for *Surgir* started two years before the inauguration of the school, and lasted till its opening. The mayor approved and funded a team of different professionals (social work, philosophy, linguistics, psychology, teachers, and administration, among others), government representatives, and people from the communities, to reflect and discuss the particular educational needs of the population. One of the identified needs taps into the idea of changing the public image of *Aguablanca* and its residents. However, maintaining the model under the new mayor's administration has been difficult since the new administration decreased the budget for public schools.

The school board is formed by the principal, two teachers elected by the teachers' board, two parents elected by the parents' board, a student elected by the students' board, a graduate elected by the graduate's board, and a representative of the institutions that fund the school. The school structure defines the principal as the head of the institution, followed by the two academic coordinators (elementary and secondary), the administrative coordinator, and the librarian. After them, there are the teachers and the students. The *Surgir* library is part of the network of public libraries in the Department, and it works as both a school library (in the mornings during the school day), and a community library (in the afternoons for the general public). The *Surgir* library is the tallest building in *Aguablanca*; before its construction the tallest building was the police inspection.

In Colombia, the educational policy states that each educational institution must propose its *Proyecto Educativo Institucional* PEI (Institutional Educational Project), which is a statement of the goals, management strategy, mission, pedagogic strategy, regulation handbook, teacher and didactic resources, and tenets the school proposes. The PEI is constructed with the community, the parents, the principal, the students, and the teachers. The PEI in *Surgir* is in construction and it pretends to be an ethnic curriculum, which according to the principal, means that there are diverse types of knowledge circulating in the school. The IES curriculum is organized in fields: scientific (mathematics, natural sciences, and social studies), humanistic (Spanish and literature, ethics, religion, and English), and cultural (physical education, arts, computers).

Grades are organized by cycles. Cycle I corresponds with early childhood, preschool, first, second, and third grades. Cycle II includes fourth and fifth grades. Cycles III and IV are for middle and high school. In elementary, there are three classrooms of each level, and the school day schedule is 7-12m. Recess for elementary is 9-9:30am. In elementary there is one teacher for each classroom, and they do not rotate. The classroom I focused my observations on is 5-1. The classroom has 56 square meters (183 square feet), and it is located on the second floor of the building. There are 41 students in the classroom. Each student has an individual desk and a chair. The classroom has big windows with no curtains. The view of the windows is of *Avenida Ciudad de Cali* (City of Cali Avenue), which is one of the main streets in front of the school. Noise of cars, honks, people passing by, and street vendors enters the classroom. The average temperature in Cali is 30 degrees Celsius (86 degrees Fahrenheit). Thus, usually it is necessary to open the windows at 8am when the temperature starts to heat.

Field entry and recruitment procedures. I contacted the principal of the school to explain to him the project. Then, following the IRB protocol (Appendix A), I presented the project to the parents' board and it was approved. I then contacted the elementary coordinator who introduced me to the three fifth grade teachers. I chose 5-1 as the focal classroom because the teacher told me he was interested in the black Colombian research theme for his classroom, and because he openly said he would like to participate. Once in the classroom, I sent out the general consent forms for all the students in the classroom in their backpacks. I observed 5-1 for one month and then the teacher and I together decided on eight black students that could be targeted for at home observations, among which was Yeison Daniel. I talked with all the parents in 5-1 during the parent – teacher conference and in a separate appointment I talked with the parents of the eight possible target students. I chose three families that expressed being interested in participating, and that mentioned the black theme as important for them too. Yeison Daniel is one of the students I targeted for at home observations. During my first visit to the families, I introduced myself, explained the research to them, and obtained the signed consent forms.

Informants

I worked with several people in the settings. I call them informants because I see them as the people who taught me about their ways of thinking and doing (Bernard & Ryan, 2010). The selection of informants was not random, but purposive (Bernard & Ryan, 2010) because I chose the school and the classroom 5-1 based on the possibilities of encountering black population in them, and because the teacher stated being interested in racial issues. I selected Yeison Daniel as the case because he called my attention with showing his literacies in the classroom, their links with race, and his self-identification as black Colombian. The rest of the participants were not

chosen for their race, but for the role they played in the school (such as principal, teachers, librarian), and for their relationship with Yeison Daniel.

Informants in the family setting. My focal informants in the family are Yeison Daniel, Felipa (grandmother), and Yaneth (aunt). These focal informants will be further described in the following chapter. Other informants are Yeison Daniel's siblings, and cousins. Felipa is the axis figure of the family network, which is formed by two families. In one family the members are Felipa, Yeison Daniel, and his siblings. In the other family the members are Yaneth and her daughter. There are also extended families in the network who live in Tumaco, a town in the department of Nariño, in the Pacific Coast of Colombia where Felipa and her children came from. The family operates in the process of re-composition since other relatives remain in the house for periods of time. Felipa administers the houses, and establishes the rules for the young ones.

Informants in the school setting. My focal informants in the general school setting are the principal, the elementary coordinator, the secondary coordinator, the librarian, and the 5-3 and 5-1 teachers. These informants will be further described in the following chapter. Other informants include the rest of the elementary teachers in the school, people who worked in janitor services for the school, and the administrative coordinator.

Informants in the 5-1 classroom. My focal informants in the 5-1 classroom are the teacher, and Yeison Daniel. The rest of the students in the classroom were also informants, mainly the black students in the classroom, but I did not target them for at home observations. All the students in the classroom live in different neighborhoods in *comunas* 13, 14, and 15 in the low-low and low socio economic status.

Bounding the Study

Events. Since this study inquires how Yeison Daniel attributes meaning to literacies in relation to racial frames in the school, and how that impacts his learning and participation in the school, the targeted events included observation and participation in different activities in the school and at home. Table 2 shows the different events included in this research.

Table 2

Research Events

The Family	The School	The Classroom
Cooking	Recess	Class: the three fields
Doing laundry	The ethnic week: whole school	(cultural, scientific,
Hair braiding	activities, cycles activities, artistic	humanities)
Buying groceries	activities, discussion activities,	Physical education
Doing homework	planning, evaluation	Library
Celebrating birthdays	School breakfast	Computer
Talking	The language week	Class activities: dictation,
Running errands	Teachers' meetings	copying, reading,
Talking with neighbors	Parents' meetings	exercises, whole class,
Watching pictures	After school activities	small groups, and
Using the computer		individual activities
Hair styling		

Processes. Within these settings and events, I paid particular attention to how Yeison Daniel and focal informants practiced literacies in their daily life, the meanings attributed to them, and how this practicing related to the school's racial ideology. I also paid attention to the racial frames that formed the racial ideology.

Protecting informants' identities: Assigning pseudonyms. Protecting participants' identities is a must for the researcher (Sieber, 1992) in all cases, but particularly important for those who are at risk. Since some of my informants fall along categories such as low-income, poverty, discriminated groups, children, and elderlies, I was very careful in protecting all my informants' identities. Although some of the informants suggested I used their real names in the

research reports, I did not use their real names to further respect their rights and explained to them why I used pseudonyms.

For assigning pseudonyms to my informants, I selected the names based on the characteristics of their names in Spanish to convey the linguistic variety and aesthetics. Thus, if the name was a traditional name in Spanish (like Héctor or Amparo), I kept that essence in the pseudonym (Iván or Socorro). If the name was a mixing of English or Italian with Spanish spelling and pronunciation (like Yan Carlos from Giancarlo in Italian, or Leidi from Lady in English), I kept that essence in the attributed pseudonym (for instance Estiven or Yuli). In the particular case of Yeison Daniel, I worked with him in choosing the pseudonym that he wanted to use. I also attributed pseudonyms to last names, to both of them since in Colombia people usually have two last names (paternal and maternal).

I also changed the name of the school, but I did not change the name of the city, the district, or the mayor of the city. I assigned the pseudonyms as informants were appearing in the fieldnotes. To further protect my informants, I deleted their names and faces in the pictures of school worksheets, or massive school events. I created passwords for accessing the files that have informants' real names on them such as consent forms, and the file with the names and pseudonyms.

Ethical considerations. Several authors call attention to the necessity of attending ethical considerations (DeVault, 1999; Lincoln, 2009; Sieber, 1992). The most important obligation the researcher has with informants is in regards to respecting their rights, beliefs, desires, and needs. Ethnographic methods such as participant-observation and interviewing are obtrusive in that they intend to know and understand participants' views and everyday life (Goldbart & Hustler, 2005). Thus, ethical considerations were essential for this study in which I observed Yeison Daniel at

home and at school, therefore, accessing information and events of his life. In addition, for other informants like Yeison Daniel's relatives and school staff, ethical considerations were as important since their views and opinions represent institutional positions about race and education that are sensitive issues. The following safeguards were employed to protect informants' rights: explanation of research objectives to informants before signing the consent form, explanation of exception to confidentiality, giving informants a copy of the signed consent form for their records, written permission through the signed consent form before proceeding to data collection, informing about data collection activities and devices before hand, transcription of interviews were available to informants, adapting to and respecting their schedules and privacy for planning observations and interviews, keeping safe informants' private information collected through interviews and observations, and finally considering their interests and needs above all research activities.

I had to make an exception to confidentiality in Yeison Daniel's information once because he was at risk. I immediately reported his case to the elementary coordinator and the psychologist in the school. In Colombia, education, humanities, and health professionals are mandatory reporters of not only child abuse, but also child risk. After reporting the situation in the school, I talked with Felipa and Yaneth about my proceeding.

Data Collection Strategies

I collected data for this study from April to October 2014 in the field (24 weeks), and October 2014 to October 2015 through follow-up phone and text conversations with Yeison Daniel. I organized data in the form of descriptive fieldnotes (Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw, 2011) that used different types of data sources: participant-observation, in-depth interviews, conversations (face to face and virtual), literacy pieces, and artifacts. I have a set of 53 fieldnotes

with approximately 2000 pages and 350 pictures of literacies and artifacts. In what follows I explain the crafting of my fieldnotes, and the data sources. Table 3 presents a summary of data sources and activities.

Table 3

Summary of data sources and activities

Data Sources		Activity	Amount
Observations		Classroom	81
		Home	58
		School (including library)	72
Interviews	Classroom	5-1 Teacher: Juan Francisco	10
	Home	Felipa	7
		Yaneth	6
		Yeison Daniel	12
	School	Principal: Mario	5
		Elementary Coordinator: Jaime	6
		Secondary Coordinator: Héctor	5
		Librarian: Catalina	6
5-3 Teacher: Olga		5	
Conversations		Follow up-phone and text conversations with Yeison Daniel and his family	42

I placed Yeison Daniel as an informant in the home setting on this table for the sake of clarity. However, he was an informant in the classroom and in the school settings too, and I interviewed him in regards to the three settings. The same happens with Juan Francisco, the 5-1 teacher. He was an informant in both classroom and school settings, even though for clarity in the table I placed him in the classroom setting. It is important also to note that in one day in the field I was able to observe and participate in the three settings. For instance, classroom in the morning (7-10am), school also in the morning (10-12m), and home in the afternoon (12-4pm). I also visited the family in weekends.

Writing as an interpretive process. Fieldnotes play an important role for the interconnection between observation and writing when using ethnographic methods (Emerson et

al., 2011). Since I intended to understand the social practices around literacy and how its uses described racial identities, fieldnotes (relating observation and writing) were essential for documenting how others acted in the settings, and how I processed that acting too. To that extent, my fieldnotes included my account of what was happening with my personal reactions and questions to those happenings in a different column. They also included the transcription of the interviews, and the digital versions of the literacy pieces and artifacts I took pictures of. Data are “reductions of our experience” (Bernard & Ryan, 2010, p. 5) therefore, through fieldnotes my experience in the field moved from being events that actually occurred in a moment, to be accounts of my experience in the field; accounts that can be accessed and re-accessed over and over (Emerson et al., 2011). My accounts of what was happening were written in English with some key words in Spanish that fulfilled a local meaning, such as names of food, school activities, slang, or practices. However, for better pursuing local meanings, I used Spanish to write what informants said as verbatim conversations, or for the case of transcribing interviews. Thus, I wrote and analyzed my fieldnotes using English and Spanish as explained above. Nevertheless, for reporting findings I translated the excerpts and present both versions of them in the following chapter.

Writing fieldnotes entails not only choosing what to write, but also, how to write it. To that extent, my fieldnotes evolved with time and at the beginning I described settings, language, attitudes, routines, and artifacts in general. With time, I was more attentive to describe how informants used literacy and how that related to the school’s racial ideology. Since the process of understanding others’ ways depends on the researcher’s participation in the lives and practices of informants (Emerson et al., 2011), my fieldnotes also evolved due to the fact that I started to

more actively participate in the settings. To that extent, my fieldnotes also document that process of re-socialization of my presence in the field as it was occurring.

Participant-Observation. Participation is essential for understanding practices (Emerson et al., 2011) and to better integrate with informants in their daily lives. It also allows for doing things with informants to capture how they construct and attribute meaning to action. I observed and participated in the school and family settings with my informants. I visited the field on average five days/week, even on weekends for the family setting. I covered all the days of the week in my visits to the school to get a sense of the routines and practices. Some days my visits were longer than others, but in average, my visits lasted five hours.

I assumed a participation-to-write approach (Emerson et al., 2011) in my fieldwork to highlight the relationships between observing, participating, and writing, as procedure to know informants' ways. This approach "focuses on learning how to look in order to write, while it also recognizes that looking is itself shaped and constrained by a sense of what and how to write it" (p. 23). While in the field, I jotted down words and sentences in my journal. I also used an audio-recorder to capture verbatim teaching instructional sequences and conversations in both settings. As my participation increased, the jotting in the field was less frequent since informants expected that I participated and be involved in their practices, thus leaving the jotting for the moment in which I was on the bus on my way back home. During the first six weeks, I observed and participated in different events with the school and the families. However, with time, I gradually consciously looked for and focused on events that entailed literacy practices in both settings to observe and participate in them.

In-depth interviews. It is of interest for this study to document not only the literacies of Yeison Daniel and those of other informants in the settings, but also the meaning they attribute to

their literacies. In this case, and for the goal of this research, accessing informants' views entails inquiring about personal opinions, preferences, beliefs, cultural knowledge, racial ideology, and worldviews, among others. Thus, to better capture those meanings, in addition to participant-observation, I carried out in-depth interviews with my informants (Kvale, 2008; Mertens, 2015). My approach on interviews is that of conversations with structure and purpose (Kvale, 2008), not only because that view entails a positioning of informants in the interview event, but also because for some of my informants' understanding, what we did during interviews was talking.

To that extent, I did unstructured (informal) and semi-structured (formal event) interviews (Bernard & Ryan, 2010). For the informal interviewing, I talked with informants as they did things while I was with them; sometimes because they were cooking or walking to a meeting, so I asked them questions to take advantage of the moment. I interviewed Yeison Daniel constantly when we walked home together, at home, in the classroom, during recess, and in every opportunity I had for talking with him. Also, with informants with whom I talked every day or with whom I developed a more intimate trust, like the 5-1 teacher, or the family, I did informal interviews with questions about what they were doing. For the formal semi-structured interviews, I had a protocol created beforehand to guide the questions. I also scheduled interviews with informants at a convenient time for them. The following table shows the relation of informants and the semi-structured interviews I carried out with them.

In designing the protocols that guided formal interview events, I went over the fieldnotes to create the themes I needed to further inquire in the interviews. I read my fieldnotes, my comments, the codes, the memos, and then I stated the questions. However, with all informants in the first interview, the question that triggered the rest of the interview was the same: "*cuénteme su historia de vida*" (tell me the story of your life"). From their answer I started

asking about educational history, family history, professional life, plans for the future, and in general, their views about education, literacy, race, and schooling. For the school setting, I had sets of questions about the school functioning, the history of the school, the informants' role in the school, and in general, institutional views. I also included sets of questions about literacy practices for all participants and another one for teachers' instruction. I had also sets of questions that triggered the racial topic with all my informants like: "*para usted qué es raza y qué es etnia*" ("for you, what is race and what is ethnicity"), or "*para usted qué es ser negro?*" ("for you what it is to be black?"). Obviously, how I presented the question and how I got into it depended on previous conversations with informants, and their educational levels.

In all these semi-structured interviews I established main questions (Kvale, 2007) and follow-up questions. Depending on the informant, I used different ways of probing during the interviews such as the echo, the uh-huh, the tell-me-more, and the long question probes (Bernard & Ryan, 2010). Also, during transcription of the interviews, I started to think about further questions to include in the protocol for all informants, or for that particular individual. Since the number of times I interviewed informants varied depending on the contact I had with them or on their availability (for instance Mario, the principal, had a busy agenda), for some of the informants the interviews were longer and gathered more than one topic.

Literacy pieces. Usually, in regards to this type of data, authors refer to the collection of documents, written documents, or written texts (Bernard & Ryan, 2010; Sunstein & Chiseri-Strater, 2012). However, my take on these types of data is impacted by my theoretical view on literacies (Barton & Hamilton, 2000), and by the goal of documenting how informants defined literacies. To that extent, I refer to these types of data as the collection of literacy pieces. I collected literacy pieces to better account for the literacy practices of my informants. Since I

intended to capture the different literacies in the field, I collected a variety of materials with written text, although some of them had also other representation systems. The following pictures show samples of these literacy pieces.



Picture 1 (Fieldnotes, 06.10.14)



Picture 2 (Fieldnotes, 06.10.14)

For collecting these literacies, I was able to sometimes get the physical copy of the piece, but for other cases I took pictures of the pieces to get a digital version of them since I could not take them with me (students' notebooks, posters, clothes, and ads). I linked the literacy pieces to the interviews and conversations to take informants to position themselves towards different literacies. Literacy pieces varied from setting to setting. Thus, in the school setting (here I include the library) I collected official documents (PEI, letters, minutes), notes, memos, e-mails, classroom worksheets, textbooks, books, posters, tags, calendars, and government's propaganda. In the families I collected prayers, diaries, journals, books, posters, magazines, medicine prescriptions, calendars, songs, screen shots, and text and video digital files. Depending on the setting and the informants, some of those pieces were constructed as cultural artifacts.

Artifacts. This type of data is defined as “material objects that represent the culture of that site” (Sunstein & Chiseri-Strater, 2012, p. 124). I collected artifacts that had or did not have written text on them. Again, I took pictures of them to get a digital copy since I could not take

them with me. Some of these artifacts coincide with the literacy pieces but not all of them. The artifacts I collected in the school and in the families are varied and they represent different elements that offered information about informants' views on literacy and race, and occupations. I used the artifacts to ask questions in the interviews to better capture what the meanings of the artifacts were.

Data Analysis Procedures

I analyzed data constantly in this project. Analysis started the moment I visited the field and began writing fieldnotes (Bernard & Ryan, 2010). During observations, during the writing of fieldnotes and memos, when planning, implementing, and transcribing the interviews, when looking at the literacy pieces and artifacts, I analyzed data constantly. I kept analyzing the data after I left the fieldwork and started to write this dissertation. I now explain how I proceeded to analyze data in different stages, but first, I explain how I proceeded with the transcription of interviews throughout the process.

For transcribing interviews I did not use any software. I played the audio file in the computer and typed in the words. I transcribed the interviews myself to begin the process of analysis. I transcribed the interviews verbatim, but I did not include informants' hesitations and word repetition. I did not do detailed phonetic transcriptions of the interviews (Rapley, 2007) either. When I was done with transcription, I listened again to the interview to check on the typed version of it. Comments I had during the interview and/or transcribing I wrote in the "observer's comments" column of the fieldnotes.

Reading place and eclectic coding (Weeks 1-6). During the first six weeks, I spent time in the field knowing informants, understanding routines, schedules, touching base with the families, and in general, reading the field. Data analysis in this stage was focused on the writing

of fieldnotes and theoretical memos (Bernard & Ryan, 2010), and on a first cycle of eclectic coding to look for initial salient codes (Saldaña, 2013). While writing fieldnotes I had a column for writing my comments and questions about what I saw that I would need to either further inquire with informants, and/or further read in academic documents and newspapers.

In this approach I used descriptive and process coding as elemental methods, which Saldaña (2013) defines as being basic, but focused for a primary approach (p. 83). My first approach was then eclectic and it fulfilled the goal of being exploratory. The eclectic coding was useful for identifying an index of data contents and actions that gave me a sense of the environment, informants, and of the general functioning of the settings. The content codes identified in this first stage were essential for me to look at racial issues in the field, and to how literacy related to them. Finally, the writing of memos in this stage helped me to get a general glance of racial issues in the city and in the country. I organized the codes from these six weeks' eclectic coding into a matrix in a Microsoft Excel file that allowed me to locate the 27 codes in columns, and to see their recurrence and initial relationships among them. The 27 codes are: architecture and landscape, black Colombians/being black, black literacies, capital, children's participation and learning, classroom literacy, curriculum, east, education, educational system, formal/informal, identity, institutional views, instruction, migration, moving forward, parents, people (destination, clothes, race), people from the outside/Cali, race and occupation, racism, school literacies, school structure, security people, street literacies, teachers, and time. The following figure shows part of the coding matrix.

Table 4

Matrix of Codes

Instruction	Education	Children's participation and learning	Classroom literacy
Draw different shapes on the board FN 4,1	A student does not attend the school for 25 days and comes back without explaining why FN 4,5	The teacher asks children to tell him what to write on the board FN 4,2	The board is used for writing homework assignment FN 4,3
Use paper for making a square shape FN 4,1		Children ask me because they don't understand the teacher's explanation FN 4,2	Worksheet 1: Math. Juan does not use it. He proposes inferences. Writing a paragraph with simple vocabulary
Juan reminds the formula for finding the area in a square: multiplication FN 4,2		"In the past people already discovered this so now for you things are easier" Juan FN 4,2	
Teaching concepts: base and height with rectangles FN 4,2		Students know who knows and who doesn't in the classroom FN 4,3	

Delimiting the study and themeing the data (Weeks 6-10). With the codebook I got from the first coding stage, I looked at the data from weeks 1-10 and started to re-organize the codes into themes. For identifying themes, I used different techniques such as repetitions, local meanings, metaphors and analogies, transitions, similarities and differences, linguistic connectors, theory related codes, and cutting and sorting. I used the themes to code data from weeks 1-10. In this second coding stage (Saldaña, 2013), I continued writing theoretical memos, questions, and concerns in the fieldnotes. In this part I also refined the questions and started to consciously focus on race and literacy in the settings. The themes I identified after this cycle are:

literacy (classroom literacy, home literacy, school literacy), race (classroom, home, school), literacy and race (classroom, home, school).

The case of Yeison Daniel (Weeks 10-24). As I focused more on Yeison Daniel, the contexts in which he participated, and how he participated, I also planned the interview protocols in a more case-directed way, and refined the questions of this study. During these weeks I coded the data with the themes from the previous stage, and I also applied three affective methods for coding: emotion, values, and versus (Saldaña, 2013). In this third stage of coding, affective methods were important for understanding the tensions between Yeison Daniel and his participation in contexts. Particularly, value coding that looks for attitudes, beliefs, and values, was essential for inquiring views on literacy and race. With this analysis, I created charts to organize the codes and to access the information in the fieldnotes from the charts. The following table shows an excerpt of one of the charts.

Table 5

Excerpt of the chart: Literacy & Race in the Classroom

Literacy	Race
Poster in the classroom Real pictures with Alphabetic Literacies	Liberal Frame: Poverty is due to bad decisions
Meeting with parents Oral-Written: with the students we are working on writing a family history	Replying the Liberal Frame: Juan telling parents they have rights according to policy.
Instruction Writing on the board, students must copy, activity and homework during the ethnic week	Mestizaje Racial Frame: Fragmenting, denying races, color blind, differences are cultural, stereotyping
Government's visit to the classroom and the school Poster and book with stories: pictures of happy children, Alphabetic Literacies, canonical literature	Liberal Frame: Problems of violence and poverty are class-based
Introduction Juan tells his story, Literacy as autobiography and stories	Replying the Cultural Frame: Even though I did not have parents, "I'm not a thief, I want to study, I have dreams about studying"

Data analysis: Identifying themes and reduction of data. Although I analyzed data constantly as stated above, the analysis I present in this dissertation was done after I finished data collection, left the field and came back to the US. This final analysis was based on a fourth stage of coding in which I went over the fieldnotes to code for patterns and theoretical configurations. This coding helped me to identify conceptual ideas tied to the themes and the value coding. In this fourth stage, coding was parallel to writing and to the identification of theoretical models (Bernard & Ryan, 2010). In what follows I describe my procedures for analysis and the process of interpretation.

Creating charts and sorting themes. I created 1-3-page word files for each informant indicating their general information, dates of interview, and the themes under which they appeared in the data. I also created a diagram to relate Yeison Daniel to other informants, and to identify their general information such as age, educational level, race, and occupation. I read the fieldnotes again (which included my accounts, the transcription of the interviews, literacy pieces, and artifacts) in light of the case, the themes, the charts, and the files I created in previous stages. In other words, I took all the tools I created for visualizing data and themes, to look at the data again looking to confirm the information. After this I created a file for putting the themes (literacy, race, and literacy and race) together in columns with the excerpts from the data in which they appeared.

Organizing themes. I took the file with the sorted themes, to organize them in hierarchical relationships. I organized the themes into core and peripheral elements of the case by analyzing their occurrence, their pervasiveness, informants' reaction to the theme, and the degree to which the theme appeared in the settings. I put all this information into a new table in which I included the themes, the transcript from the fieldnotes, and the narratives that articulated

theoretical memos. Then I looked at the table and started to organize my writing. The themes I present in this dissertation are the themes I identified in these procedures I have described above. To that extent, in Chapter 4 I present the analysis of the themes that I identified in regards to Yeison Daniel's views of literacy and race in the school, and how that impacted his learning in the school.

Design and strategy impact on data analysis. The critical stance responded to the characteristics of this study because understanding individuals' perspectives with a critical eye is essential to better capture and reflect on the conditions that create, maintain, and challenge inequities and power structures. This is so because by inquiring individuals' actions, experiences, and the political conditions under which action and experience occur, the analysis of the interaction between structure and agency is foregrounded thus allowing for a much complex approach of social processes of not only domination, but also of struggle. Researching the relationship of literacies and racial frames is complex. As shown in Chapter 1, surveys and statistics help to glimpse the general panorama and to call attention to structural aspects in the education of black students. However, they do not allow for the in depth characterization of students' interests, how they negotiate with the system, and the racial ideology that conditions everyday classroom and school life. Only qualitative research with elements of criticality such as emphasizing power relations within socio-economic conditions, localizing knowledge, highlighting language, and calling attention to oppression and its reproduction and resistance, were useful for this project. This is so because my interest in documenting Yeison Daniel's literacies was not only to learn from him, and to value and honor his struggles as a black Colombian young male, but also to show and critique the political context in which he negotiates his everyday learning.

The case study strategy shaped data collection because I focused on following Yeison Daniel throughout the settings to understand how he interacted in them. In that regard, interviewing and observing other informants was essential for documenting the tensions of the settings in which Yeison Daniel participated. In relation to data collection, the case study strategy impacted my design of the interview protocols, what I paid more attention to in the field, and how I searched for more information to help me characterize the context of Yeison Daniel's literacies. Nevertheless, I privileged in-depth inquiry of Yeison Daniel's case over coverage of, let's say, all the students in the classroom. The case study strategy also impacted data analysis because understanding Yeison Daniel's characteristics was something I looked for in this process. My view towards themes was focused on learning from his everyday school and home experiences to better complement what is known about the education of black students in the city. To that extent, the writing of the final narrative I present in Chapter 4 was also impacted by the case study strategy. In writing the narrative I intended to portray thick descriptions of Yeison Daniel's participation to have those as starting point to discuss the bigger panorama of racial frames in the school.

Quality of This Project

In qualitative research, indicators of quality depend on the approach and purpose of the study (Mertens, 2015). Although different to the positivist approach, in qualitative research it is also important to evaluate the degree to which the researcher has been rigorous and careful for analyzing and interpreting informants' ways. My approach to data analysis is that data do not speak by themselves. Instead, it is more about what the researcher sees and looks for in them. Nevertheless, it is important to be sure that what the researcher sees is something recurrent and patterned in the data. In the same way, it is important to be sure that transcriptions, literacy

pieces, and artifacts do represent informants' meanings. In what follows I discuss how I proceeded to guarantee the quality of this project.

