

**YOUNG PUERTO RICAN CHILDREN'S EXPLORATION
OF RACIAL DISCOURSES WITHIN THE FIGURED
WORLDS OF LITERATURE CIRCLES**

by Patricia Margarita Castrodad-Rodríguez

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STATEMENT BY AUTHOR

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SIGNED: Patricia Margarita Castrodad-Rodríguez

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DEDICATION

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the racial discourses of six and seven year old Puerto Rican children participating in small group literature circles over one academic year. The main research question is “How do Puerto Rican young children in a multiage classroom construct race through dialogue within the figured worlds of literature circles?”

This study is based on teacher research qualitative research design, using methods and techniques from ethnography and case study research. This study describes the dialogue of 20 Puerto Rican children, during 6 literature circles. These were chosen as case studies to examine student’s racial ideological explorations in depth. Data gathering methods included field notes from participant observation, audiotapes, videotapes, and transcripts.

A detailed description and analysis of children’s responses to literature, this study documents how young Puerto Rican children’s ambiguity and inconsistent usages and meanings of racial terminologies to signify their worlds. Through emerging ideological discourses such as colorblindness and essentializing discourses, young children explore discomfort instead of neutral, inclusive and unifying racial constructions, along with racial harmony that celebrates goodwill and benevolence. Literature circles as figured worlds informed by Rosenblatt’s reader-response theory and Holland, Lachicotte, Skinner and Cain (2003) social practice theory of identity, are proposed to be a space where racial identities form and reform, facilitating variable forms of racial talk.

The findings of this research illustrate the importance of teacher research as one form of qualitative research to illustrate the complexity of children’s racial talk aimed toward educational racial understandings and change. The importance of racial discourses in young children’s racial explorations to signify their worlds.

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

“Maestra tiene que sacar el libro para el círculo literario” “Es hoy, verdad?” (Teacher my child has to take out a book for the literature circle. It’s today, right?) (November, 2005).

These are the voices of parents as they enter the classroom. It is like any other morning in my classroom, but its uniqueness is that we are having literature circles today. It’s a Thursday morning and students write their names on the sign-in sheet, and then decide whether to read a book, write a letter or note to a friend or me, feed the fish, or water the plants - among other choices. I realize that some enter the classroom with their literature discussion books underneath their arms. Parents participate in the grand event by helping their children take out the literature discussion books from their backpacks. Their books are marked with post-it notes as a reminder of the parts they want to share in the small group dialogue. It is the third literature circle and everyone continues to share the same excitement as the very first time we engaged in a literature circle and a grand dialogue.

During the past two years I worked as teacher in a multi-age classroom at the University of Puerto Rico’s Elementary School. Kidwatching (Goodman, 1985) both in and out of the classroom has enabled me to think about and question important issues concerning my own and my students’ processes within the curriculum, and my relation to literacy, language, culture, and history. For example, one issue that caught my attention is the way the school culture mandates another curriculum in the middle of the first semester when there is a designated week in November called “La Semana Puertorriqueña,” - The Puerto Rican Week. It becomes a celebration outside the curriculum, a celebration that does not question why and how we are to

integrate these themes and issues into the classroom curriculum. Teachers and students are expected to demonstrate their knowledge and awareness of their culture through different activities such as inviting an outside lecturer or dressing up like a person from one of Indians, Spaniards, or Africans; considered the main founding groups of Puerto Rico, Indian, Spaniard or African. The school and its curriculum become an “Ethnographic Spectacle” (Tobing Rony, 1996) of Puerto Rican cultural reaffirmation. According to Tobing Rony, (1996) ethnographic spectacle refers to how people as “others” are “pictured as a landscape, a museum display, an exotic” (p. 17). The complexity of Puerto Rican culture is reduced to this spectacle which perpetuates the status quo, both politically and culturally. My students’ comments and behaviors are very pointed when there is a shift in the curriculum and school activities, though comments such as: “Otra vez, pero si eso ya lo sé.” and “¿Tenemos que parar esto que estamos trabajando?” [“Again, I know this all ready.” “Do we have to stop our work?”] The students’ expressions reflect their discontent at discontinuing their meaningful engagements.

Another tension for me were comments from a parent referring to the children’s talk: “Me dio mucha preocupación porque Joe no lo, no iba a entender, porque no se ha tocado en casa nunca con aspectos raciales. Me preocupé que si yo tenía que haber hablado de eso ya, o como si yo debía presentarle ese issue (asunto), como si yo lo estaba alejando de una realidad que existe.” [“I worried a lot that Joe was not going to understand because we have never in our house talked about racial issues. I worried because I thought that I should have talked to him about that, or should have presented this issue before, seems like I was shielding him from reality”] (literature discussion with parents, 2005). Experiences like this evoked tension and reflection for me.

Our experiences in the classroom are the starting point for continuing reflection, constant questioning, and wondering about Puerto Rican history, views of culture, and the role of culture in the school curriculum, as well as how students are responding towards their own knowledge about Puerto Rico, social and language issues, and the school mandated curriculum. Freire (1987) points out, we become “objects” instead of “subjects” in the act of knowing. Being racial objects is dangerous for us and our lives in the way that we become blind to reality. My students and I became the objects in the learning process. Moreover, I would add to this general objectification, the specific nature of racial objectification, and additionally, that as we internalize, it gives us, “double consciousness, a sense of always looking at one’s self through the eyes of others-racial veil” (Du Bois, 1994, p.48).

I considered the reflective processes of the students and myself as an inquiry act (Lindfords, 1999), and a language act in which the purpose is to engage another in one’s attempt to understand. I sought to go beyond and connect with others and my students, and I attempted to seek information together to further and go beyond our present understanding. This means that an inquiry act is not solely an individual act, but a social process of engaging with others. It is a social process because we not only seek and wonder with the help of others, but because we also take action. My stance as a teacher-researcher is that we actively took action to transform and reconstruct our words and worlds through dialogue.

I am interested in the significance of language and in the conditions and processes by which children come to be aware of the social world as they dialogue within the figured worlds of literature circles, and as their experiences and relations are put into play in their worlds. This

interest was sparked while working as a teacher with children in a multiage classroom (6 and 7 year olds) in Río Piedras, Puerto Rico, as mentioned above.

This study focuses on the ways young children explore their racial ideologies through dialogue within the figured worlds of literature circles. It is grounded on Fairclough's (1992, 1995) critical discourse analysis and the social practice theory of Holland, Lachicotte, Skinner and Cain (2003), specifically their conception of figured worlds as intimately tied to identity work.

Drawing from these theorists, in this study racial ideologies will be examined as beliefs that are embedded in discourse and are being constructed, by children. These ideologies are conceived in a broader sense as the assumptions and beliefs about the world that a group of people share so that racial ideologies, as the shared beliefs about race. Ideologies are between people and shared across books and the media, but also in a mediated form of political and economic structures. These structures guide and serve as norms for what we think, act, talk, value and interact (Gee, 1992). Language is a social and an interactive phenomenon in which ideologies are embedded in discourse and are constructed through that discourse. According to Fairclough (1992, 1995) all discourses are ideological; language is shaped by political, social, racial and economic ideologies, but also is always produced and reproduced and sustains dominant societal structures. Fairclough (1992) considers three important claims about ideology. The first one is that ideology exists in the practices of institutions, secondly, that ideology "interpellates" or constitutes subjects, and thirdly, that "ideological state apparatuses" (education, media, etc.) are sites that support and strengthen the class struggle which leads to

struggle in and over discourses (Fairclough, 1992, p. 87). Thus, ideology is a representation of the world in the mind of the learner.

Children's racial ideologies are an unfinished process. From a social practice theory of identity (Holland et al. 2003), based on Vygotsky's concept of mediation, people use resources (cultural artifacts) around them as "pivots" to shift to conceptual worlds and make sense of those worlds. A pivot is a mediating device for students to reveal in dialogue the ways race and racism are experienced and signified through their race talk. Children in this study explore racial ideologies through discourses as well as through social and self racial identification, and use language that is around them, including the language the picture books, to negotiate the use and meanings of racial labels. This means that children's racial ideologies and discourses are in constant change and are not fixed, but are gradually developing and emerging through their experiences.

Racial discourses is defined as the ways children use language to respond and shift in their understandings of the conceptual world of race. These are specific ways children use language, perform and reform their "ways of being" as they respond to others' discourses. Racial discourses focus on children's ways of using language and how they partially appropriate racial ideologies, to use as a "pivot" or mediating device to respond in certain ways and so evoke "local emerging forms." Discourse does ideological work (Fairclough and Wodak, 1997).

Figured worlds refers to positionality, the "space of authoring" and world making/creating. In this study figured worlds is used to reconceptualize literature circles. Firstly, it is important to point out that literature circles are small group discussions where a group of students, who have read or heard the same text, sit and dialogue about the meanings

they have constructed from their understandings and personal connections (Short, 1995). Conceptualizing literature circles as a figured world allows for a thorough analysis of identity and world making. Figured worlds are a “generic world” where children develop through positionality to create a space of authoring and construct meaning for their worlds (Holland et al., 2003). By positionality Holland et al. (2003) mean the ways in which children are positioned in relation to others and how this position offers others positions. The space of authoring is where children are identified and identify others who are offered positions that they may accept, or reject. World making is where lies the possibility for making and constructing new ways, artifacts and discourses. This sight where positions (positionality) are offered provides a space of authoring that is socially identified by others and leads to positions that we may accept or reject. Making connections across children’s linguistic and world experiences involves world making and the possibility for new ways of creating artifacts, and discourses.

The literature examining young children's conceptualizations of race is limited. One of the few studies examining children’s ideologies through dialogue from a sociocultural framework is Martínez-Roldán (2004 & 2005). In this study, students’ racial explorations are characterized as embrionic from a Vygotskian perspective or as emerging ideologies. In contrast, this study conceptualizes students’ assumptions and beliefs about race that are shared among social groups as racial ideologies. This concept of racial ideologies differs from that of Martínez-Roldán (2004 & 2005) studies, firstly discourses that are intitunationalized or naturalized are explored within the specific context that of figured world, and are used as resources or mediating variable constructions of race. According to Hassan (2001) language in discourse enables people to internalise the world and experience the living of their life (p.4). Children as well as adults use racial discourses to make possible experiencing and negotiating meanings in

the living of their life. I draw from a Vygotskian framework (Hassan, 2001) to think of the exploration of racial ideologies and the tendency of children to respond in certain ways in and out of school as concept formation. Racial labels (negrito, prietito, among other) are not a passive nor a receptive process but, reflect an active participation of children and adults through life. This means that semiotic mediation by means of the modality of language is a constant quality of human life.

Hassan (2001) establishes two manifestations of semiotic mediation, visible and invisible mediation. On the one hand, invisible mediation is primary since it begins in early infancy, and occurs across a large number of cultural activities (community market, family reunions, etc.). Thus, the people that are interacting “see” some process of everyday living, and the language is naturalised, manifesting discourse as a natural part of participating in her/his community. On the other hand, visible mediation is focused on some specific concept or problem (Hassan, 2001). This means that one of the people in the interaction is aware that s/he is teaching or explaining something specific to someone. According to Hassan (2001) these forms of semiotic mediation serve important purposes in the creation of culture and in preparing social subjects to have a lived sense of belonging to the culture in which they are located (p.6).

This study focuses on race as a social and historical construction that evolves through time. This means that racial ideologies are always emerging, in a state of flux and fluidity, where social subjects through language create culture as well as have a sense of belonging to the culture they are located.

As pointed out above, in this study children’s racial ideologies and racial discourses are conceived as explorations, their racial explorations are examined in this study as part of their

active participation as social subjects. Being social subjects means that their active participation is by means of drawing from the resources or cultural artifacts that are available to them to make sense of their world. It is important to point out that the world is not being structured in a value-free manner. Instead, the circulation of racial discourses and images implicates social, historical and political relations of dominance. Therefore, the analysis highlights young children's thinking and understandings of race not to negatively critique their thinking but to explore their current emerging thinking.

In order to understand Puerto Rican children's explorations of racial discourses I first narrate my story as a racial subject and then provide a brief overview of Puerto Rico's sociopolitical and racial history as a colony of Spain and then the United States. This chapter ends with a discussion of the diverse conceptualizations of race and an overview of the dissertation.

Race: My story

To write about what guides and frames this study, and the critical issues in and out of school that guide me and the students, requires a focus on race and identity and considerable self-reflection. Inevitably, my experiences as a teacher-researcher led me to become aware of important issues and to look through a different lens at the classroom dynamics of the classroom culture. I began to reflect not only on my experiences in the classroom, but about my life experiences in relation to race and racism. I also became aware of the interplay between these experiences and the importance of both forces in the preparation and understanding of this study. Hesitantly, as I read and observed, I continuously made connections, but also noted that tensions

emerged. Tensions are discomforts that stir me to think, understand and investigate. I realize that we always have tensions as we read, write, talk, and engage in common daily experiences. My tension arose as I began to reflect and write, and thus to consider deeply what was moving me to think specifically about Puerto Rican children's literature that deals with crucial issues such as identity, race, and culture.

I believe it is important to understand the life experiences that have guided my work as a teacher-researcher, and so I offer my story. As a little girl, around eight years old, I was relocated to the northeastern United States from Puerto Rico. My first experiences in the United States indelibly marked me for the rest of my life. I attended a school in a small town in Massachusetts where I was in a bilingual program until my mother decided to place me in a regular classroom in order to learn English. My memory of the school is of long dark halls, freezing temperatures, and my friend Tracy, who was one of a few Spanish speakers. My younger brother attended the same school and as we walked through the halls we were called "spics," and literally spit upon. There were also many aggressive acts towards my brother outside of school, on the school bus. Interestingly, the issue was not skin color but being Puerto Rican. The aggressiveness was continuous; we were docile bodies (Foucault, 1982) trying to understand the new environment which had a long history of racism and discrimination. Our only companion and support was our mother, who was politically involved in different social movements such as the feminist movement, and who fought racism and discrimination against blacks and minority groups. She responded and became proactive on our behalf when she went to school, spoke to and questioned our teachers. She even questioned a teacher who made me recite the Pledge of Allegiance in front of the class, knowing full well that I did not know this pledge.