Prolonged and persistent engagement. Researchers' deep and close involvement with informants is essential for guaranteeing quality (Lincoln, 2009). I visited the field five days a week and spent an average of five hours in it. I participated in different school activities that were both part of the routine and special events such as instruction, staff meetings, recess, breakfast, workshops, and celebrations, among others. In the family I also participated in the routine and extraordinary activities such as cooking, birthday celebrations, claims to governmental offices, cleaning up, and laundry, among others. To better capture the rhythms and moves in the settings, my visits to the school covered all the days in the school week (Monday to Friday), and my visits to the family covered all the days in the week (Monday to Sunday).

Member checking. To check the researcher's transcriptions and interpretations of events, informants' ways, artifacts, and –in this case– literacy pieces, are recommended practices (Mertens, 2015). These involve the search for verification with informants about the researcher's constructions. I conducted member checking during data collection in the field constantly, and even after when I kept phone conversations mainly with the family members. For member checking I applied different strategies. I restated what informants had said talking or during interviews to check on their ideas (for instance, *o sea que usted lo que quiere decir es que...* “what you mean is...”). I shared transcriptions of the interviews with informants. They asked me to add information, but never asked me to take out parts of the document. For family members who were not that familiar with alphabetic literacies, I read the transcriptions for them while asking for clarifications, which worked as re-checking. I also asked questions about literacy pieces and artifacts to informants to check on my understanding of the pieces.

Triangulation. Triangulation involves the checking on consistency of the evidence across different data sources (Mertens, 2015). I triangulated my data from all the sources I had. I analyzed my accounts in the fieldnotes in light of the interviews, literacy pieces, and artifacts. For instance, I used teachers' worksheets and school events to analyze the literacies occurring in those settings in light of what the teachers, coordinators, and the principal had told me in the interviews in regards to how they defined literacy. I used family literacy pieces to see Yeison Daniel's literacies, and I used Yeison Daniel's literacy pieces to see his school achievement and behavior.

Issues with translation. Since qualitative research entails the capturing of local meanings, issues with language and culture in regards to the researcher and to conveying meanings in a written document must be carefully considered (Mertens, 2015). Data collection and fieldwork happened in Spanish. In addition to what I stated above about how I proceeded with the language of fieldnotes and interviews, I carried out two steps to guarantee the meaning of the excerpts in English. When I chose the excerpts that were part of this dissertation, I translated them to English, depending on the case. Then, I asked an anonymous Colombian bilingual researcher to check on the translation I had done. After that, I asked an anonymous US graduate student who speaks Spanish to also check on the translations to correct the meaning in English.

The Researcher's Role and Perspective

Connection with the field and with informants is essential in qualitative research (Bresler, 2013). This connection entails for the researcher to be aware of the poles and grey areas in the dissonance–empathy continuum, while at the same time distancing to be able to surpass one's own subjectivities (Bresler, 2013; Peshkin, 1988). This connection also entails the positioning of

the researcher and how his/her personal experiences impact research decisions in all the stages of the process. In this section I describe my subjectivities in this study.

My interest in this study departs from my father's educational history as a black Colombian who experienced discrimination at school. At the same time, I have to acknowledge that I grew up in a privileged economical environment that is very different to that of Yeison Daniel, his family, and most of the black population in the country. Likewise, I self identify as a black Colombian woman, and since in Colombia the darker the skin color the lesser the possibilities of having economical and social capital, I have to say that my skin color has not placed me in the same discrimination experiences in which people with darker skin negotiate their lives and futures everyday. I am also bilingual and biliterate, which is not common in Colombia, not even for the dominant *mestizo* population.

Nevertheless, I connected with my informants, sometimes through dissonance, but most of the time through empathy. Talking about race in Colombia is difficult because of the racial ideology that masks racism and discrimination. To that extent, some of my informants' views towards race represented the racist racial ideology that I disagree with. In those cases, I have to acknowledge that I felt dissonance, yet able to surpass that feeling to state the racial frame at play. Empathy was the usual way to connect with students and families as they shared with me painful experiences that triggered a sense of solidarity in me. Precisely, that sense of solidarity encouraged me to participate more with informants in their life projects. At the same time, I distanced myself from the empathy when analyzing and writing this piece.

Not living in *Aguablanca* did not allow me to be there everyday, every time. However, taking the bus for going there was a learning experience as I used the same routes people in the District used for going to work in other parts of the city. In this one-hour each way trip, I talked

to people and learned their perceptions about the bus system, oppressions, and struggles. Also, going back and forth to and from the field, helped me to feel the city and to be more aware of racial dynamics as the economic capital landscape changed from the south to the east conglomerate of the city.

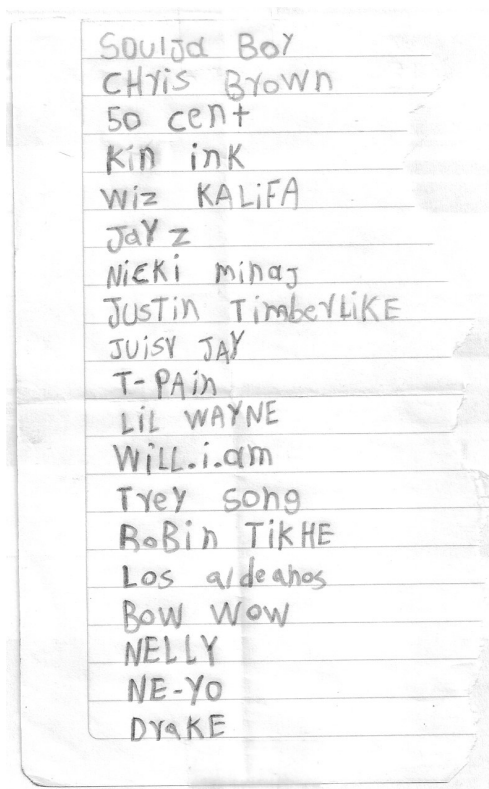
This not-living-in-the field was also useful for me to go home, write, and distance myself from my feelings. Racism was pervasive during my field experience and I constantly felt obfuscated, sad, indignant, and powerless. As Rager (2005) states, “conducting qualitative research on topics that are emotionally laden can have a powerful impact on the researcher” (p. 23). In my case, being able to leave the field and process those feelings at home was part of my mental health element during data collection. Of course, there is a degree of privilege for being able to visit unprivileged people and then conveniently leave the place for going to one’s privileged home. Although I lived in a very simple style during my data collection, unlike some of the students in the classroom and the families I visited, I must acknowledge at home I did have appliances, bed, ceiling, computer, drinking water, doors, food, furniture, Internet, refrigerator, shower, and toilette bowl.

Chapter Four

Yeison Daniel's Identity, Literacies, and Participation in the School

Vignette 1

On April 28, just two weeks after starting my field work, I was in the 5-1 classroom (target classroom) observing the Humanities' field class, when Yeison Daniel, a black student handed me a note with a list of singers saying to me "*esta es la lista de cantantes que a mí me gustan para que usted sepa*" [this is the list of singers **I like**, so that **you know**"] (Fieldnotes, 04.28.14, p. 5). Students were supposed to be working silently on identifying grammatical elements in a paragraph of the book *Los Goles de Juancho* [Juancho's Goals]. I approached students individually to see how they were doing the activity. Yeison Daniel was not working on the assignment, but on writing the note below.



Picture 3 (Fieldnotes, 04.28.14)

I looked at the note and thought about it for a while. Not only did the note contrast with the teacher's comments about Yeison Daniel's bad spelling, but also, it caught my attention that all of the artists on the list sing in English. Different questions arose in my mind at that moment: Why does he give me the list after I had only been in the classroom twice? Why did Yeison Daniel give me the note in the middle of the Spanish language class? Why did Yeison Daniel emphasize that these are the "singers **I like** so that **you know**"? Why was Yeison Daniel not doing what the teacher asked but something different? Why had the black male teacher told me that Yeison Daniel had issues with spelling? And what type of relations between literacy and race could explain his actions? These questions made me pick Yeison Daniel as the focal student of this study about reflecting on literacy and racial ideology in this particular school setting.

Organization of the Chapter

In this chapter I analyze Yeison Daniel's learning and participation in *Surgir* in regards to how literacy and race relate in the school (whole setting and classroom). The narrative in this chapter is aimed at answering my two research questions: How do Yeison Daniel's views on literacy and race relate to his learning and participation in the school? How are literacy and race related in the school and in the classroom? Throughout the writing of the themes, and the description of the findings, I answer these two questions as they weave for constructing the narrative. The narrative is not linear, but woven, folded and intricate as a way to illustrate the complex relationships and tensions that impact Yeison Daniel's participation in the school, and schooling process.

For this narrative, I present informants' views and actions as a collective description that frames their acting. As a black Colombian woman who rejects racism, and who uses alphabetic literacies daily, the exploration of racial constructions and the literacies that support them was

not easy due to the prevalent school racial ideology that diminishes the impact of racial structures on black people's lives, while highlighting literacy as a neutral tool for all people to move forward. Nevertheless, as I present the views and the lives of my informants in regards to literacy and race, I try to both respect and honor their honesty and willingness to participate and contribute to this study.

This chapter is organized in two parts. The first part focuses on Yeison Daniel, who he is, his family history, the family literacy practices, and his identity as a black Colombian young male living in the city, which is essential for reflecting on how Yeison Daniel faces and participates within the school setting. The second part describes the school setting and the classroom space. For the general school setting, I describe and analyze an institutional and curriculum event called the "Ethnic Week". Through this event, I describe the school's literacy practices, the *mestizaje* racial frame and its links with literacy, how this racial frame is institutionalized, how it is contested, and how contestation impacts Yeison Daniel's participation in the school. For the classroom, I describe how Yeison Daniel's participation in this space is shaped by his views on literacy and race, and how that impacts his academic standing in the school.

Literacy and Race at Home: Yeison Daniel's Alternative Literacies and Cultural Continuity

In this part, I first present Yeison Daniel and his family, then I describe the family literacy practices that frame his conception of literacy, and then how Yeison Daniel's literacy practices entail a view on learning and race that represents an important identity marker for him. This characterization of Yeison Daniel and his family sheds light for better understanding his participation and learning in the school. For helping the reader to follow the narrative, Table 3

introduces two focal informants at home, their relationship with Yeison Daniel, their racial identity, formal educational levels, and occupation.

Table 6

Informants' Chart: Home

Name	Relationship with Yeison Daniel	Age	Racial Self-Identification	Educational Level	Occupation
Felipa Lozano	Grandmother	65	Black Colombian	Second grade	Worked in the domestic service informally. Stay home grandmother.
Yaneth Díaz	Aunt (Felipa's daughter)	35	Black Colombian	Second grade	Works in the domestic service informally. She also sells beauty products through magazines

Yeison Daniel Delgado Díaz: A Black 13 year-old male in Cali. Yeison Daniel was born in Cali. Both of his parents died from AIDS related to HIV, and he and his other two siblings are under the custody of Felipa (their maternal grandmother), and Yaneth (aunt, Felipa's daughter). Yeison Daniel's maternal family members were born in Tumaco, a town in the Pacific Coast of Colombia (Department of Nariño), and then migrated to Cali looking for "*mejores oportunidades*" [better opportunities] (Fieldnotes, 05.20.14, p. 5). Yeison Daniel's mother Filomena, was born in Tumaco, and Leandro, his father, was born in Venezuela. Although Leandro was born in Venezuela, the family considered him as black due to his physical characteristics. Leandro died when Yeison Daniel was seven years old in 2008, and Filomena died the following year.

Yeison Daniel repeated third grade twice and fourth grade once. The first time he repeated third grade was in 2010 because he went to Tumaco for vacations and stayed longer.

When he returned to Cali, the school year had already started and Felipa asked the teacher that he repeat third grade because he had missed half of the school year. The second time he repeated third grade was, according to Felipa, “*porque él se portaba muy mal*” [because he misbehaved] (Fieldnotes, 05.20.14, p. 6). He repeated fourth grade due to low academic achievement.

When asked about his racial identity with the question “*¿Cuál es tu raza o tu identidad?*” [What is your race or your ethnicity?], Yeison Daniel answers by saying “*¡yo soy negro! Negro que vive en la ciudad*” [I am black! Black-living-in-the-city] (04.28.14, p. 6). In 2014 he self-identified as “Swagger”, which is an urban life style characterized by the clothing with colors and alterations, and a way of handling life situations with strength. However, in early 2015 he stated he is no longer a Swagger because the style started to be confused with being “Faru”, which is another style in which people presume of themselves: how they talk, dress, and steal things from people on the streets (Fieldnotes, 03.16.15, p. 2). Yeison Daniel likes music in English; he listens and follows different African American artists, generally from the rap genre. He practices basketball, break dance, parkour, and soccer. Yeison Daniel has Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and Youtube accounts that he uses daily in the afternoons either at home or in the school library. He also uses the Internet for listening music, watching videos, posting in social media, and translating lyrics and ideas. Yeison Daniel accesses the Internet for all these activities through the computer.

Family literacies. In the home setting, literacy was characterized by alternative practices (in regards to the official ones promoted by the school institution) around texts. Alternative literacies refer to literacy practices inscribed in events outside of the formal official character of the school. These literacies were used to show the struggles and difficulties the family faced everyday in the city. Particularly, Yeison Daniel’s use of alternative literacy practices makes

evident that he takes practices from the home setting to extend them and to build on a black-living-in-the-city identity. In what follows, I describe the literacies in the home setting, and how they represent a marker of the family's economical and social reality.

“Leer es leer distintas cosas, no sólo libros” [Reading is reading different things, not just books]: Alternative literacies at home. In the home setting, texts had particular forms, functions, and structures. In general, the home literacy practices related to four domains: civil, economic, family life, and health (See Appendix A for details on the home literacies). The texts inscribed in these practices are varied. The general characteristics of the texts in the civil domain are that they are more alphabetic-based, and they entail the use of pre-established rules in terms of form: filling up forms, the public bus schedule, the news, legal identity, etc. These literacies are practiced everyday for running errands, registering young members in after-school programs, getting identification cards for the library, and other services. Civil literacies are more practiced by adults who represent the young members.

The predominant characteristics of the texts in the economic domain are that they are informal (raffle, selling food on the street), and that they relate to numeracy (counting and estimating the house budget). These literacies are practiced everyday as part of obtaining money for the home's expenses, estimating a budget, buying groceries, paying bills, and running errands. All members in the family practice economic literacies (obtaining money and adjusting the budget) although Felipa is who makes the final decisions as to expenses and savings.

The texts in the family domain mix alphabet and oral forms with pictures (stories around pictures and letters), illustrations (almanac), and they entail a collective construction (telling stories together, writing texts together). Literacies in the family domain are practiced everyday in the house as part of conversations, telling stories, and talking about artifacts, and the practices

they come from. Felipa is usually who leads these practices and other members join the event to participate collaboratively in the construction of texts. The following pictures illustrate the literacies in the economic and family domains.



Picture 4 (Fieldnotes, 09.30.14)



Picture 5 (Fieldnotes, 06.10.14)

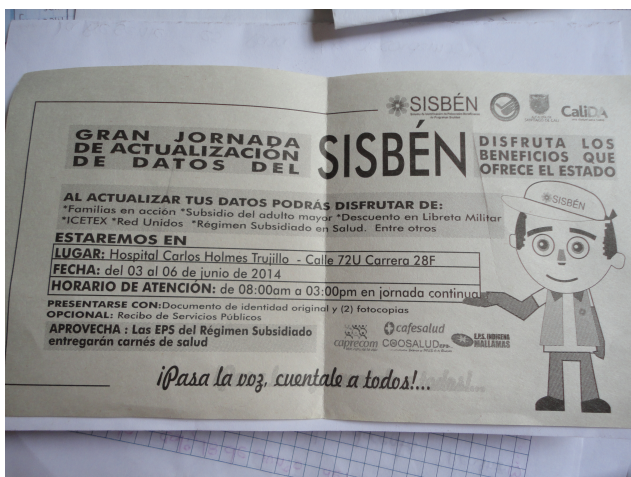
Picture 4 shows the ticket of the raffle Yaneth did to collect money for celebrating Felipa's birthday. The family used other ways of obtaining money such as making bracelets, picture frames, and food for sale. Picture 5 shows the calendar the family had in the living room to mark the Soccer World Cup matches. The calendar had space for jotting the countries that passed the rounds towards the final game. These literacies were collective since all the members in the house collaborated by selling tickets for the raffle and by writing the names of the countries and the times of the matches on the calendar. During the 2014 Soccer World Cup (SWC), June 12 to July 13, the family organized their schedule around the matches in regards to time for lunch, or social events like watching the match with neighbors. Calendars were used also for other things like choosing children's names. For instance, while talking about the SWC calendar, Felipa told me how her mother wanted to choose the name of her son with the Bristol

calendar (Fieldnotes, 07.12.14, p. 9), and how Felipa used it after for choosing some of her grandchildren's names. In the family literacies, it was common that talking about a text triggered a story related to other texts. These literacies (economic and family) represent ways with which the family struggles for economically living-in-the city while developing practices that characterize the family's practices around texts.

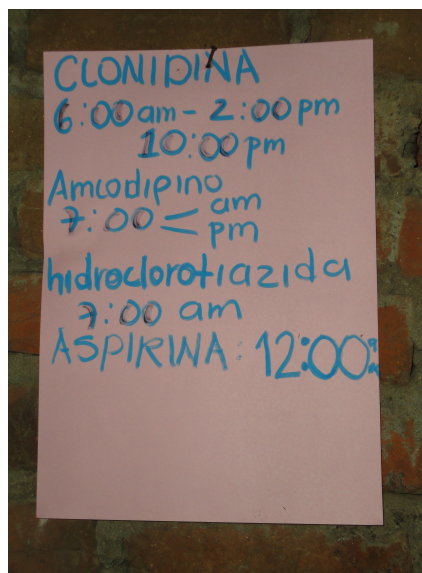
Texts in the health domain are characterized by a mix of the qualities in the civil domain related to the public nature of the health system (mainly alphabetical institutional literacies), with the qualities in the family setting related to how the family understands diseases. In the case of Yeison Daniel's home, HIV-AIDS was a frequent topic in the health domain: reading about it, learning about it, testing for it, identifying symptoms, telling the story of how Filomena and Leandro got it, and then how they died. HIV-AIDS was themed in conversations with young members about how to avoid sexually transmitted diseases, and how to take care of themselves. Felipa narrated in detail how she discovered her daughter had HIV when she read Filomena's medical record. Felipa centered the story around her finding and reading of the medical record Filomena hid to avoid her family discovering she had HIV-AIDS. When talking about it, her voice emphasized the medical record's written note when she said, "*Y ahí la ví! En la mitad del folder, una nota grande que decía VIH positivo. Tenía resaltador amarillo. Luego todas las partes que decían VIH tenían resaltador rosado o azul. Nunca me voy a olvidar **de esa nota***" [There I saw it! In the middle of the folder, a big note saying HIV positive. It had yellow highlighter. Thenceforth, all of the HIV notes had pink or blue highlighter. I will never forget **that note**] (Fieldnotes, 09.02.14, p. 6-7).

What is interesting is that Felipa's story shows the mix between formal texts (medical records) and formal procedures (confidentiality), with the characteristics of the family domain:

co-constructed stories, stories that talk about events in which written texts were the center, stories in which other texts are related when talking about one literacy event, and stories in which the members talk about what others did, felt, or said. Although the texts in the health domain gravitated around HIV-AIDS, there were other topics like registering in the public health system, extracting teeth due to pain, and Felipa's high blood pressure. These texts mixed the alphabetic basis of the health system's literacy practices with the mixed and co-constructed particularities of the home literacy practices. The following pictures illustrate this point.



Picture 6 (Fieldnotes, 05.28.14)



Picture 7 (Fieldnotes, 06.10.14)

Picture 6 shows the flyer Yaneth received on the street and took it home to read it and decide on registering her stepfather in the public health system called SISBÉN. The flyer has alphabetic-based literacy along with drawing and governmental logos. Picture 7 shows the list of medicines Felipa took every day and the times. Lina, Yeison Daniel's sister, made the list so that Felipa could remember to take her medicines when her grandchildren were in school. When I asked Felipa who wrote the list, she replied that her grandchild "*Porque yo no sé cómo leer y escribir esos nombres de pastillas*" [Because I don't know how to read and write those names of

medicines] (Fieldnotes, 06.10.14, p. 6). Literacies in the health domain show how the family mediates between official institutional literacies, and their own practices by incorporating the formalities of public discourses with the flexibility of the family domain. The family literacies (civil, economic, family, health) in general are unique or appropriated uses of texts that subscribe to a particular definition of reading and writing. Felipa's previous statement about she does not knowing how to write the names of the medicines developed into a conversation with Felipa about how she defined reading and writing.

Leer es leer cosas, no sólo libros, sino leer la naturaleza para ver cuándo las frutas están listas para comer, o leer el mar para ver cuándo la marea va a subir o a bajar, leer la luna para ver cuándo las mujeres van a parir sus bebés. Yo también leo otras cosas, muchas cosas. Mire, aquí tengo las fotos del funeral de mi hija. ¿Si ve cómo tenía la piel de oscura?... Me gusta leer fotos y también ver las noticias. Pero no sé leer un libro para entenderlo. Sólo estudié hasta segundo grado... En la escuela uno aprende a leer para entender y eso es lo que cuenta aquí, no lo que yo sé.

[Reading is reading things, not just books, but reading the nature to see when the fruits are ready to eat, or reading the ocean to see when the tide is coming up or down, reading the moon to see when women are going to deliver their babies. I also read other things, many things. Look, here I have the pictures of my daughter's funeral. Do you see how dark she was?... I like reading pictures and I also watch the news. But I don't know how to read a book with meaning. I studied only till second grade... In the school you learn to read with meaning and that is what counts here, not what I know] (Fieldnotes, 06.10.14, p. 8).

Felipa's definition of reading includes the alphabet, which is essential in formal alphabetic literacies. However, her definition of reading extends literacies to interpreting different things like nature (the ocean), and pictures (the skin color of a death body). Felipa acknowledges not mastering alphabetic literacies and she is aware those have more social value, and are taught in the school. The ones she masters are not taught in the school. Her definition of writing also correlates with the definition of reading in that for her, it's about designing things, and this includes the process of making them: "*Es que la receta se escribe después de hacer la comida porque hacer la comida hace parte de escribir*" [The recipe is written after cooking because cooking is part of writing] (Fieldnotes, 07.02.14, p. 5). Felipa defines writing as the entire event in which a written text is the center as she talks about how writing includes the final dish when she cooks with a list of ingredients. She also considers the products of writing as triggers of stories to tell and share; stories that are also collectively constructed. Finally, Felipa states that each story she tells is different, even when talking about the same occurrence because "we re-create them [stories] every time we tell them" (Fieldnotes, 06.10.14, p. 8). Felipa's definitions of reading and writing are sophisticated in that she goes beyond alphabetic literacies and linearity to talk about literacy events that include processes, relation to other texts or events, co-authoring, and creation of the same story over and over based on different instances of telling it.

In sum, the home literacy practices are alternative, elaborated, varied, and texts have different forms. The civil domain shows the use or appropriation of practices around written texts citizens must go through in their role as part of living the city. The literacy practices in the economic domain relate to economic hardships and strategies for overcoming them. The practices in the family domain represent a way to organize members around texts in regards to

activities and decisions. Finally, the literacy practices in the health domain show the interaction between institutional and individual practices around texts (written and oral). It is important to say that all of them correlate, although the four domains are visible, practices at home are not as strictly separated as in the school setting, for instance. These family literacy practices at the same time represent ways of surviving in the city (doing raffles and dealing with diseases), of how the family exists in the city, and their everyday struggles.

As I discuss in what follows, for Yeison Daniel, those alternative literacy practices are foundational and he appropriates and re-defines them according to his age, personal preferences, and racial identity. Next I analyze Yeison Daniel's complex view on literacies practices as tied to learning and racial identity.

Yeison Daniel at home: Constructing a black-in-the-city identity. When asked about how he defined himself, the first thing Yeison Daniel mentions, is his blackness, which makes race an important marker of his identity. For Yeison Daniel being black is a main characteristic of his identity: of how he experiences the world, how he sees himself, and how he perceives others might see him. When asked what being black means to him, he said "*Es todo, es yo quien soy y cómo vivo*" [It is everything, it is who I am, and how I live] (Fieldnotes, 09.23.14, p. 13). For Yeison Daniel, blackness relates to physical characteristics (skin color, hair) although he also mentions "*la etnia de mis ancestros*" [my ancestors' ethnicity] (Fieldnotes, 09.23.14, p. 13), which relates to cultural characteristics. Yeison Daniel's understanding of blackness includes then both the physical characteristics, along with the cultural aspects. However, although Yeison Daniel likes his maternal relatives' cultural traditions tied to being black in rural Pacific Coast towns "*Me gusta la música de mi abuela, de Tumaco*" [I like my grandma's music, Tumaco's music] (Fieldnotes, 07.12.14, p. 10), his life experiences are more linked to the city's life and

landscape as he defines himself as *caleño* (from Cali). This is interesting in that it shows Yeison Daniel's understanding of black groups who preserve their cultural ways (his ancestors, and to some extent his grandmother), and those who represent sectors of cultural mobility (he self-identifying as *Caleño*).

Although Yeison Daniel says he respects what his grandmother does, his preferences are different, not only because he lives in the city, but also because he fights the idea that being black is something tied exclusively to the cultural characteristics of blacks living in rural towns. For instance, Felipa complained that Yeison Daniel did not like the traditional music of the Pacific Coast, and he stated he did like it, but "*Aquí casi todo el mundo cree que a mí me gusta esa música y que toco esa música y no me gusta cuando la gente cree que esa es la única música que conozco*" [Here most people think I like and play that music, and I don't like it when people think that is all the music I know" (Fieldnotes, 07.12.14, p. 11). Yeison Daniel was referring to the idea that just because he looks physically black, people assume he only likes, plays, and dances the traditional music from the black people in towns. Yeison Daniel wants to be seen as a black-living-in-the-city, while at the same time valuing his relatives' roots and history. What he does not want is to be reduced to only the cultural aspects tied to black people living in rural towns because that does not capture the experiences of black people-living-in-the-city. Precisely, in order to show his black-in-the-city-identity, Yeison Daniel appeals to different lifestyles that identify him, his worldviews, aesthetic sense, sports, and interests. In the following excerpt Yeison Daniel talks about being Swagger, what it means, and how it impacts his complex identity.

Beatriz: ¿Por qué es que te gustan las cachuchas?

Yeison Daniel: ¡Porque son parte de mi estilo!

Beatriz: ¿Y cuál es tu estilo?

Yeison Daniel: ¡Swagger!

Le pregunto a Yeison Daniel el significado de la palabra.

*Yeison Daniel: Si usted lo pone en el traductor (Yeison Daniel abre Explorer, escribe “translate”, va a Google Translate y escribe la palabra “Swagger”. Dice pavoneo).
¿Ve?...*

Beatriz: ¿Y cómo lo relacionás con ser negro?

Yeison Daniel: Porque yo estoy orgulloso de ser negro que vive en la ciudad.

Beatriz: ¿Eso es lo que otras personas que son Swagger piensan?

Yeison Daniel: ¡Sí! Hay grupos de Facebook para Swaggers negros en Aguablanca.

Beatriz: ¡Qué interesante!

Yeison Daniel: Compartimos videos de Youtube, videos propis, fotos, ¿Ve?

[Beatriz: Why is it that you like hats?

Yeison Daniel: Because they are part of my style!

Beatriz: And what is that style?

Yeison Daniel: Swagger!

I ask Yeison Daniel the meaning of the word.

Yeison Daniel: If you put it in the translator (Yeison Daniel opens Explorer, types translate, goes to Google Translate, and types the word swagger) it says *pavoneo* (the word in Spanish). See?...

Beatriz: And how do you relate it to being black?

Yeison Daniel: Because I am proud of being black and living-in-the-city

Beatriz: Is that what other black people who are swagger think about?

Yeison Daniel: Yeah! There are groups on Facebook for black swaggers in *Aguablanca*

Beatriz: So interesting!

Yeison Daniel: We share Youtube videos, our own videos, pictures, see?] (Fieldnotes, 06.10.14, p. 5-6).

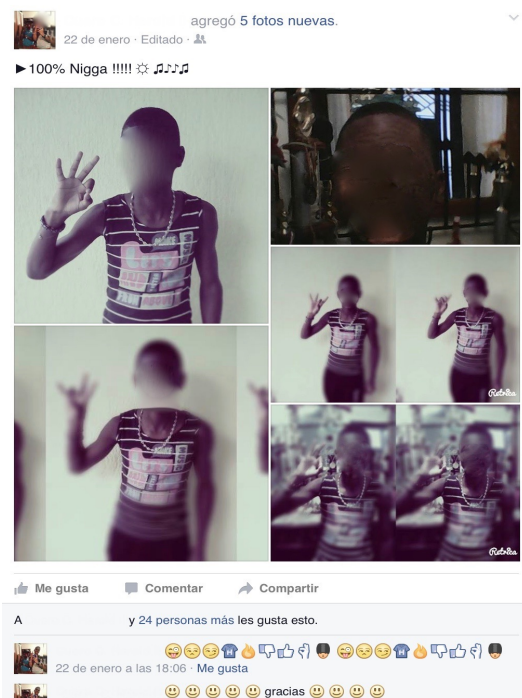
In this excerpt Yeison Daniel talks about being Swagger and how that conveys his black-living-in-the-city identity in regards to likes and group affiliation. However, in early 2015 he stopped his identification as Swagger due to its negative image. Basically, what Yeison Daniel says is that since Swagger is a style that has come to be identified with the stereotype of black people being thieves, he does not want to be tied to it because that perpetuates the idea of blacks in the city as problematic. When I asked him what he was since he was no longer swagger, he said “*Sólo yo, Yeison Delgado*” [Just me, Yeison Delgado] (Fieldnotes, 03.16.15, p. 2), and he told me he still liked the music he liked before because that characterized him. Thus, Yeison Daniel is able to change the style that conveys his black identity, while continuing with his black identity. He shows his black identity is not fixed, but it changes over time, and it represents a struggle between how others see him and how he sees himself. His likes, style, and refusal to be identified only with the practices of black people in towns can be interpreted as related to geography and youth identity. However, what makes them a particular black racial identity is that Yeison Daniel’s decisions about likes and style are rooted in a strong sense of racial affiliation characterized by the fighting an image imposed to him by the dominant *mestizo* group. In other words, more than generational or geographical markers of his identity and style, the bases for marking and defining these in Yeison Daniel’s case, are race, and racial struggle. The first aspect he appeals to for defining his identity is race, not age or geography themselves. Although these are included, they are not determinant markers as race is.

What is also important in regards to Yeison Daniel's racial identity and style is the predominant use of alternative literacy practices for delivering and conveying both of them. The following picture is from pages in Yeison Daniel's personal notebook. He used his notebook as a type of diary in which he wrote and drew things that happened to him, things he liked, sentences in English, and lists of songs.



Picture 8 (Fieldnotes, 09.03.14)

Picture 8 shows a drawing of Wiz Califa, an artist Yeison Daniel likes, and sentences in English based on the grammar structure for asking questions that he found in a dictionary. In his notebook he also wrote notes for people and things he liked about trips or music. Yeison Daniel's use of the personal notebook included performing his style preferences, communicating with others, and personal reflection. In addition to drawing and writing, Yeison Daniel's literacy practices included also digital knowledge and skills. The following pictures show his Facebook posts and pictures, and the use of this space to perform his black identity.



Picture 9 (Fieldnotes, 01.22.15)



Picture 10 (Fieldnotes, 05.28.14)

Yeison Daniel used Facebook to show his black identity (picture 9 says “100% Nigga” in English) to his Facebook friends. Yeison Daniel takes the word “Nigga” used by the black US artists he follows, and he does not attribute a negative meaning to it. The use of alternative literacy practices for this endeavor is evident. The literacy practices Yeison Daniel used at home for building his identity are just like the family ones, texts characterized by the mixing of different semiotic systems: the alphabet, drawings, music, and videos. He used his personal notebook, Facebook, the computer in general (creating folders to categorize his music, and video files, decoding videos from Youtube to save them on the computer), and his body as the canvas for these literacies (using clothes with written messages, and certain colors). Yeison Daniel used Youtube for watching videos, and Google Translate for translating the lyrics. He copied the lyrics in English and Spanish and saved them as word documents on the computer.

This use of literacies related to a particular view of learning that was prevalent in the home setting: learning by doing or learning by participating. For example, when I asked Felipa to teach me how to cook certain recipes, she insisted on me doing that dish with her so that I learned how to do it. Felipa also stated that “*¿Cómo más aprende uno si noes viendo y haciendo?*” [How else does one learn than by watching and doing?] (Fieldnotes, 07.02.17, p. 3). This was a family practice because Yeison Daniel’s cousin (Yaneth’s son) answered the following when I asked him how he learned how to cut hair “*Uno aprende es haciendo. Uno se sienta, observa y algunas veces ni siquiera cierra los ojos*” [One learns by doing. One seats, watches, and sometimes one does not even closes the eyes] (Fieldnotes, 05.28.14, p. 5). In the family setting learning entailed doing and participating.

Yeison Daniel’s view of alternative literacies is inextricably linked to blackness, and ways of learning (doing and participating), and this view determines his investment for participating in the settings. When Yeison Daniel talks about how he translates the English lyrics into Spanish, then reading them, and after posting a video on Facebook, he inevitably talks about black identity and learning.

Yeison Daniel: Yo soy negro, así que me gusta escuchar música, aprenderla así y ponderla en Face o en mi cuaderno... Para que lo que a mí me gusta esté ahí, que lo aprendí y que así es como yo soy.

Beatriz: ¿Es para alguien?

Yeison Daniel: En Face es para que mis amigos sepan, en mi cuaderno es para pensar en yo quién soy... En Face puedo decir lo que quiera sobre ser negro, pero en la escuela eso ni siquiera importa.

Beatriz: ¿Qué no importa?

Yeison Daniel: ¡Eso! Mostrar que yo aprendo así (señala la pantalla del computador con las ventanas de Youtube y traducción abiertas), y que soy negro.

[Yeison Daniel: I am black, so I like listening to music, learn it like that, and put it on Facebook or on my notebook... So that what I like is there, that I learned it and that that is how I am

Beatriz: Is that for someone?

Yeison Daniel: On Facebook it is for my friends to know, and in my notebook it is for thinking on who I am... On Facebook I can say whatever I want about being black, but in the school that doesn't even matter.

Beatriz: What does not matter?

Yeison Daniel: That! Showing that I learn this like this (points at the screen computer with the windows for Youtube and translation), and that I am black] (Fieldnotes, 09.23.14, p. 17).

In this excerpt Yeison Daniel talks about how he writes things related to what he likes, how he learns by watching and doing, how all this relates to who he is, and that is being black. Basically, for Yeison Daniel literacy relates to identity and learning and that view impacts his participation in the settings as to how much that participation reverts on his building of blackness as a social group, of black-living-in-the-city. This view of literacies then determines his investment with settings. The school one is not an exception.

In sum, when in his home setting Yeison Daniel builds on an identity of social mobility characterized by self-identifying as black-living-in-the-city. This identity of social mobility is described by a certain style affiliation that constructs and is constructed through diverse

alternative literacies and ways of learning them. This view of literacies determines his ways of participating in the school setting, and in the classroom.

Returning to the Vignette that began this chapter, the context of why Yeison Daniel gave me the note with the list of singers in the classroom on April 28, can be further understood as that he was sharing with me his black-living-in-the-city identity and the style he used for conveying it. However, it is not yet uncovered why he did it in the Spanish language class, why he was not doing what the teacher asked him to do, why the teacher told me Yeison Daniel has difficulties with spelling, and how all these questions can be framed in relationships between literacy and race in *Surgir*. In the following part, I describe and analyze the school setting and how literacy and race collide in *Surgir*.

Vignette 2

During the week of May 27, the school celebrated an institutional event called the Ethnic Week (EW). The first day of the EW, activities included the opening of the week (with performances by urban dance groups), and a play and talks organized by the school library. On the second day of the EW, activities included visiting alcoves in which information about the four Departments in the Pacific Coast (Chocó, Valle del Cauca, Cauca, and Nariño) was being highlighted in regards to geography, ethnic groups, hydrography, and culture. Yeison Daniel's classroom (5-1) participated in the opening of the EW, the play, and during recess students were free to attend the talk organized by the library. On the second day, 5-1 visited four alcoves that talked about Nariño and its towns (focusing on Tumaco), Cauca, another one on Nariño, and one on Chocó. Yeison Daniel participated and liked the activities on the first day, but disliked and rejected those on the second day. His comments on the Day Two activities focused on saying

that the information on Towns and Departments was limited, and he did not even attend the last alcove on Chocó. He disappeared saying he had to go to the bathroom.

Understanding his behavior was added to my inquiry, just as understanding his actions in the classroom when he gave me the note. Deciphering why he participated on the first day, and why he did not do it on the second one, was a new addition to the characterization of Yeison Daniel's participation in the classroom. Understanding if his behavior in the EW related to his acting in the classroom, if so how, and what literacy and race had to do with that, is what I narrate in this second part of the chapter.

Literacy and Race in *Surgir* and in 5-1: Constructing and Contesting the Dominant Racial Ideology

Literacy and race in *Surgir* and in the classroom 5-1 are interconnected, and that relation is determinant for understanding Yeison Daniel's participation in these settings. When literacy is analyzed alone in regards to practices, events, and written texts, results show patterns of behavior around written texts. However, when further analyzed in regards to race, the intersection shows how racial frames in the school and in the classroom were institutionalized and contested through literacies. For the general school setting, I describe how literacy and race relate in the *mestizaje* racial frame for planning and implementing the Ethnic Week (EW), how the library activities contested the frame, and how all this informs Yeison Daniel's participation in the week. For the 5-1 classroom, I describe how literacy and race intersect in two instructional practices impacting the black teacher, and black students and Yeison Daniel's participation in the classroom. Basically, in this part I describe *Surgir* and 5-1 as the settings in which Yeison Daniel participates and negotiates his formal school learning.

Literacy and race: Constructing and contesting racial frames in *Surgir*. In the school, literacy and race were related in ways in which the former was a tool to institutionalize or contest the latter. The use of literacy to institutionalize a certain racial frame was evident in the general school setting through the staff's views, and through the curriculum. The use of literacy to contest the prevalent racial ideology was more evident in whole school events involving the students, and in the library space through the librarian's views, and the activities she carried out. For helping the reader to follow the narrative through five informants' eyes, Table 7 introduces them, their role in the school, and their racial identity.

Table 7

Informants' Chart: School

Name	Racial identity	Position in <i>Surgir</i>	Degrees	Years in that role
Mario Andrés Lozada Pino	<i>Mestizo</i>	Principal	Normalista ¹ Licensed in Social Studies MA Education and Human Development	Teaching 7 years Principal 20 years
Jaime Barrera Castillo	<i>“Una mezcla de blanco e indígena. Un poquito de todo”</i> [A mix of White and Indigenous. A little bit of everything]	Elementary Academic Coordinator	Licensed in Mathematics Business Administration Started a MA in Education	Teaching 20 years Coordinator 7 years

¹ In Colombia, *Normalista* is a type of high school degree whose goal is to train students during high school for being preschool and elementary teachers as soon as they graduate. The Normal schools system originated in 1822 in Bogotá, Caracas, and Quito, and it allowed for the low-cost alphabetization of big amounts of students (Zuluaga, Saldarriaga, Osorio, Echeverri, & Zapata, 2004). It started when teachers used more advanced children as mentors in the classroom. *Normalistas* graduate with certifications for teaching. However, to increase their credentials and salaries, they can complement their education with undergraduate and graduate degrees.

Table 7 (cont.)

Héctor Fabio Montes Herrera	<i>Mestizo</i>	Secondary Academic Coordinator	Licensed in Mathematics and in Physics	Teaching 20 years Coordinator 1 year
Olga Lucía Carvajal Arboleda	“ <i>No pertenezco a algo específico. Soy Universal</i> ” [I don’t belong to something specific. I’m a universal being]	Teacher 5-3	Normalista Licensed in Elementary Education	Teaching 23 years
Catalina Flórez Orozco	<i>Negra</i> [Black Colombian woman]	Librarian	Licensed in Literature	Teaching 7 years Librarian 5 years

There were five racial frames circulating in the school setting and all of them were constructed through literacy and constructing official views of literacy. The racial frames circulating in *Surgir* were the cultural, the liberal, the *mestizaje*, the minimization, and the naturalization. Table 8 summarizes the frames, their main ideas, and examples from the school.

Table 8

Racial Frames in Surgir

Racial frames	Description	Examples
Cultural	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Black people’s living conditions are due to their cultural ways Black people in <i>Aguablanca</i> are problematic, and they are related to delinquency and violence Black people in the Pacific Coast are harmonious and preserve valuable ancestral 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> “<i>En las familias afro... hay mucha anormalidad... O sea que esta comunidad en el nivel familiar, en el cultural, ellos mismos se han segregado</i>” [In the afro families... there is a lot of abnormality... So, this community in the family level, in a cultural level, they have segregated themselves a lot] (Olga, Interview, 09.16.14, p. 10). “... <i>todo lo que hacían era bulla, bulla, bulla. Y ese es un patrón cultural que los caracteriza bastante... No los identifico</i>”

Table 8 (cont.)

	knowledge.	<i>como agresivos, pero nótese que sí los veo como un grupo con sentimientos de inferioridad</i> [... all they did was noise, noise, noise. And that is a cultural pattern that characterizes them a lot... I don't identify them as aggressive, but note that I do see them as a group with a feeling of inferiority] (Jaime, Interview, 06.26.14, p. 41).
Liberal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Equality for all: collective rights, and class struggle (not racial) • Dismissing affirmative action • Democracy is the political way to achieve equity: moving forward, national identity, and leadership 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Principal: <i>“Precisamente una de las estrategias de la clase dominante que no tiene interés en las transformaciones es que nosotros no nos apropiemos de los himnos ni que tengamos unidad”</i> [Precisely one of the strategies of the ruling class that has no interest in social transformations is that we don't appropriate the anthems, nor we have unity] (Fieldnotes, 05.02.14, p. 1). • <i>“Enforcarse es un grupo puede ser problemático”</i> [Focusing on one group (affirmative action) can be problematic] (Héctor, Interview, 09.23.14, p. 34). • Principal: <i>“Leer y escribir son asuntos muy importantes para nosotros porque eso y la educación es lo que nuestros niños necesitan para salir adelante”</i> [Reading and writing are very important issues for us because that and education is what our children need to move forward] (Fieldnotes, 04.09.14, p. 2).
Mestizaje	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is no race (is an invention), but ethnicities (cultural groups) • National <i>mestizo</i> identity: mix of criollos (Spaniards' descendants born in the country), blacks, and indigenous • Rejection towards blacks and indigenous: mixing towards whitening 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>“Raza es la raza humana. Etnicidad se refiere más a los grupos humanos que comparten sistemas culturales, lenguajes, cosmogonías...”</i> [Race is the human race. Ethnicity refers more to human groups that share cultural systems, languages, worldviews...] (Mario, Interview, 06.04.14, p. 14-15). • <i>“En Colombia nosotros somos es mestizos”</i> [In Colombia we are <i>mestizos</i>] (Héctor, 04.29.14, p. 2) • Changing the mandated Afro-Colombian Week for the EW because the country is

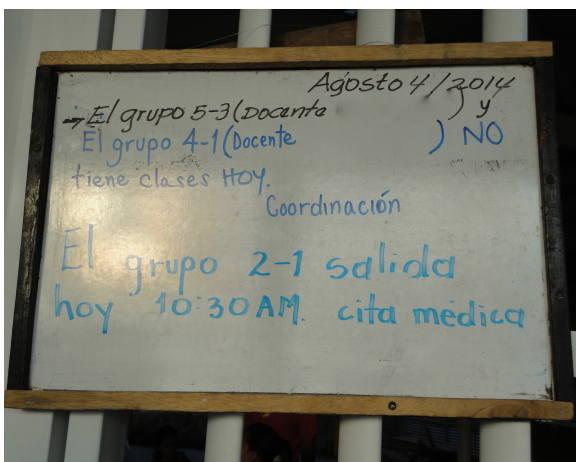
Table 8 (cont.)

		<i>mestizo</i> , not black. So is the school (Fieldnotes, 04.29.14, p. 3).
Minimization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minimize discrimination and racism • Denying the difficulties black people face 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “<i>El racismo no existe porque a todos nosotros nos pueden discriminar</i>” [Racism does not exist because we all can be discriminated against] (Mario, Interview, 06.04.14, p. 20). • “<i>El racismo no existe porque yo no discrimino</i>” [Racism does not exist because I don’t discriminate] (Mario, Interview, 06.04.14, p. 21). • “<i>Ellos son personas que han venido aquí con el cuento ese del desplazamiento forzado</i>” [They [blacks] are people who come here under the <u>story</u> of forced displacement] (Olga, Interview, 09.23.14, p. 25).
Naturalization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Naturalize derogatory terms for referring to black people • Naturalize black people’s living conditions as natural occurrences • Naturalize discrimination as how things are 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “<i>Decirle a alguien betún puede ser por cariño porque depende es del tono</i>” [Calling someone <i>betún</i> (black shoe polish) can be out of love because it depends on the tone] (Mario, Interview, 06.04.14, p. 19). • “<i>De alguna manera ellos están innatamente predispuestos al crimen</i>” [Somehow they [blacks] are innately predisposed for crime] (Olga, Interview, 09.16.14, p. 8). • “<i>Si usted tiene 100 aplicantes y 99 son negros, van a preferir el blanco porque así son los perfiles normalmente</i>” [If you have 100 applicants and 99 are black, they are going to prefer the white because normally those are the profiles] (Jaime, Interview, 06.26.14, p. 42).

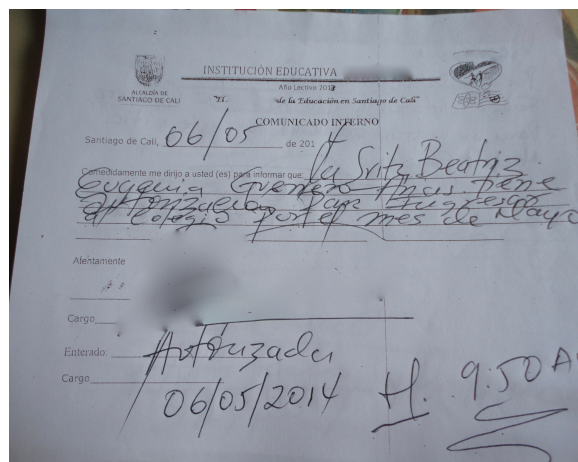
Some of the racial frames, like the cultural, the liberal, and the *mestizaje* ones, were more evident in the curriculum construction, and the minimization and the naturalization were more prevalent in the views of the school staff. In what follows, I illustrate how the *mestizaje* racial frame operated in the school during the EW, for constructing the Ethnic Curriculum, and how it

related to literacy's meaning in the school. Then I describe how the racial frames were contested, and the scope of this contestation in the school. But first, to contextualize, I describe the literacy practices in the general school setting.

“If you don’t have written authorization, you cannot enter the school”: *The School’s literacy practices.* In general, the school’s literacy practices related to two functions: structuring the school as an institution, and implementing the curriculum (See Appendix B for details on the events and the written texts in each practice). The general characteristics of the literacy practices related to structuring the school are that written texts work as tools for institutionalizing, proving, accessing space, and naming space. The principal and the two coordinators were interested in using agendas, letters, memos, plaques, records, reports, schedules, and other different written forms of communication as ways to organize the school. Written texts in this practice are predominantly alphabetic and structured through formats like writing records, memos, and letters. The following pictures show samples of these texts in the school.



Picture 11 (Fieldnotes, 08.04.14)



Picture 12 (Fieldnotes, 05.06.14)

Picture 11 shows a note left on the gate for parents and guardians to know that classes were canceled for two grades and that for the 2-1 classroom the day ends at 10:30am due to a teacher's medical appointment. Picture 12 shows a memo the elementary coordinator gave me

for allowing my entrance to the school. As a tool for institutionalizing, the use of written texts was explicitly required by the principal and the coordinators for all teachers and staff in the school. When addressing teachers in a meeting for evaluating the Language Week celebrated in April, the elementary coordinator highlights precisely the necessity to structure tasks around written texts when he said: “*Propongo que tengamos una política de reuniones y que tengamos objetivos escritos, guías escritas para agendar y asesorar... Establezcamos una política para que nos organicemos específicamente con la escritura y tengamos las reuniones*” [I propose that we have a meetings’ policy and that we have written goals, written guidelines for scheduling and for assessing... Let’s establish a policy so that we specifically organize ourselves with writing and we have the meetings] (Jaime, Interview, 04.29.14, p. 2-3). This request was an institutional approach mandated by the principal and the two coordinators.

The other characteristic of the literacy practices for structuring the school is that they were also seen as proof of activities, decisions, interactions, and of students’ academic achievement. The institutional view validated the use of agendas, memos, and reports, among others, to demonstrate actions and thoughts. Hence, the school viewed written texts as creating and confirming reality. That is why written texts were seen as keys to facilitate or prohibit access to spaces: showing a written memo for entering and using the auditorium, computers’ room, and even to enter the school. Written texts were also seen as tools for naming space with tags and labels: classrooms, principal’s office, secretary, and theater. In fact, I was asked to show the memo the elementary coordinator gave me to enter the school every day in the morning. Even though doormen started to know me, the day I forgot to take the memo with me, the doorman told me “*Si usted no tiene autorización escrita, no puede entrar al colegio*” [If you don’t have

written authorization, you cannot enter the school] (Fieldnotes, 07.29.14, p. 1). That day, the elementary coordinator had to come to the entrance to allow me in.

The general characteristics of the literacy practices related to implementing the curriculum are that alphabetic literacies alone or accompanied by illustrations were seen as ideologically neutral, as a tool for upward mobility in itself, as a means for learning, and as a program called PILEO (*Plan Integral de Lectura, Escritura y Oralidad* / Integral Plan for Reading, Writing, and Orality). This literacy practices are more varied than those for structuring the school in that they use illustrations, along with the alphabet for their construction. These literacies correspond with agendas, anthems, billboards, books, and posters that usually were done by students under classroom or school projects. The following pictures show samples of this literacy practice.



Picture 13 (Fieldnotes, 04.21.14)



Picture 14 (Fieldnotes, 06.26.14)

Picture 13 shows a billboard done by students for the Language Week in which they praise Gabriel García Márquez. Picture 14 shows a note done by secondary students to allow students to wear the Colombian soccer team's t-shirt in the school the days in which the national team played in the World Soccer Cup. These public prints, as part of classroom or school projects, were seen as neutral because informants in the school staff (except for the librarian) saw

no ideology or racial ideological weight attached to them. When asked about billboards' meanings, they answered that "*Esas carteleras representan las actividades de lectura y escritura que los estudiantes aprenden y que son importantes porque los van a sacar adelante*" [Those billboards represent the reading and writing activities students learn and that are important because they will move students forward] (Olga, 09.23.14, p. 27). In the elementary coordinator's words "*La lectura y la escritura en la escuela son aspectos positivos que todos deben dominar, lograr un nivel deseable de lectura y escritura para saber de literatura, filosofía y cultura general*" [Reading and writing in the school are positive aspects everyone must master, to achieve a desirable level of literacy to know about literature, philosophy, and general culture] (Jaime, Interview, 06.26.14, p. 28). Not only literacies were considered neutral in ideological terms, but also they were seen as a goal for children's learning in the school since they relate to societal upward mobility. The principal emphasized this when I introduced my project to the parents' board by saying that "*La lectura y la escritura son asuntos muy importantes para nosotros porque... ustedes saben cuán duro es para la gente de nuestra comunidad ser vistos diferente, participar en la sociedad y transformar cosas*" [Reading and writing are very important issues for us because... you know how hard it is for people in our community to be seen differently, to participate in society, and to transform things...] (Fieldnotes, 04.09.14, p. 2).

In the school and curriculum implementation, literacy instruction was included in what the ministry of education calls PILEO, which is a program for literacy and orality that is not mandatory, but open for schools to develop curriculum projects. In *Surgir*, PILEO was part of the Humanities field (language, Spanish, and English) and the person in charge of it was the librarian, who conducted workshops with the teachers to improve students' literacy skills. Teachers were not receptive to developing PILEO strategies because it entailed more work for

them, or as Olga, the 5-3 teacher said “*PILEO es más trabajo y yo enseño lectura y escritura distinto de lo que ella propone*” [PILEO is more work and I teach reading and writing different than what she proposes] (Fieldnotes, 05.02.14, p. 5). The librarian was interested in developing a different view on literacy and orality for the school. The librarian’s interest was to have teachers go beyond the literary canons, to understand how reading and writing work in the fields (Cultural, Humanities, and Sciences), and to question power dynamics that limit black and indigenous’ participation in written production:

Digamos, no sólo cómo leer y escribir en las ciencias, aquí o allá, sino que los maestros lleven a los estudiantes a reflexionar en la participación de los negros e indígenas en la lectura y la escritura en los campos y que con base en ello, los estudiantes piensen que hay diferentes formas de leer y escribir, y que algunas son más reconocidas como oficiales que otras dependiendo de la historia de dominación. Pero el miedo de los maestros es... hay asuntos de poder implicados que los cuestionan hasta a ellos mismos.

[Let’s say, not just how to read and write in sciences, here or there, but that teachers take the students to reflect on blacks and indigenous’ participation in reading and writing in the fields, and based on that, the students think that there are different ways of reading and writing, and that some are more acknowledged as official and others are not depending on the history of domination. But teachers’ fear is... that there are issues with power implicated that even question to themselves] (Catalina, Interview, 09.08.14, p. 5).

The librarian considers literacies to not be neutral, and to be related to contexts and politics, that is, as localized and mediated by power. Precisely, she intended that the school’s PILEO address these tensions instead of focusing on the teaching of texts exclusively. Teachers did not follow the librarian’s ideas and complained about the work she proposed in the

workshops. The principal and the coordinators did not follow either, although they did require the use of written texts for the school's organization and curriculum's implementation. However, not following on the librarian's ideas was not a rejection towards improving literacies and the PILEO program in the school. On the contrary, literacies and the PILEO program were important for the school and a desirable goal for students' learning. What the principal, coordinators, and teachers did not agree with, was the view of literacy practices the librarian was proposing, a view that highlights and reflects the intersections of literacies and race, literacies and domination, and literacies and social participation.

Next, I discuss the *mestizaje* racial frame circulating in the school during the EW and how it relates to the literacy practices in *Surgir*. Drawing from the data, I show how this racial frame that influenced the EW's organization, and the Ethnic curriculum, related to the literacy practice of implementing the curriculum.

Racial frames and contestation in Surgir's Ethnic Week and ethnic curriculum. The Ethnic Week (EW) was the school's approach towards what the Ministry of Education calls The Afrocolombian Week, which corresponds with the schools' commemoration of slavery's abolition on the week of May 21. In *Surgir*, the principal and the two coordinators decided to change the focus on the Afrocolombian week for what they called the EW. This change was made under the rationale that Colombia and the school are diverse and that it was necessary to focus on diversity instead of focusing only one group. The EW was also an extension of the ethnic curriculum, which was supposed to operate during the entire school year, and not only during one week. Thus, the EW was an important exercise for the school to reflect on the long-term project of building an ethnic curriculum. What is interesting to analyze is how the change from the Afrocolombian Week to the EW was impacted by the *mestizaje* racial frame that

circulated in the school, and how the frame used written texts for institutionalizing the school's racial ideology. In what follows I describe how the *mestizaje* racial frame impacted the EW, and how written texts were part of the institutionalization.

“Tenemos que institucionalizar el espacio étnico en la escuela” [We have to institutionalize the ethnic space in the school]: The mestizaje racial frame in the EW and the ethnic curriculum. This phrase was stated by the secondary coordinator during the beginning of the first meeting for planning the Afrocolombian week in the school (Fieldnotes, 04.25.14, p. 4). The meeting included all the ethnic educators in the school, and Héctor, the secondary coordinator as director of the week. In this meeting, Héctor stated that the Ministry of Education focuses on the afro topic for the week of May 21, which is limited if compared to the cultural variety of the country and the school. Therefore, according to Héctor, the Afrocolombian week had to become the EW to cover all that variety. This change from the afro topic to the ethnic one is due to the racial ideology that had an important presence in the school, the curriculum, the classroom, and instruction. The racial ideology in *Surgir* was formed by five racial frames: cultural, liberal, *mestizaje*, minimization, and naturalization. To illustrate the use of racial ideologies for the EW and the ethnic curriculum's construction, I focus on the *mestizaje* racial frame.