Those events were not my only contact with intolerance; my memory of watching and passing by a group of Ku Klux Klan members in full dress opened a new door, probably to understanding how society can oppress and marginalize others, through institutionalized racism. My mother did her job by making my brother and me aware that such attitudes and acts were intolerable. She wanted us to understand that what the children who tormented us in school were doing was wrong and that we should fight back, not aggressively, but through dialogue. We are a big family of five siblings. I remember our family ritual of gathering and talking about different issues during dinner. Our talk was about daily experiences, work, school, books, and social issues in our daily lives. From an early age, through the dialogues and experiences with my parents and siblings, I become aware of my presence in the world. Our family was a “thought collective” (Fleck, 1981).

The collective voices of my mother, teachers, classmates, my brother, the Ku Klux Klan, feminists and minorities, and experience have traveled with me throughout my life. For a long time I silenced the voices that most haunted me, the histories and stories that took me back to those experiences when I was a child. Rosenblatt (2005) points out that, “Language is socially evolved, but it is always constituted by individuals, with their particular histories” (p.25). Reflecting on and articulating my experiences has given me the tools to think about the relationships involving culture, identity, language, literacy, power, and racism. The social dynamics of my particular childhood experiences in classrooms helped me reflect on these experiences and thus to see the dynamics of the classroom context through a different lens.

The “ethnographic spectacle” (Tobing Rony, 1996) of objectification that I experienced as a child remains in me and is the force that has guided my work as a teacher. Two thoughts

come to mind: first, my childhood experiences and teaching experiences merge together to give my voice a strong force as a white woman, a Puerto Rican, an individual living in a colony of the United States, a middle class citizen, teacher, and mother. Secondly, particularly important and sometimes problematic is my identity as a white woman, my whiteness in relation to society and to the sociocultural contexts in which I have worked. These are my identities, socially constructed, that intersect and overlap. In order to understand Puerto Rican children's racial ideologies I examine Puerto Rico's sociopolitical and racial history as a colony of Spain and then the United States.

Puerto Rico's sociopolitical history: A complex scenario of conquests and colonialism

Christopher Columbus set eyes on Puerto Rico during his second voyage to the Americas in 1493, for the first time securing it in written history. The racial formation of Puerto Rico emerged from the interplay of three groups: (1) the indigenous population of Taíno/Arawakan people, which is estimated to have included between 60,000 and 100,000 individuals at the time of the initial Spanish colonization; (2) the Spanish colonizers and immigrants; and (3) the African workers imported and initially introduced as slaves, and their descendants (Rivera-Batiz, 2004). The indigenous populations were enslaved for the economic activities of the Spanish colony in the sixteenth century; for the extraction of gold from rivers and later in the production of sugar from cane. The indigenous population, according to the traditional view, vanished quickly in the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries because of disease, conflict with the Spaniards, and the hardships of enslavement. Only in the central, mountainous part of the island did any significant indigenous populations survive for a longer period of time, gradually inter-

mixing with the rest of the population, to create the Puertorrican jíbaro (Rodríguez, 2009). Interestingly, their modes of agriculture did not vanish and people in the rural areas still, for example, use their particular ways of planting. In 1530, a census ordered by the Governor stated that the number of slaves was five times that of the White population (Rivera-Batíz, 2004). In addition, in 1534 the colony's governor complained about a mass departure of Spaniards from the island to other parts of the Spanish territory, concluding that the island had hardly any Spaniards remaining, but mostly Blacks.

The racial composition of Puerto Rico remained heavily composed of African slaves and their descendants until the nineteenth century. However, the growth of the African population on the island also diminished sharply in the nineteenth century. The slave trade from Africa was abolished in 1817 as a result of a Treaty between Spain and Great Britain (Rivera-Batíz, 2004). Trade in slaves in Puerto Rico did continue, however, through the purchase of slaves from other islands. Slavery itself began to end in Puerto Rico in 1870 as a result of the Ley Moret law through which slaves older than 60 and the children of slaves were liberated. Slavery was then officially abolished in 1873; however, freed slaves were still required to remain with their owners for at least three years. From 1860 to 1950, as determined from Spanish and American censuses (Rivera-Batíz, 2004), increased European immigration, the elimination of the slave trade, and the higher mortality rates of slaves and their descendants, brought a major change in the racial composition of Puerto Rico, increasing the proportion of the population catalogued as White. In spite of this, the proportion of the population catalogued as White dropped sharply from 48.5 percent in 1860 to 34.5 percent in 1910 – even though it sometimes included persons considered Black as well as “Colored” (or “Personas de Color” in Spanish).

Puerto Rico was ceded to the United States in 1898 by Spain at the end of the Spanish-Cuban American War and became a U.S. colony. The island had been under Spanish control for over three hundred years and then, as the spoils of war, became a colony of the United States. The intention of the United States was to secure its military and naval dominance in the Caribbean (Torres, 2000). Both political and linguistic changes were the consequences of this reassignment. One of the first acts of the U.S. military government was to declare English the official language of education in Puerto Rico. The goal of the Americans was to replace Spanish entirely - 100 percent. In 1902 both languages were proclaimed co-official languages for the transaction of the affairs of the Puerto Rican government (Schweers & Hudders, 2000). Thus, the imposed educational and linguistic policies in Puerto Rico were to convert Puerto Rico into a nation of bilinguals, and eventually into monolingual English speakers. The road to Americanization dictated that in order for Puerto Ricans to participate in the U.S. system of democracy, Puerto Ricans needed to learn English. The education of children was the pathway to eventual Americanization and Anglification. Puerto Ricans became aware of the intentions of the U.S. to Americanize and to replace the use of the vernacular Spanish. Hence whiteness was embedded in the useage of English. The message was clear that Puerto Rican culture and language were inferior to those of the Americans. However, resistance soon began. When teachers and parents began to react; interestingly the argument was that it was not a pedagogically appropriate practice and was harmful for children. This led to protests and reform efforts. From 1915 to 1934 Spanish was to be taught until fourth grade, in fifth grade English was to be introduced half days, and thereafter English was to be the language of interaction. It is important to point out that until the late 1940s the language of instruction in public high schools

was exclusively English. Thus, only a small number of elite students, those competent in English, attended school.

In 1949, when the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico was created as an autonomous free state associated with the United States, changes in educational policy also occurred. Spanish became the language for all instructional purposes in the public school system. Simultaneously, with Spanish taught in high schools, this undermined the public schools' elite status. In the early 1990s a new dimension of the language controversy arose in Puerto Rico with the question of designating one as Puerto Rico's official language. One political party proposed Spanish as the official language and in 1991 Spanish became the official language of Puerto Rico. In 1993, however, the opposing political party that favored statehood through legislation proposed both Spanish and English as the official languages of Puerto Rico. Polls indicated that the large majority of Puerto Ricans preferred having both as the official languages. At the present time, the controversy continues as "English only" within the Puerto Rico political "status" project is being debated by the U.S. congress through proposition H R 2499.

At the beginning of the 20th century, White European migration to Puerto Rico slowed down drastically and has remained relatively low since then. At the same time, by all accounts the inter-mixing of Black and White populations within the island increased. According to Rivera-Batíz (2004), there are varied social, cultural, economic and political forces connected to this process, but it is certain that the legacy of slavery and the presence of intolerant attitudes and discrimination have subjected persons labeled as Black to severe social and economic isolation or distress, and marginalization – even invisibility. The individual and social effect is that historically the tendency has been for a racially-mixed population, considered a substantial

portion of Puerto Rico, to switch self identification from Black to White. As a result, only a small portion of the population, with very dark skin color, continued to be considered as Black over time (Rivera-Batiz, 2004; Duany, 1998). All these complex and ambiguous socio-political and historical changes have given clear messages to the Puerto Rican people that they are inferior, voiceless, illiterate, and unable to govern their own destiny.

When the Spaniards conquered Puerto Rico, the population in Puerto Rico had to obey and function according to their laws and their language, both of which reveal discrimination and thus denigrated Blacks, who are still denigrated as Black Puerto Ricans under the colonization of the United States. The insistence of Americanizing Puerto Rico through the imposition of the English language, with English then being designated the official language of Puerto Rico, and the embeddedness of race within the language issue continues to influence Puerto Ricans. Despite this historical imposition, Puerto Ricans still struggle for the maintenance of Spanish as the official language. Thus language and race are inextricably embedded in Puerto Rico's sociopolitical history.

As I wrote this chapter, the U.S. Senate's judicial committee hearings were convening for consideration of the first Latina-Puerto Rican (or Newyorikan) to be confirmed as one of the Supreme Court judges, Sonia Sotomayor. This event contrasts and reflects the sociopolitical and sociocultural complexities of Puerto Rico as a colony of the United States. I also have personally experienced the dichotomy of both positive and negative aspects of living as a Puerto Rican in the U.S., since my parents sought better educational opportunities for my siblings and myself by relocating there. Most of the members of my family have resided in the United States at different moments from the 1950s to the present time; the *va y ven* or *vaiven* (Duany, 2005;

Torres-Guzmán, 1998) is a lived experience, such as Sonia Sotomayor's. These contrasting experiences point to the issue of race and racism, and how these are experienced and signified within the colony of Puerto Rico. These events led me to examine through their dialogue how race is experienced and signified by children through their dialogue within the figured world of literature circles.

Puerto Rico's racial history

Puerto Rico's racial history, is centuries old, troubled, and as West-Durán (2005) states, "always inextricably layered and plagued with misunderstandings and denials" (p.48). During Spanish colonization and slavery, Puerto Rico, unlike its small Antilles neighbors like the French, Dutch, and English speaking Caribbean, developed its sugar plantation system late (1795-1850). According to West-Durán (2005), from 1600 on, the island had a slave population that was greater than 15 percent of the total population. In the French islands slaves averaged from 80 percent to 90 percent of the population, in the British colonies, from 75 percent to 95 percent. When slavery was abolished (1775-1873), the racial composition of Puerto Rico was as follows: Whites, 40 to 55 percent; free Non-Whites, 40-50 percent; and Slaves, 5 to 15 percent (West-Durán, 2005).

These numbers reflect Puerto Rico's social and self racial identification and reality at the time, when Puerto Rico had a more racially mixed population than elsewhere in the Caribbean and its economy was not completely dominated by sugar. Puerto Rico then was comparable to Mexico, Peru and Cuba, because the island was functioning as a non-plantation society. Unlike slaves, the free colored could travel on the island, gather publicly in groups, dance in the streets, and

own stores. Free non-whites could acquire land as well as inherit properties without restrictions. Moreover, they could enter crafts, acquire an education, and serve the militia – within segregated units. They were allowed to bear arms that were prohibited to free colored and slaves, but the arms were implicitly directed against slaves. In contrast, whites could enjoy many activities and opportunities, such as access to university level education, public offices and honors, functioning as notaries, and holding positions in the church. Interestingly, slaves who fought bravely, for example in the British attack on San Juan in 1797, were then freed as bravery in these battles eased any or all restrictions.

The painter, José Campeche (1751-1809), who was the mulato son of a freed slave, exemplifies the demographic, social and cultural importance of a free colored population. One of Campeche's paintings, "El velorio," is part of the University of Puerto Rico's art collection and was an important cultural tool in our thematic unit on Puerto Rico and race. This painting depicts an African religious theme with great detail and use of color.

During the nineteenth century half of the population was white and 5 to a 15 percent of the slave population during the years of the Spanish control. In 1830, half of the population was still black and mulatto, meaning that the island had three times as many slaves as in 1790. According to West-Durán (2005) there are several reasons for this dramatic increase: the independence of Haití (1804), thus creating the first independent and black nation in Latin America; the independence of former Spanish colonies; and the outlawing of the slave trade by Britain, Denmark, France, and Holland. During this historical period, Haití was considered the world's largest producer of sugar. Aside from coffee, sugar represented about half of the island's exports and in the 1850s Puerto Rico produced as much sugar as Jamaica.

After the Spanish-Cuban American war ended, Puerto Rico (1898) became a U.S. colony, and became subjected U.S. racial attitudes. At the same time, the U.S. economy provided jobs for many dark-skinned Puerto Ricans, either on the island or for those who emigrated. During WWI, Puerto Ricans who considered themselves white within the broader island definition of race found themselves placed in segregated Negro units in the army.

Rethinking race

From an anthropological perspective, race as a code for skin color was an invention of the nineteenth century and became the defining problem for early anthropology (Tobing Rony, 2006) Race is usually defined by cultural forms or models that determine racial categories or classifications according to physical characteristics. Instead, if race is a sociohistorical construction, then looking at the process of the construction becomes significant. According to Bolgatz (2005), the social construction of reality varies from culture to culture and evolves over time. Therefore, racial categories and meanings continually change throughout history. Bolgatz (2005) states, “if we ignore our history, we come to believe that differences across-so called racial groups are tied to biological factors” (p.22). Meanings attributed to race through racial labels are constructed and constituted through language and are not universal. In the same way in which the use and interpretation of language varies among people; there are always power dynamics at work that reflect assumptions, values, ideas and power relationships between people. The process of constructing racial ideologies is so subtle that we often don’t take notice.

According to the Websters New World Dictionary and Thesaurus (2002), race is defined as “a class or kind of people unified by shared interests, habits or characteristics; a category of

humankind that shares distinctive physical characteristics” (p. 521). Bonilla-Silva (1997), from a sociologist perspective, states that race is a “social fact” similar to class and gender, since racialized social systems emerged as part of the changes that occurred during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Social orders are stratified along racial as well as class and gender lines. Racial stratification is hierarchical, hence races ascribed with the superior position always enjoy social, political, economic and psychological advantages over the group or groups ascribed to inferior positions (p. 899).

Bonilla-Silva’s (1997) theorization of race is, as “a real and central social vessel of group affiliation and life in the modern world” (p.899). This means that despite changes in racial formation, in the content and meaning of special racial identities, social relations between races can become institutionalized and affect their life in society. These definitions reflect the definition in the dictionary that focuses on physical characteristics from a biological perspective, which purports that differences are natural and therefore immutable. Silva-Bonilla extends this concept as one that is grounded in power relations and the effects that have been individually and socially, hence historically, grounded. He argues that race is historically bounded and not an essential category; race is a sociohistorical construction. Race from a sociohistorical perspective indicates that racial differences have been constructed in particular ways by people over time.