The mestizaje racial frame. This frame included ideas of national identity, ethnicity as inherent to all social beings, denying races and racializing ethnicity, cultures as static groups, stereotyping, and fragmenting. All these ideas built on what the school considered as the ethnic curriculum, which had its maximum exposure during the EW, and written texts were an important tool to operationalize the *mestizaje* racial frame during the planning and implementation of the EW.

The *mestizaje* racial frame defended the idea of a national *mestizo* identity that is formed by the mixing of *criollos* (Spaniard descendants born in the country), blacks, and indigenous. The frame coexists at the same time with rejection of black and indigenous peoples. Thus, *mestizaje* values mixing, but only the identified as tending towards whitening. The *mestizo* national identity is present in the school in alliance with the liberal frame to defend ideas of democracy and equality for all Colombians, the *mestizo* ones. During the planning of the EW, in teachers' meetings, ideas about the *mestizo* national identity were presented to discuss the extent to which the EW should focus only on black and indigenous groups.

Rector: Los invito a entender la semana afro, no como la semana afro sino como la semana étnica. Estuve en una reunión con rectores étnicos. La idea es entender que nosotros, como mestizos, tenemos una identidad nacional y que por eso, no podemos enfocarnos exclusivamente en lo afro, sino en lo étnico. La idea es que los estudiantes entiendan que hay cosmovisiones y formas con el conocimiento en el mundo.

[Principal: I invite you to understand the afro week not as the afro week, but as the EW. I was in a meeting with ethnic principals. The idea is to understand that we, as *mestizos*, have a national identity and that because of that, we cannot focus exclusively on the afro, but on the ethnic. The idea is that students can understand that there are other worldviews and ways with knowledge in the world] (Fieldnotes, 04.29.14, p. 2).

The secondary coordinator immediately echoes the principal and replies that it is necessary to have an agenda. In this excerpt the principal talks as a *mestizo* man to defend the idea of a national *mestizo* identity that must be included in the curriculum approach of the EW. In the same way it occurs in the liberal frame in which ideas of equality and democracy prohibit a focus on the particularities of certain groups; in the *mestizaje* frame, the idea of a *mestizo*

national identity dismisses any attempt to highlight the needs of particular groups. In the liberal frame, affirmative action is dismissed because it can create more inequity, and in the *mestizaje* frame focusing on black and indigenous peoples during the EW can hinder the *mestizo* national identity.

After the principal's intervention in this meeting, teachers discussed in several meetings how to better focus the EW. Teachers proposed a review of all the country by departments based on the idea that "*Como colombianos, todos somos étnicos*" [As Colombians, we all are ethnic] (Fieldnotes, 04.29.14, p. 2), and others proposed a focus on the regions of Colombia because "*Como colombianos tenemos cinco grupos culturales y la semana étnica debe enfocarse en los aspectos culturales*" [As Colombians, we have five big cultural groups and the EW should focus on cultural aspects] (Fieldnotes, 04.29.14, p. 2). In the end, teachers proposed to address the four departments of the Pacific region during the EW because "*Esos sí son diversos*" [Those are diverse] (Fieldnotes, 04.29.14, p. 2). Thus, the EW ended up as a review of Chocó, Valle, Cauca, and Nariño.

Related to the idea that every individual is ethnic, there is also the idea that it is not necessary to talk about races because it has been demonstrated that the human race is only one, and what changes are the different cultural practices groups share. Those are called ethnicities or ethnic groups. This idea was very strong not only in participants' opinions during the interviews, but also in the curriculum's implementation during the EW. In the following excerpt the principal, defines race and ethnicity as explained above.

Raza es para las especies, entonces raza es la raza humana. Etnicidad se refiere más a grupos humanos que comparten sistemas culturales, lenguajes cosmovisiones, no necesariamente asociados a un país, no necesariamente dentro del contexto de los límites

de los países. Hay familias o grupos étnicos que pueden vivir a través de diferentes países pero que pertenecen al mismo grupo étnico.

[Race is for species, then race is the human race. Ethnicity refers more to human groups that share cultural systems, languages, worldviews, not necessarily associated to a country, not necessarily within the context of a country's borders. There are families or ethnic groups that can live throughout different countries but belong to the same ethnic group] (Mario, Interview, 06.04.14, p. 14-15).

This conceptualization fights against the idea that some groups or races are genetically “better” than others. Thus, with the argument that race is only one, black and indigenous peoples are respectfully placed in the same level of intellectual, physical, and cognitive, etc., capability as mestizos. However, by focusing on ethnicity, discussions about racial groups are dismissed along with discussions about racism and rejection of dark skin and phenotypic features.

Nevertheless, even though informants insisted on the use of ethnicity as a more appropriate term due to its focus on cultural aspects, they used racial terms to categorize ethnic groups. As the principal stated, contradicting himself in regards to what he had stated before, “*Cuando uno habla de persona negra se refiere a una persona que tiene un color de piel diferente, no necesariamente una cultura diferente*” [When one talks about blacks, this refers to a person that has a different skin color, not necessarily to a different culture] (Fieldnotes, 06.04.2014, p. 17). This racialization of ethnicity was also present in how *Surgir* addressed the EW.



Picture 15 (Fieldnotes, 05.27.14)

In this picture of a billboard done by students in fourth grade, it is possible to see how the indigenous ethnicity is portrayed as faces exclusively. This racialization of ethnicity, along with the denial of cultural continuity present in the cultural frame, led to ideas of stereotyping, fragmenting, and of cultures as static groups. In one of the meetings for planning the EW and after having decided to address the Pacific region, teachers agreed on the agenda. The secondary coordinator wrote on the board the agenda as it was discussed with the teachers.

Día 1: Inauguración por ciclos

Día 2: Feria del Pacífico

Día 3: Minga, gastronomía, experiencias significativas

Ciclo 1: Valle del Cauca, Ciclo 2: Nariño, Ciclo 3: Cauca, Ciclo 4: Chocó

Héctor: Es importante recuperar el término “minga” porque es usado por ambos grupos, afros e indígenas.

[Day 1: Opening by cycles

Day 2: Pacific fair

Day 3: *Minga*, gastronomy, meaningful experiences

Cycle 1: Valle del Cauca, Cycle 2: Nariño, Cycle 3: Cauca, Cycle 4: Chocó

Héctor: It is important to recover the term “*minga*” because it is used in both groups, afros and indigenous] (Fieldnotes, 04.25.14, p. 6, 5).

Teachers decided to dedicate the second day of the EW for expositions, and the third one for festivals, food, and guests from nearby schools. This decision of reducing blackness and indigenusness to festivals, food, and celebrations shows a trend towards stereotyping that was validated and institutionalized through the written agenda on the board. The coordinator wrote the word *minga* on the board and called attention towards its importance for both groups. However, the cultural mobility in the Pacific Coast that creates the use of the word *minga* for both black and indigenous peoples is not addressed or reflected upon. Fragmentation is also noticeable in the agenda since each cycle should be in charge of one of the four departments.

This agenda was executed during the EW and in the opening of the week activities built on the *mestizaje* racial frame. The elementary coordinator talked about diversity and the importance of exalting it, a fourth grade teacher read factual information about the diversity of the country, children in fourth grade dressed like Guambianos (indigenous group whose men wear skirts) performed a dance, children in second grade performed a *currulao* (dance from the black people in the Pacific Coast), and students from another school sang the Colombian national anthem in Wayuú (indigenous group) dressed in the Wayuú attire. The coordinator’s speech on diversity praised *mestizaje* while saying nothing about blackness and indigenusness, the factual information about diversity read by a teacher focused only on *mestizos*, and the dance performances stereotyped blacks and indigenous, also because there was no explanation about Guambianos’ skirt and children in the school just laughed at that performance. Particularly, having children sing the national anthem in Wayuú created the illusion that indigenous and their

languages are welcome, although the idea behind this is to have indigenous peoples use their language to name the *mestizo* identity (national anthem), not theirs.

Fragmentation and the idea about static cultures were more evident during the second day of the week when each cycle created alcoves in the classrooms to talk about political, demographic, and social aspects of each department. Students were supposed to rotate to visit the alcoves in which fragmented information about black and indigenous groups was presented through *mestizo* criteria. When information about the ethnic groups in each department was given, this was limited to number of groups, languages, food, festivals, dances, and demography. There was no reference to mobility, migration, mining, forced displacement, or fracking. Information given was stated as if cultures are static, uniform, fixed, and harmonious. Literacy was used to validate the *mestizaje* racial frame, and to dismiss the social issues black people face in the towns in the Pacific Coast. The following pictures show some of the billboards that illustrate this racial frame in the school and its use of written texts.



Picture 16 (Fieldnotes, 05.27.14)



Picture 17 (Fieldnotes, 05.27.14)

Picture 16 shows the *mestizaje* frame's focus on fragmentation and on geographical information about the departments. Picture 17 shows the Colombian flag colors, with

information about Chocó in regards to typical music instruments, and typical food. These billboards were done by students as part of the classroom activities for the EW.

The EW represents the school's attempt to implement an ethnic curriculum. The *mestizaje* racial frame informed the construction of the ethnic curriculum, in which *mestizos* represent the diversity of the country and blacks and indigenous are present, but do not represent diversity. Thus, for the curriculum to be ethnic, it must address mainly the predominant diverse *mestizo* population in the school.

Nuestro PEI es un PEI, de acuerdo con los principios institucionales, intercultural, que es la base para la etnoeducación. Yo no puedo hablar de etnoeducación si no hablo de interculturalidad. A menos que hable sobre educación afro o indígena. Si yo voy a hablar así y me refiero a eso como étnico, perfecto. Pero lo que nosotros proponemos es etnoeducación desde una perspectiva intercultural, o sea, de facilitar el encuentro de la diversidad. Porque de acuerdo con el censo, Surgir no es una institución afro, sino mestiza, diversa.

[Our PEI (Educational Institutional Project) is a PEI, according to the institutional tenets, intercultural, which is the base for ethnic education. I cannot talk about ethnic education if I don't talk about interculturality. Unless I talk about afro education or indigenous education. If I am going to talk like that, and I refer to that as ethnic, perfect. But what we propose is ethnic education from an intercultural perspective, that is, of facilitating the encounter of diversity. Because according to the census, *Surgir* is not an afro, or indigenous institution, but *mestiza*, diverse] (Mario, Interview, 06.25.14, p. 13).

According to the principal, the PEI in *Surgir* is ethnic and the requirement for it to be ethnic is that it is intercultural. He equates *mestizo* with diversity, and blacks and indigenous are

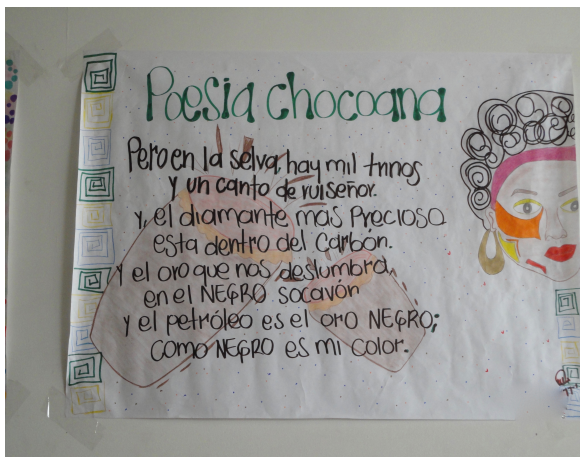
just the other two groups in the country. Therefore, the principal does not consider ethnic education as focused on the other groups (both or either) because they do not represent the diversity of the country, although they exist. On the contrary, *mestizos* do represent the mixing. Thus, the principal sees ethnic education as that focused on diversity (*mestizos*), and that in which blacks and indigenous' knowledge is accepted to circulate in the school. Basically, for him, ethnic education refers mainly to diversity (*mestizos*), and to black and indigenous because ethnic education (as intercultural) must exist in relation to something else.

The principal, showed himself as a fervent believer of the idea that the school's ethnic curriculum should teach black people's cultural ancestral knowledge along with traditional knowledge. The principal highlighted the idea that there is an oppositional relationship between traditional knowledge and cultural ancestral knowledge (Mario, Interview, 06.25.14, p. 13). He also stated that in the school both types of knowledge must circulate so that children have choice and decision.

Están los médicos que recetan agüitas. Y están los yerbateros o médicos ancestrales que recetan ir al médico. Entonces lo que nosotros pretendemos es que nuestro currículo incorpore el conocimiento que nuestra comunidad tiene sobre cómo hacer... Y esos son conocimientos que tienen que circular en la escuela para que los estudiantes tengan la posibilidad de la opción, de escoger.

[There are physicians who prescribe *agüitas* (little herbs infusions). And there are *yerbateros* or ancestral medicine men who prescribe going to the physician. So, what we intend is that our curriculum incorporates the knowledges that our community has about how to do... And those are knowledges that have to circulate in the school so that students have the possibility of option, of choosing] (Mario, Interview, 06.5.14, p. 15).

The principal does not propose a way to integrate both types of knowledge, but only the approval of having the non-official one circulating in the school. He considers both types of knowledge as separated, therefore reflecting the view of black people in the Pacific towns as ancestral and with a romantic idea of their cultural ways. As if rural blacks' cultural ways exist in a different dimension. In addition, when talking about cultural ancestral knowledge, he uses the word "*agüitas*" (little herbs infusions), which in diminutive reduces the value of that same thing he is trying to praise. At the same time, the principal stated that a teacher saying in a teachers' meeting for planning the EW "*¡Buenísimo! Ahora vamos a tener que ponernos taparrabos*" [Great! Now we have to wear *tabarrabos*] (how chroniclers described Indigenous' clothes for the bottom part of the body) with ironic tone, is not racist. That teacher "*Simplemente no está de acuerdo con lo que otros profesores están proponiendo para las actividades de la semana étnica*" [He just disagrees with what other teachers are proposing for the activities of the EW] (Mario, Interview, 06.04.14, p. 19). This, along with the fact that every time the principal talked about rural blacks' ways, he referred exclusively to food, festivals, dance and music, suggests that for the principal, the school's role is to teach the stereotyped cultural practices of black people in rural towns. This racial frame was institutionalized in the EW, and literacy practices were the tools.



Picture 18 (Fieldnotes, 05.27.14)



Picture 19 (Fieldnotes, 05.27.14)

These two pictures show two billboards done by students for the EW. The picture on the left shows a billboard with a poem in which the life in rural towns is praised, and the other focuses on the traditional festivals in the department of Chocó. The problem with these billboards is that they represent a racist *mestizaje* frame concealed under the name of “ethnic curriculum”, an ethnic curriculum that uses written texts for its implementation, and written texts that for the school’s literacy practices, have the characteristic of being proof. The school’s emphasis on black and indigenous peoples’ cultural aspect, disregarded addressing racism and discrimination as social problems. This contrast shows preference towards the existence of black people in rural towns, and rejection and denial towards the existence of black people in the city. Thus, the written texts that privileged the planning and implementation of the EW did not address blackness, indigenusness, discrimination, and/or racism, therefore, deleting them from the panorama, while institutionalizing the school as *mestizo*.

Thus, literacy practices relate to the *mestizaje* racial frame in that they support and give more weight to the idea that rural blacks are a desired, fun, and happy group, whereas black people in the city are not even mentioned or addressed through written texts. Basically, the idea of acknowledging black culture with emphasis on rurality and fixity while disregarding the social

problems of black people that represent sectors of cultural continuity was institutionalized through the curriculum, and executed through public prints on the walls, and the activities during the EW. Literacy practices' role in this frame entails also to create the illusion that written texts are used and integrated with cultural ancestral knowledge, while avoiding talking about black people in the city. In other words, literacy practices in the *mestizaje* frame are not used to talk about that which would take to accept racism (black people in the city), and used for talking about that which disregards its existence (black people in towns).

“No se trata de que un mestizo me diga negra, sino de que yo empoderada, me acepte y me reconozca como mujer negra” [It is not about a mestizo calling me black, but about empowered, accepting and calling myself black woman]: Contesting the racial frames in the school. As individuals move and interact with structures, there is also agency for action, which means that their actions are not exclusively limited by social structures, but that individuals have agency in transforming their reality. Students and the librarian found ways to reply and contest the racial frames and the literacy practices that came with them. The students contested the frames and the literacies with actions of protest and non-participation. The librarian contested with a different agenda for the EW. In this part I describe and discuss the librarian's views and her contestation of the racial frames during the EW.

The librarian, a self-identified black woman, was emphatic on insisting that the library had to promote identity within the black Colombian community in *Aguablanca*. She wanted to name the library after a famous black poet from the Pacific Coast. However, the previous major decided to name the library “*Surgir*” –as the school– to promote his campaign's slogan. The librarian did not participate in the meetings for planning the EW in the school. Since the library belongs to the network of public libraries in the city, she was able to develop her own agenda for

the week in the school and in the library. Among the activities the librarian carried out are: discussion with secondary students about fracking and mining in towns in the Chocó Department (Fieldnotes, 05.21.14, p. 5), interactive talk with a black Colombian female writer of picture books (Fieldnotes, 05.27.14, p. 3), presentation of the library's Afrocolombian collection (Fieldnotes, 05.27.14, p. 5), and presentation of a play about two black children's lives in a town in the Pacific coast (Fieldnotes, 05.27.14, p. 5). These activities were public and open for all the students in the school. However, not all teachers took their students to the library's activities because they were not included in the agenda for the EW (Fieldnotes, 05.20.14, p. 5). The agenda written on the board in the teachers' luncheon did not include visiting the library during the week. Again, school literacies are used to not address black people and/or blackness as social groups.

With the discussion on fracking and mining the librarian was contesting the cultural and *mestizaje* frames in which black rural people live in harmony and in a bubble. The talk with Mary Grueso Romero (black Colombian writer) and how the activity centered on Mary explaining connections between writing and her black identity, contested the *mestizaje* frame by proposing the intersection of various not static identities and how alternative literacies are means to realize them, and to dismantle oppression. Mary also talked about how she used writing for contesting the naturalization frame in which black people are not represented in books for children. Mary read two of her books aloud and there was space for students' questions. Thus, Mary was basically highlighting the role of literacies for not only contesting frames, but also for constructing identities of resistance. The Afrocolombian collection of the library gathers different genres (literature, research, non-fiction) in which black Colombians are the subject, and/or the authors to discuss issues of black people as social groups. This replies to the liberal

frame in which social problems are class-based. The play about the lives of two black children in a town in the Pacific was the adaptation of a book called “*Jacinto y María José*” [Jacinto and María José], which is an award winner picture book. Children in fourth and fifth grades participated in the play enthusiastically. The story questions the cultural and the *mestizaje* frames because groups are not static, and the characters are not romanticized or stereotyped.

With all these activities the librarian was making evident a different agenda for the Afrocolombian week, one that was not acknowledged by the school since they focused on an ethnic view informed by racial frames. The librarian and the activities she proposed in the library not only for the EW, but in general, contested the racial frames in the school while using alternative literacies (the talk on mining and fracking, the talk with a black female writer, the Afrocolombian collection, and the adaptation of a book in a play) as a tool for so doing.

The librarian was the informant on the school’s staff that, while contesting the racial frames with alternative literacies, she advanced identities of struggle in how she saw the school’s role with literacies. During interviews with her, the librarian replied to the racial frames with her opinions. For instance, she questioned the *mestizaje* racial frame in regards to understanding race as a social construction, and understanding race and ethnicity together. She also highlighted the importance of skin color for understanding racial discrimination.

La raza es un concepto social que yo relaciono más con melanina, pero también con los aspectos culturales de ese grupo humano. La raza negra fue estigmatizada y se le atribuyeron características de las que supuestamente no puede escapar y eso fue una excusa de dominación de un grupo hacia el otro. Y lo étnico, que para mí también debe incluir lo social, lo relaciono con la cosmovisión, el contexto de un grupo o comunidad humano... y eso va más allá de lo racial. Pero están los dos: raza y etnia. En algún caso

lo que ha sido estereotipado como etnia negra es la comida, el baile, las prácticas y eso cuadra con lo racial porque usualmente son las personas que viven en los pueblos. Pero en otros casos no cuadra. Como la gente negra que vive en las ciudades y que tiene prácticas diferentes. Aunque algunos preservan sus formas, otros las mezclan con las del espacio de la ciudad. Y lo otro es el color de piel, lo racial, que es muy importante porque el racismo se basa principalmente en eso.

[Race is a social concept that I relate more with melanin, but also with the cultural aspects of that human group. The black race was stigmatized and it was attributed with characteristics from which supposedly they cannot escape from, and that was an excuse for domination of one group over other. And the ethnic, which to me also must include the social, I relate it with the worldview, the cultural context of a group or human community... and that is beyond race. But there are the two: race and ethnicity. In some case what has been stereotyped as black ethnicity are the food, the dancing, the practices, and that matches the racial because usually they are people who live in the towns. But in other cases that doesn't match. Like the black people who live in the cities and that have different practices. Although some preserve their ways, others mix them with the city space. And the other thing is the skin color, the racial, which is very important because racism is based on that mainly] (Catalina, Interview, 09.08.14, p. 6).

In this excerpt the librarian shows a different approach to defining race and ethnicity in comparison to what other people in the school explained. She highlights that these constructs are social constructions (unlike other informants who used definite terms to define race and ethnicity) used to oppress and stereotype groups. She also talks about crossing and separating both terms to account for the importance of the skin color for reflecting on racism. The librarian

basically states that blackness, as skin color, is what explains racism; while blackness as a cultural group varies due to cultural mobility.

The librarian also replies to the naturalization frame in relation to names for referring to black people. In this regard, she questions the pragmatic relativism to indicate that those words have a negative meaning, and that comparing black skin color to objects animalizes and dehumanizes black people.

Decirle a alguien betún porque esa persona es negra, eso es discriminación. Hay gente diciendo que es por cariño y hay incluso gente negra que dice que les dicen así por cariño. Lo que pasa es que nos han dicho y nos han hecho creer que es por amor, pero eso es discriminación porque ¿por qué usted tiene que comparar el color de piel de alguien con un objeto que se usa para zapatos? Siguen animalizando y deshumanizando a la persona negra. El tema de lo negro todavía tiene una connotación negativa no sólo en términos de comunidad sino también en otros aspectos de la vida... Así que yo puedo entender que hay gente que no quiere ser identificada como negra. Y es complicado porque una cosa es que yo, reconociéndome como negra y reconociendo a alguien como negro por la historia que nuestra piel tiene, me diga negra. Otra muy diferente es que un mestizo me diga negra no para reconocer esa historia, sino para revivirla y justificar su posición de dominar y nombrar otros. O sea, no se trata de un mestizo diciéndome negra, sino de que yo empoderada, me acepte y me llame mujer negra.

[Telling someone *betún* because that person is black, that is discrimination. There are people saying that it can be out of love, and there are even black people who say they are called like that out of love. What happens is that black people, we have been told and they have made us believe is out of love, but that is discrimination because why do you

have to compare someone's skin color with an object, with something used for the shoes? They continue animalizing and dehumanizing the black person. The topic on blacks still has a negative connotation not just in terms of the community, but also in other aspects of life... So I can understand there are people who don't want to identify as black. And it is complicated because one thing is that I, self-identifying as black and identifying someone as black due to the history our skin has, tell him/her black or he/she calls me black. A very different thing is that a *mestizo* calls me black, not to acknowledge that history, but to revive it and support his/her position of dominating and naming others. That is, it is not about a *mestizo* calling me black, but about empowered, accepting and calling myself black Colombian woman] (Catalina, Interview, 09.08.14, p. 8-9).

The librarian talks about ideas that counter the naturalization frame. She, unlike other informants, questions not only that the meaning of words used to refer to black people depends on the context, but also she reflects on the *mestizo* power of naming and of calling someone "black", on the power for othering people. What is interesting about the librarian also is that when talking about her opinions, she inevitably talks about identity. Thus, the librarian relates her talking about blackness, discrimination, ethnicity, and race, to racial struggle identities and to black people in *Aguablanca*. For instance, when talking about how she knows the community in *Aguablanca*, the librarian does talk about their struggles and explains problems in the community as social issues. The following excerpt illustrates this point.

Pues yo no vivo en esta comunidad. Honestamente, los conozco por la biblioteca o las visitas que hacemos para talleres porque a mí no me da miedo de venir de mi casa a la biblioteca. Me da miedo cuando salgo para las actividades de la biblioteca, me dan miedo los tiroteos. Eso me hace sentir miedo. Me duele profundamente la gente aquí

viviendo con esa ansiedad, me da tristeza eso porque los estudiantes tienen que lidiar con eso todos los días. Para mí esta comunidad es heterogénea, mucha gente viniendo de diferentes pueblos, gente desplazada. Llegan en condiciones de violencia, han sido abusados por grupos armados o por la economía... y tienen que venir a la ciudad amenazados. O sea que mucha gente aquí no sabe cómo acomodarse, cómo ser. ¡Eso es duro!

[Well, I don't live in this community. Honestly, I know them through the library or the trips we do for workshops because I don't feel afraid of coming from my house to the library. I am scared when I go out for the library activities, I am afraid of a shooting, that makes me feel scared. It hurts me deeply the people here living with that anxiety, I feel sad for that because the students have to deal with it every day. To me this community is heterogeneous, many people coming from different towns, displaced people. They arrive in conditions of violence, they have been abused by armed groups or by economy... and they have to come to the city threatened. So many people here don't know how to accommodate, how to be. That is hard!] (Catalina, Interview, 09.08.14, p. 16-17).

In this excerpt the librarian talks about her knowledge of the community based on her job as a librarian. She acknowledges that there are problems in the community (shootings, delinquency, aggressiveness, stereotyping, family situations), but she does not talk about these issues as “natural occurrences” but as social problems. In addition, she uses her fear of being in the community as a way to connect with them through solidarity. When she contests the racial frames, she ties that contestation to identity, to identities of struggle. And this proceeding informed her management of the library. Thus, the librarian's views and the activities she planned for the library intended to promote these identities within the black community in

Aguablanca. The librarian's agenda for the library towards the school and the community were significantly different than that of the school not only because it contested the racial frames, but also because it used alternative literacy for so doing. This was evident when she talked about her goals with the library and the programs it implements.

Creo que es extremadamente importante ser capaz de reafirmar el tema afro aquí en la biblioteca porque la población aquí es mayoritariamente negra, viven en condiciones económicas duras, socialmente estigmatizados, marginados. Creo que es necesario que ellos en este espacio puedan encontrar que gente que se ve como ellos también han salido adelante, que son talentosos en distintos campos, en las ciencias, las artes, los deportes. Que vean no sólo pobreza, discriminación, desplazamiento, negación cultural, desprecio, sino que la biblioteca también sea para ellos un espacio de comodidad. Por eso el tema afro es importante para mí aquí, con la lectura, la escritura y las artes. Y principalmente reconociendo que hay distintas formas de leer, escribir y de entender y producir arte.

[I think it is extremely important being able to reaffirm the afro theme here in the library because the population here is majority black, they live in hard conditions economically, socially stigmatized, marginalized. I think it is necessary that they in this space can find that people who look like them have succeeded too, are talented in different fields, in sciences, arts, sports. That they see not only poverty, discrimination, displacement, cultural denial, contempt, but that the library is for them a space for comfort. That is why the afro theme is important to me here, through literacy and the arts. And mainly, acknowledging there are different ways of reading, writing, and understanding and producing arts] (Catalina, Interview, 09.08.14, p. 7).

Among the programs the library has are: reading and writing with community and expectant mothers, oral stories, writing letters to relatives who are away, events to sensitize about disability (the name of this event honors a black Colombian writer with disability), reading and writing in parks, hospitals, and prisons in *Aguablanca*; training adults on using computers, workshops, and religious rituals important for the community such as praying the *novena* (which is a community gathering of nine consecutive days till December 24th to pray and celebrate the birth of Jesus with written prayers read aloud by children).

The description of how literacy and race relate in the general school setting for the EW, and how the librarian and the activities she carried out contested the *mestizaje* racial frame, contribute to a better understanding of Yeison Daniel's acting during the EW and his participation in the first day of the EW (mainly library activities of contestation), and his rejection towards the second day (mainly the *mestizaje* racial frame). Next, I describe in detail Yeison Daniel's participation and contestation during the EW.

Contesting Racial Ideologies During the EW: Yeison Daniel in the School Setting. In the general school setting, Yeison Daniel's participation was characterized by direct contestation of the racial frames that circulated in *Surgir*. Due to the institutional and whole school character of the EW, Yeison Daniel's contestation was different compared to the one he did in the classroom. His opinions and actions of contestation in the general school setting were not as noticeable as the ones he did in the classroom. Nevertheless, his contestation towards the racial frames was open, direct, and categorical. In what follows I describe and analyze Yeison Daniel's participation in the EW's activities and how that participation related to the questioning of the racial frames and the literacies they used for their institutionalization.

The first day of the EW the school did the opening separating elementary and secondary, along with the library activities. Children in 5-1 were taken to the opening, and also to the play the library organized. The second day of the EW the students in cycle 2 were supposed to rotate to visit different alcoves prepared by other classrooms. The alcoves addressed the four Departments the school decided to target during the EW (Cauca, Chocó, Nariño, and Valle del Cauca) which form the Pacific Coast of Colombia, also called the Pacific Region. The following excerpts correspond with Yeison Daniel's participation in that second day of the EW.

The first alcove 5-1 visited was on the Department of Nariño, and Tumaco, Yeison Daniel's family's town, is a city in that Department. The classroom had no desks and the 5-1 children were seated on the floor along with 4-3. A teacher talked about Nariño explaining its geography, the rivers, mountains, food, festivals, and ethnic groups. The teacher used a video that highlighted Nariño's geography and the anthem sounded in the background. While the video was playing, Yeison Daniel stood up and moved to the corner of the classroom where he seated and looked down at the floor. This is what he said when I asked him why he went to the corner of the room.

Yeison Daniel: Primero, Tumaco es mucho más que eso. Mi familia es de Tumaco y el pueblo es mucho más que lo que ellos están mostrando. Y también, ellos ponen el himno como si con eso nosotros todos somos iguales.

Beatriz: ¿Y no somos iguales?

Yeison Daniel: No! Los negros no vivimos como viven los otros.

Beatriz: ¿Cómo vive la gente negra?

Yeison Daniel: Por lo general, pobres.

[Yeison Daniel: First, Tumaco is more than that. My family is from Tumaco and the town is much more than what they are showing. And also, they play the anthem as if with that we all are the same.

Beatriz: And we are not the same?

Yeison Daniel: No! We black people don't live the same as others.

Beatriz: How do black people live?

Yeison Daniel: Usually, in poverty] (Fieldnotes, 05.28.15, p. 2)

This excerpt illustrates Yeison Daniel's contestation of the liberal frame and its use of anthems to promote the idea of equality and democracy. Yeison Daniel also contested the minimization frame by saying he did not like the alcove on Cauca and the handout they gave to the students because "*Ellos no hablan de las cosas importantes que pasan aquí y allá como el racismo y cómo nosotros vivimos*" [They don't talk about the important things that happen here and there like racism, and how we live] (Fieldnotes, 05.28.15, p. 3). Again, the alcove focused on handicrafts and the manual work black and indigenous people do in Cauca. What is interesting is that when contesting the racial frames and the literacies they used, Yeison Daniel's view on literacies and the related identity of black-living-in-the-city were more noticeable. The following interaction occurred when visiting another alcove on Nariño in which the teacher talked about music and food. Yeison Daniel not only reaffirmed his preferences, but also contested the cultural frame and its ideas on fixedness, and rural black people.

Yeison Daniel: A mí me gusta esa música porque a mi abuela le fascina. Pero no me gusta para mí.

Beatriz: ¿Qué música te gusta a vos?

Yeison Daniel: Como rap, en inglés.

Beatriz: ¡Wow! Qué bien.

Yeison Daniel: Me gusta porque muestra quién soy yo.

[Yeison Daniel: I like that music because my grandma loves it. But I don't like it for me.

Beatriz: What music do you like for you?

Yeison Daniel: Like rap, in English.

Beatriz: Wow! Nice.

Yeison Daniel: I like it because it shows who I am] (Fieldnotes, 05.28.15, p. 3)

Basically, while contesting the racial frames, his view on literacies surfaced as a way to insist and to reaffirm his blackness. Just as it happened in the classroom when Yeison Daniel gave me the list of artists he liked, in this case telling me about the music he likes is also a statement of his identity. In other words, Yeison Daniel expressing his preferences in that setting and under those circumstances was more than just telling me his likes; it was an act of validating his racial identity. By contesting, Yeison Daniel created and re-created his identity because he saw opportunities to understand how others saw him, and how he wanted to be seen. Although this is interesting in that it shows that facing contestation can trigger and secure individuals' identities, for Yeison Daniel that contestation was not one he could dismiss as optional, or one that did not impact his academic standing in the school. On the contrary, this contestation was one that jeopardized his permanence in the school and risked his school capital because the elementary coordinator saw Yeison Daniel's participation as misbehavior, and his aunt was called to the school permanently (sometimes twice/month). For Yeison Daniel, contesting was a necessary, yet risky everyday practice in the school. This constant contestation impacted Yeison Daniel to the point in which he escaped from having to validate himself all day. Thus, Yeison Daniel did not stay for the entire talk in the last alcove 5-1 visited. As soon as they started talking

about Chocó, its anthems, geographies, food, and festivals, Yeison Daniel said he had to go to the bathroom and stayed there till the end of the day (Fieldnotes, 05.28.15, p. 3). When I asked him why he stayed in the bathroom for so long he said “*porque si no me voy a volver loco con todo lo que dicen*” [If I don’t, I’m going to be crazy with all of what they say].

The second day of the EW, Yeison Daniel and I walked together to his house and talked about the activities in the EW. His critical view towards the activities was informed by his views on literacies and their link with identity and learning. In the following excerpt Yeison Daniel contests the *mestizaje* racial frame to propose activities that would have fostered the identities of black-students-in-the-city.

Beatriz: ¿Qué pensás de las actividades de hoy?

Yeison Daniel: ¡No me gustaron! No me sentí atraído. Me sentí hasta ofendido... Porque ellos hablan sobre lo que la gente negra hace con la música y la danza y no hablan de la gente negra. Ayer me gustó más... Me gustó la obra y el grupo de baile al final. Pero no nos dejaron ver el grupo bien. Nos llevaron a los salones.

Beatriz: ¿Por qué te gustaron la obra y el grupo de baile?

Yeison Daniel: Porque mostraron cómo somos nosotros aquí y allá. Mostraron lo que somos. Hoy... No me gustó para nada.

Beatriz: ¿Qué te hubiera gustado ver?

Yeison Daniel: Grupos de baile urbano, parkour y rap. Y también tal vez un taller sobre traducir canciones y crear blogs o usar Face para grupos. Algo más como nosotros aprendemos.

[Beatriz: What do you think about today’s activities?

Yeison Daniel: I did not like them! I didn't feel attracted. I even felt like offended...

Because they talk about what black people do with dance and music, and they don't talk about black people. Yesterday I liked it better... Yesterday, I liked the play and the dance group that danced at the end. But they didn't allow us to see that group. They took us to the classrooms.

Beatriz: Why did you like the play and that group?

Yeison Daniel: Because they showed how we are here, and there. They showed what we are. Today... I didn't like it at all.

Beatriz: What would you have liked to see?

Yeison Daniel: Dance urban groups, parkour, and rap. And also maybe a workshop about translating songs and creating blogs or using Facebook for groups. Something more like how we learn] (Fieldnotes, 05.28.15, p. 4).

In this excerpt it is possible to see that Yeison Daniel questions the *mestizaje* racial frame and how it racializes ethnicity. What is interesting is that he contests it with his complex view on literacy as tied to identity, and ways of learning. Due to that, his contestation goes with proposals of activities that exalt identities (black urban groups, parkour, rap), literacies (translation, digital literacies), and ways of learning (how we learn). Again, contesting led Yeison Daniel to take a stance and to be critical about racial ideologies in the school. However, the risk of his positioning in terms of his academic standing was high and put him under the eye of the teacher, who as I discuss in what follows, had his own racial struggles.

Literacy and race in the classroom: Contesting literacies and racial frames in 5-1. In the classroom literacy and race were related, likewise in the school setting, in ways in which literacies support the construction or contestation of racial frames. However, unlike in the

general school setting, in the classroom these ways had complex manifestations due to tensions related to informants' racial identities and positioning in *Surgir*. For helping the reader to follow the narrative about the classroom, Table 6 introduces the focal teacher in 5-1, and eight of the 16 black students in the classroom, their self-declared racial identity, and their role.

Table 9

Informants' Chart: Classroom

Name	Role in the classroom	Racial identity
Juan Francisco Carabalí Quiñónez	Teacher	Black
Alexa Lucía Venté Rodríguez	Female Student	Black
Gustavo Adolfo Pérez Mesa	Male Student	Black
Harvey Mendoza Benítez	Male Student	Black
James Edward Mora Rojas	Male Student	Black
Johana María Valencia Ceballos	Female Student	Black
José Antonio Valencia Ceballos	Male Student	Black
Leidi Garcés Betancur	Female Student	Black
Yeison Daniel Delgado Díaz	Male Student	Black

The tensions related to racial dynamics and their impact in the classroom linked to two situations. First, the 5-1 focal teacher is a black male teacher who moved between implementing the school's curriculum (with its institutional view of race) through instruction, and contesting it. Second, black students' contestation in the classroom was not only towards the curriculum's racialized literacies, but also towards the black teacher who delivered them. To that extent, the relationship between literacy and race in the classroom was more changing and varied in the classroom. In what follows I illustrate these changes and variations in how literacies and race related in the classroom space for operationalizing and contesting the school racial frames. First, I describe the literacy practices in the classroom.

Stories, copying, and dictation: The literacies in 5-1. In general, the classroom's literacies related to two practices: Introduction of the day (capital **I** to differentiate this practice

from the noun introduction), and instruction of the fields. These two practices relate to the structuring the school, and implementing the curriculum literacy practices that occurred in the general school setting (See Appendix C for details on classroom practices, events, and texts). The Introduction of the day was a practice of about 45 minutes in the morning (7-7:45am) in which the teacher talked with the students about goals for the day or the week, agenda for the day, the week or the month, institutional decisions, school events, and students' achievement. The instruction of the fields was the practice of direct instruction on culture, humanities, and sciences, which are the three content areas defined by the school in the curriculum.

The classroom literacy practices in the Introduction alternated between oral and written forms depending on the more or less institutional character of the event. Thus, written texts were predominant when the teacher communicated school institutional information, and texts that are mixed with oral discourse and drawings occurred when the teacher was preaching/scolding the children. For conveying institutional information and decisions, written notes in the board that students had to copy on their notebooks were common, as well as letters handed to the students. Students' expected participation in this practice was to copy the message on their notebooks, sign documents, show the letters to their parents, and show parents' signature for proving they read the document. These institutional written texts were also used for sanctioning students or parents for not engaging in the *Surgir*'s code for behavior and responsibilities. On repeated occasions, black students refused to sign or to turn in the document signed by their parents (Fieldnotes, 05.06.14, p. 1; Fieldnotes, 06.25.14, p. 2).

In regards to the preaching/scolding event if the Introduction, literacies were more oral and included drawings. Children were expected to participate with reflections and ideas. For instance, a missing dog note was taken by one of the students and Juan decided to discuss it, and

to put it on the wall of the classroom. Juan talked with the students about how children had to take care of their pets and some children shared stories about their pets, and how sad they would get if their pets were lost (Fieldnotes, 05.06.14, p. 1). Juan asked the students to write the phone number in the note and to remember the face of the dog in case they see it in the streets. In this event of the Introduction, the missing dog note triggered a value/moral teaching sequence that required the students also to write a phone number in their notebooks. Usually, in this event students were welcomed to participate with ideas and opinions that led to a reflection about life, good behavior, and reconciliation. The following excerpt illustrates a sequence in which Juan guided a discussion based on an oral story:

7:45am Introducción: Juan le dice a los estudiantes algo que pasó la noche anterior. Lo paró un hombre en moto y Juan pensó que lo iba a robar. La sorpresa fue que el hombre había sido su estudiante cuando Juan trabajaba con jóvenes difíciles y el hombre sólo quería saludarlo y agradecerle.

Juan: O sea que uno debe querer mejorar. Cuando las mamás dan esa retahíla es por algo... porque aquí ustedes están en riesgo... A ver, esta es una lectura de la vida.

¿Cuándo ustedes roban a sus padres?

Voces: ¡Nosotros no robamos a nuestros papás!

Yeison Daniel: Ellos dicen que no porque creen que robar es sólo para cosas materiales.

Juan le pide a Yeison Daniel que comparta la idea con todo el salón.

Juan: Cuando llego al salón y empiezo a jugar, a no hacer las tareas, a desobedecer, ahí estoy robando a mi madre. Robo el tiempo... Así que van a escribir una cosa con la que van a ser obedientes en una hoja de papel.

7:45am Introduction: Juan tells the students something that happened the night before.

Juan was stopped by a guy on a motorbike, and Juan thought the guy was going to rob him. His surprise was that that the guy had been a student when Juan worked with difficult teenagers, and the guy just wanted to say hi and thanks.

Juan: So one must want to improve. When moms say that speech is for something... because here you are in risk... Hey, this is a reading of life. When do you rob your parents?

Voices: We don't steal from our parents!

Yeison Daniel: They say they don't because they think stealing is just for material things.

Juan asks Yeison Daniel to share his idea with the entire class.

Juan: When I arrive to the classroom and start playing, not doing homework, disobeying, there I am robbing my mother. I am robbing the time... So, you are going to write one thing about which you are going to be obedient from now on on a piece of paper (Fieldnotes, 05.07.14, p. 2).

In this excerpt Juan tells a story, talks about “reading life”, and asks the students to write something they will commit to in the future. The event includes oral forms (telling and listening to a story), and written forms of literacy (writing to commit to something). Black students participated more and were on task during this preaching/scolding event, which included topics such as community situations, family issues, good and bad behavior, and dreams for the future. Although texts in this event were varied compared to those in the institutional events of the Introduction, what was expected for the children to do with texts was punctual and verbatim. Children were asked to answer questions, to write a word, a sentence, or a number.

In regards to the literacy practices related to instruction, although their use changed with the fields (sciences, humanities, and culture), in general the definition of literacies remained the same throughout the fields. The events in which literacies were used in the three fields gravitated around assigning classroom work and assigning homework. The texts used in these events included the book that was part of the 5th grades project “*Los goles de Juancho*” [Juancho’s goals], sporadic worksheets, and the official textbooks. The literacy activities in these events did change from field to field. In the sciences field, literacy activities included summarizing verbatim information into tables, written instructions on the board, writing the correct answer on the notebook, and math group games (Juan asked children to solve math equations in their heads as fast as possible). In the humanities field, literacy activities included identifying grammar categories, reading aloud, silently, and whole class, dictation, copying paragraphs from the book, writing vocabulary items, explaining orthography rules, reading stories, and writing paragraphs. Finally, in the cultural field, literacy activities included copying paragraphs by mixing letters with drawings, making billboards, reading stories, and writing sentences.

What did not change throughout the fields is that the definition of literacies in the classroom entailed a mechanical view towards it. The teacher promoted the view of *lecto-escritura* (read-writing) with the students. During the interview, Juan stated that reading and writing are “*Identificar y leer correctamente las letras*” [Identifying and writing letters correctly] (Juan, Interview, 06.25.14, p. 26). Thus, literacy-entailing activities in the classroom were verbatim, mechanical, focused on the grammatical parts, and students were not asked to compose texts beyond copying entire paragraphs from the texts. Sometimes in the homework Juan did ask the students to write a story, but most of them did not do that homework because, as Gustavo said: “*Profesor, usted no nos enseñó cómo escribir historias, así que yo no hice la tarea*”

[Teacher, you did not teach us how to write stories, so I did not do the homework] (Fieldnotes, 07.29.14, p. 4).

Children participated more actively in the literacy activities in the cultural field, precisely the space in which texts had letters and drawings, and in which reading and writing were not orders to follow but activities for a certain school project: taking care of a plant, doing masks, sewing costumes. The literacy activities for instruction in the sciences and the humanities fields, asked children to follow orders (copy something in their notebooks, look for the meaning of words in the dictionary, read silently a chapter of Juancho's goals), to find verbatim information about something (fill in the blank, find grammar elements in a paragraph), and to write *planas* (the name for writing letters or sentences several times in rows while keeping correct calligraphy).

Juan's pattern of instruction had this sequence: briefly explaining something, asking children to do an exercise about it, children not understanding it, Juan checking on comprehension, children saying they did not understand, Juan saying he already explained it, and children saying they understand so that the teacher changed to another subject. This pattern repeated constantly during instruction. At first, this pattern seemed as just bad instruction. However, with the racial dynamics in the school, in the classroom, and the interviews with Juan and children, this pattern could not be explained only as bad instruction. Although it is true that Juan's instruction could improve in regards to content delivery, classroom management, and disciplining students, all these aspects cannot be seen alone to criticize his teaching. Juan's instruction must be understood as interacting with racial dynamics. In what follows, I present the literacy and race tensions that occurred in the classroom in regards to the bigger institutional space of the school.

“Nosotros vivimos cada día como personas negras y el resto habla es de etnicidad” [We live everyday as black people and the rest talk about ethnicity]: A Black teacher teaching in an ideologically mestizo school. When I met Juan for the possibility of doing my observations in one of the fifth grade classrooms, he immediately told me about the black students in his class. That same day, after observing his classroom for about 10 minutes at the end of the school day, Juan told me about he visiting all the towns in the Pacific Coast of Colombia to explore his roots and history because *“Yo quería pensar sobre yo quién soy”* [I wanted to think about who I am] (Fieldnotes, 04.21.14, p. 6). In that conversation, as well as in the conversation we had in the first interview with Juan, he self-identified as black Colombian. In that first interview Juan told me the story of his life, marked by difficulties, experiences of discrimination, and economic struggles. Two things from that interview deserve to be highlighted here. First, Juan told me his life as a story. Second, Juan related his life experiences to his decisions to become a teacher. For instance, when talking about how he decided to study chemistry and becoming a teacher, Juan told me the story of a teacher who discriminated against him for being black.

Había un profesor en bachillerato que era temido. Yo perdí un examen con él. No entendía química y él una vez me dijo “Usted nunca va a aprender, usted no es bueno para eso, usted es bueno para bailar”. Me dijo eso, así no más. Me acuerdo que cuando estaba en la universidad en mi primer examen de química saqué 5 y le llevé el examen a mostrárselo... Y eso me hizo querer ser maestro, pensar que puedo estudiar y enseñar química para ser un buen profesor.

[There was a high school chemistry teacher who was feared. I failed an exam with him. I did not understand chemistry, and he once told me “You are never going to learn, you are not good for this, you are good for dancing”. He told me that, just like that. I remember

when I was in college, on my first chemistry exam, I got a 5, and I took the exam to show it to him... And that made me want to become a teacher, to think that I can study and teach chemistry for being a good teacher] (Juan, Interview, 05.07.14, p. 8-9).

In this excerpt Juan talks about how this teacher back in school implied Juan's skills were not for intellectual activities, but for dancing, which is the biologization of a cultural feature attributed to black people. Juan's life story is full with situations of discrimination towards him, like the story of how he was discriminated when applying to a job and the social worker told Juan and the other indigenous applicant who have passed all the required tests (plus some they applied only to Juan and the other applicant), to not continue in the process because "*No vamos a contratar a ninguno de los dos*" [We are not going to hire neither of you] (Juan, Interview, 05.07.14, p. 20). Juan's life story was then not only full with situations of discrimination, but it was also full with struggles for contesting racial frames. Going back to the school and showing his Chemistry teacher the exam with the highest grade was a way to contest the cultural frame that black people are good just for dancing. Likewise, Juan was also contesting the racial frames in the school.

As I kept observing the classroom, the school, the teachers, and talking and interviewing Juan, I noticed he did not attend the ethnic teachers' meetings for planning the EW. When I asked him about why he did not attend one of the meetings in which the ethnic teachers were planning the activities, Juan said "*No, yo tengo otras formas de protestar. Tengo que planear con mis estudiantes cosas para el proyecto ecológico*" [No, I have other ways to protest. I have to plan with my students things for the ecological project] (Fieldnotes, 04.29.14, p. 4). Juan had a group of students of different grades with whom he developed school projects, and the one he was working on during the 2014 academic year was on Ecology. This project intended to take

the students to think about ways to improve the appearance of their neighborhoods with local actions for trash management, and practices like picking after people's dogs. When I asked what he meant with "other ways to protest", Juan said "*Pues de hacer las cosas, de no quedarme en la misma cosa*" [Well, of doing things, of not staying in the same thing] (Fieldnotes, 04.29.14, p. 4), and he told me he had to go.

During the preparation and implementation of the EW, Juan's instruction focused on the concepts of race, ethnicity, ethnic groups, the Pacific region, and the department of Nariño, that was assigned to cycle 2 (fourth and fifth grades). The following excerpt shows Juan dictating assignments for the students' activities during the EW.

8:15am Ciencias

Juan: 5-1 para la semana étnica tenemos que hacer el mapa de Nariño. Para eso tenemos que hacer el siguiente trabajo. Equipo 1, ustedes indagan las montañas.

Mientras explica Juan usa el tablero para escribir lo que cada equipo tiene que hacer.

Los niños sacan sus cuadernos para escribir la tarea.

Juan: Equipo 2, hidrografía de Nariño. Equipo 3, indagar el mapa político de Nariño.

Miren que yo no estoy usando la palabra investigación, sino la palabra indagar porque investigación implica algo más cuidadoso y largo. Equipo 4 y 4ª, etnias.

Niño: ¿Qué es etnicidad?

Juan: ¿Qué es etnicidad?

Johana: El tipo de raza.

Juan: El color de piel es muy importante. Pero aquí la etnia es definida como lo cultural, como cómo nos sentimos con un grupo.

Juan sigue escribiendo en el tablero la tarea:

Equipo 5: Economía, Equipo 6: Costumbres gastronómicas, Equipo 7: Bailes, trajes.

Juan: Miren lo que dije. ¡Ustedes se supone que deben estar copiando y no veo eso!

[8:15am Sciences

Juan: 5-1 for this EW we have to do *Nariño's* map. For that, we have to do the following work. Team 1, you inquire the mountains.

While explaining this, Juan uses the board to write what each team has to work on.

Children take out their notebooks to write the assignment.

Juan: Team 2, hydrography of *Nariño*. Team 3, inquire about the political map of *Nariño*.

Look I am not using the word research, but the word inquire because research entails something more careful and long. Team 4 and 4a, ethnicities

Boy: What is ethnicity?

Juan: What is ethnicity?

Johana: The type of race

Juan: The skin color is very important. But here ethnicity is defined as the cultural, as how we feel with a group.

Juan continues writing on the board the different assignments:

Team 5: Economics, Team 6: Gastronomic customs, Team 7: Dances, costumes

Juan: Look at what I just said. You were supposed to be copying and I don't see that!]

(Fieldnotes, 05.06.14, p. 2-3).

In the sequence shown in this excerpt alphabetic literacy is used to promote the *mestizaje* racial frame (fragmentation of groups through cultural stereotyping categories) in a written assignment. What is interesting about this excerpt is that at the same time, Juan subtly replies to this frame. Note that Juan says “we have to”, which means not only that he has to work with the

students, but also that it is a decision they are obliged to do. Juan warns the students that the type of search they have to do is not an in-depth inquiry, but a general search of information, to decrease importance to whatever information they found in terms of being “real” or “truth”. Juan does not answer the question asked by a student about “what is ethnicity”. On the contrary, Juan presents the question to the class so that one of the students answers it. Johana, a black student, answers that ethnicity is the type of race. To respond to Johana, Juan clarifies that skin color is important, and he implies that although “here” (in the school) ethnicity is what counts. Juan’s answer shows that he somehow wants to highlight the skin color, although the school talks about ethnicity, and not about skin. When I showed Juan this excerpt and asked him what he meant with his answer to Johana, he said that “*Es que nosotros somos negros, así es como vivimos cada día y la gente habla es de etnicidad*” [It is that we are black, that is how we live every day and people talk about ethnicity, which is something different] (Fieldnotes, 05.20.14, p. 4). When I asked him which people, Juan responded “*La mayoría*” [The majority].

Juan’s direct contestation of the racial frames occurred mainly during the Introduction practice, in the preaching events, and usually, black students in the classroom participated in these events. During those events he contested the racial frames that circulated in the school. For instance, Juan used a weekly magazine called “*Revista Semana*” to talk about forced displacement in students’ neighborhoods, conflicts in *Aguablanca*, and hard situations; thus questioning the cultural and the naturalization frames. He invited the students to read the magazine and left it on the shelves so that students consult it (Fieldnotes, 05.06.14, p. 1; Fieldnotes, 06.04.14, p. 2). When I asked Juan in the interview to tell me more about the use of the magazine in the classroom, he said: “What I am looking for with the students is that they critique, that they visualize themselves towards what happens around them and that they have

identity” (Juan, Interview, 06.25.14, p. 24). This use of a magazine not only contrasts with Juan’s definition of reading (identifying and writing letters correctly), but it also shows the use of literacies for contesting racial frames.

Juan used alternative literacy practices for contesting racial frames. Juan told me about and shared with me two books he is writing although he has not shared them with the school. One book does not have a title and the other’s is “Surviving in the *Retiro* neighborhood”. Although he does not master the formal rules for alphabetic literacy, he tells two different stories in which black people are highlighted. In the one with no title, a futuristic story in the XXXth century, black people are represented in different occupations in fields such as physics, chemistry, engineering, and medicine. One of the characters had just finished a PhD in nuclear physics.

The contestation that occurred in the Introduction practice was uncommon in the teaching fields practice. When teaching the fields, Juan just followed the curriculum with instruction that ended up being confusing for the students in regards to content and assignments. During the Introduction Juan not only contested the frames, but he also used varied texts that included anecdotes, oral stories, social services (missing pets), and the magazine, to incorporate them in the topics of the preaching/scolding events. On the contrary, when teaching the fields, Juan followed the curriculum and he used predominantly official alphabetic literacies and activities like dictation, copying, and *planas*. When I asked Juan the reason for teaching students about life and situations in the Introduction part, he explained that that is what they will need to survive and deal with situations, and he added: “*Había un artículo en El País sobre que la gente negra no es contratada para trabajos incluso cuando están calificados*” [There was an article in *El País* (a city newspaper) about black people not being hired in jobs even when they are qualified”

(Juan, Interview, 09.03.14, p. 24). Then, I asked Juan if he had tried to address this in the school and he said it was difficult because *Surgir* is a mestizo school, which means that “*todos somos mezclados*” [We all are mixed] (Juan, Interview, 09.03.14, p. 19).

When I asked Juan about his instruction being different in the two practices he replied that “*En la Introducción tengo tiempo para hacer las cosas diferentes, pero en los campos tengo que enseñar lo que tengo que enseñar*” [In the Introduction I have time to do things differently, but in the fields I have to teach what I have to teach] (Juan, Interview, 09.03.14, p. 20). I kept asking to inquire the extent to which he related this proceeding with racial struggle but he seemed to cut the conversation each time. Juan did not openly talk about racial dynamics in the school, but in his own personal life. In fact, when he told me about his experience with the job application I mentioned before, I immediately asked him if he had felt discriminated against in *Surgir*. Juan looked at the floor and after a noticeable pause, he said “*No, aquí no*” [No, not here] (Juan, Interview, 05.07.14, p. 21). That same day I discovered the black teacher that the elementary coordinator was looking for the other day referring to him as “*betún*” (black shoe polish), was Juan, whom when asked about names for referring to black people said “*Es mejor referirse a las personas por sus nombres porque eso les da identidad e incrementa el autoestima*” [It is better to refer to people by their names, because that give people identity and increases their self-esteem] (Fieldnotes, 06.25.14, p. 28).

Juan’s position as a black male teacher led him to take the Introduction part of the day with varied alternative literacies to struggle the racial frames in the school. At the same time, his position as teacher in *Surgir* limits him for openly stating the racial dynamics in the school and the official literacies with which they were implemented. Thus, how Juan positioned in the classroom as a teacher was impacted for his racial identity in the school, and he ended up

struggling between what he had to teach, racism, and black people in *Aguablanca*'s harsh reality. Thus, Juan's teaching is not just incoherent. Juan's teaching is also the result of how he deals with racial dynamics in the school for himself as a black teacher, and for the black students in his classroom, of how he struggles with how blackness is being erased from the school, and how the problems of black people living in the city are not accounted for. Or as a character of one of the two books Juan is writing replies when asked why he does not go to the school: "*Usted no ha entendido, aquí es una historia diferente. No es lo que uno quiera sino lo que ciertas personas digan*" [You have not understood, here it is a different story. It is not what one wants, but what certain persons say] (Juan, Interview, 09.03.14, p. 24).