The biological perspective on race permeates and dominates social structures, shaping the ways in which schools, classrooms and curriculum are structurally reinforced through notions that race as a biological perspective is natural and that racial differences are therefore inborn (Bolgatz, 2005). We describe and classify people according to how we perceive them racially; the same occurs in terms of gender, class, and nationality, among other attributes. There are

diverse cultural artifacts which we employ to establish who we are according to how we identify ourselves and are identified by others. For example, recently I checked off boxes on the U.S. census form according to the way I racially identify myself, in order for Puerto Rico to receive federal funding. Throughout my university experiences I have had to do the same in order to be considered for minority scholarships. In addition, physical aspects such as skin color, hair color and texture, among other attributes, are essential in structuring racial discourse. I agree with Bolgatz (2005) that we come to consider race as given and fixed (p.21). This means that historically racial classifications are made according to our perceptions and are reinforced through racial discourses.

I began this teacher research with an ideology about the use and meanings of racial labels as a binary white/black conception of race, in other words, a binary form of racial classification which assumes dichotomous black/white identities. My home and university experiences led me to question the variability and meanings of racial labels. For example, in both sociocultural contexts, the racial label of *trigueñito* or *prietito* was questioned since the origin of the words arises from slavery times. When sugar cane was burned, the color was perceived as *prieto* or reminiscent of a tanned skin.. In addition, the diminutive form *ito/ita* at the end of words such as *negrita*, *prietito*, *trigueñita* can carry a pejorative connotation because of its association with slave status, but also may communicate affection and intimacy (Godreau, 2008). Thus, the term of affection is linked to the idea of lessening or diminishing another because of their skin color. Although mixed usages and meanings of racial labels like *prieto*, *trigueño* and *indio*, among others, exist within the Puerto Rican sociocultural context as a “lived through experience,” I did not recognize the multiple inconsistencies in their uses and meanings until I began to think about it in the classroom context. Bolgatz (2005) states that race and racial terminologies are loaded,

grounded in histories in which power was and still is constituted and contested. For example, I manifested the assumption and belief that many people share the idea that they are either white or black, constituting a dichotomy. I should point out that race does not mean just skin color, but is used to refer to and veil actions, expressions, forces, and reinforcement of inequality and threats to social justice. Thus, it is not a neutral category.

In this study, I examine how racial ideologies within the figured world of literature circles are represented both individually and socially, and constituted through dialogue, not as an essential racial category, but through illustrating multiple uses and meanings of racial terminologies that are historically grounded and coexist. Racial labels, as Bolgatz (2005) states, are codes which imply that someone is powerful, poor, or dangerous among other meanings. This means that racial labels constitute certain identities as normal and marginalize and exoticize others.

Zenón and Godreau: Puerto Rican racial dialogue

Two eminent Puerto Rican scholars have researched and discussed race as a biological reality and social construct. The research of Isabelo Zenón Cruz (1974) was published in a monumental two-volume set, “Narciso descubre su trasero:” El negro en la cultura Puertorriqueña” [Narcissus Discovers his Backside: The black in Puerto Rican culture] (West-Durán, 2005). Other scholars have characterized this as an exceptional and complete study on the hypocrisy of the expression negro Puertorriqueño, where Puerto Rican has become an adjective. Why is a black Puerto Rican identified as black before he is considered Puerto Rican? In his seminal piece, Narciso descubre su trasero: El negro en la cultura puertorriqueña, West-

Durán (2005) has literally translated the title in English as, “Narcissus discovers his backside” while others have translated the title as, “Narcissus discovers his rear end.” According to Zenón (1974), this translation reflects thoughts about black Puerto Ricans’ racial identity, and how racism plays out in literature, language, sports, politics, poetry, music, arts, education, and the university. He goes so far as to discuss the illustrations in books, among other examples.

Zenón’s seminal piece remains the only academic study that addresses the issue of blackness in Puerto Rico, exemplifies the origins of the word *raza* and social prejudice, and then analyzes racism in the different arenas of social life. Rivera-Batiz’s (2004) study about race and economic outcomes on the island includes other scholars who have also analyzed the issue of race and racism in Puerto Rico. These scholars include Rodríguez-Marazzani (1998), whose work focuses on mapping the discourses on Puerto Ricans and “race;” Merino-Falú (2004), who touches on race, gender and social class, Rodríguez-Cotto (2004), a University of Puerto Rico’s researcher, whose essay focuses on the evidence of racism towards black women; and Román (2002), who comments on the apparently invisible aspects of racism.

Zenón’s (1974) piece on racism is theoretically and methodologically impeccable. He draws on Frantz Fanon specifically regarding the importance of demystification of colonial ideology, what is referred to as colonial discourse. He also methodologically adopts deconstructionism with the intention of deconstructing Puerto Rican racist discourse. In 1974, when Zenón’s seminal piece was finally published after years of academic debate on whether or not it should be published, it caused a revolution in academia and in students’ thoughts about racial perceptions (including those of my mother) at the University of Puerto Rico, since it touched on the “delicate” issue of race, racism and black Puerto Ricans. West-Durán (2005)

states that Zenon's work was controversial because it attacked much of the hypocrisy around race on the island, drawing on previously unexamined assumptions from popular culture, such as jokes, sayings, and proverbs, to prove his point (p.63).

This issue of unexamined assumptions from pop culture is discussed academically, as a point of departure, not only for further fruitful conversations, but for the emergence of a university seminar, *El negro en la literatura Puertorriqueña/Blacks in Puerto Rican Literature/*. Zenón (1974) begins his piece by analyzing the quotidian term, *El Puertorriqueño negro/The Puerto Rican black* vs. *El negro Puertorriqueño/The black Puerto Rican*. He emphasizes how quotidian language reveals a subtle and "criminal" viewpoint which Puerto Rican blacks have been subjected. He also rearranges and re-orchestrates the syntax of *puertorriqueño negro /Puerto Rican black/* to *negro puertorriqueño/black Puerto Rican/*. In other words, his intention is to reflect on the reasons why the adjective of *puertorriqueño/Puerto Rican* is *negro/black* (Zenón, 1974, p.23). For example, when we (Puerto Ricans) refer to the *Lareños* (people from the municipality of Lares in the central mountainous part of Puerto Rico) we do not say "the white *Lareño*" or "the white from Lares" but, when we refer to the blacks in *Loíza* we say *los negros de Loíza/the blacks from Loíza* because its population primarily is black. Zenón (1974) states that the culture is secondary to the *negro/black* and primary to the white. Thus, through language there is not a differentiation between culture and white, it is a distinction. This does not happen with blacks in Puerto Rico, the image of blacks comes from the *Loiceños* a (town, where there is a vast population of blacks). The images of blacks in Puerto Rico are reduced and simplified to one town - *Loíza* - that is among many towns in Puerto Rico where there are large populations of blacks.

“Black Puerto Ricans” have been marginalized since we have had national consciousness. The issue of race and skin color has been treated in Puerto Rico by the civil society as an issue of conventional wisdom. For example, people in Puerto Rico adopted a whitening or bleaching discourse. Race and skin color are not a major aspect of Puerto Rican society. As scholars have pointed out, skin color is considerably less important in Puerto Rico than in the United States. However, racism and discrimination does exist in Puerto Rico; among Puerto Rican families Whitening phrases such as *no pueden dañar la raza white* (You can’t damage the race) is about getting married to a black Puerto Rican, and *dañar* has been translated as damage, since it is unwelcome, and causes physical and detrimental changes. In addition, *mejorar la raza* literally means “improve one’s race” (Godreau, 2008) by having offspring with someone who is of lighter complexion. It is also visible when the cabinet of the governor is composed exclusively of white men, and by noting who enters the hotels, clubs and casinos. This issue is socially reduced as whites are first class and second class, and blacks belong to second class only. This phenomenon of “whitening” has been noted among a number of scholars in Puerto Rico. As Duany (2002) observes:

“[a] common practice on the Island is a strong desire to whiten yourself, a tendency also known as “bleaching (*blanqueamiento*).” As expressed above, the history of slavery in Puerto Rico --associated with severe social and economic marginalization of the Black African population and its descendants-- provided strong incentives for lighter-skinned persons not to identify as Black, but to identify as white, where social and economic privilege traditionally lies.”(p.242).

Zenón (1974) informs my study, because his seminal piece focuses on the constitution of racial labels, derogatory labels that have characterized Puerto Rico when referring to “Negros.” His linguistic focus on racial racism in Puerto Rico is the foundation of an ideological work to foster and support the socioeconomic system as well as part of the culture and folklore. These

words may be negro sucio, negro asqueroso, and words such as negrito which, depending on the context of its use, may demonstrate affection, as mentioned above. Also mulato, raza, and grifo have an origin that is zoological, and were applied to animals and then used to refer to and describe negros and indios. Interestingly, physical characteristics such as the hair, nose and skin color have been viewed with a negative connotation. Hence, the body as the focal point demystifies Narciso/Narcissist.

Another important contemporary scholar is Isar Godreau, who has focused her research on racial usages and meanings via persons within specific locales in Puerto Rico, such as in Barrio San Antón, Ponce (south), a teacher in Cayey (Central North), an interview that took place in the central plaza of the city of Ponce, and three activists from San Juan involved in antiracist efforts in Puerto Rico by providing antiracist workshops and participating in black women's organizations. The author coined the concept "slippery semantics" to explain the variability in the usage and meanings of racial labels within one conversation and across locales in Puerto Rico. Her work is recent (2005-2008), and the only research of its kind; since Zenón's (1974, 1975) masterpiece there had not been scholarly research in this area of study.

Isar Godreau's (2008) argument that usage is highly dependent on context and defies the often sharp dichotomization made by binary forms of classification can be associated with the U.S. and also the more ambiguous forms of racial terminology associated with Latin America. In addition, she extends her argument that both forms can co-exist simultaneously and proposes an incipient typology of contexts that considers when binary or multiple terminologies are deployed and the social implications of such usage.

This study shares the idea of the use and meanings as ambiguous, inconsistent, and coexisting, with Godreau's (2008) research. However, although the context is literature circles, students create diverse contexts, across figured worlds in which the use and meanings are constructed by discourses which inspire new actions. Hence, the individual and social effect are ambiguous and inconsistent in usage and meaning. Thus, students construct the collectively realized "as if" realms (Holland et al, 2003) in which they discursively construct and constitute race. This idea of contexts, constructed discursively within literature circles, challenges Godreau's (2008) conception of a concrete space or place such as a town, school, literature circle, classroom, or organization, among other examples, where variable uses and meanings of racial labels or racial talk takes place. I argue that the spaces and places do not have to be close or far from each other, such as towns in Puerto Rico, in order for racial labels and identities to be ambiguous and inconsistent.

Overview of research

Within the sociopolitical and racial history contexts of Puerto Rico, as well as the personal histories of children, the intention of this study is to understand the variability of racial labels that young children use and the ambiguity of their meanings within the figured world of literature circles. In order to examine Puerto Rican racial discourses in literature, I want to specifically look at Puerto Rican racial ideologies in relation to literature and how young children explore racial discourses through two broad themes that overlap and frame the research: these are social and self racial identification, with embodied identities as a subtheme, and

colorblindness and essentialized discourses. Children use diverse discourses and modes to respond and in the process new racial discourses (what I term “local emerging forms”) emerge.

The main question guiding this research is as follows: How do Puerto Rican young children in a multiage classroom construct race through dialogue within the figured worlds of literature circles? The following subquestions are examined through critical discourse analysis:

- How do children use racial terminologies in their talk to construct and constitute race?
- How do racial discourses as cultural tools mediate children’s constructions of race and racial identities within literature circles?
- How do children’s racial identities form and reform through dialogue within literature circles?

These questions are examined through critical discourse analysis (CDA) methodology.

In chapter 1, I introduced the study by describing the sociopolitical and racial history of Puerto Rico, defining key concepts and providing overview of the study. In chapter 2, I present the theoretical framework of the study and describe the main two theories informing my analysis - Fairclough’s critical discourse analysis and CDA social theory, and Holland, Lachicotte, Skinner and Cain’s social practice theory of identity. I review the literature related to CDA and literature circles as a figured world. In Chapter 3, I present the research design of the study, which is framed as teacher research, thus qualitative in nature, highlighting ethnographic case study design. I describe the research context in terms of the school, classroom and the students, and present the research methodology which is grounded in Fairclough’s CDA methodology. In chapters 4 and 5, I present a brief overview of the two books used in the literature circles as well

as the backgrounds of the authors and illustrators of each text and present the analysis and findings. In Chapter 6, I summarize the findings as well as the conclusions and implications.

CHAPTER 2: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The main theories informing this study are critical discourse analysis and social practice theory of identity. This study centers race within Fairclough's (1992, 1995) notion of CDA as language use and its interrelationship with race, school and society, as well as social practice theory as it relates to language as a cultural tool which mediates children's thinking with the conceptual world of race. The study focuses on racial discourses within literature circles as being socially reproduced and constituted. The conception by Holland, Lachicotte, Skinner & Cain (2003) of figured worlds as connected to identity work enabled me to reconceptualize literature circles as figured worlds where racial identities are forming and reforming through dialogue. Children's responses mediate the negotiations and understandings within social interaction around issues of race and how racial identities are formed and reformed through social practice. This literature review focuses on scholarly research regarding figured worlds in educational contexts and critical discourse analysis in educational contexts.

Literature Circles as Figured Worlds

In this section I present my theorization of literature circles as figured worlds where students' identities are performed and reformed through dialogue. Conceptualizing literature circles as figured worlds entails both a generic space where students respond to their environment through dialogue by means of racial tools.

A reconceptualization of literature circles as figured worlds: Identities in social practice

“Identities never arrive in persons or in their immediate social milieu already formed...they happen in social practice”(Holland, Lachiotte, Skinner and Cain, 2003, p. 1)

Holland, Lachiotte, Skinner and Cain (2003) drew from different schools of thought, from culturalists and constructivists, to develop their theory on identity in practice. Their theoretical framework draws from Vygotsky, Bakhtin and Leont’ve to enhance Bourdieu’s practice theory. Practice indexes a meta-theory in anthropology, sociology, linguistics and education, signaling a shift away from an irrational conception of culture, language, literacy and other social phenomena (Barlett and Holland, 2002). Their conception of “in practice” invokes pragmatics and a group of actors using cultural resources which themselves undergo transformation toward some culturally given end, while immersed in the flow of social life. In this study, I invoke cultural historical concepts of practice developed from Bakhtin, Leont’ve and Vygotsky to reconceptualize literature circles as figured worlds and examine children’s racial identities.