“¿Y cómo vamos a escribir de algo que no sabemos? [And how are we going to write about something we don't know?]: Black students contesting racial frames and official literacies. In the classroom black students resisted the literacy events in which texts were used to promote the predominant racial ideology in the school. In relation to the two practices in the classroom (the Introduction and instruction of the fields), black students participated and were attentive during the preaching/scolding events of the Introduction, and rejected or contested the literacy events that promoted racial frames in the instructional practice, precisely the events in which Juan followed the curriculum and his instruction was not effective. The result of this formula were sequences in which children were not attentive, meandering the classroom, not disciplined, talking among them, off task, and not learning content.

Children rejected the frames in different ways that are important to describe since their actions in the classrooms illuminate their learning in the school. Questioning the classroom activities was one way in which children demonstrated their rejection towards the official

literacies and the racial frames. The following excerpt shows how, during the EW, children rejected writing concepts related to the *mestizaje* racial frame of the school and the curriculum.

8am Clase antes de las actividades de la semana étnica

Juan: Sabemos que sólo hay una raza ¿y es cuál?

Niños: Humana.

Gustavo, James, Johana y Leidi empiezan a hablar entre ellos y dejan de prestar atención.

Juan: La raza humana. Todos somos de la raza humana. Así que hoy vamos a estudiar la región Pacífica. ¿Qué departamentos forman la cuenca del Pacífico?

Estudiante mestiza: Valle, Cauca, Nariño y Chocó.

Juan: ¡Muy bien! Hoy vamos a pasear por esos departamentos. Saquen su cuadernillo cultural y van a hacer un mapa conceptual de lo que ven. O sea que van a escribir un resumen. Al final, vamos a tener un debate... Un mapa conceptual por departamento.

Apunten: ¿Cuáles son las etnias?

Harvey: Profesor, ¿qué es eso?

Juan no responde la pregunta de Harvey. Harvey agacha la cabeza y mira abajo su cuaderno. Entonces mira al tablero.

Harvey: ¿Y cómo vamos a escribir de algo que no sabemos?

Gustavo: ¡Sí, profesor! ¿Cómo vamos a escribir de algo que no sabemos?

Juan: Segunda pregunta, ¿Cuál son sus comidas típicas? Tercera pregunta, ¿Cuáles son sus fiestas representativas?, Cuarto, ¿Qué grupo étnico prevalece?, Quinto, ¿Cuál es la ciudad capital?

José: No profesor, nosotros no vamos a hacer eso.

Juan: Voy a calificar escritura, ortografía, caligrafía. Esta nota va para el campo cultural. ¿Alguna pregunta?

Los niños no preguntan. Sus caras lucen enojadas. Le pregunto a José por qué dijo que no va a hacer lo que el profesor pidió.

José: Porque no me gusta eso. Esas son cosas bobas. Las cosas no son así.

[8am Class before EW activities

Juan: We know there is only one race which is what?

Children: Human.

Gustavo, James, Johana, José, and Leidi, start talking among them and stop paying attention.

Juan: The human race. We all are from the human race. So, today we are going to study the Pacific region. Which departments form the Pacific's basin?

Female *mestizo* student: Valle, Cauca, Nariño y Chocó

Juan: Very good! Today we are going to travel those departments. Take out your cultural notebook and you are going to do a conceptual map of what you see. So, you are going to write a summary. At the end, we are going to have a debate... One conceptual map per department. Jot down: what are the ethnicities?

Harvey: Teacher, what is that?

Juan does not answer Harvey's question. Harvey frowns his head and looks down at his notebook. Then he looks at the board.

Harvey: And how are we going to write about something we don't know?

Gustavo: Yes, teacher! how are we going to write about something we don't know?

Juan: Second question, what are its typical foods? Third question, what are its representative fairs? Fourth, what ethnic group prevails? Fifth, what is its capital city?

José: No, teacher, we are not going to do that.

Juan: I am going to grade writing, orthography, calligraphy. This grade goes for the cultural field. Any question?

Children don't ask. But their faces look upset. I ask José why he said he is not going to do what the teacher required.

José: Because I don't like that. Those are stupid things. Things are not like that.

(Fieldnotes, 05.28.14, p. 1).

In this excerpt Juan starts saying there is only one race as it is stated in the *mestizaje* racial frame. Children respond Juan's question but black children stop paying attention. A female mestizo student in the classroom responds to Juan's verbatim question. Then Juan explains what they are going to do in the day as they participate in the activities of the EW. Juan confuses conceptual map with summary and his instruction about what students have to do is not clear. Then, when Juan starts to explain the categories children have to work with in the EW's activities, and Harvey asks: "What is that?", Juan does not respond and Harvey seems disappointed. The categories Juan is using are the ones defined by the ethnic teachers for Cycle 2: ethnicities, food, fair, main ethnic group, and main city. Harvey insists and asks again, but this time Harvey questions the entire assignment by asking how to write about what they do not know. Other black students follow on Harvey's complain and Juan continues dictating the assignment and reminding the students it will have a grade. Children do not respond when Juan asks if there are questions. I asked José why he said he will not do the assignment and his answer is: "because things are not like that".

Black students were not rejecting the activity *per se*, they were rejecting the ideological part of the activity in that it related to the school racial frames in which blackness was constructed as rural and static. It is not they did not want to do the activity because they did participate in the Introduction part, and in the English class. Black students rejected the activities in which racial frames were predominant and the official literacies were serving those frames. Precisely, in the English class they participated by showing a different type of engagement in the activity: they consulted the dictionary, asked me how to say things in English, worked independently, wrote sentences on their notebooks, and talk about how they have learned the language (Fieldnotes, 06.04.14, p. 2). Thus, students also showed their rejection towards the racial frames of the school by participating and being on task on activities that reaffirmed their identities as black students in the city, and that countered the idea that blackness is just rural. In general, black children in the classroom liked the English class and they participated in it. Children said they liked English because they like music in English like Johana who said “*A mí me gusta inglés porque así puedo cantar en inglés*” [I like English because that way I can sing in English] (Fieldnotes, 07.29.14, p. 3). By participating in the English class, they replied to the cultural frame in the school in which cultures are static, and black people in the cities are not addressed.

Children also showed rejection towards the racial frames by showing their identities within the classroom in actions of resistance. For instance, one day José used a lotion called *Sulfaplata* that is prohibited, but that is part of his mother’s knowledge on healing wounds. At the same time, he engaged with me in a conversation about why he used the lotion and did not pay attention to the class. José told me he did not like the book Juancho’s goals because they are talking about a boy who is *mestizo*, travels all around the country, and he precisely questioned

that a black boy would not be able of doing that because “*A la gente negra no nos quieren en todo lado*” [Black people are not liked everywhere] (Fieldnotes, 09.10.14, p. 3). Basically, since the story does not represent his situation, José disengages from the class, from the activity, from the book, and instruction, while taking out and putting on the prohibited lotion his mother gave to him. This non-participation is an intended action that questions the *mestizaje* and the liberal frames and their impact on the curriculum: there are mixing in the country however, black people does not live under the same conditions. In this regard, black children also showed their situation in the classroom by publically stating their status to remember their identities. While silently reading a chapter of Juancho’s Goals that talked about the main character meeting a boy who was displaced, Johana says loudly to the class: “*¡Nosotros somos desplazados!*” [We are displaced!] (Fieldnotes, 09.02.14, p. 4). Since Juan does not follow on what Johana says, I go to her because she looks upset. When I ask her to tell me about it, she says it is not important. Johana responds to the minimization racial frame that negates forced displacement and shows black people’s living conditions as if they chose to live like that. Johana started by affirming she is displaced, and a discussion could have been developed to address the situation, but Juan did not follow on what she said. I also asked Juan later on why he did not follow on what Johana said and his answer was: “*No me acuerdo de eso. De pronto mañana lo menciono en la Introducción*” [I don’t remember that. Maybe tomorrow I’ll talk about it in the Intro] (Fieldnotes, 09.02.14, p. 5). When I asked him why in the Introduction, he said “*Porque en la clase ya tengo que enseñar y estoy atrasado porque los otros quintos ya van ene l capítulo 10*” [Because in the teaching part I have to teach and I am behind because the other fifth grade teachers are already in chapter 10] (Fieldnotes, 09.02.14, p. 5). Thus, black children’s perception of Juan during the teaching events is that he acted like a *mestizo* person because he was “*Enseñando como si no*

fuera negro” [Teaching as if he was not black] (Fieldnotes, 06.17.14, p. 3) said Leidi, or as James said, “*El profesor Carabali es muy raro porque cambia en el día*” [Teacher Carabali is very weird because he changes throughout the day] (Fieldnotes, 07.30.14, p. 3). Black children knew that how Juan positioned himself as a teacher in the Introduction was different to how he did it when teaching content.

With this analysis of how literacy and race related in the classroom, it is easier to frame Yeison Daniel’s action of giving me the note with the lists of singers he liked (in English) in the middle of the Spanish language class. However, his actions of contestation in the classroom further illustrate how his views on literacies and their link to identity and learning impact his schooling process everyday. Next, I describe Yeison Daniel’s practices of contestation in the classroom, the tensions this created with the teacher, and the extent to which this jeopardized his permanence in the school.

***“This is the list of artists I like”*: Yeison Daniel’s contestation in the classroom.** In the classroom Yeison Daniel contested the racial frames and the literacies they used by participating and following the activities in the Introduction, and by contesting and refusing to do tasks in the instructional events. This contestation in the instructional events was marked by his particular view on literacy linked to identity, and learning. In what follows I illustrate and discuss Yeison Daniel’s complex practices of contestation in the classroom.

Usually, in the Introduction event, Yeison Daniel participated openly to contribute to the class and his participation was not limited to the teacher’s request to do so. Yeison Daniel participated in this event with opinions and requests that contrasts his participation in the other instructional events. It is not a surprise that he participated in the Introduction since that event was the moment in which Juan contested racial ideologies too. Yeison Daniel even asked the

teacher to continue with the activities in the Introduction event and one day for instance he told Juan “*Profesor, usted también estaba contando una historia de que usted se cayó ¡y no la terminó! ¿Nos puede contar la historia?*” [Teacher, you were also telling a story that you fell and you didn’t finish it! Can you tell us the story?] (Fieldnotes, 05.21.14, p. 2). As a characteristic of this event, Juan used oral stories along with alphabetic literacies to contest racial frames. Yeison Daniel asking the teacher to continue with the stories was not only because the event grouped identity, literacies and learning, but also a way to ask Juan to continue contesting the racial ideologies that circulated in the school because when I asked the boy why he requested the continuation of the story, he said that to “*Para seguir hablando y aprendiendo de nosotros*” [To continue talking and learning about us] (Fieldnotes, 05.21.14, p. 3).

During instructional events, Yeison Daniel’s participation on the contrary was significantly different and changing. He did not participate at all in activities that involved copying and dictation. He preferred coloring or remaining seated without doing the task (Fieldnotes, 06.17.14). Usually, these activities were predominant in humanities for language arts and Spanish, and sometimes were present in the scientific field for social studies. This non-participation hindered Yeison Daniel’s academic standing in the school because the teacher evaluated him negatively in regards to not doing homework or classroom activities. His non-participation was a practice that took Yeison Daniel towards marginalization since the teacher’s report for the third period stated that he “*Puede hacerlo, pero no quiere luchar*” [Can do it, but he just does not want to strive] (Juan, Interview, 09.23.14, p. 1).

On the contrary, Yeison Daniel did participate in the English part of the Humanities’ field. During English he is on task, and he also contributes to the class to correct Juan when for instance, he confused the personal pronoun **he** with **the**, because in Spanish, the personal

pronoun *el* (he) is the same word as the masculine article *el* (the) (Fieldnotes, 06.03.14, p. 1-2). However, regardless of Yeison Daniel's participation in English, Juan's assessment of Yeison Daniel was negative. Juan disregarded Yeison Daniel's knowledge and his participation in the English class saying that "*Él tiene que se excelente y participar en todos los campos, no sólo en inglés*" [He has to be excellent and participate in all the fields, not just in English] (Juan, Interview, 06.04.14, p. 30). When I asked Juan about Yeison Daniel's interest and knowledge in English for capturing his learning with his like for the language, the teacher said that "*No sé, él no copia, no produce lo que la escuela pide y yo tengo que evaluar con eso*" [I don't know, he does not copy, he does not produce what the school requires and I have to assess with that] (Juan, Interview, 10.02.14, p. 16).

During Math instruction Yeison Daniel solved equations individually, but he did not participate in the whole class discussion for reviewing the result of calculations (Fieldnotes, 09.02.14). The other moment when Yeison Daniel participated was when activities did not stereotype groups. This was less frequent because the book *Juancho's goals* (textbook for structuring instruction in the three fifth grades) stereotyped its characters, but sometimes Juan used readings from the textbooks that talked about groups differently. For instance, when they were reading about Vikings and Scandinavian countries using another textbook, Yeison Daniel said to Juan and to the class "Profe, ¿qué tal que pudiéramos viajar allá y saber cómo ellos viven allá?!" [Teacher, what if we could travel there and know how they live there?!] (Fieldnotes, 06.03.14, p. 4).

Based on Yeison Daniel's complex participation that precisely depends on how he interprets events as promoting racial ideologies and/or suitable for struggling in regards to literacies, his oppositional patterns of participation were interpreted by Juan as unwillingness to

do the work (Juan, Interview, 10.02.14, p. 16). There were sequences in which Yeison Daniel did not participate due to his positioning, like when Juan talked publically about students as having dyslexia. And then in the same sequence, participating to counter the racial ideology and its literacies by answering correctly and whole class Juan's request to spell the word "rain" in English (Fieldnotes, 09.03.14, p. 2-3).

What is important about Yeison Daniel's participation patterns created for his contestation practices, is that Juan's interpretation of them is that they are inconsistent. For Juan, Yeison Daniel's unwillingness and obstinacy to sometimes participate, and not doing it some others is what explains his behavior in the classroom and in the school. Juan's interpretation is supported by the fact that during recess Yeison Daniel plays soccer, basketball, and gymnastics, but he does not want to move at all for dancing the traditional dances from the Pacific Coast in the physical education class (Fieldnotes, 05.22.14, p. 3).

Thus for Juan, Yeison Daniel is whimsical because the teacher does not interpret his patterns as rejection of racial frames and its literacies. On the contrary, for Yeison Daniel, choosing carefully where and when to participate is an important daily racial identity negotiation that risks his standing in the school. This constant battle in the classroom causes Yeison Daniel to collapse emotionally and to run away from certain activities and situations. In the following excerpt from the Humanities' field, Yeison Daniel is overwhelmed with having to do something that goes against his racial identities and literacies.

Juan le pide a los niños hacer una plana en sus cuadernos. Yeison Daniel está terminando la actividad que hicieron antes del recreo y escucho a Juan regañándolo.

Después me acerco al escritorio de Yeison Daniel y él está llorando.

Beatriz: ¿Por qué estás terminando esto?

Yeison Daniel: ¿No ve que el profesor dice que yo nunca termino nada? ¡Eso no es cierto!

Beatriz: Si pero si terminás eso vas a seguir atrasado todo el día. ¿Por qué no terminás esto en la casa y ahora trabajás en lo que él está pidiendo ya?

Yeison Daniel: ¡No quiero hacer esto! Esto no es lo que yo soy (lágrimas corren por sus mejillas).

Beatriz: Yo sé.

Yeison Daniel se queda en el escritorio mirando la pared y llorando.

Juan asks all children to do a *plana* (writing the same sentence over and over following the space pattern) in their notebooks. Yeison Daniel is finishing the activity they did before recess and I hear Juan scolding him. After that, I go to Yeison Daniel's desk and he is crying.

Beatriz: Why are you finishing this?

Yeison Daniel: Don't you see the teacher says I never finish something? That is not true!

Beatriz: Yeah but if you finish that you will continue behind the entire day. Why don't you finish that at home and right now do what he is asking.

Yeison Daniel: I don't want to do this! That's not who I am (the tears run down on his face)

Beatriz: I know

Yeison Daniel is on his desk, looking at the wall, and crying] (Fieldnotes, 07.29.14, p. 7).

This excerpt illustrates the emotional weight Yeison Daniel deals with every day in the classroom. He has a strong racial identity tied to literacy, and the classroom content not only does not follow on that, but it also negates students' realities and racial identities. In *Aguablanca*

hyper-masculinity is a strong identity marker of young black males and Yeison Daniel crying in the classroom shows the emotional stress he experienced by the constant contesting. The result is Juan calling Yaneth (the aunt) to go to the school to talk with the elementary coordinator about Yeison Daniel's not working and misbehaving.

Juan also has his own battles in regards to race. What is interesting is that Yeison Daniel is aware of that, and he would like to see the teacher acting differently, more solidary, like in the Introduction event when Juan tells stories and Yeison Daniel asks for more. This creates tensions between Juan and Yeison Daniel that started to explode in the fourth academic period, which was decisive for Juan to decide on promoting Yeison Daniel to sixth grade.

Beatriz: ¿Qué pasó el viernes en el colegio?

Yeison Daniel: Primero que todo, yo estaba haciendo lo que el profesor pidió. Así que lo que yo digo es que si él hubiera explicado primero, eso no hubiera pasado. Pero él esperó que todos lo hicieran para decir que estaba mal. Y yo le dije que hubiera podido decir eso antes.

Beatriz: ¿Creés que Juan sabía que todos lo estaban haciendo mal?

Yeison Daniel: Pues no, él no sabía porque no estaba en el salón. Si él hubiera dicho "tiene que ser así, así, así y así". Tenía que haber una explicación, como un ejemplo.

Beatriz: ¿Juan no explicó?

Yeison Daniel: No, dijo que resolviéramos la tabla y se fue del salón. Así que cuando volvió le dijo a todos que lo estaban haciendo mal y yo iba apenas en el número ciento algo. Y ya casi iba a ser medio día y todos se estaban yendo. Y me dijo "así no es" y entonces él estaba borrando mi tabla y le dije "¿por qué me borra mi tabla?" y me dijo "para que la haga otra vez". Y le dije "no lo voy a volver a hacer. Nadie le dijo que me

borrara mi tabla". Y me dio la hoja otra vez y la puse dentro de mi escritorio y me estaba yendo y él no me quería dejar ir. Y le dije "por favor, deme permiso" porque él no me dejaba pasar. "Por favor, deme permiso". Y como él no me dejaba pasar por la puerta, yo usé la ventana.

Beatriz: Cuando Juan pide hacer las cosas intenté hacerlas. ¡Vos sabés cómo hacerlas!

Yeison Daniel: Es que a mí sí me gusta leer y escribir, no me gusta como él lo enseña.

Porque todo es copia y copia, dictado y dictado. ¡No me gusta eso!... Porque es repetir cosas que no tienen que ver conmigo. Y también, yo espero más de Juan.

Beatriz: ¿Qué querés decir?

Yeison Daniel: Que él es negro y enseña como si no lo fuera.

Beatriz: ¿Cómo así?

Yeison Daniel: Él debería estar haciendo cosas distintas... Como mostrando cómo somos nosotros.

[Beatriz: What happened on Friday in the school?

Yeison Daniel: First of all, I was doing the work the teacher asked. So, what I say is that had he explained first, that wouldn't had happened. But he waited so that everybody had done it to say it was wrong. So, I told him that he could have said it before.

Beatriz: Do you think Juan knew you all were doing it wrong?

Yeison Daniel: Well, no, he didn't know because he was not in the classroom. If he had said "it has to be like this, this, and this". There had to be like an explanation, like an example.

Beatriz: Didn't Juan give an explanation?

Yeison Daniel: No, he just said solve the table and he left the classroom. So, when he came back he told everybody was doing it wrong and I was just in number hundred something. So, it was going to be noon and all were leaving. And he told me “it’s not like that” and then he was erasing my table and I told him “why are you erasing my table?” and he told me “so that you do it again”. And I told him “I’m not doing it again. Nobody told you to delete my table”. And he gave me the sheet again and I put it inside my desk and I was leaving and he would not let me go. And I told him “please, give me permission” because he didn’t want me to pass through. “Please give me permission”. So, since he didn’t allow me to leave through the door, I used the window.

Beatriz: When Juan asks to do things try to do them. You know how to do them!

Yeison Daniel: It’s just that I do like reading and writing, I don’t like how he teaches it. Because it’s all copy and copy, dictation and dictation. I don’t like that!... Because that is repeating things that don’t relate to me. And also, I expect more from Juan.

Beatriz: What do you mean?

Yeison Daniel: That he is black and he teaches as if he isn’t.

Beatriz: How so?

Yeison Daniel: He should be doing different things... Like showing who we are]

(Fieldnotes, 09.30.14, p. 3-5).

When I talked with Juan about that incident, he said that “*Yeison Daniel es muy inteligente pero él no quiere trabajar. Estudiantes como Yeison Daniel pueden cambiar las dinámicas de este país*” [Yeison Daniel is very smart but he doesn’t want to do the work. Students like Yeison Daniel can change this country’s dynamics] (Juan, Interview, 10.02.14, p. 17). Yeison Daniel wishes Juan’s racial identity impacted his instruction and at the same time,

Juan wishes Yeison Daniel to excel and become an excellent student. It is evident that they both expect much from each other in regards to changing racial dynamics: Juan expects for Yeison Daniel's intelligence to be used to show that black people are smart, and Yeison Daniel expects for Juan's positioning to be used to teach the students how to foster black identities. Thus, Yeison Daniel's case illustrates the difficulties of negotiating and struggling a black identity in the classroom, precisely because it is a space in which actors understand struggles in different ways according to their positioning. In addition, Yeison Daniel's case with his constant battle and negotiation allow for an analysis of the relationship between participation and practices of resistance in the classroom.

Yeison Daniel's contestation in the classroom articulated his vision of literacies as tied to identities and learning, to degrees of participation, and to investment in learning in the classroom. The day Yeison Daniel gave me the note with the list of singers he liked, in the middle of a language activity that focused on copying, he was not only contesting to the *mestizaje* and cultural frames, and their weight in the curriculum. Yeison Daniel was also showing his view on literacy.

This action of showing his literacies in the middle of the instructional event to contest racialized content was a common practice for Yeison Daniel. Sometimes he did it by participating in whole class, and sometimes he did it while talking with me or with his classmates. One of Yeison Daniel's preferred ways to contest was by publically asking Juan things that suggested a different way of doing things. Like when he asked "*¿En el cuaderno de inglés?*" [In the English notebook?] after Juan instructed the drawing of a map that showed *Juancho's goals'* character trajectory of traveling in Colombia in the sciences field (Fieldnotes, 05.21.14, p. 4). Particularly with his insistence in English, Yeison Daniel contested the cultural

racial frame that promotes fixed and rural views of black people. In other occasions his contestation was done by talking about his reality as black-living-in-the-city during generic “race-neutral” instruction. In the following excerpt during math, Yeison Daniel starts talking about prices of food in the classroom during a math exercise.

Los niños están trabajando en sumas, restas, división y multiplicación. Yeison Daniel está sentado en el puesto mirando las ecuaciones.

Beatriz: ¿Cómo vas?

Yeison Daniel: Pues, no estoy haciendo el ejercicio.

Cuando le pregunto por qué, me cuenta sobre un incremento en el precio de la comida.

Yeison Daniel: Pues, creo que el incremento fue de 400 pesos porque mi abuela dijo que todo subió este fin de semana (precios)... Sí. Antes ella se gastaba 70.000 pesos en mercado y ahora se gastó 80.000 pesos. Y ella nos pidió que seamos más considerados y tenemos que racionar la comida para la gente en la casa para que todos comamos... Así que yo estaba pensando calcular la cantidad de comida de acuerdo con las personas en la casa, y lo que debemos gastar cada día para que la comida dure todo el mes.

Beatriz: ¡Muy bien! ¡A tu abuela le va a encantar eso!

No le pude decir que trabajara en las ecuaciones que había en el tablero porque él estaba resolviendo una ecuación más compleja y real en su cabeza.

[Children are working on addition, subtraction, division, and multiplication. Yeison Daniel is seated on his desk looking at the equations.

Beatriz: How are you doing?

Yeison Daniel: Well, I am not doing the exercise.

When I ask him why, he tells me about an increase in food prices.

Yeison Daniel: Well, I think that the increase was 400 pesos (per product) because my grandma said that everything went up this weekend (the prices)... Yeah. Before she spent 70.000 in grocery shopping and now she spent 80.000 pesos. So she asked us to be more considered and we have to ration the food for the people at home, so that we all eat... So, I was thinking about estimating the amounts of food, according to the people, that we should spend every day so that the food lasts for the month.

Beatriz: That is great! Your grandma will love that!

I could not tell him to work on the equations on the board just because he was solving a more complex and real equation on his head] (Fieldnotes, 06.10.14, p. 3).

In this excerpt, Yeison Daniel was not doing what Juan requested, but he was doing math to solve a real equation from his home setting and to then write a budget for his family. By doing this, Yeison Daniel was contesting the “neutrality” of the school content and the liberal racial frame in which we all are equal, which challenges the exercise Juan asked about adding and subtracting apples in an unreal way. What is important about this excerpt is that in contesting the racial frames, Yeison Daniel’s view on literacy as tied to identity and learning, surfaced as a way to connect with the class while questioning the content. Yeison Daniel’s view of literacy surfaced usually during instructional events for showing connection with the educational activity occurring at the moment, while questioning the content of what was being taught.

Yeison Daniel had a strong opinion about the content being taught. He criticized copying and dictation as activities that were not interesting. The important thing about this is that Yeison Daniel appealed to his view on literacy to assume a critical stance. Yeison Daniel compared the activities he does on his personal notebook with the activities they do in the classroom to state that the latter do not help them “to be black students in the city” (Fieldnotes, 09.02.14, p. 3).

Yeison Daniel does not only contest and question racial frames in classroom, he also shows his identity, which is what helps him to contest and question in the first place. The important thing about this practice is that Yeison Daniel gets tired of doing it, of constantly battling content and at some points, he just disconnects from the class in a non-participation pattern by saying “*Quiero poner la mente en blanco y escuchar música*” [I want to have my mind going blank and to listen music] (Fieldnotes, 09.10.14, p. 2). This pattern is seen as unwillingness to learn and it ultimately impacts negatively Yeison Daniel’s standing in the school as Juan complains that Yeison Daniel does nothing (Fieldnotes, 09.10.14, p. 2); and it also impacts Yeison Daniel’s views of education as Yeison Daniel started the fourth academic period saying “*Estaba pensando en retirarme del colegio*” [I was thinking about dropping out of school] (Fieldnotes, 09.30.14, p. 5).

Summarizing, Yeison Daniel’s participation in the classroom depends on the extent to which he understands the event’s possibilities for contesting racial frames, and for struggling identities of black mobility. For both contesting and struggling, Yeison Daniel negotiates his investment based on his view of literacy. Even though Yeison Daniel’s patterns of participation and non-participation due to his contesting of racial frames are complex and interesting, what the teacher sees is that he is capricious. Nevertheless, the teacher wants for Yeison Daniel to excel because Juan acknowledges that he is smart, but that is not what Yeison Daniel wants to fight for in regards to racial frames.

Yeison Daniel does not want to just show his intelligence, which would question only one racial frame (cultural); he shows also his identity and how it relates to literacies and to ways of learning. In other words, Yeison Daniel’s questioning of racial frames is tied to his view of literacy that determines his ways of participating in the classroom and of constructing identities

of struggle and resistance. The conflict with Yeison Daniel's contestation in the classroom is that it jeopardized his schooling and put him under a "conditional registration" situation for moving on to sixth grade. Conditional registration means that he could move to sixth grade, but at the first discipline and/or misconduct action, he would be expelled from the school.