Vygotsky’s vision of person and society and the importance of artifacts as mediators in human action is essential to understanding how mediating devices such as language enable people to shift themselves beyond their immediate surroundings. Leontiev’s concept of activity is also important in this work. According to Holland et. al, Leontiev defined activity as “people respond to what they find in the environment in the context of a historically, socially and culturally constructed form of social interaction” (p.39).

They also draw from another Russian theorist, Bakhtin, whose work has influenced their conceptualization of “*Figured worlds*” in terms of authoring selves. Bakhtin’s concept of heteroglossia, a cacophony of different languages and perspectives, expands on the concept of identity; in that a person does not own her/his words. Multivocality or the orchestration of voices is what Bakhtin called authoring selves within social practice to situate identity in the idea that people draw from different voices to make meaning of themselves. People see the world by authoring it, thus as a group and as individuals we do not hold only one perspective at a time. In other words, people rearrange, reword, rephrase, reorchestrate different voices and, by this process, develop their own authorial stance (Holland, Lachicotte, Skinner and Cain, 2003, p. 183). Through this process, the meanings we make of ourselves within the space (literature circle) where different vocal perspectives of the social world come together is, in Bakhtinian terms, a process of authoring the self.

They also draw from Bourdieu’s concept of practice theory which highlights “how systems of power and privilege render the participants of encounters more or less equal, more or less like agents, and more or less interpersonally powerful” (Holland, Lachicotte, Skinner and Cain, 2003, p. 146). In other words, social practice theory views the ways in which social structures influence actors and practice (Barlett and Holland, 2002). Everyday behaviors and improvisations are comprised of impromptu actions that occur when our past is brought to the present as *Habitus* (dispositions we have that make infinitely diversified tasks possible) and that meet with a particular combination of situations and conditions to which we have no set response. Barlett and Holand (2002) argue that *Habitus* is composed of socially and historically constituted, durable, embodied dispositions to act in certain ways that result from a person’s history of interactions with structures, and strongly influences future actions. The term

“symbolic violence” is important in explaining how positional identities are a matter of struggle, often unrecognized, whose effects live on in personal and social history.

According to Holland, Lachicotte, Skinner and Cain (2003), within figured worlds “people have the propensity to be drawn to, recruited for, and formed in these worlds, and to become active in and passionate about them” (p. 49). Furthermore, people’s identities and agency are formed dialectically and dialogically in these “as if” worlds (p. 49). “As if” worlds refer to sites of possibility (agency) and figured worlds are a social reality that lives within dispositions mediated by relations of power (Urrieta, 2007). This means that power is distributed within figured worlds. Participants become aware or are informed of how power works, explicitly and implicitly. Identities and agency forming dialectically and dialogically create a conflicting interplay between the “I” and the collective experience; the words come from others (Holland, Lachicotte, Skinner and Cain, 2003).

The concept of figured worlds is one of the four contexts that Holland, Lachicotte, Skinner and Cain (2003) suggest are sites where identities are produced. In this study, I focus on the ways in which students “figure” who they are in relation to the social types (gender, ethnicity, race) that populate the figured world of the literature circle and in social relationships with the people (peers, teacher) who perform in these worlds. Students develop new identities in figured worlds in the processes of participating in discourses organized by these worlds. I also examine how the figured world of the literature circle is the context for meanings of artifacts such as objects, events, and discourses. Discourses as the focus of analysis in this study provide the means to evoke local emerging forms within figured worlds and gain force by mediating the thoughts, feelings, and responses of individual students, “participants” within figured worlds.

Students are offered positions in different figured worlds. This means that students' distributions of rank, power, and prestige are limited to varying degrees of accepting, rejecting, negotiating, and even evoking, as I will exemplify; discourses-identities are being offered. In this respect, I also draw from Holland and colleagues the notion of the "space of authoring" as another context within figured worlds, to exemplify the ways local emerging forms are evoked, accepted, rejected and negotiated in social practice, therefore making choices (linguistic and experiential) about responding in particular ways. As students respond they shift into a conceptual world, in this case, to the conceptual world of race and racism wherein lies the possibility for making and creating new ways, artifacts, acts and discourses, for more liberatory worlds (Urrieta, 2007).

I think that the literature circle constitutes a figured world for several reasons. The first is that a figured world is a cultural phenomenon. A literature circle is a construct of the culture of the classroom, thus children are recruited, can enter, and develop through participating with others. Second, figured worlds function as contexts of meanings. As will be exemplified, in this context the children construct meaning through dialogue and as they socially encounter and take positions. Children take meaning from the activities in and out of this world and situate them in a particular time and place. Third, the literature circle as a figured world is socially constituted, organized and reproduced. Children learn to relate to each other in diverse ways. And lastly, the literature circle as a figured world is a site where identities are produced. Children "figure out" who they are through activities and in relation to the social types that populate these social relationships with the people who perform within these worlds (Urrieta, 2007, p. 108). All the children in this study are figuring out who they are in relation to others, what they bring to the literature circle, and their performance role within the literature circle. This does not mean that identities are finalized as identities are consistently in flux. Identity, according to Holland,

Lachicotte, Skinner and Cain (2003), combines metaphorically both the intimate or personal world with collective forms and social relations.

Sociocultural practice theory moves beyond static and fixed notions of identity. To go beyond viewing identity as culturally deterministic or situational, identity and self are viewed in this study as racial identities forming during activity. Within the figured world of literature circles, racial identities are formed and reformed because children are actively engaged with the environment. In addition, the different ways in which we participate in different activities with different people, cultures and institutions constitute identities. Ideologies shape and set the context for people to tell others who they are and further, to tell ourselves who we are. Bakhtin (1981) reminds us that identity is always experienced as a dispersed, unfinished process; the self is always unboundaried and transgressing.

The figured world of the literature circle is a site of possibility for orchestrating racial identities, the way we make meaning of ourselves is in Bakhtin's terms, "authoring self." The meaning that is attributed to the literature through dialogue, allows children to mediate individually and collectively their own and other's thoughts and behaviors. In other words, both book and dialogue serve as pivots, thus enabling them to shift themselves into a conceptual world and to go beyond their immediate surroundings. Literature circles conceptualized as a figured world, are an "as if" generic world. This means that students become actors as they participate in and shape this world through their discourses, performances, and artifacts. Not only have they carried out such tasks as expressing colorblind statements, dichotomous black/white racial perspectives, essentialized statements, and embodied identities, but these various characters have particular styles of interacting that shape themselves as well as the others

and have perspectives that are distinguished and oriented toward the figured world of literature circles. Holland, Lachicotte, Skinner and Cain, (2003) remind us that we are always in the flux of doing something, the “something being historically, collectively defined and meaningful, socially produced” (p. 53).

Literature circles are a space imbued by the kinds of people who frequent them. Likewise, conventional forms of activity become impersonated (Holland et al. 2003). This means that the way we express ourselves, the discourses we bring to an activity, the emotions and places to which we go, situate us to claim and to identify with social categories and positions of privilege in relation with whom we interact.

From this perspective, relevant discourses of these six and seven-year-old students emerged from the cross group analysis - for example, colorblindness and essentializing discourses. I explore how these racial discourses are represented and constructed and serve as pivots in students’ racial understandings and search for meanings. The colorblindness and essentializing discourses initiate linkages and evoke the emergence of local forms such as “specialness” and “brown” discourses, to mention only two, through the ways students respond to their immediate surroundings. In other words, I frame literature circles as a figured world, as a social reality, and a site of possibilities where students conceptually and substantially produce new self understandings. With this in mind then, the figured world of literature circles is populated by Puerto Rican students who engage in a range of acts or changes of state (students, advocates, reproducers of dominant discourse), moved by a set of forces (political, familial,, collegial).

Holland, et al. (2003) offer a valuable account of identity-in-practice that moves educators from the notion of official racial labeling and exposes the complexity of the self forming and reforming within various social contexts (time, place, space) including education. This theory of identity in practice enables teachers and students to view self agency to improvise through dialogue as social praxis on the politics of everyday life, and to transform by moving beyond the fixed notion of identity in education. Specifically, racial identities map out our participation in socially produced and culturally constructed activities. This theory of identity in practice enables teachers and students to move beyond the fixed notion of identity in education.

Rosenblatt's concept of "evocation" within the figured worlds of literature circles

Conceptually, literature circles emerge from Rosenblatt's transactional theory of reading or reader response theory. Literature circles are inextricably embedded in social practice theory since cultural resources such as literature and conceptual democracy are strongly intertwined and conceived as pivots or mediating devices that enable children to shift from their immediate surroundings to the conceptual world of race, and also to organize their thinking, actions and responses, thus evoking new discourses and responses. I draw on Rosenblatt's concept of evocation which is part of the transaction between reader, author and text, within the continuum of aesthetic and efferent stances. Rosenblatt's reading response theory explores how readers read, interpret, evaluate and criticize literature (Cai, 2008, p.213). Within this transaction, a range of responses from Rosenblatt's perspective are better understood if they are seen as part of a continuum between aesthetic stance and efferent stances. Readers move between reading for reflection, interpretation and analysis, and for action after reading. The personal experience

(aesthetic) includes evocation and response. Readers “evoke” a story world or social world (Beach, 2008) from the text and respond to what is being evoked. Within the continuum of aesthetic and efferent stances, the reading moves from and for, ideologies that are experienced, and the reader’s belief system and sociopolitical issues are constructed from the evocation and response to others’ texts. Subject positions (Beach, 1993) are taken within the aesthetic stance where ideological stances constitute racial discourses and identities. These positions constitute ways of responding as children “live through experience” along with the text and other’s texts, dialogically and dialectically. According to Cai (2008) the efferent stance is when ideologies and the reader’s belief system are experienced and, the aesthetic stance is when young children experience reflection and critical analysis of the text itself, but also the connections between literature and their’s and other’s literary experiences.

Evocation should be understood within the figured world of literature circles as a component of the transaction between young children’s experiences and the text moving around on the continuum of aesthetic and efferent stances influenced by social, cultural and political factors that are present and essential within dialogue. Children’s conflicting racial discourses are created as others’ voices come together and evoke particular responses, such as through embodied identities.

Literature Review: Literature circles as a figured world within educational contexts

Research in education that conceptualizes figured worlds, identity, and agency has been presented in diverse ways and in diverse educational contexts. In 2002 a group of researchers from a range of disciplines gathered important articles in *The Urban Review*, in 2007. This

volume recompiled the work of educational researchers using Holland et al. 2003 practice theory of identity and concept of figured worlds in educational contexts. Figured worlds was the central concept of their research space. For example, Leander (2002) and Wortham (2004) focused their work on African American youth within a school context. Urrieta's (2007) data was collected in California between 2001 and 2003. His research examined a broader figured world by focusing on how 24 Mexican Americans became Chicana/o Activists and later Chicana/o Activists-Educators. His research focused on the participants' conceptual and procedural identity production in local Chicana/o activist figured worlds in colleges and universities.

Other studies have focused on high school literacy practices against the larger constructs of school, work and family. Lutrell and Parker (2001) focus their work on literacy practices and identity production within the figured world of high school, and Boaler and Greeno (2000) look at how two different classroom settings afford students different perspectives and identities as mathematics learners. Most of the research on figured worlds is situated in high school settings with Latina/os and African Americans.

Critical Discourse Analysis

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is a social theory and analytical tool that enabled me to examine children's racial discourses in social practice, thus a way of signifying experience from a particular perspective. This view of language is essentially important in this study as language is regarded as potentially ideological and discourses are tied to action. Discursive practices entail social and cultural change and contribute to change in knowledge, social relations

and social identities. The work of Fairclough (1995) helps expand on the inextricable interrelationships of identity, ideology and discourse.

History of CDA

I begin this section with a brief history of CDA in order for the reader to have a sense of the emergence of CDA as a social theory and analytical tool, and in order to contextualize the purpose and aim of CDA as a social theory. During the 1960's, the civil rights movement and women's movement were accompanied by a broader linguistic turn in the social sciences and the proliferation of post-structural and post modern theories. The 1970s were characterized by the transformation of linguistic theories and methods in the social sciences that evolved from traditional linguistics to interactional linguistics and then to critical linguistics. Critical linguistics considers questions related to society, and Halliday's (1975, 1978) Systematic Functional Linguistic (SFL) is a theory of language emphasizing the meaning-making process that informed both critical linguistics and then critical discourse analysis. During the 1990s, a group of scholars such as Fairclough, Kress, van Dijk, van Leeuwen and Wodack, discussed theories and methods specific to CDA. Researchers in education turned to CDA as a way to make sense of the ways in which people make meaning in educational contexts. Moreover, CDA is an approach that educational researchers turned to for addressing questions about the relationship between language and society within educational contexts.

Early examples of linguistic analysis in educational research grew out of the lenses of sociolinguistics (Gumperz, Labov, Sinclair and Coulthard), linguistic anthropology and the ethnography of communication (Gumperz and Hymes). For example, Sinclair and Coulthard (1975) developed a framework for coding teachers' and students' discursive acts within

classroom talk. Cazden's (1988 and 2001) research focused on a descriptive analysis of classroom talk. Both emphasize micro-interactions. In addition, other scholars from the disciplines of sociology and cultural studies looked to classrooms and schools to theorize about the ways in which social structures are reproduced through educational institutions.

Critical discourse analysis was an attempt to bring social theory and discourse analysis together to describe, interpret and explain the ways in which discourse constructs, represents and becomes represented by the social world. It stems from three overlapping intellectual traditions, each emphasizing the linguistic turn in the social sciences: Derrida and Foucault, Butler (Feminist post-structuralism) and Kress, Halliday and Pennycook (critical linguistics). Critical discourse analysis (CDA) has its roots in critical linguistics (Fowler, Hodge, Kress, & Trew, 1979; Kress, 1985; Kress & Hodge, 1979) and systemic functional linguistics (Halliday, 1989, 1994). Fairclough (1992) makes clear that CDA varies from critical linguistics in that it attends to the micro linguistics aspects of grammar including cohesion, syntactical construction, metaphors, and themes, but treats the text as a social practice rather than as a social product.

CDA focuses on how language as a cultural tool mediates relationships of power and privilege within social interactions, institutions and bodies of knowledge. Language is a social practice, and because not all social practices are created and treated equally, all analysis of language is inherently critical.

Discourses and Critical Discourse Analysis: Social Practice

Scholars in the academic area of discourse analysis and critical discourse analysis conclude that discourse is a concept that is a common currency, used to refer to classroom,

academic, and work place discourses. These discourses have been defined differently by many scholars from a variety of disciplines (Mills, 2004, van Dijk, 1997). I will extend the discussion of discourses in order to understand critical discourse analysis. One of the definitions of discourse is that it is “language above the sentence” developed by patterns (structure and organization) at a higher level than a sentence (Schiffrin, 1994). In other words, the focus is on the way different units function in relation to each other. Other definitions are of discourse as language use and discourse viewed as a system (organized socially and culturally as a way of speaking) through which particular functions are realized (Schiffrin, 1994, p.32). This assumes an interrelationship between language and context. Another definition that goes beyond “language use” is “discourse is language use relative to social, political and cultural formations” (Jaworski and Coupland, 2006, p. 2). In other words, it is not only language reflecting social order, but also language shaping social order and shaping individuals’ interaction with society. Discourses are social; they reflect and construct the social world and are constituted dialectically and dialogically. Language is viewed as social, an instrument of power and control; it is not powerful on its own, but gains power by the use of powerful people, and as an instrument of the social construction of reality, a form of action that entails what people do to, or for, or with each other (Gee, 1996). Thus, language is a social and an interactive phenomenon in which ideologies are embedded in discourse and where these are constructed. It enables us to understand society and how people respond to it.

Rosenblatt (1994) argues that the reading act is a complex social nexus; that language is a socially generated and socially generative phenomenon (p.20). In this sense, our reality is discursively constructed and discourse is never a product, but a set of consumptive, productive, distributive, and reproductive processes that are in relation to the social world (Fairclough, 1995;

Rogers, 2004). Fairclough (1992) means by “reproduction” the mechanisms through which societies sustain their social structures and social relations over time.

Discourse is a contested concept since there are conflicting and overlapping definitions that emerged from different theoretical and disciplinary paradigms. Gee (1996, 2006) contrasts little d with Big D discourses, whereas little d discourses are a stretch of language that makes sense. Gee (1996), for example, points to stories, reports, essays, and conversations as part of Discourses with Big D which are “ways of being in the world, or forms of life” that allow membership and recognition within particular social networks. Gee (1996, 2006) defines discourses with capital D as “ways of being in the world, or forms of life which integrate words, acts, values, beliefs, and social identities, as well as gestures, glances, body positions, and clothes” (p. 127). In other words Discourse is like an identity kit and more than just language, allowing recognition within a social network. According to Kress (2002) discourses are “systemically organized sets of statements give expression to the meanings and values of an institution” (p.11). Also, they define, describe, and delimit what is possible to say.

Fairclough (1992) points out that discourse is not only a mode of action in which people may act upon the world and among each other, but a mode of representation in which a dialectical relationship exists between discourse and social structure, the latter being a condition for and an effect of social practice. In this way he concludes that discourse is the following:

“Shaped and constrained by social structure in the widest sense and at all levels. Socially constitutive; constituting all the dimensions of social structure. Discourse is a practice not just representing the world, but constituting and constructing the world in meaning. (p.64).”

Discourses involve more than language. Interestingly, from a perspective of identity in social practice, Holland, Lachicotte, Skinner and Cain (2003) define discourses of the self as relevant, but not as indicators of a pervasive culture. Rather, they consider discourses of the self as living tools, or living artifacts, meaning that the living tools build the self in contexts of power; they are not expressions of stable or essentialist interpretations of the world. Bakhtin (1981) defines discourse as “language in its concrete totality” (p. 103). Bakhtin means that the self and the words are socially contextualized to struggle; discourses are conflicting, overlapping or intersecting, what Bakhtin calls heteroglossia. Language is regarded as potentially ideological, and Discourses are tied to action since discourse practices entail social and cultural change and contribute to change in knowledge, social relations and social identities.

Simultaneously, discourses and ideologies constitute what Gee (2006) calls discourse models and which others refer to as cultural models (Holland & Quinn, 1987). Gee (1996) conceives discourse models as unconscious theories we embrace that help us to make sense of texts and the world. In other words, discourse models are rooted in the practices of sociocultural groups of people; they are the taken-for-granted stereotypes, ways of knowing. I share with Holland et al. (2003) the opinion that cultural forms or cultural models are the taken-for-granted standard scenarios that we collectively produce and participate in daily. I think cultural models or discourse models are theories that we construct out of competing and conflicting discourses which are constituted in ideologies. Cultural models allow us to function with ease in the world, but at the price of stereotypes and routines that limit new possibilities. In this way, Fairclough’s (1995) concept of naturalized discourse as taken-for-granted common sense ideologies is an

effective mechanism for sustaining hegemony. A text (oral or written) is produced in a discursive event, which is an instance of language use analyzed as text, discursive practice (production, distribution and consumption of a text) and social practice. The orders of discourse are then the totality of discursive practices of an institution, and relations between them that become naturalized discourse (Fairclough, 1995). Cultural models hold within them values and perspectives on people and reality (Gee, 1996). They allow us to move and function in the world with ease as we grow within, for example, the cultural models of home and school. Identities are constituted by ideologies, through naturalized language, and social relations. Ideologies exist among people and are shared across books and media, but also in a mediated form of political and economic structures. These guide and norm what we think and value, how we act and talk, and interact.

Moving beyond discourse as “language use,” Fairclough (1995) has defined discourse as “use of language seen as a form of social practice” (p.7), and a way of signifying experience from a particular perspective (p.135) Fairclough views language as social and discourse as shaped by relations of power and invested in ideologies. He states that issues of power and ideology are inextricably embedded in language; thus, discourse analysis is reformulated and seen as an exploration of how texts, both oral and written, function at all levels within a sociocultural practice. Fairclough (1992) draws from Foucault’s work on discourse to refer to discourse as the different ways of structuring knowledge and social practice. For Foucault (1982), power is explicitly linked to knowledge and is not found in, but is constructed in and through language. In this way, Foucault argued that social meanings are not constructed only

through language, but power relations and subjectivities are negotiated through discursive practices. Foucault (1982) states that, “power is not totally entrusted to someone who would exercise it alone, over others, in an absolute fashion; rather, this machine is one in which everyone is caught, those who exercise this power as well as those who are subjected to it” (p. 19).

Discourses are always politically, socially, and economically constituted. Thus, all discourses are ideological as language being shaped by political, social, racial and economic ideologies, but also as always produced and reproduced, and sustaining dominant societal structures. Discourse is a force which functions within specific assemblages with other forces. This means that different contexts invite different assemblies; language and context are a two way dynamic relationship that assembles meaning, which is an image that is framed based on the construction of the context in that here-and-now-moment and on our past experiences. Interestingly, in the same way Fairclough (1992) states from a Foucaultian perspective that discourses do not just reflect or represent social entities and relations, but they construct or constitute them. Moreover, different discourses constitute key entities in different ways and position people in different ways as social subjects. I think the social effect of discourse is the focus on discourse analysis. However, Fairclough (1995, 1992) clearly states his theoretical framework by combining a Bakhtinian theory of genre (in analysis of discourse practice) and a Gramscian theory of hegemony. On the one hand, Fairclough (1995) draws from Gramsci’s concept of hegemony which highlights both how power relations constrain and control productivity and creativity in discourse practice, and how relatively stabilized configurations of discourse practices constitute one domain of hegemony (p.2). On the other hand, he draws from

Bakhtin's (1981) intertextuality to then arrive at interdiscursivity via Kristeva's work to explain his notion of production, distribution and consumption

The work of Fairclough (1995) helps expand on the embeddings of identity, ideology and discourse. Critical discourse analysis is a social theory and method in which we describe, interpret and explain the relationship between language and society. Critical discourse analysis is concerned with the hidden agenda of discourse, its ideological dimension (Rogers, 2004). This means that it searches for salient features such as the political and ideological, which are rooted in particular power relations, and which could be dismissed as not evident to people. Fairclough combines a social theory with a linguistic theory. Thus, CDA looks to establish connections between the complexity of features in texts (the ways in which texts are put together and interpreted), discursive practice (text production, consumption and distribution) and wider sociocultural practice.

Fairclough and Wodak (1997) offer eight foundational principles of CDA:

- CDA addresses social problems
- Power relations are discursive
- Discourse constitutes society and culture
- Discourse does ideological work
- Discourse is historical
- A sociocognitive approach is needed to understand how relations between texts and society are mediated.
- Discourse analysis is interpretative and explanatory and uses a systemic methodology.
- CDA is a socially committed scientific paradigm.

CDA and social practice theory-figured worlds are inextricably interrelated since they allow researchers to look at language from a critical perspective, to understand how children negotiate within social practice issues of race, and to explore how racial identities form and reform in complex ways.

Literature Review: CDA as a social theory and analytical tool in educational contexts

Scholarly research has examined young children's responsive patterns when approached by the teacher's questions (Cazden, 1978), and young children's responses to children's literature (Sipe, 1998, 1999, 2002, 2002, 2001). Recent scholarship through critical theoretical and methodologies by Rogers, 2002; Martínez-Roldán, 2006; López-Robertson 2006; Enciso, 2008; and Lewis, C. & Birr Moje, E., 2003 has provided a spectrum of research on children's discourses within classrooms and literature circles from a critical sociocultural approach. This means that issues of power relations, gender and identity are addressed and emphasized by means of critical approaches to learning.

CDA as an analytical method in education focuses on the relationship between language form and function, the history of the practices that construct present-day praxis, and how social roles are acquired and transformed. There are a range of approaches in CDA studies by educational researchers. For example, according to Rogers (2004), some are interested in how texts are put together (Blome & Carter, 2001; Lemke, 1992; Peyton-Young, 2001) or in studies of policies (Collins, 2001; Corson, 2000; Woodside-Jiron, 2002) and interactions in classrooms and schools (Bloome & Egan-Robertson, 1993; Kuma-ravadively, 1999; Moje, 1997; Rogers, 2003). One group of studies that interests me analyzes the interactional patterns among readers

and texts, and between readers in literature circles, (Martínez-Roldán, C., 2003; Martínez Roldán, C., 2005; Rogers, R., 2002; Lewinson, M, Van Sluys, K, & Seely Flint, A., 2006; Lewis, C. & Moje, E., 2007). According to Rogers (2005) all of these researchers are concerned with critical theory, the relationship of language and discourse in constituting the social world, and a methodology that allows them to describe, interpret, and explain such relationships.

Rogers, Malancharuvil-Berkes, Mosley, and Hui (2005) published an article which reviews the research literature on CDA in education. Their purpose was to provide a critical and integrative review of CDA across five databases in the social sciences (Web of science, MLA, PsycINFO, ERIC, and ArticleFirst) with the search term *critical discourse analysis*, from the years 1993 through 2003 by interrogating theory, methods, and implications. Their questions were: What happens when Critical Discourse Analysis crosses the boundaries into education research? In what ways do education researchers use CDA? How can the use of CDA in educational contexts inform us about method and theory? This search led the authors to locate 284 works that used Critical Discourse Analysis, which resulted in 40 articles that employed CDA in the context of education. The articles provided a range of educational contexts, national locales and diverse approaches to CDA as an analytical method. For example, these studies examine policy documents (Ailwood & Lingard, 2001), written standards and test documents (Anderson, G., 2000), textbooks in Japan (Barnard, C., 2001), college students in a Turkish university classroom (Bartu, H.; 2001) college students in the United States (Bergvall, V., & Remlinger, K., 1997), university colleges of education studying texts about education reform in the U.S. (Bloome, & Carter, 2001) public speeches in a secondary classroom in the U.K. (Baxter, 2002), high school students of African origin in Canada within a social studies class (Brown, D. & Kelly, J., 2001), class discussions in a high school in the UK (Chouliaraki, 1998), the call for

national and state-level educational standards in the U.S. (Collins, 2001), an Italian teacher in a school in South Australia with a social justice agenda (Comber, 1997), monthly meetings of a board of trustees in a secondary school in New Zealand (Corson, 2000), three adolescents of Puerto Rican and African descent in a community writing program in a New England urban middle school (Egan-Robertson, 1998), U.K. Higher Education (Fairclough, 1993), third and fourth grade ESL students (Hispanic) and teachers in an urban magnet school in the U.S. (Gebhard, 2002), children six and seven years old in six schools in London (Tunstall, 2001), and (Beach, 1997) provides a useful theoretical perspective for understanding how competing discourses constitute the meaning of social practices in discourse contexts. Some studies did define CDA, but did not state the purpose or questions of research; thus, did not provide their context of study, data sources or data analysis, and so were not applicable (Rogers, Malancharuvil-Berkes, Mosley, and Hui, 2005).

I point out the three studies that were included in the reviewed literature and informed my interest in CDA methodology: white high school students and their teacher in chemistry class (Moje, 1997), Latina/o primary-grade students problem posing in meetings within an urban bilingual elementary school (Orellana, 1996), and three African American children across two schools in the U.S. (Rogers, Tyson, & Marshall, 2000),

Recently, teachers and researchers in the U.S. have turned to CDA to explore the interrelationships between language and society in their classrooms. I located other research using CDA and literature circles or class discussions. However, Rogers (2005) makes clear that researchers such as van Dijk have proposed changing the name Critical Discourse Analysis to Critical Discourse Studies because the term “analysis” suggests that research is focused on

analysis and thus the approach leaves out the theory. However, critical discourse analysis is both a theory and a method. I include and consider both Gee's approach to CDA as well as Fairclough's perspectives on the research that I located. These take into account my area of research interest and thus the selection of the body of inquiry focuses on children's dialogue (oral "texts") in literature circles.

In order to have a clear understanding of the CDA approaches in these studies, I decided to adapt the methodology of Rogers, Malanchavuril-Berkes, Mosley, & O'Garro Joseph (2005) to review critical discourse analysis studies in education and to enable me to have a better understanding of recent CDA perspectives and approaches in education. My intention is to focus on CDA concerning young children's dialogue (oral texts) within literature circles in and out of school, which creates a significantly narrower focus than Rogers et al. Only recently have teachers turned to CDA to explore the interrelations of language and society in their classrooms, so this terrain is still relatively unexplored. Studies that inform me include Lewis, Ketter, and Fabos, (2001) who examine how discussions of multicultural young adult literature among a group of white, rural teachers and researchers were shaped by sociopolitical contexts and participants' constructions of racial identity, the deconstruction of the social construction of race in four children's books in a teacher education course (Rogers, & Christian, 2007), exploration of the special education referral process as an institutional site for exploring the intersections of power, discourse and subjectivities (Rogers, 2003), and eighth grade students' use of a community-based set of texts to create identity of themselves and each other in relation to their community (Egan-Robertson, 1998).