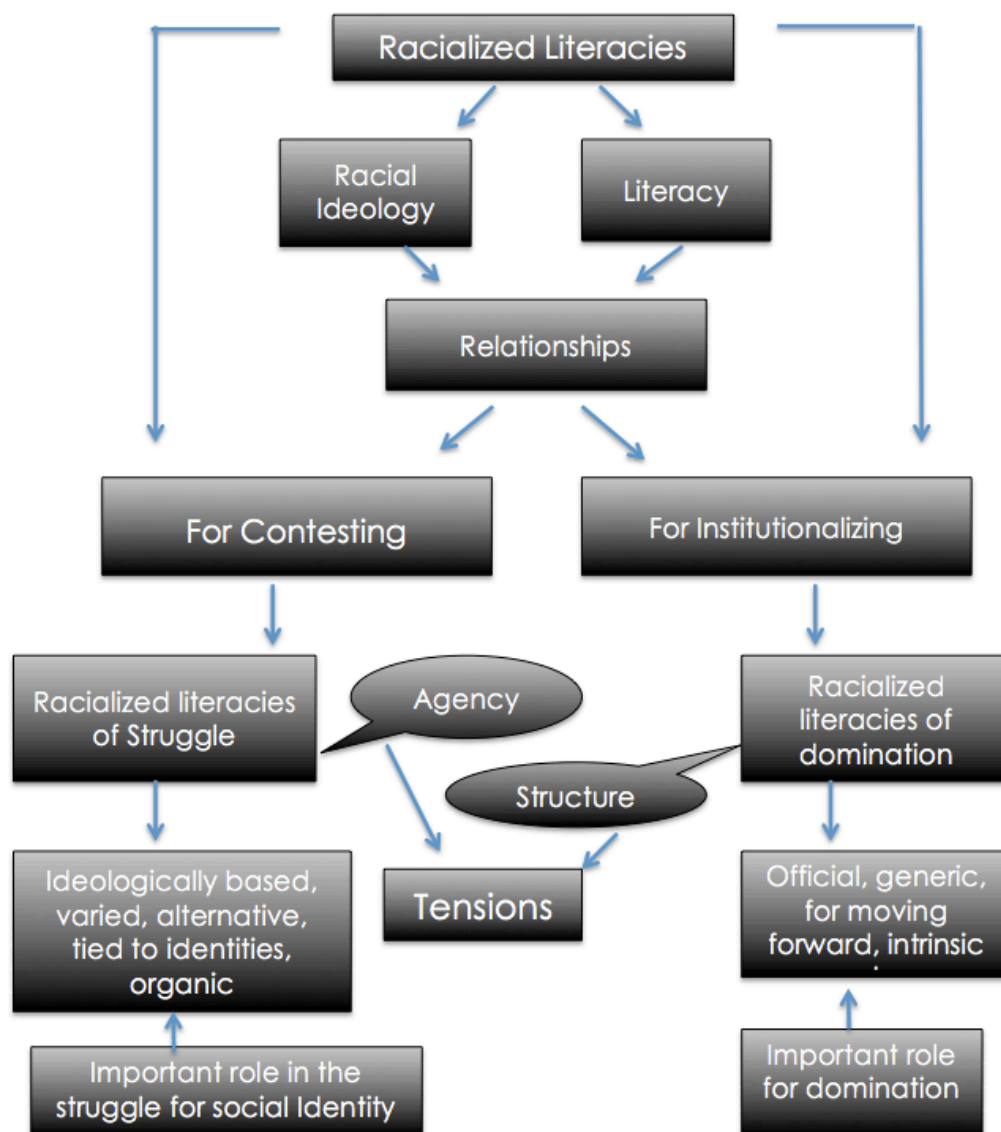
Chapter Five

Racialized Literacies of Domination and Racialized Literacies of Struggle

In this chapter I relate the narrative I presented in the previous chapter with the literature review and the theoretical frame. Based on the two questions I posed in this study, I discuss the implications and conceptualizations that understanding the intersections of literacy and racial ideologies offer for accounting for Yeison Daniel's participation in light of the narrative in chapter four. I also present limitations, implications, and recommendations for future research. Finally, I reflect on my personal journey with this research project and on how it helped me to understand the role of a critical perspective towards literacy and race. For helping the reader understand the structure I discuss in this chapter, Diagram 1 shows the sets of relationships for literacy and race I intend to establish in this chapter.

Diagram 1 proposes to understand racialized literacies based on the relationship between racial ideology and literacy. Literacy practices change depending on the type of relationship established with race. When literacy and race relate in an institutionalizing manner, literacies represent structural views of texts as generic, for all individuals to move forward, official, and with an intrinsic value. I call Racialized Literacies of Domination (RLD) to these practices that represent an important role for racial domination in the school. When literacy and race relate in a contestation manner, literacies represent agency, and texts are configured as alternative, ideologically based, organic, varied, and tied to identities. I call Racialized Literacies of Struggle (RLS) to these practices that correspond with a role of fostering racial struggles over a social identity. I discuss in detail RLD and RLS in the discussion of the second question.

Diagram 1

Racialized Literacies**Question 1: Impact of Yeison Daniel's Views on Literacy and Race for Schooling**

In response to this question, in Chapter 4 I described how Yeison Daniel's views on literacy as tied to identities and ways of learning, impacted his participation and investment in school and classroom activities. This in turn, affected Yeison Daniel's academic standing in the

school to the point in which he was in the eye of the teacher and the coordinator due to discipline issues. For better understanding Yeison Daniel's views on literacy and race, I also analyzed his practices in the home setting. For the school setting, I used the analysis of his participation and opinions on the Ethnic Week's activities. For the classroom, I analyzed this space's racial dynamics between the teacher and the students, Yeison Daniel's participation in different events, and classroom informants' racial positioning. In what follows I discuss how Yeison Daniel's views on literacy and race impacted his schooling, based on the relationships between literacy and race in the settings.

Literacy and race for Yeison Daniel. For Yeison Daniel literacy and race are connected because they are inextricably linked to each other for creating and developing a black identity of struggle. Yeison Daniel embraces literacy as a tool not only for the everyday struggle as it occurs in the home setting, but also for the consolidation of a black social identity related to living-in-the-city. In addition, his view on literacy (tied to identity and ways of learning) reflects RLS characterized by creativity, mastering the coexistence of systems of representation in a text, and variety of formats. Yeison Daniel's views of literacy are rooted in the practices in the home setting, and then further used in the school for fighting racial domination.

For Yeison Daniel, literacy is tied to his black identity, how he conveys it through style, and to ways of constructing and learning those ways of conveying style. For him, literacy forms a unit with racial identity and learning. This view of literacy-identity helps to further advance the definition of RLS as ideological, organic, and tied to identity. Furthermore, Yeison Daniel's literacy practices help to illustrate the characteristics of RLS in regards not only diverse forms, but also to alternative non-conventional ways of learning them.

Yeison Daniel's literacies are characterized by the mix of drawings, letters, and pictures. These semiotic systems can exist in the text alone, or mixed, depending on the event in which the text is inscribed. The texts Yeison Daniel reads and designs have varied forms such as audiovisual, oral texts, still images, and written texts. These literacies also have different media or platforms like social networks (Facebook, Instagram, Youtube), his personal journal, walls on his room, and his body with the clothes he uses. Kirkland and Jackson (2009) define these practices as tied to black masculine identities. For Yeison Daniel, learning how to use and design these texts is related to his racial identity. In other words, his view of literacies includes the idea on learning as tied to blackness. This learning does not mean learning how to use Facebook, Youtube, or a journal, but learning how to use these media for fostering black identities. Thus, learning for Yeison Daniel means learning how to create, promote, and read racial identities through literacy practices.

When framed as a social practice, literacy uses varied systems of representation (Gee, 2001; Pahl, 2004). Alim, Baugh, and Bucholtz (2011), Duncan-Andrade (2009), and Morrell (2002) have documented ways of teaching and learning them. What Yeison Daniel's sophisticated view of literacies show, is that teaching and learning literacies extend the boundaries of texts *per se*, to account for racial struggles. That is, for Yeison Daniel, the role of literacies and the ways of learning how to use them for fostering his black identity is not only a pedagogical matter, but also, a political one. These literacies are transformative (Freire & Macedo, 1987) because they relate to Yeison Daniel's interest of using them for contesting racial frames, and for liberating him from racial oppression.

In the case of Yeison Daniel, these RLS have a strong foundation in the home setting's practices. For him, the home space is the space for securing his literacies, and for practicing them

without penalty, precisely because this is the space in which literacies are used for showing a black identity related to living-in-the-city. Therefore, Yeison Daniel's views on literacy and race are solidified in the home setting through the family literacy practices, and through his own preferences. Yeison Daniel's racial socialization (Bonilla-Silva, 2015) starts in the home setting and it is more evident in the school due to the contestation character of his behavior. Compton-Lilly (2011) and Taylor and Dorsey-Gaines (1998), have discussed the important role that family literacies represent for black children. However, conceptualizing the home setting as foundational for black students practices of resistance in the school is new.

For Yeison Daniel the possibility of practicing RLS is directly linked to how that practice reverts on his identity and learning. His investment by participating through literacies in a certain space is determined by how he gauges that participation will revert on his identity and learning. This strong relationship between identity and investment explains people's engagement with educational projects (Norton, 2001). However, in the case of Yeison Daniel, literacy and learning represent two more aspects added to identity for determining his investment, thus making it more complex. These literacies are strongly linked to racial identity (negotiating and struggling for the acknowledgment of blackness-in-the-city), and to learning (fostering ways for building on that identity).

For Yeison Daniel, literacies-identity is that site of struggle between how others might see him for being black (rural and with a romanticized view of black people's practices), and how he wants to be seen (black-living-in-the-city). Yeison Daniel's case contributes to characterize the complex ways in which identity, as a site of struggle between the individual and society (Norton, 2000), relates to literacies, therefore further describing them as essential in forming subjectivity. McKay and Wong (1996) describe students' use of literacies to reject

classroom practices that denied their identities. However, Yeison Daniel's case advances this by showing that literacies are not just used, but incorporated and appropriated along with racial identity in an organic way. Kitching (2013) reflects on the role of body for studying literacy and race. RLS advance the role of the body by making evident the multiple ways in which that organic character creates literacy practices that construct not just the black physical body, but also its subjective representation. In other words, RLS open possibilities for further incorporating and analyzing black bodies' positioning and the enactment of a black identity of struggle. Furthermore, RLS contribute to reflect on how generations of black people born and living in cities whose contact with their families' towns of origins is less frequent, integrate differently the system of places (Barbary, 2004), and the subjective representation of places and bodies in terms of social identities of struggle.

Participation patterns as contestation patterns. Yeison Daniel's view of literacy impacted his participation in the school, therefore, his academic standing. This is so not only because non-participation practices are negatively seen by his teacher as unwillingness to participate, but also because his participation practices for contesting were seen as reprehensible. It is in Yeison Daniel's complex participation patterns, and his negotiation of structure and agency that opportunities to further theorize domination and resistance are evidenced.

Yeison Daniel's participation in the school and the classroom depended upon how he saw events as opportunities for building on his view of literacy. Thus, his patterns moved between non-participation and peripheral legitimate participation (Lave & Wenger, 1991) depending on the events' racial ideology weight. Yeison Daniel's non-participation consisted of sitting at his desk and not doing assignments requested by the teacher, not doing homework, and the more extreme, escaping from events. His non-participation, since it was interpreted as capricious by

the teacher, moved Yeison Daniel away from full participation. On the contrary, his peripheral legitimate participation included asking the teacher for more stories and contributing with ideas to the whole class. Nevertheless, this legitimate participation in the Introduction event, which was not constructed as “instructional”, but as moral teaching, did not influence his academic standing positively because it did not have the same importance for determining academic achievement.

Importantly, there is one more practice of participation that is interesting to document, also because for Yeison Daniel, that was a common one. Participation for racial contestation is a dual practice that he performed frequently in the school. This participation is dual because the school interpreted as reprehensible, thus marginalizing him. At the same time, contestation is a practice of legitimate peripheral participation because for Yeison Daniel it entailed full participation in the tangible black community living-in-the-city, and the imagined community of blacks-in-the-city he accessed through social networks. These tangible and imagined communities (Anderson, 1991; Kanno, 2003) generate the sense of affiliation and belonging Yeison Daniel appealed to for contesting. In fact, his non-participation patterns are also actions of contesting. And due to his strong affiliation with the communities that built on this view of literacies, affiliation with the school community (as the institutional space) was non-existent. Hence, his contestation actions in the school consolidated his participation in communities that struggled for the vindication of black-identities-in-the-city. Yeison Daniel’s participation patterns were problematic for the schools’ personnel since they interpreted those as unwillingness and willfulness, and that put Yeison Daniel in the eye of the teacher and the elementary coordinator for possibly not being promoted to sixth grade.

Analyzing these patterns of participation as patterns of contestation related to literacy and race allows for characterizing instances of racial domination and resistance. How Yeison Daniel experienced racial socialization in the home setting differed from how the school understood his racial socialization through the curriculum. Thus, identifying patterns of contestation in the school setting help to weigh and to carefully look at movements between structure and agency that explain students' complex oppositional investments with learning and with the schooling process. In addition, these patterns shed light for understanding the impact that schools' racial socialization has for black students' educational participation and academic achievement. In the case of Yeison Daniel, having Felipa telling him to do homework and to do assignments in the classroom because he has to finish high school was not negotiable. In fact, doing homework and assignments for Yeison Daniel was inconsistent with his racial identity defined by a sense of struggle, his views of literacy as alternative, and with how he experienced and socialized race in the home setting.

Yeison Daniel's case: The constant contestation fatigue. Yeison Daniel is a black 13 year-old male student whose parents have died and someone who lives with his grandmother. He is a black young male living in the mostly black populated east fringe of the city, in the *Aguablanca* district. In this district, there is correlation between poverty, young black males (11-30), and high residential concentration of black people that relates to dynamics of hyper-masculinity, territorialism, and violence (Urrea-Giraldo, 2012). Yeison Daniel's case helps to further characterize the role of RLS for understanding his practices of contestation in the school.

Nested in the home setting, Yeison Daniel's view of literacy is characterized by texts as related to identity and learning. This view of literacy determines his participation as contestation, which in the school setting, is interpreted as non-participation. The tensions created by Yeison

Daniel's constant contestation for validating himself caused him to escape from events, to cry in the classroom and at home, and to emotionally collapse at the end of the school year. This constant validation has been explained as the racial battle fatigue (Martin, 2015), which is defined as the psychological and sometimes physical impact on health and wellbeing people of color experience for having to validate themselves constantly in a dominant racialized social structure (p. xv).

Due to Yeison Daniel's strong sense of black identity (related to RLS), the racial battle is constant, and he does not give it up. He does not give up even for feeling relaxed by not having to battle, nor for obeying his grandmother, or for showing that black people are smart and thus participate from the mainstream *mestizo* ideology. He does not give up because that would entail to whiten his soul. Basically, Yeison Daniel battling is based on his refusal to negotiate and to re-socialize his home racial identity in the school's *mestizo* ideology. This shows the indirect character of racial socialization in the school setting, which is precisely executed through the curricula and its racial ideology, in the everyday school's relationships. This study shows the different ways (school and classroom) in which a young black male navigates his racial identity while contesting the school's racial socialization.

In the case of Yeison Daniel, the racial battle fatigue interplays with the anxiety for not having enough money for covering basic needs such as buying food and paying the water bill in a city that reaches 95 Fahrenheit degrees sometimes of the year. This level of stress is something most of the black people live with in *Aguablanca* that in turn impacts their health (Mosquera, 2015). Felipa's high blood pressure is not a genetic black race disease as the physician told her. The high prevalence of high blood pressure and diabetes in black people in Colombia is the

result of social problems (not genetic) this population faces due to discrimination and racism (Lucumí, 2014).

Now, since *Aguablanca* is a district whose population is mostly black, this correlation of poverty and high residential concentration in the zone is not coincidental, as neither are hyper-masculinity, territorialism, and violence. The racial battle fatigue and the related-to-being-black unsatisfied basic needs, help to further characterize these dynamics in *Aguablanca*. For Yeison Daniel, RLS are how he copes with fatigue and anxiety. It is not capriciousness that Yeison Daniel listens to music in the classroom (with headphones) and said he wanted to have his mind blank while doing it. This further contributes to the characterization of RLS as organic, because practicing them is a way to preserve one's health while avoiding fatigue, the racial battle fatigue. Next, I discuss how literacy and race collide in the school setting.

Question 2: Relationships Between Literacy and Racial Ideologies in the School and in the Classroom

In response to this question, in Chapter 4 I described in this order, the literacy practices, the *mestizaje* racial frame's operation in the ethnic curriculum, how this frame used the official school view towards literacy for its institutionalization, and how it was contested with varied literacies. In the school setting, I used an analysis of the ethnic week to explain how literacy and the racial ideology intersected in its planning and implementation. In the classroom, I analyzed the teacher's racial positioning, instructional practices, and students' contestation. This following part reflects then on the relationships between literacy and race in the school and in Yeison Daniel's classroom.

Literacy and racial ideology in *Surgir*. As shown in Chapter 4, literacy and racial ideology are connected in the school through an instrumental relationship. Literacy serves as tool

for the institutionalization or contestation of racial ideologies in the school. Institutionalization and contestation represent the poles in the continuum for using texts in *Surgir*. In what follows I explain and discuss how RLD and RLS function in the school.

Racialized Literacies of Domination. When literacy and race relate for institutionalizing the *mestizaje* racial frame and the racial ideology –as it happened in the school for the Ethnic Week or in the classroom for instructional events–, literacy practices have particular characteristics in which racial domination is its foundation.

The *mestizaje* racial frame in the school represents ideas of a *mestizo* national identity that highlights mestizaje as diversity, yet dismisses the acknowledgment of blackness and indigenusness. The lack of addressing blackness and indigenusness is concealed under the idea of ethnicities as cultural characteristics of groups. Thus, in the *mestizaje* racial ideology, race is singularized as the human race, and what marks differences, are ethnicities. In this frame, and because it uses ethnicities as a way for categorizing groups, cultures are seen as static groups in far rural towns, in which exchanges, migration, and mobility are not included because those processes challenge a static view of cultures (Wade, 2013). Since the *mestizaje* racial frame denies races and privileges ethnicities, it ends up racializing ethnicity since the term *ethnicity* is used to refer to racial groups, and because the cultural criteria employed for ethnicity is more complex for characterizing groups (it entails practices) than the physical criteria (it entails phenotypic traits). The *mestizaje* racial frame is characterized then by practices of domination of one group over others like stereotyping, fragmenting, and dividing.

RLD are mainly alphabetic-based, they are considered neutral, independent from the social context, they use pre-established strict formats, they represent a tool for moving upward in the social ladder, and they are official. These literacies are seen as generic because they are used

as if they were naturally default, although they institutionalize a racial frame that along with four others form the school's racial ideology. RLD intend to perpetuate relations of domination from the *mestizo* dominant group towards black and indigenous groups.

These characteristics of the RLD correspond with what Street (1984, 2004, 2009) calls the autonomous view of literacy that precisely entails the view that literacy is not particularly tied to any ideological perspective, and that therefore is presented as neutral. This view of literacy has been identified as promoted mainly within school settings, as institutions that define what is literacy, what counts as literacy, and what is the official literacy relevant for being taught (Zavala, Niño-Murcia, & Ames, 2004). Although not entirely alphabetical, the RLD in *Surgir* share most of the characteristics of what Street (1984, 2004, 2009) refers to as the autonomous model of literacy practices.

This sharing of characteristics is not a surprise since both the autonomous perspective of literacy, and the racial ideology in *Surgir* are shown as neutral, as generic, as default, and as desirable. Both the autonomous view of literacy and the predominant racial ideology, create the illusion that they represent positive results for the school due to their intrinsic value. The illusion is a characteristic of domination that Freire (2000) refers to as “myths”, which are precisely the statements that oppressors present as the oppressed people's reality, as the naturalized versions of oppression's “reality”. In that same line, the RLD create the illusion that since literacy is neutral (no particular ideology attached to it), its use in the school does not relate to a particular racial ideology. This in turn, extends the illusion to promote the idea that the school's view of literacy is applicable to all the students in the same way –regardless of racial ethnic struggles–, and that everyone should benefit from literacy.

Street (2004) calls attention to the idea that the autonomous model of literacy is in fact ideological. This is so because it carries a deficit view that places literacy as the intellectual extreme of the pole in which orality –as lacking intellectuality– represents the opposite point. Indeed, its strategy is to show itself as non-ideological. In the same way, the racial ideology in the school is presented as neutral in that it privileges the diverse *mestizo* group insinuating it includes everyone. The RLD focus on the *mestizo* group, and they carry with them a *mestizo* national identity of democracy and unity that is presented as important for all Colombian citizens, but is more accurately representative of the *mestizo* ones.

Racialized Literacies of Struggle. When literacy and race relate for contesting the racial frames and the entire racial ideology in the school and in the classroom –as the librarian and Yeison Daniel did– literacy practices have particular characteristics in which struggle is the signature.

Contesting the *mestizaje* racial frame in the school entails questioning the singularity of a *mestizo* national identity by highlighting the existence of a *mestizo* dominant group, as well as the acknowledgement of black and indigenous peoples as dominated groups. For contesting the *mestizaje* racial frame, recognizing blackness and indigenusness by vindicating and calling attention to physical characteristics is essential. The contestation foregrounds the importance of skin color, hair, and facial traits for explaining rejection towards blackness, instead of highlighting ethnicity that focuses on the cultural. A certain individual is not discriminated against when walking on the street just for being a member of any black Colombian group in cultural terms. That person is discriminated against if he/she looks black, in relation to what historically has been constructed as being black by the *mestizo* dominant group: skin color, hair,

and face traits. This confirms that RLS contribute to further characterize the role of the body and its subjective construction through literacy practices.

In addition, the cultural view of ethnicity is one that romanticizes the existence of black people in rural towns and denies the presence of black-people-in-the-city. To that extent, contesting the *mestizaje* racial frame implies establishing the foundation for understanding black people as a social, not a cultural group. In that way, the categorization of black groups based on social characteristics such as living conditions, and access to societal institutions, enables the analysis of racism and discrimination as social problems (Lozano Lerma, 2013), therefore as socially relevant. This analysis contests ideas of fixedness to emphasize exchanges, migration, and mobility. To counter the emphasizing on one generic *mestizo* ethnic approach, the contestation vindicates talking about blackness, vindicates naming it, and vindicates accepting it, to show its presence.

RLS are the literacies used for contesting this frame. These literacies are alternative, ideologically based, mixed, organic, tied to identities of struggle, unofficial, and varied. RLS are alternative and unofficial because they are not acknowledged by the school as valuable or as practices that people realize for contesting the racial frame. These literacies are also ideologically based in that they are openly showed as ideologies of struggle. They are also mixed in that they appeal to the coexistence of different semiotic systems for their construction (illustrations with orality, for instance), and the final result is a text that can include the process for its creation. In that same line, RLS are tied to identities of struggle in that they represent fights over racial vindication, and that makes them organic literacies, that is, as necessary for survival, and as vital for showing who a black person or group is. The RLS are varied in form because they extend the

use of the alphabet, to incorporate also oral forms, illustrations, situations, and digital knowledge.

These characteristics of the RLS not only correspond with an ideological model of literacies (Street, 2009) that precisely acknowledges the value and importance of practices around texts for individuals and groups beyond of the normative school setting, but they also relate to transformative literacies (Freire & Macedo, 1987) because they are literacies aimed at social transformations. Understanding these RLS as carrying a transformative racial weight is essential for visualizing their impact and importance for black people's lives. In the case of the contestation of the school *mestizaje* racial ideology, RLS represent a fundamental role in the struggle for the creation of group social identity, and for the sense of affiliation and belonging.

Although RLS in the school are used for contesting the racial frame, their possibilities (due to their nature as alternative and unofficial) are wide since they are not constrained by limits of forms and systems of representation as RLD are. In addition, RLS's execution demands creativity, mastering of diverse forms, and perspectives. RLS in *Surgir* correspond to practices of contestation that are tied to ways of participating and of constructing the meaning of struggle. Although the school's racial ideology is strong and it permeates the entire curriculum, instances of contestation through RLS allow for understanding how practices around texts create identities of struggle. In other words, RLS in the school are the practices in which to analyze tensions between structure and agency. In the case of *Surgir*, RLS are the reply back to domination, because they take literacies defined as domination, and attempt to deinstitutionalize them so that they represent the struggle. The goal of the RLS is not to access the practices of the dominant *mestizo* group, or to indoctrinate people through them. The goal of the RLS is to question the RLD, to contest them, and to deconstruct them with their alternative, organic, and varied texts.

RLD and RLS: *Surgir* as a site for resisting and reacting to domination. *Surgir* is a school attended by students living in the *Aguablanca* District. The mostly black Colombian population of the district corresponds with migrants and their descendants who came from towns in the Pacific Coast of Colombia and who live in Cali in conditions of poverty (Urrea-Giraldo, 2012). *Surgir*, as the biggest public school in the district serving the *Aguablanca* population is a space in which black students' dynamics of mobility and living conditions are manifest. To that extent, the school represents a space for incorporating systems of places (Barbary, 2004) related to black Colombians' struggles. This incorporation is an important characteristic for understanding how black students are limited and enabled for mediating identity, knowledge, learning, and power in the school. Giroux (2011) proposes to conceptualize schools as spaces in which students negotiate and mediate structure and agency. Particularly, RLD and RLS are practices in which to understand this limitation and enablement in *Surgir*, to conceptualize schools as sites for struggle, conflict, and resistance.

In *Surgir*, literacy is the tool for institutionalizing a racial ideology that deletes blackness, while at the same time it is the tool for mediating and vindicating the understanding of black people as a social group. In the school, literacy is at the core of these dynamics representing a double role of serving racial domination and serving to its contestation. It is precisely in the tensions and relationships between RLD and RLS in which black students' agency and participation in *Surgir*, must be reflected upon. Thus, understanding the relations between literacy and race in the school allows accounting for black youth's constant recycling between structure and agency, and for theorizing their struggles in the educational context. Analyzing racialized literacies foregrounds the collaborative and coercive relations of power that intend to empower or marginalize students' identities. Indeed, this shows that schools are part of a

complex network of social institutions that “control the production, distribution, and legitimation of economic and cultural capital in the dominant society” (Giroux, 1983, p. 62).

In *Surgir* RLD can be seen as representing structure and structural actions, and RLS as representing agency and reactions to structure. These literacies are two different forces that impact each other. However, the weight of RLD in the school is pervasive and overpowering. This is because they support a strong racial ideology that extends beyond the walls of the school since Colombia is a country with complex racial dynamics (Wade, 1995) in which *mestizaje* is valued while blackness and indigenusness are rejected. Thus, in *Surgir*, racialized literacies impact each other, but the weight of institutional racial domination limits the impact of RLS for triggering change. Therefore, understanding the nature of racial domination and resistance in *Surgir* as literacy-based, opens possibilities for questioning the role of literacy in the education of black children, even more when schools are framed as spaces for maintaining and challenging power (Apple, 2004).

Since RLS are so representative of black people’s racial contestation and vindication, it is precisely in the tensions between RLD and RLS that black students’ participation and learning in the school must be further problematized. This is because the tensions between RLD and RLS allow for conceptualizing resistance as a pedagogical practice, and for questioning how relations of power allow or limit students’ racial identities and their negotiations in the classrooms. How students negotiate their beings, interests, and learning within these literacy practices sheds light on a more thorough analysis of racial power relations in the school and their impact in students’ schooling process. RLD and RLS work then as a frame for conceptualizing schools as sites of domination and resistance. In *Surgir*, the case of Yeison Daniel offered insights to reflect on these tensions in detail because he actively used RLS to contest the force of the RLD, although in

the institutional apparatus and ideology, he is powerless for making visible the importance, scope, and value of that contestation.

Racial formations: The education of black children in Cali. The analysis of Yeison Daniel's views on literacy and race, of the school's racial ideology, and of the particularities of the classroom, contribute to further characterize racial formations in these local levels in the city of Cali. The views on race Yeison Daniel fosters in the home setting in relation to his black-living-in-the-city identity, allow for further relating local racial formations with the high concentration of black people in the east conglomerate of the city. The understanding of this urban factor contributes to support the necessity of addressing black people in the city as social groups, and how their identity negotiation configures particular racial formations in the city space.