These are important and inform researchers about the complexity of literacy and CDA within the diverse domains in educational contexts. According to my research interest of children's discourses in literature circles, I identified four studies from 2002-2008 which range in ethnicity, language, communities and grade- levels. The CDA research in this area concerns young bilingual students' discussions of literature, examining children's gender ideologies (Martínez-Roldán, 2005), children's use of diverse textual resources and critical practices in relation to how they situate themselves within larger social discourse (Van Luys, Lewison, & Seely, 2006), critical discussions around literature with African American adolescents in an inner-city community, (Rogers, 2002), and an eighth grade English language arts class's responses to literature and how micro and macro relations of power shape peoples' subjectivities, identity enactments, and agency through or via cultural models and discourses (Lewis, & Moje, (2008). In **Table A** I illustrate a summary of the CDA research that I reviewed for this study.

I begin my evaluation by reporting the major themes across the articles, by looking at the multiple ways in which CDA has been defined and then exploring the contexts in which CDA is situated, and noting the relationship of CDA to the methods and how these are employed by education researchers. I see that across these CDA research studies there is not a uniquely "right" approach to critical discourse analysis. Different approaches fit different issues, and sometimes, according to Gee, (2006), can reach similar conclusions. I conclude that the researchers combined theories and methods, such as sociocultural theory with transactional theory and Gee's (2006) CDA approach (Martínez-Roldán, 2003), critical literacy, literature circles and theories of learning (Vygotsky, 1978). Additionally, other theoretical combinations are multicultural literature employed within a political and historical understanding and Fairclough's analytical CDA approach, (Rogers, 2002).

In another study Moje and Lewis, (2008), sociocultural and critical perspectives were bundled, and the analytical framework was combined with both activity theory and CDA, creating a hybrid of Gee's (2006) discourse analytic perspective and Fairclough's (1992, 1995) with cultural studies. These researchers created a method of analysis that (Moje & Lewis, 2008) call a critical sociocultural theory. Lewison, & Seely, (2006) combine critical literacies with classroom discourse, and their analytical method combines grounded theory, critical literacy framework and critical discourse analysis.

Table I: CDA Literature Review Research Summary

Publication	Definition of CDA	Research focus/ Questions	Context of study	Data sources	Data analysis
Martinez-Roldan, C. (2003) US	Did not provide definition	An examination of 7 year-old Mexican girl narratives shaped identity construction	Literature discussions in a bilingual elementary school, Tucson, AZ	Audio tapes and transcripts of over a school year, 15 literature circles	Qualitative case study –the author uses for this study a third layer analysis, using Gee’s CDA approach (semiotic building, world building, socioculturally situated identities)
Van Luys, K.; Lewison, M; & Seely, Flint, A, (2006) US	Did not provide definition	Process and practices of one classroom conversation-Two girl’s explorations on issues of hairstyle, race, and cultural identity.	Multiage classroom (4th through 6th) in public elementary school in a Midwest university town	Audio tape and transcripts, also artifacts	Gee’s situated meanings, social languages, cultural models and situated identities
Rogers, R., (2002) US	“CDA is a pedagogical and analytical framework for teachers and researchers who are interested in changing unequal power relations” “I use CDA to examine the tension spots in the discussion group”	Two year study of critical discussions around literature with African American Adolescents in an inner-city community	Literature discussion group within a family and two adolescent girls living in an urban neighborhood	Field notes and transcripts	Fairclough (1995) three tiered framework of overlapping orders of discourse: local, institutional and societal
Lewis, C. & Moje, E. (2008) US	“CDA how discourse both shapes and is shaped by social process and institutions” “The power of CDA is in its methodological precision, which enables the analyst to illustrate how power and Discourse are produced in day-to-day discourse, and further, how these productions reflect and instantiate systems, structures, and institutions” (p. 23) “CDA allows for an analysis that articulates the between microlevel activity and macrolevel activity social structures. CDA examines genres, styles and discourses as they relate to one another to produce orders of discourse that instantiate powerful social orders” (p. 23).	8th grade English language arts classroom in a two way bilingual immersion public school, urban area. The school is a predominantly Latina/o community within the city. Data was drawn from a larger, ongoing ethnography of the schools and community conducted by Moje since 1998.	Class discussion drawing from a chapter book in which the students had to choose a topic or thesis prompted by the book to defend the thesis in writing.	Writing artifacts, transcripts	“Hybrid” of Gee’s discourse analytic perspective global analysis (semiotics or signs are established, the worlds are built, Fairclough’s analytic tools for examining turn-taking, exchange structures, modalities, politeness, ethos and focusing on the types of verbs used, the participants included and excluded, and how participants are named (p.27).
Martinez-Roldan, C. (2006) (US)	“CDA , both as theory and method, provide tools to examine children’s discussions...CDA enables the study of language in its relation to society and ideology...CDA has been successfully used to uncover the workings of power and ideologies in the language practices of adults.	2nd grade in a Spanish/English bilingual class (Southwestern, US) Yearlong interpretive study	Examined Bilingual children’s gender ideologies in discussions of texts	Participant observations, audiotapes, and transcripts	Gee’s six building tasks

Martínez-Roldán (2005) specifically employs Gee's CDA perspective, and combines social and critical perspectives of learning and ideology, Latina/o critical and Chicana epistemology with Gee's six building tasks and Fairclough's social theory.

There are many ways of approaching CDA and the procedures as well. This has been a dispute among researchers and scholars of CDA, whether the analytic procedures of CDA should be more standardized or not. The scholars and researchers who argue that CDA should be applied more systematically and rigorously counter the critics who say, "CDA researchers search their data for what they are trying to prove, instead of letting the data 'speak' (Rogers, 2005, p.379).

The researchers' analytical methods in these studies ranged both in terms of the diversity of theories as well as in their analytic approaches. For example, Martínez-Roldán (2003) and Sluys, Lewison, and Seely, (2006) did employ Gee's analytical tools; the difference relies on the issues and questions that they wanted to examine through the data which led them to select from Gee's analytical tools the ones that were pertinent according to their data and questions. For example, Martínez-Roldán (2003) used both of Gee's analytical tools or tools of inquiry. These tools are situated identities, situated meanings and Discourses along with Gee's notion of semiotic building, world building, and socioculturally situated identities. Martínez-Roldán (2005) also used Gee's six building tasks, but theoretically emphasized Fairclough's social theory. On the other hand, Van Sluys, Lewison, & Seely, (2006) employed Gee's discourse model, specifically focusing on situated meanings, social languages and cultural models to

understand how issues of status, solidarity, and power were at work as the girls in the study discussed hair. CDA was particularly employed as a third analytical lens with the specific purpose of analyzing practices. Moje & Lewis (2007) employed a hybrid of Gee's (2006) discourse analytical perspective and Fairclough's (1992, 1995) perspective to analyze linguistic constructions.

Both Van Sluys, Lewison, and Seely (2006) and Moje and Lewis (2007) employed a "hybrid" of approaches, what has been identified as "collapsing" theories of discourse under that of critical discourse analysis. For example, Moje and Lewis (2007) began their research with Gee's global analysis which requires asking questions about how semiotics are established, how worlds are built, how activities get constructed, how identities are made available or recognized, and how political alliances and connections across peoples, spaces, times, and concepts are built. Then they employed Fairclough's (1992) analytical tools for discursive practices.

Rogers (2002) employed Fairclough's (1992, 1995) three tiered model or three dimensional conception of discourse differently in relating to the analytical aspect. For example, the first thing in that analysis revolved around the ways in which Rogers (2002) as a researcher planned to be critical at the local, societal and institutional levels and the other was the analysis of the interactions in the group discussions and whether or not asymmetries in knowledge were being challenged, transformed, or maintained. On the one hand, she employed Fairclough's (1995) concept of reflexivity (monitoring one's own thoughts and actions, strengthening the epistemological landing stage of research)

within the domains of discourse at the local, institutional and societal levels, and on the other hand Fairclough's intersecting domains of analysis, description, interpretation and explanation.

The reviewed research on CDA demonstrates that CDA and researchers of CDA have overcome the emphasis or bias on written language which has historically characterized CDA. All the studies focused on interactional data. Also, the research illustrates the multifunctionality and forms CDA can take both as theory and method. Moreover, I think "hybridization" of methods is at the heart of CDA studies in education and in rethinking, if not reframing, sociocultural theory. However this is a contested issue among researchers and scholars.

From Fairclough's (1992, 1995) critical discourse analysis perspective, I draw on his three dimensional conception of discourse to illustrate the ways in which students within the figured world of literature circles, structure and restructure discourses through discursive practices, therefore leading to changes in language, as well as in social and cultural change. Order within discourses illustrate the ways in which students structure language and are embedded in discursive practices. Discursive practices are regularities, strategies that are characterized by rules that define the specificities of certain organizations or groups. Discourses are practices that systematically form the objects of which they speak (Foucault, 1982). CDA enables me to look at the ways in which students represent, construct, receive, and interpret language, and the social effects it has. Students' language choices work together in a network to form social practices; thus,

capturing the sociocultural processes in the course of their occurrence, in their entire complex, contradictory, incomplete and often-messy materiality (Rogers, 2003). Orders of discourse (genre, style, and discourse) form social practices and have an ordered set of discursive practices associated with a particular social domain or institution and boundaries between them. Discursive practice involves analysis of the process of production, distribution and consumption, making visible the relationship between language and society and the relationship between analysis and the practices analyzed.

I suggest a theoretical framework that draws from converging theories which center race in contemporary Puerto Rican society within reading and schooling experiences and structures. Therefore, through critical discourse analysis I examine children's explorations of racial discourses within the figured worlds of literature circles to account for the glaring variations in their use and meanings.

Conclusions

This theoretical framework reflects the continual dialogue between theorists and myself, informing this study. The theoretical framework also reflects the multiple and mixed thoughts and feelings which intend to encompass multiple views simultaneously. The intention is not meant to answer, correct, assert or extend, but to visualize theories where multiple voices and ideological interactions come to dialogue, inform, and communicate with each other, developing from text to text theoretically. This framework assimilates, contradicts, or echoes other texts.

I constructed a sociocultural framework that draws and invites us to join together a variety of theoretical perspectives. I combined aspects of Fairclough and Holland, Lachicotte, Skinner, and Cain, to emphasize the inextricable interrelationships between discourse and identity. I have situated literacy, not in the individual person or literacy as the “ability to read and write,” but in the social, in society, where hybridization (Bakhtin, 1981; González, 2003), the mixing of various languages, beliefs, knowledge, and perspectives emulsifies and enables us to conceptualize race and identity (González, 2003), where discourses as heteroglossia are dynamic through dialogized interaction (Bakhtin, 1981); (Gee, 1996, 2006) & (Fairclough, 1992, 1995), and where racial identities are forming and reforming (Holland, Lachicotte, Skinner, Cain, 2003) simultaneously in social practice. This theoretical framework reflects the continual dialogue between theorists and myself, informing this study.

I connected important concepts from each theorist, highlighting the inextricable interrelationships between race, discourse and identity. In this way I focused on dialogue. In a broader sense, Freire’s notion of dialogue as the means of reflecting, acting (*concientização*) and transforming is part of an educative experience and the essence of literature circles.

As a teacher researcher this theoretical framework views and invites one to open spaces like literature circles, to explore and gain a better understanding of the complexity of race, racial discourses and identities. From a critical literacy perspective, dialogue is important if not an essential part of taking action to transform. The social and cultural

change is envisioned with Freire (1987) who expresses that knowledge is made from experience, from educative experiences both in and out of school that are personal and social. Moreover, knowledge is constructed within the heterogeneity of meanings and forms of text (discourse practice) in literature circles and within the complex, unstable and innovative sociocultural practice (Fairclough, 1992, 1995). I think that engaging children to reflect actively and to want further ongoing experiences involves them in continuous praxis (reflection-action) and, as Freire (2000) states, allows them to “create history and become historical-social beings” (p.101). The critical issues (culture and race) and stances that children take in literature circles mediate their approximations and distances to construct a different lens for talking and thinking about ideologies, cultural assumptions, and racial talk. Reflecting upon and responding to the present realities that are imbued in the past and brought to the present in different sociocultural contexts such as literature circles, contributes to a more critical understanding of who we are and how we came to be. To be able to move back and forth consciously among different discourse communities to which we belong or will belong is important in the wider processes of social-educational and cultural change.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study points to how social and self racial identification, power relations, and embodied identities play out when children dialogue, read, and inquire within the figured world of literature circles. These literature circles are part of the academic activities within classrooms and schools. Specifically, this teacher research study looks at the ways students' racial discourses are being represented and constructed through discourse and the meanings that are constructed within literature circles. The processes through which students explore language choices and evoke the construction and production of cultural meanings are examined.

Methodological Framework: Reflections as a Teacher Researcher

I conducted teacher research in my multiage classroom of six and seven year-olds and collected data focusing on my initial inquiries concerning the state and school mandated curriculum in relation to children's conceptualizations of race. At the time of gathering the data I was struggling with an issue; I wanted to think about why I was required to stop in the middle of teaching a themed study and talk to my students about Christopher Columbus and the discovery of Puerto Rico, and whether this was even important for my country or for my students. I also wondered why this topic was transmitted in such a superficial or "light" manner. I struggled with acknowledging the purpose and importance and what children might know about this topic.

These inquiries led me to think about and look at how students can take a critical stance and dialogue about racial ideologies and cultural assumptions. I wondered about the role that social and personal discourses play in the process of reconstructing children's understandings of race and racial identities. How do children conceptualize their skin color within the context of literature discussion groups? What do children know about race? The beginning of my inquiry led me to constantly reflect about my practice and to take action in my classroom. I made curricular changes such as incorporating the learning through language component of a balanced literacy curriculum (Short, 2002), and realizing the importance of literature circles and the inclusion of Puerto Rican children's literature in the curriculum. This inquiry process is essential for a teacher researcher and a part of our daily duties as faculty at the University of Puerto Rico's laboratory elementary school. This teacher research study focuses on the questions that evolved as a result of my issue with the mandated curricular intrusion.

Teacher research can manifest in a variety of forms; each provides rich and distinctive perspectives on teaching and learning, is a generator of knowledge, and challenges assumptions about the relationships of theory and practice. Teacher research can be defined as systematic, intentional inquiry by teachers about their own school and classroom work (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1993). It is systematic in that there are ordered ways of gathering and recording information, documenting experiences inside and outside classrooms, and making some kind of written record for rethinking and analyzing classroom events. It is intentional since it is an activity that is planned rather than

spontaneous. It stems from and generates questions, and reflects teachers' desires to make sense of their experiences with children in classrooms.

Teacher research, like all other forms of research, in essence is a social and constructive process. In other words, it pursues action (change) and research (understandings) simultaneously (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1993). In this way, it is a cyclical process in which action and critical reflection occur through data gathering, analysis, taking action and collaborative planning based on the results of actions. In this cyclical process, on-going data analysis is essential. The methods, data and interpretation are continuously developed in light of new understandings that are expanded from the consistent and systematic process in which reflective collaborators engage to improve strategies, practices and knowledge of the contexts in which we take part. The site and setting of this study were selected because the complexity within the classroom initiated reflection and inquiry in me and thus I became a teacher researcher in response to immediate and valid professional concerns.

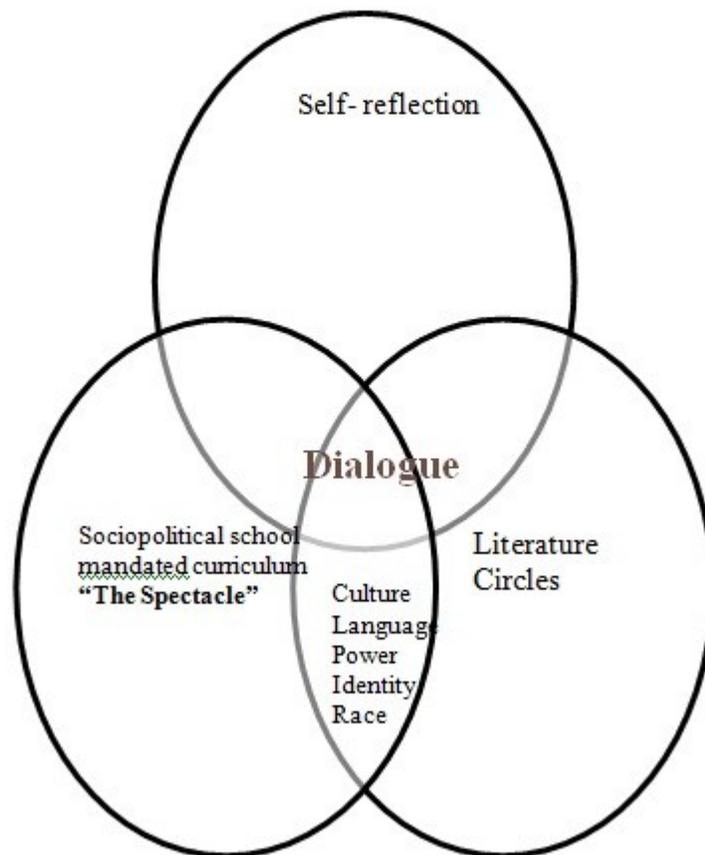
This action research study emerged from a desire to understand students and the connections they were making about race, through racial labels within dialogue, aiming to understand their connections from their perspectives. According to Hubbard and Power (1999) teacher research or action research is initiated and carried out by teachers in their classrooms, using their inquiries to discover essential questions, gather data, and analyze the data to answer those questions.

My primary goal in this dissertation study is to understand how children explore racial discourses and identities within the figured world of literature circles and thereby to improve my professional practice in specific and concrete ways. According to Marshall and Rossman (2006), action research blurs the distinctions between researcher and participants and strives for teachers to question and make changes in their practice. Being part of the classroom culture facilitates entry into the research site and establishes a democratic inquiry processes.

Below I present **Diagram A** which reflects my thinking process as a teacher researcher. This diagram reflects both how I perceive myself as a teacher researcher, and my thinking processes. The three circles are intertwined, meaning that each circle is interrelated, and as a teacher researcher in this research process I engaged in self reflection that had to do with critical issues such as race, power, and identity.

Diagram A: Thinking as a Teacher Researcher

(Patricia Castrodad-Rodríguez, 2007)



In other words, critical issues as the center focus are inextricably embedded the learning-through-language and literature circles as a component of a balanced literacy curriculum (Short, 2006), the school's sociopolitical curriculum, and my self-reflection as a teacher researcher. In this way, I analyze children's racial discourses that are part of the

sociopolitical sphere of school. Dialogue is in the center as well, cutting across the other spaces where discourses are produced and reproduced. I believe that all analysis begins with our personal histories and stories. This diagram enabled me to reflect upon my personal practice, racial ideologies and experiences, on the mandated curriculum and also the ways children were responding to it. It represents my reflection process as a teacher researcher, and how I conceptualize the role of a teacher researcher - one in which self reflection is essential in terms of the mandated curriculum, (or “The Spectacle”), and dialogue within literature circles.

The main focus of this analysis is how through dialogue, childrens explore racial discourses constituting an order of discourse and signifying their worlds as expressed within literature circles. I look at the ways children interact (style), the ways in which they positioned and where they are positioned (identity), and finally, their ways of representing (discourse) through dialogue within literature circles. This leads to the analysis of orders of discourse (Fairclough, 1992, 1995) within social practices. Across the five literature circles, students’ multiple ideological languages or social languages (Bakhtin, 1981) are structured and restructured into orders of discourse to constitute discursive practices. I realize that children, through dialogue within literature circles, use particular semantic and grammatical elements, for example, naturalized language (Fairclough, 1992) that constitute identities and discourses. The elements or cultural models that students draw from are framed in this study as living tools (Holland, Lachicotte, Skinner and Cain, 2003); students develop around and through these and construct particular identities and discourses within literature circles.

My intention is to systematically study students' racial discursive practices; how their ideological explorations of race is historically constructed and represented inconsistently and ambiguously through dialogue within the figured world present in literature circles.

Sociocultural Context: School and Classroom Communities

In this section I introduce the school, and briefly state the history, credentials and expectations of the school as part of the University of Puerto Rico. I also provide information on the students and their parents' demographic attributes to exemplify the diverse and richness of the school population. I describe the classroom and classroom curriculum, illustrating the rationale and purpose of literature circles and a brief introduction to both of the texts discussed in the literature circles. Finally, I present each student and the themes that emerged from each literature discussion group.

The school that serves as the site for this research is a laboratory elementary school's associated with a highly respected university institution in Puerto Rico. The University of Puerto Rico at Río Piedras, which was established in 1903 as a Normal School in order to prepare teachers, is the flagship institution of the island's public post secondary educational system. The university's lab school, the EEUPR, was founded in the early 1900s to provide field and clinical experiences for the preparation of teachers. In the 1940s, its mission broadened to serve as a laboratory for the development, research, and dissemination of educational innovations. By 1987, a Preschool Center for

audio impaired children was established as part of the EEUPR in coordination with the Department of Education of Puerto Rico in order to provide a center for demonstrating innovative teaching methods for deaf children. The school is located in metropolitan San Juan, the capital of Puerto Rico. It is a K-6 school that serves both the university community and also the general community. This means that the children in the school come from diverse backgrounds. Half of the children are from the university community where their parents are faculty, professors, and non-faculty staff such as office and maintenance employees. The other half are from the general community, children from the San Juan area and towns nearby apply to the school. The school is also an educational context and site for pre-service teachers to observe and engage in the everyday experiences of the school and classroom. Located in Río Piedras town in San Juan and at the edge of the University of Puerto Rico, near the Education Building, the school is separated from the university by a main avenue.

In 1992, the EEUPR became affiliated with the National Association of Laboratory Schools (NALS). The development of the EEUPR as a learning community (LC) has been guided by the school's philosophy, vision, and mission statements. As a laboratory school, the EEUPR aspires to provide an innovative educational model for The University of Puerto Rico, which will develop future educators. Likewise, the school expects to wholistically form elementary students through the principles of the learning community.

At the present time, the EEUPR has a current student population that reaches a total of 187 children enrolled in grades K to 6. As a result of the admission process, approximately 50% of the students are females and 50% are males. There is a lottery drawing of students for admission into kindergarten. Due to this effort, 50% of the students are children of employees from the UPR and 50% are from the general community. Ninety-six percent (96%) of the students are Hispanic with the remaining four percent (4%) belonging to other ethnic groups. Families comprising the student body of the EEUPR belong to either the middle or lower socio-economic class. Approximately 14% of the students are enrolled in the Special Education Program of the Department of Education of Puerto Rico. As a way to ensure a more personalized interaction between teachers and students, the average class size is nineteen students. Finally, there is a preschool center for the hearing impaired which serves a group of six students between the ages of three and five.

According to the Middle States Association report prepared by faculty members annually, the mission of the EEUPR fosters innovation, educational investigations, clinical experiences, curriculum development, and technology skills to contribute to the development of educators and other professionals related to the educational field in Puerto Rico and other countries. The school also offers educational experiences in which students construct their own knowledge and maximize their own potential based on the principles of the learning community. The educational experience the faculty strive for is to provide all students with the opportunity to develop higher level learning skills, openness to diversity, creativity, disposition towards collaboration, reflection, and

responsibility. Given the growing complexity of the mission it faces today, as an elementary school the EEUPR must overcome a unique set of challenges.

As faculty of the UPR Río Piedras Campus, which is an Intensive Research Institution of Higher Education, those members of the EEUPR hired after 1998 are required to complete a doctoral degree in education and expected to publish their research projects in peer journals. Thus, the standards for excellence are set high at this institution which influences the educational contexts within Puerto Rico. By conducting this research I am fulfilling that expectation.

Among the intellectual experiences that this learning community offers is the opportunity for children and faculty to walk around the university and access the facilities of the university as part of our curricular activities. The Museum of Anthropology, Art and History is one of the institutions at the university that we frequented and its openness to us is an example of how the university facilitates and fosters the elementary school generally and the students' learning process specifically.

Below I present **Tables I-IV** which provide an overview of parents' demographic employment attributes for each of the four literature discussion groups. In terms of the books discussed in each literature circle: Group 1 worked solely with *En la bahía de Jobos: Celita y el mangle zapatero* ; Groups 2 and 3 worked with both books; and Group 4 worked solely with *¡Hombre de color!*.

Table II: Parents' demographic attributes for Literature Group 1

Student	Age	Gender	Job-Father's	Job-Mother's
Germey	6	female	Professor Faculty of Education	Professor Faculty of Education
Sara	6	female	Medical Asistant – Department of Health	Physician - University of Puerto Rico Health Center
Raúl	7	Male	Non-academic staff - University of Puerto Rico	Sales representative -Private company
Roberto	7	Male	Administrative Staff - University of Puerto Rico	Secretary

Table III: Parents' demographic attributes for Literature Group 2

Student	Age	Gender	Job-Father's	Job-Mother's
Gaby	7	female	Asistant to the President of the University of Puerto Rico	Graduate student
Jescy	6	Male	Chef	Administrative Staff - University of Puerto Rico
Jaime	6	Male	Office of the register University of Puerto Rico	Stay at home
Joe	7	Male	Professor of Biology - University of Puerto Rico	Professor of Biomedics - University of Puerto Rico
Sheyda	7	female	Non-academic staff at the University	Retired

Table IV: Parents' demographic attributes for Literature Group 3

Student	Age	Gender	Job-Father's	Job-Mother's
Armando	6	Male	University Professor	Graduate student
Fabián	6	Male	No information	Private Company
Jorge	7	Male	No information is provided	Private sector-secretary
María	7	female	University of Puerto Rico Professor	Physician
Sofi	6	female	Dept. of Health	Unemployed -senate of Puerto Rico

Table V: Parents' demographic attributes for Literature Group 4

Student	Age	Gender	Job-Father's	Job-Mother's
Adri	7	Female	Private company	Administration University of Puerto Rico
Alex	6	Female	Lawyer	Microsoft
Angelica	7	female	Puerto Rico Telephone Company	Puerto Rico telephone company
Yara	6	female	Electric Company	Secretary-administration University of Puerto Rico

These tables exemplify the richness of our school and classroom communities. The sociocultural backgrounds of the children and their families enrich our experiences within the school and classroom contexts and thus enhance the learning processes.

The classroom: A collaborative context

My classroom context was comprised of twenty-one children, 10 girls and 11 boys. This group brought a rich diversity of backgrounds to the classroom. The literature circles maintained this richness of social diversity and also illustrated that our classroom was a multiage classroom. This meant that six and seven year-olds interacted with each other on a daily basis. One group, fortunately, remained for two years in the classroom, interacting with older students during the first year and younger students during the second. This type of classroom organization aims to recognize and acknowledge students' sociocultural backgrounds and knowledge about the world and literacy. All students work collaboratively and the teacher's role is to facilitate different experiences and opportunities in which students construct knowledge by thinking, questioning, dialoging, taking risks, and respecting one another.

I describe my classroom as a place wherein the children, parents and I actively collaborated. We sought help from one another, we wondered, thought and questioned, and made decisions together. We used reading and writing for a variety of purposes when we engaged in reading, writing, and dialogue for pleasure, to communicate, to think and question. We let others know something, made them think, and challenged preconceived ideas or notions through dialogue. At the same time, we developed multiple viewpoints and perspectives in order to understand our own and others' experiences and texts, in this case with written and oral language so as to lead to change. What is meant here by change is to move or go beyond our ideas and view the world differently from a critical lens (Vasquez, 2004). Language becomes a powerful tool

when students appropriate their literacy processes. Language became part of their everyday life and served as a way to question and expose social injustices in and out of school.