In regards to the school and the classroom, Yeison Daniel's case shows that racial formations are impacted by how racialized actors interplay with the structural level. In the classroom one important element for the racial formation represented by the black students was the positioning of the black teacher as following or contesting curriculum. Black students formed a racial identity that interplayed and responded to the black teacher's positioning towards curriculum. In the school (except for the library and the librarian), racial formation was more openly determined by direct contestation of a *mestizo* curriculum operated by *mestizo* actors. What is interesting to highlight is Yeison Daniel's ability to interpret the different contexts' racial ideology and to develop racial formations accordingly. This shows that his participation in different racial socialization spaces (home and school) developed his awareness and ability to read instances of racial domination and to respond to them. This finding is important to further characterize the nature of black racial formations and movements in educational settings. Next, I

discuss what Yeison Daniel's case contributes to for reflecting on in the broader national context of education.

Conceptualizing Racialized Literacies: Practices Around Texts in Racialized Social Structures

In summary, Yeison Daniel's sophisticated view of literacy and his contestation patterns shed light on the importance of documenting tensions between structure and agency in the school. In this case, Yeison Daniel's view of literacy that corresponds with RLS, represent students' agency, and RLD represent structural forces. Yeison Daniel's case illustrates the tensions between these literacies and their weight in black students' schooling. Conceptualizing the tensions of racialized literacies in a bigger context based on Yeison Daniel's case is what I discuss next.

Schools as racialized structures: Texts and schooling in Colombia's racial dynamics.

The analysis I presented in this dissertation in regards to what I call the *mestizaje* racial frame and its impact in the curriculum in *Surgir*, have documented the important impact racial ideologies may have for schools' curriculum and their implementation through teaching, learning, and school functioning. I analyzed *Surgir's* racial frames to make evident the predominant racial ideology in that setting. In this case, *Surgir's mestizaje* racial frame and ideology reveal dynamics of racial domination in the school that are grounded in the use of RLD for institutionalizing them.

Although this is the only study that addresses the relationships between literacy and race in regards to the black population in Colombia, Valoyes (2015) also has shown that in regards to teaching mathematics, racial frames permeated teachers' expectations of black students' achievement in another school in *Aguablanca*. Analyzing racial frames and their configurations

towards a racial ideology through literacies uncovers dynamics of racial domination that are subtle and covert in racial democracies (Bonilla-Silva, 2014). In the case of the school setting, it foregrounds the racism students must negotiate with their learning in the school institution (Lewis, 2003), and the texts that are created in the process.

In Colombia racial dynamics have been addressed by Wade (1995) in what can be considered a seminal ethnographic study for conceptualizing racism in the country. Basically, in Colombia two connected ideologies coexist in regards to racial order and national identity. On the one hand, there is the view of *mestizaje* as the unique characteristic of the country in which black, indigenous, and white are mixed to create and celebrate the particular identity of the country. On the other hand, blacks and indigenous are discriminated against. Thus, *mestizaje* is understood as a “morally neutral convergence of three races onto a nonhierarchized middle ground” (p. 19). In this ideology, the singular “neutral” convergence of *mestizaje* aspires to whitening “by envisaging a future in which blackness and indigenusness are not only absorbed, but also erased from the national panorama” (p. 19).

The *mestizaje* racial frame I identified in *Surgir*, corresponds with what Wade (1995) calls *mestizaje* ideology. Although Wade (1995) did not address the school institution, the fact that the *mestizaje* racial frame was identified in *Surgir* calls attention to the necessity to further investigate this and other racial frames, as well as their use of literacies in societal institutions. However, I conceptualize *mestizaje* as one racial frame among others, that together form the racial ideology (Bonilla-Silva, 2015) that uses RLD for its institutionalization. Analyzing racial frames and the ideology in which they are founded is essential for visualizing racial domination beyond isolated acts of ignorance, for characterizing societies as racialized, literacies as racialized, and for addressing racial domination openly.

In the case of the school system, in Colombia “*Etnoeducación*” (ethnic education) establishes the possibility for black and indigenous groups who live in their towns to develop their curriculum centered on their cultural practices, yet within the general characteristics of the national educational policy. Due to migration of black and indigenous peoples to Cali, the local Secretary of Education office has started to encourage public schools in the east fringe of the city to develop ethnic education programs. The problem with this initiative is that, as analyzed in chapter 4, the ethnic view of racial realities is impacted by the *mestizaje* racial frame. This is, the idea of ethnic education is based on the *mestizaje* racial frame in which black and indigenous peoples living in towns are romanticized, stereotyped, and used as a veil for not addressing either black people as social groups, and the existence of black people living-in-the-city.

This banking of ethnicity (based on Freire’s banking system concept) focuses on transmitting and depositing “cultural” knowledge and students archiving. In the case of ethnic education in Cali, the weight of the *mestizaje* racial frame for addressing ethnicity encouraged the school to plan and execute the activities of the Ethnic Week in opposition to the black Colombian week. The problem with this ideology is that when taking cultures’ knowledge under the *mestizo* view and giving it back to the students, the level of cultural fragmentation entailed has negative consequences for black students’ agency and their participation in the school. In addition, if this fragmentation and stereotyping is done through RLD, the impact on this on how black students attribute meaning to official literacies for navigating the school space puts them at risk for school failure.

Recommendations for Future Research: Problematizing Contexts with Critical Theories

The three critical theories I used as theoretical framework caused to the type of analysis, insights, and reflections I have discusses in this dissertation. Problematizing contexts as

accounting for historical, social, economical, and cultural aspects took me to balance the relationships between micro and macro instances of domination and contestation as both forces that impact each other in the school. The idea of questioning naturalized versions of reality made me inquire the “neutral” character of literacies to start thinking on them as racialized, as able to create, maintain, and contest unequal racial structures. Affirming RLS to counter essentialist explanations of black students’ existence and presence in the school highlights the value of knowledge construction as a political and racial effort. I now discuss the possibilities offered by critical pedagogy, critical race theory, and critical literacy for future research.

Under the undeniable racial ideology impacting ethnic education, it is necessary to further inquire how this ideology informs policy, decisions, and practices in other instances of the school institution. And precisely because literacy permeates formal educational processes, the task of relating it to racial ideologies in the school system, and the educational institution is urgent. Documenting ideologies in the educational space is essential to reflect on educational practices, on the organization of the school system, and on the explicit and implicit mechanisms of schooling (Rothstein, 1991). This takes to understand that instruction or didactic strategies themselves as technical or methodological aspects are not the only or the main changes needed to be established (Bartolomé, 2008). Indeed, acknowledging discriminatory ideologies as the foundation of the school institution might take to better pedagogical practices. At the same time, since identifying hegemonic discourses of discrimination is not enough for improving pedagogical models, it is necessary to also visualize new pedagogical possibilities by foregrounding these counter-hegemonic orientations (Bartolomé, 2008), and for triggering change and transformations (Freire, 2002).

Envisioning new liberating pedagogical positions takes to reflect on the importance of teacher education. Teachers' belief systems that replicate the dominant racial order through RLD must be questioned and challenged in teacher programs in Colombia. Working on developing political and ideological clarity as a new level of consciousness with teachers (Bartolomé, 2008; Bartolomé & Balderrama 2001) has shown positive results. In the country, this seems as a possibility because educational institutions are free to implement curricula and develop innovative pedagogies as long as they frame in the general broad educational policy.

In Colombia, the view of literacy as *alfabetización* (alphabetization), which was UNESCO's program to promote literacy in Latin America for teaching reading and writing to adults so that they were able to exert their right to vote and to be considered citizens (Mora, 2012), is still the predominant definition. This represents two problems for black people. First, the problem with this definition is that in Colombia literacy is usually seen as the teaching of the basic skills for coding and decoding letters. That is why *Surgir's* view of literacy corresponds with an autonomous view of it (literacy as just skills) so that students exert their rights (literacy as *alfabetización*). The other problem is that in Colombia blackness and indigenusness are not addressed as the racial base that alone or interacting with poverty for instance, represent the rationale for struggling. On the contrary, class-based struggle and the consolidation of a national *mestizo* identity are not only priorities in policy agendas, but also all of what must be improved.

Precisely, by relating literacy and race, not only the necessity to re-conceptualize literacy in the school system, but also its ideological character, surface as possibilities for reflecting more adequately in the needs of black and indigenous students. Literacy defined as an embedded social and cultural phenomena (Kirkland & Jackson, 2009) that can create, maintain, and contest unequal social structures (Johnson & Rosario-Ramos, 2012), foregrounds the local ideological

characteristics of literacies. And the analysis of racial ideology and literacy extends this conception of literacy to reflect on how it builds racial ideologies and the predominant social racialized structure. Thus, relating literacy and race is not just about understanding literacies as local and using ethnographic approaches (Street, 2004), but also about understanding that in racialized social structures, literacies are racialized too, it is about uncovering the racialized foundation in which dominant conceptions of literacy and their promotion through the school system, are rooted.

Now, the Colombian government's emphasis on *alfabetizar* (becoming literate) black people due to the high levels of illiteracy in this population can be further reflected upon. The idea of *alfabetizar* black people under the predominant view of literacy is problematic for several reasons. First, *alfabetizar* as teaching skills creates the illusion that the government is taking responsibility and doing its job with the black Colombian population. However, teaching skills is not the goal. Instead, it alienates people to reading letters without understanding the context (Freire & Macedo, 1987), and to the related *mestizo* national identity. Second, this idea assumes a unique dominant conception of literacy and does not leave space for different ways of using written language. Third, it does not depart from understanding black Colombians ways of using written language, for instance RLS and their interaction with RLD. Finally, it does not account for the impact that racialized social structures have for black Colombians' attribution of meaning to *alfabetización*, to schooling, and to literacy practices. Thus, the question remaining is then how to improve the education of black students based on the tensions between RLS and RLD.

Improving the education of black children in Colombia: Inescapable reflections.

Based on this research, I want to discuss about what I consider are inescapable reflections for improving the education of black children in Colombia. Yeison Daniel's case shows how

racialized literacies are at the core of racial struggles and tensions. To that extent, I take from his case to start developing accounts of what a racially relevant pedagogy must foreground in regards to racial struggles and RLS.

Yeison Daniel's case highlights the importance of the home setting for oppressed groups under a new light because it points that how black students negotiate their participation and learning in the school is something nested in the home practices. This case vindicates the home setting as a space for "freedom" for groups whose practices and status do not match the mainstream ones. The home setting is the space for building an identity that will help to contest oppression in other settings. This analysis is essential for better accounting for the mismatch home – school (Heath, 1982; Taylor and Dorsey-Gaines, 1988), and for a more nuanced analysis of the mismatch that includes not only documenting fragmentation, but also the home practices as foundational for contesting oppression. Thus conceived, the mismatch home – school is not just a mismatch, but also the struggle against domination and oppression, the tensions between structure and agency, and between different instances of racial socialization.

The possibility of building on identity through contestation, and the important role literacies and learning have in the process, contrasts with the difficulty of doing it in the school, and it foregrounds again the importance of the home setting for building the identities with which black students contest the predominant racial frames in the school setting. Likewise, understanding dynamics in the family setting helps to better characterize the nature of how black students participate and learn in the school. In the same way, analyzing how black students participate in the school in regards to domination and resistance helps to problematize their access to school capital beyond accessing to knowledge and official literacies, but also extending this access to understanding the identity aspects at play. Therefore, documenting contestation as

a dangerous and risky practice that can hinder black students' learning and participation in the school and access to school and symbolic capital, while at the same time it is a necessary practice for identity construction and racial struggle.

Yeison Daniel's case also sheds light for reflecting on how teachers and school's expectations have a dominant racial way of understanding black children's participation in the school, therefore, for better envisioning changes. This case calls attention then to the necessity of understanding struggles as founders of the pedagogical model in which dialogue, generative themes (Freire, 2000), hip hop and relevant instruction and means (Childs, 2014; Hill, 2009; Kynard, 2008; Morrell & Duncan-Andrade, 2002), are essential aspects for better serving black students.

Understanding intersectionality between racial domination and other forms of oppression nuances the analysis of how racialized social structures impact racialized subjects in different institutional levels and in different socio-economic aspects. In Colombia, not all black population lives in poverty, but most of the poor population is black. This underscores the necessity to make evident institutional racism by analyzing in detail how blackness relates to poverty. Due to black adult women being the group most affected by violence and forced displacement (Rodríguez, Alfonso, & Cavelier, 2009), analyzing the intersection of race and gender is an urgent matter because the instances of oppression they face are not only different, but also fundamental for family networks. In addition, studies addressing *mestizos'* racial enactment are needed to further document the structural character of racism in the school (Rogers & Mosley, 2006, 2008), and to then reflect on the role of education for black children.

RLD and RLS call attention to how the dominant definition of literacy is the one promoted in the school system. This action of domination conceals the view of literacy as

literacies, as ideological, organic, and vital. These racialized literacies also call attention to tensions between structure and agency that are fundamental for explaining not only domination in the school, but also black students' learning. In this same line framing school as sites of domination and resistance better captures the nature of the struggles participants face in the school setting. In the case of this research, documenting not only the racial ideologies but also how they are contested and by whom helped to reflect on how participation patterns relate to struggles and resistance.

I consider as extremely important to further identify racial frames and ideologies in the school system, and how they impact the school curriculum. Using critical theories is the philosophical background for enabling the understanding of RLS and RLD as central in the construction and contestation of racist racial ideologies. In this regard, investigating the extent to which the curriculum creates more oppression by institutionalizing racial ideologies through well-intended efforts like the Ethnic Week, is essential for documenting racial micro-aggressions black students face in their everyday participation in the school.

Limitations

Although Yeison Daniel's case is interesting and I learned important knowledge about literacy and race thanks to his case, I am aware that this study could have been stronger if my time in the setting had been for one year, and if my access to participants had been more immediate by living in *Aguablanca*. In this regard, I was realistic as to my life as a graduate student who went for six months to Cali for fieldwork. Family and economic dynamics limited me for staying more time in the field. In regards to accessing participants, I had been away from Cali for the four years I had been in the US for my doctorate program. Living in *Aguablanca*

without having been in the city for four years, was a risky decision for me in terms of my own safety.

Understanding this Journey: Identity, Family, and Research

In having a critical view as my theoretical frame, methodology, and this entire study shows, I want to explain where my interest in this research project departed from. I, as a black Colombian woman have experienced the intersections related to literacy, race, and education in the country. It is precisely my own racial identity and family history where my interest in this research project has departed from.

My father is black Colombian and he was born in a small rural town in the Pacific coast of Colombia called *El Charco*. My grandmother (father side) was a teacher and she taught all her children how to read and write at home. My grandfather studied till fifth grade, yet he built ships and they owned a minimarket store. When my grandfather went to the prestigious *Colegio Javeriano* (a boarding private school) in Pasto (the biggest closest city to *El Charco*) for registering his two oldest children (my father and my uncle) in first grade, the priest/principal (it was, and still is a Catholic school) told my grandpa that his children could not study in that school. When grandpa asked why, the priest/principal said: “your children cannot study here because they are black”. After my grandpa donated some money to the school and paid for the entire academic year of the two boys, the priest/principal accepted their registration in that school. Among one of my father’s childhood stories, he told me that in school, during recess, children used to tell him and my uncle “*gallinazo*”, which is a black scavenger bird. Since my father’s town was more than 12 hours in boat far from the school, he could not travel there on the weekends to see his parents and siblings as the rest of the children in the school used to. So, “I

dedicated myself to study and to practice sports”. My father graduated from that school and then he migrated to Cali to study medicine, and afterwards he studied Urology in Argentina.

My father is trilingual, literate and an Urological surgeon in a country in which illiteracy rate for black children is almost double that for mestizos, and in a country in which blacks are overrepresented in disadvantaged social positions (Rodríguez et al., 2009). Thus, different things from my father’s educational history in regards to identity, literacy, and race started to resonate in my mind. First, the role of the school in changing the odds, in “surpassing the given”, as Lewis puts it (2003). Second, the role of mastering official literacies in increasing life chances, in opening the door for moving up in the social ladder. Third, the construction of racialized bodies in the school and the use of language and literacy for this endeavor. Fourth, my father’s decision of studying in the middle of discrimination, and to learn –and to excel– in mastering the ways of those discriminating him. Fourth, the high emotional cost he suffered in the schooling process in order to “get education”, from registering to everyday school life. Finally, that in the process of getting education, he had to negotiate and to some extent, to give up his roots.

Thus, in the search for reflecting on the intersections of identity, literacy, race and education, intersections with complex manifestations like for instance my father crying every time he tells the story of how he got into *Colegio Javeriano* while rejecting to visit his home town *El Charco* because “nothing happens in that town, going there is a waste of time”; I started to configure my interest in this study. The relationships between literacy, race and education in my father’s case showed that agency to “achieve it in spite of it” (Lewis, 2003, p. 37) must be considered. Thus, mastering RLD plays a role in changing life chances for black people while at the same time it works as obstacle to not move forward.

I decided to investigate the intersections among identity, literacy, race, and schooling in the lives of black Colombian children in the east conglomerate of the city of Cali because the demographic statistics show that my father's story has a particular socio-historical context, and his case is an outlier in the statistical data of how most of the black people live in the city and the country. However, my father's story made me think about the complex oppositional identities created by the tensions of literacy and race. In my father's case, the relationship between mastering official literacies (now I call them RLD) and giving up a black identity to participate in the mainstream *mestizo* group is the foundation for oppositional identities. Now I understand why he cries when telling the story of how he got into that prestigious boarding school and the racism he dealt with, and at the same time he does not want to go back to his hometown, to acknowledge alternative literacies, or to embrace his black identity.

This research has taught me many things about my father, my family, and myself. Somehow, many pieces of a puzzle are fitting and I now understand better the racial and literacy landscape in my city. This research showed me that connection with social issues, informants, and situations, is essential for carrying out a research project. In my case, connection started as something I wanted to understand about my father, about my family, and myself as a black Colombian woman. Then, that connection changed to extend my personal interest to that of the black population as I learned more about their difficult living conditions in Cali and Colombia. Afterwards, when in the field, connection was different in that I saw my black informants as not only numbers in the statistics, but as honorable and valuable people. Finally, during this writing my connection was stronger because I was able to see what I learned about not only my initial interest, but about the problem in itself.

In sum, I learned that my father and Yeison Daniel's stories are both stories of struggle, are both stories of complex oppositional identities. I learned that although I use alphabetic literacies in my daily life, I have to acknowledge the oppression basis in which these literacies are founded. I learned that although I grew up in a privileged position, and that I have accessed an educational degree that is not common for black women in Colombia, I have to question my positioning as researcher in the field each time, even if that means questioning my own position of privilege and comfort.

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Appendix A

IRB Approval

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS AT URBANA-CHAMPAIGN

Office of the Vice Chancellor for Research

Office for the Protection of Research Subjects
528 East Green Street
Suite 203
Champaign, IL 61820



February 25, 2016

Arlette Willis
Department of Curriculum and Instruction
307 Education Bldg
1310 South Sixth Street
Champaign, IL 61820

RE: *Literacies and racial ideology: A Black Colombian young male's learning and participation in an urban school*
IRB Protocol Number: 14565

Dear Dr. Willis:

You have indicated that your continuing project entitled *Literacies and racial ideology: A Black Colombian young male's learning and participation in an urban school*, Institutional Review Board (IRB) protocol number 14565, is undergoing data analysis only and that you are no longer gathering data from human subjects. The University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign IRB has approved, by expedited continuing review, continuation of your project for data analysis only; the approval expires on 02/23/2017. Certification of approval is available upon request.

Because this approval is only for data analysis, you are *not authorized* to involve human subjects in any aspect of the protocol and we have not returned any consent forms related to the project. IRB approval must be obtained to reinstate enrollment of human subjects in this protocol.

The IRB has also reviewed the request for minor modifications. I will officially note for the record that these minor modifications to the original project, as noted in your correspondence received February 18, 2016: changing title from "Aguablanca Afrocolombians' learning trajectories and family, community, and school literacies in Cali-Colombia", to "Literacies and racial ideology: A Black Colombian young male's learning and participation in an urban school"; and updating anticipated enrollment to actual enrollment of 57, have been approved.

If you have any questions about the IRB process, or if you need assistance at any time, please feel free to contact me at the OPRS office, or visit our Web site at <http://oprs.research.illinois.edu>.

Sincerely,

Ron Banks, MS, CIP
Human Subjects Research Coordinator, Office for the Protection of Research Subjects

c: Beatriz Guerrero Arias

Appendix B

Home Literacies

Civil Domain

L for excusing things	Letter
L for informing	Watching the news
L for showing political position	Voting
L for moving around in the city	Bus schedules and routes
L for legalizing identity	Cédula, civil registration, custodian
L for establishing a sue	Tutela

Economic Domain

L for having money for extras	Raffle, making bracelets
L for buying food	Groceries list
LO for budgeting	Math operations
L for having money for the bills	Selling food, showing their music

Family Domain

L for entertaining	Reading stories, books, non-fiction books, telling stories, reading in the library
O instructions for cooking	Stories
L for sacraments	First communion
L for organizing the day	Schedule
L for documenting O	Stories
L for choosing children's names	Almanac
LO as nature's knowledge by experience	Stories
LO telling family stories	Collective stories

Health Domain

L for accessing SISBEN	Filling up forms
LO for learning about health	TV shows, recipes, stories
L for remembering taking pills	Billboard, list, amounts
LO knowledge about diseases (HIV)	Stories
L for reading HIV diagnose	Health record, handout
L for knowing about HIV	Handout
LO for identifying symptoms	Stories
L for asking medical lab test	Forms

Appendix C

School Literacies

Structuring the school (Literacies on the wall, Literacies that travel)

Defining / communicating roles	Plaques
Defining / communicating hierarchies	Plaques
Naming graduates' status	Plaques
Systematizing	Report, forms
Creating and naming space	Tags
Standardizing	Logo, shield, uniform (Co-constructed by students)
Scheduling	Calendar
Doing / cccing instnal. procedures	posters, reports, email
Communicating policy	Letters, memos
Emergency procedures	Tags
Trash / recycling	Tags
PEI & Habitancia (policy)	Public co-constructed document (Online site)
Attendance	Lists
Mission / vision	Poster
General functioning	Online site
Cccing with outside	Online site
Naming the school	Tag
Approving procedures	Signing documents
Entering / leaving school	Memo
Cccing with parents	Agenda
School project	Booklet (Cartilla)
Agreements outside (convenios)	Cartilla
Promoting agreements	Poster
Verifying students' progress	Reports
Staff functions	e-mail, letters, documents, reports, agendas
Budgeting	Bills, estimations, receipts
Scheduling teachers	Schedule
Controlling people	Schedule
Informing No Classes	Note on the fence
Structuring the meetings	Slides on computer
Planning things in the school	Slides on computer
Thinking things for the school	Slides on computer
Cccing policy	Documents
Approving decisions	Signing
Attendance	List

Implementing the Curriculum (Literacies on the wall, Literacies that travel)

Products of school projects (critiquing, expressing opinion, reflecting)	Mural (done by students)
Showing ideology	Billboard (Cartelera)
Cccing with parents	Agenda, letters, list of phone numbers
Planning projects	Agenda, schedule

Appendix D

Classroom Literacies

Introduction

Planning activities

Informing	Writing on the board
Assigning homework	Writing on the board

Agree on goals

Reading at loud to the students	Writing on the board
Writing words and short phrases	Writing on the board
For communicating new rules	Writing on the board
Goals	Writing on the board
Rights	School letters
Sanctions	School memos
For committing through writing	School memos

Preaching / Scolding

Anecdotes	Oral stories
Stories	Oral
Reading life	Oral
Academy + Leadership = Excellence	Oral
Related to study	Oral
Related to experience	Writing a book (Juan)
For public ridicule	Oral, public signing of memos
For moving forward	Oral
Revista Semana	Orally presented
For highlighting the role of education for children's future	Oral
For showing the role of the reconciliation	Oral
Poster on the wall	Oral
For showing how privileged children are	Oral
For showing children they have opportunities	Oral

Institutional information

For formalizing status	Letter, asking for students' signature
For giving permission	Consent
For showing property	Writing one's name
For informing	Notes, memos, writing on the board for students to copy
For showing students' progress	Writing reports
Communicate with others	Notes
Communicating with parents	Agenda

Scientific Field: Teaching sciences

Los goles de Juancho (A story for understanding science)

Reading the book	Silently, at loud, couples
Interpreting the book	Writing a synoptic table

- Explaining a concept Writing on the board exercises
 Whole class discussion of solutions
- Assigning homework (Looking for exact categories: capitals, cities, maps)
 Literal information, Literal questions
 Writing on the board short sentences
 Writing on the board what students must copy
 Writing factual information
 Oral whole class discussing
- Assigning classroom work (Looking for exact categories: capitals, cities, maps)
 Literal information, Literal questions
 Writing on the board short sentences
 Writing on the board what student must copy
 Writing factual information
 Oral whole class discussing
- Topics related to the book Making slides on the computer
 Copying information in slides

The textbook and Worksheets

- Assigning classroom work (Math exercises and problems with measures, solving
 problems and equations) Literal information, Literal questions
 Writing on the board short sentences
 Writing on the board what students must copy
 Writing factual information
 Oral whole class discussing
 Whole class little games
- Assigning homework (Math exercises and problems with measures, solving
 problems and equations) Literal information, Literal questions
 Writing on the board short sentences
 Writing on the board what students must copy
 Writing factual information
 Oral whole class discussing
 Review at home

Humanistic Field

Los goles de Juancho (A story) Original book vs. Copies of the book

Worksheets (Stories)

Textbook (Stories, Myths, Legends)

- Assigning classroom work (Literal approach to L&L)
 Reading is an order
 Reading silently, individually, at loud, whole class
 Reading: identifying verbs, synonyms, antonyms, characters, time,
 space, words
 Reading is having a good retention
 Reading bottom-up
 Reading at loud to overcome fear
 Reading to correct students when they read
 Interpreting: writing a synoptic table

Interpreting: watching a movie to relate the book
 Writing on the board short sentences
 Writing on the board what students must copy
 Writing factual information
 Writing: solving worksheets
 Writing: Orthography, Grammar elements, letters, spelling, sentences
 Writing: Dictation, Copy a paragraph, Copy from a book, what was said, ideas others say
 Writing what is learned on the board, factual information
 Writing with drawing
 Writing a story
 Writing with no editing
 Writing a summary, a synthesis
 Collective writing
 R&W exact categories: letters, literal information, literal questions, cohesion
 R&W stories, oral stories, handwriting
 R&W in group
 R&W vocabulary: meanings, definitions, whole class
 Learning English: letters, grammar, usual sentences, repeating numbers,
 Oral whole class discussing
 Assigning homework (Literal approach to L&L)
 Reading is an order
 Reading silently, individually, at loud
 Reading: identifying verbs, synonyms, antonyms, characters, time, space, words
 Reading is having a good retention
 Reading bottom-up
 Reading at loud to overcome fear
 Reading to correct students when they read
 Interpreting: writing a synoptic table
 Writing on the board short sentences
 Writing on the board what students must copy
 Writing factual information
 Writing: solving worksheets
 Writing: Orthography, Grammar elements, letters, spelling, sentences
 Writing: Copy a paragraph, Copy from a book
 Writing what is learned on the notebook, factual information
 Writing with drawing
 Writing a story
 Writing with no editing
 Writing a summary, a synthesis
 R&W exact categories: letters, literal information, literal questions,

cohesion
 R&W stories, oral stories, handwriting
 R&W vocabulary: meanings, definitions

Cultural Field

Creating masks

Performing in the school

Project for the language week

Project for the ethnic week

Project for the reflection week

Assigning classroom work

Reading is an order

Reading silently, individually, at loud

Reading a story

Reading for learning

Writing with drawing

Drawing or with Drawing

Drawing to decrease aggressiveness

Writing for telling what happens

Collective writing

Handwriting

Writing a story

Writing sentences on the board for planning the project

Writing sentences on the board for implementing the project

Writing sentences on the board for scheduling

Students' writing more drawing than text

Others' writing more text than drawing

R&W: telling stories with values

R&W Orality

R&W Talk for boys: how to be a man

R&W Talk for girls: hygiene Oral whole class discussion

Oral whole class meaning construction

Assigning homework

Reading is an order

Reading silently, individually, at loud

Reading a story

Reading for learning

Writing with drawing

Drawing or with Drawing

Drawing to decrease aggressiveness

Writing for telling what happens

Handwriting

Writing a story

Writing on the notebook for solving homework

Students' writing more drawing than text

R&W: telling stories with values

R&W Orality
Writing letters for apologizing

Recess*Playing soccer*

Filling up the world soccer cup album
Talking about the players who were born or lived in AB
Negotiating rules

Playing games

Talking
Negotiating rules