I began working at the University of Puerto Rico's Elementary Laboratory School in 2005 and left the school in 2007 to continue graduate studies in the United States in order to meet the requirement of obtaining a doctoral degree as the University of Puerto Rico Laboratory School expects from their faculty members. During those two years from 2005 to 2007 my position was as a classroom teacher for multiage students of six and seven years old. This was the first time I taught in this type of classroom organization. Before I had been working as a Kindergarten and first grade teacher in the Public School system in Puerto Rico. However, I simultaneously taught undergraduate courses related to reading and writing processes for the Faculty of Education at the University of Puerto Rico. My role at the laboratory school is two fold, teaching elementary school children and university undergraduate students. This means that my classroom is constantly visited by other faculty members, researchers and students who are preparing to become teachers. When I taught the undergraduate courses my classroom at the elementary laboratory school was the site for observing teaching and learning. I used concrete examples to stimulate thought about theory and practice. The experience at the elementary laboratory school has enriched my experiences in other academic areas. The school is an active member of the National Association of Laboratory Schools –NALS; this requires that faculty participate in committees and also as presenters, sharing our classroom experiences. In addition, I have had the opportunity

to visit exemplary schools such as Howard Gardner's elementary school and the Bank Street elementary school, both in New York City. These experiences enable me to share and establish communication with other teachers and teacher educators who support teacher research.

Classroom curriculum

My classroom curriculum was based primarily on theme units, intertwined with Halliday's (1985) learning language theory. My students had the opportunity to learn language by reading and being read to extensively. I read to my students every day, at least two to three times a day. They also learned about language by reflecting on their reading strategies and literary knowledge as they put this knowledge into practice. My students became strategic and effective readers. Together we learned through language by using language to inquire about the world and their own lives through theme units, day to day inquiry studies, and whole group read aloud discussions (Short, 1999). But, one important part of learning through language was hindered in my classroom, the discourses of the literature circle model. Most of the literacy curriculum was focused on "learning language" and "learning about language," and so I decided to integrate literature circles into my classroom curriculum.

My students and I had a diversity of literature discussions as a whole group and further explored concepts through reading aloud, whole group discussions, and field trips. These field trips included accessing two museums, one trip to the ceremonial park where

some of our Taíno Indians lived historically, and trips to the Museum of Anthropology, Art and History to study an important piece of art called *El Baquiné* or *El Velorio* (The funeral) painted by Francisco Oller. This painting represents the *Baquiné* which was a ceremony the Africans slaves had as a way of saying goodbye when a young child died. After having these diverse reading experiences we embarked on literature circles.

One of my reasons for initiating literature circles and integrating them to the curriculum was that I observed students who did not participate in whole group discussions when the occasions for dialogue were important. I also believe that within a critical theory framework, dialogue is essential in the process of reading the world and the word (Freire, 1987, 2000). Literature groups exemplify, not only the richness of a multiage classroom organization (by age and scaffolding), but also the richness of children's experiences and perspectives expressed within the literature circles.

The literature circles were conducted at two different times--one set of discussions in November about one picture book, *¡Hombre de color!*, written by Jérôme Rüiller (2004) and another round in December to discuss the picture book, *En la bahía de Jobos: Celita y el mangle zapatero* written by Ana Lydia Vega (2004). In addition, this book was read out loud as a whole group about 6 times prior to the literature discussion because of the complexity of the theme. This scheduling decision was based on the time it took for the children to engage in the dynamics of literature discussions, and also because it did not conflict with holidays.

There were six literature circle groups. In two of the literature discussion groups the students participated in only one literature circle, **Group 1** discussed *Celita y el mangle zapatero* and **Group 4** discussed *¡Hombre de color!*. Each of these groups was composed of four students in each. The other two literature discussion groups, **Groups 2** and **3**, discussed both *Celita y el mangle zapatero* and *¡Hombre de color!*. These groups had five students each. This is the ideal size for literature circles since it enables every participant to participate and engage in talk.

The children took the focus book home on a Thursday to read with a family member—parent, grandparent, brother, sister or cousin--and brought the book back the following Thursday. The children also took home post-it notes as a way of marking the pages they were interested in sharing in the literature groups. Also, on the post-it notes they wrote words or drew as ways of responding to the text in order to guide the discussion in the literature circles. My prompts before and during the literature circles were as follows: Who would like to start? (if needed); Did you find anything in the story that was intriguing or confusing?; Was there anything in the book that caught your attention? Why?; and Who would like to respond to (students' name)?

I selected the books for the literature circles for specific reasons. *En la bahía de Jobos: Celita y el mangle zapatero* was selected first and most importantly because it is about part of the history of Puerto Rico and is written and illustrated by two Puerto Ricans. The story is set in Puerto Rico, and describes the story of an African slave working in the sugar cane fields. The story takes the reader through Pablo Yandá's

journey to pursue freedom. The author, Ana Lydia Vega, is a well known and respected writer of Puerto Rican literature. Other reasons were because it is in Spanish, and it is very difficult to find children's literature written in Spanish, and especially about Puerto Rican history or a book that portrays social and historical issues concerning our culture. Most children's books in Spanish are translated from English and the translated versions come from Spain. The illustrator, Yolanda Pastrana Fuentes, is also a Puerto Rican artist, which makes the book, the text, and the reading enjoyable, applicable, and something pertinent to which the students have a strong attachment.

¡Hombre de color! by Jérôme Rüillier is a book that was first published in French as *Homme de Couleur!*. It is inspired by the African oral tradition and is actually an oral story that has been passed from generation to generation. Its theme is race. The book was purposefully selected because part of our cultural heritage is from Africa and I was interested in understanding how the students conceptualized their skin color. Through my observations at the beginning of the school year, I noticed that for a literacy event in the classroom, many students had difficulty choosing a shade of colored paper that most closely matched their skin color. The papers they selected were cut out as a child's silhouette and a diversity of skin tones characteristic of those found in Puerto Rico. The activity was intended to describe ourselves and exchange experiences with the idea of knowing better a new friend who had arrived in our classroom, and then, once selected, they could use different materials to personalize the silhouette. This event was a way of welcoming and knowing new friends in our classroom community.

I thought the book *¡Hombre de color!* would engage the children and myself to think about and explore issues of race. From my perspective, both books are intimately tied together by theme. On the one hand, *¡Hombre de color!* challenges preconceived notions about skin color and identity, and the book, *En la bahía de Jobos: Celita y el mangle zapatero*, is based on our history and African heritage. I think my students took different stances in the transaction with the texts, as there was a continuum in the stances as to their responses and interpretations. However, understanding our history and culture is interwoven with who we are and what cultures we come from.

Methods of data collection and analysis

This dissertation is based on case studies. Case studies are essential for understanding language use in a specific context such as literature circles. Genishi and Dyson (2005) emphasize that the complexity of human experiences leads researchers to case studies. The value of case studies is that a social unit (person, a group, a place or activity) becomes a case representing something, of some phenomena. Through case studies, researchers are able to understand some of the factors that shape the process through interpreting a specific context. The importance of case studies, according to Genishi and Dyson (2005), is that a detailed case is not the phenomenon itself, but the production of meaning and context. It is important to point out that within each particular context there are social activities which lead to interpretations and meanings, “what some phenomena means as it is socially enacted within a particular case” (Genishi & Dyson, 2005, p. 10). Ethnographic case study entails both context and meaning. Context is a

complex concept, and its meaning is not fixed. In this case, context entails not only the physical setting of people's actions, but a sociocultural setting which is constituted by social activities (literature circles). Moreover, it includes the larger ethnographic one reflected by historical economic, political and cultural forces. Hence, the physical environment is a set of racial discourses representing ideas and practices in the social domain. In this study, children within literature circles explore racial ideologies through dialogue. In other words, the powerful forces of racial ideological constructions are articulated and unfold as the children negotiate who informs, who speaks, what gets said, and the sort of meanings that become established. Foucault (1982) reminds us that the ways of talking and statements themselves capture the link between power and public meaning. In this way, children construct meaning of their worlds, how they explore and represent that experience and by the ways others are positioned and respond. From the perspective of a teacher researcher, a detailed case implies to see what and how racial discourses mean within the figured world of literature circles (phenomenon).

Cases are constructed, not found, (Genishi & Dyson, 2005) and as a teacher researcher I am interested in potential stories as racial discourses of human experience that overflow within the literature circles'. In addition, an ethnographic case study is appropriate in education when the intention is to advance a better understanding of a particular reality that may be susceptible to generalization. According to Merriam (1988), an ethnographic case study is characterized by its sociocultural interpretation. Its importance is referred to by Gilmore (1986), who states that "recent ethnographic research which examines language and literacy use in context has provided new insights

into the literacy competencies of pre-school and school age children” (p.155). Genishi and Dyson (2005) state the importance of both teachers’ and children’s interpretive frames that influence their ways of attending and responding to others within the social activity of literature circles.

I am interested in how children experience the world around them, and explore the racial world around them through their dialogue expressed in literature circles. I also intend to explore what a particular phenomenon means within a particular case, which is the collaborative construction of meanings and racial identities, expressed within the figured worlds of literature circles in the particular sociocultural context of Puerto Rico. The goals are to inform other teacher researchers and university researchers about how Puerto Rican children, specifically six and seven year-olds, conceptualize race and enact racial identities, and to understand the mediating role of dialogue in reforming and performing racial identities (children’s thoughts and actions) as historical and social constructs. The specific research questions are:

- How do young Puerto Rican children in a multiage classroom construct race through dialogue within literature circles?
- How do children use racial terminologies in their talk to construct and constitute race?
- How do racial discourses as cultural tools mediate children’s constructions of race and racial identities within literature circles?

- How does children's racial identities form and reform through dialogue within literature circles?

Data collection

Data was collected from twenty one students, and 4 discussion groups, and six literature circles. For the first discussion of the book, *En la bahía de Jobos: Celita y el mangle zapatero*, written by Ana Lydia Vega there were three literature circles. Group 1 was composed of four students and there were five students in Groups 2 and 3 respectively. The discussions took place on November 11, 2005. For the second book, *¡Hombre de Color!* written by Jérôme Müller, three literature circles. Group 4 was composed of four students. The other two literature circles were with the members of Groups 2 and 3. These literature circles took place on December 12, 2005.

The discussion groups lasted from twenty minutes to forty minutes. All the literature circles were digitally audio-taped and videotaped. The audiotape recordings were transcribed, except one, and the videotapes were used to confirm the transcribed data. In addition, observations and field notes were taken during the literature circles so as to have details of the interactions among students and to capture themes across the discussions. Observations were systematically documented and recorded the events, actions, and interactions in this specific sociocultural setting.

The site and setting were selected because of the complexity within the classroom that initiated reflection and inquiry. The data collection was a part of the classroom daily

activities. Literature circles were not an addition to the curriculum or an activity that the children were unfamiliar with. In addition to the routine consent form that parents sign at the beginning of every school year since this is a laboratory elementary school, an additional informed consent and assent form was provided to each parent, specifying the purpose of this particular study. All participating students, therefore, had the necessary parental consent in place. In order to familiarize myself with the data, I listened and watched the audio tapes and video tapes of each discussion before transcribing. Once the discussions were transcribed, I listened to each tape and read the transcript to note patterns, themes or recurring ideas. After this process I read field notes and made notes after transcribing the discussions in order to concentrate my analysis on those discussions most relevant to the questions of the study.

To provide a context for each of the five literature circles, the next section introduces each of the children participating within each literature circle.

- **Group 1: En la bahía de Jobos: Celita y el mangle zapatero**
 - **Germi** a seven year old, was outspoken in and out of different figured worlds. She is the youngest of three daughters. Her two sisters were five and nine years older than she. Both of her parents are professors at the University of Puerto Rico.
 - **Raúl** was seven years old and was reserved within literature circles. Both Raúl and Germi were identified and labeled within the school context as presenting learning disabilities. Raúl is the oldest of two siblings and raised by his mother

and later by his stepfather. His conceptual thinking about race was thought provoking within his literature discussion group.

- **Roberto** a seven year old and a promising baseball player, deposited all his passion and energy in the baseball field. He is the youngest with three siblings, and became an uncle during the school year when his oldest sister gave birth to the first grandson and nephew. His mother responded to one of the picture books we read in class, “Willie el tímido”/Willie the Wimp/ written by Anthony Browne and which we were going to adapt and put into a play form, the following way, “Roberto is not black, he is trigueño, trigueño” (my emphasis).
- **Sara** was six years old and in her first year in our multiage classroom. She is the daughter of a Dominican father and Puerto Rican mother and the younger of two. Her sister is six years older than she. She was independent and outspoken outside the figured world of the classroom and in contexts where there was not a “formal” setting, such as the playground and the hall. Her position-response within the figured world of the classroom was to be silent.
- **Group 2: En la bahía de Jobos: Celita y el mangle zapatero and ¡Hombre de color!**
 - **Gaby** was a seven year old girl in her second year in the multiage classroom. She was incredibly outspoken and enjoyed participating in all classroom discussions. She is the second sibling of three daughters. Her father was an

administrative assistant of the president of the University of Puerto Rico and her mother worked as non academic employee of the university.

- **Jaime** was a six year old, the son of a Guatemalan mother and Puerto Rican father and an only child. This was his first year in a multiage classroom. Within the classroom context he was not open to sharing thoughts, connections and experiences. Even with his peers he did not communicate or engage in play on the playground. Within literature circles, Jaime's voice is important in terms of enhancing and extending others' voices regarding the texts.
- **Jesey** was a six years old, who was in a multiage classroom organization for the first time. He was reserved and did not always participate in class discussions. In the first literature circle, his participation was limited to using physical descriptors to socially identify African slaves. While discussing the second book, he captured everyone's attention because of his thoughtfulness. He is the only son of a chef and nurse.
- **Joe** was seven years old and in his second year in the multiage classroom organization. He had a younger brother at the same school. Both parents were professors in the Faculty of Natural Sciences at the University of Puerto Rico. Although his participation was not consistent, when he participated his statements were important in engaging with others to explore race. During the discussions of *¡Hombre de color!*, his peers looked for him to clarify what we discussed and for help during reading and writing. Joe served as a "scaffold" for his peers and contributed to class discussions mostly by bringing artifacts

such as informational books, movies related to the theme of study and information from the internet that he had gathered with his mother the night before. He spoke in a reserved low voice, and his participation within the literature circle was limited. For example, during a twenty-minute dialogue, he talked once.

- **Sheyda** was a six year-old girl. She is the daughter of a non-academic staff at the University of Puerto Rico and retired secretary who worked with the Government of Puerto Rico. Sheyda participated in the Special Education School Program and received additional language therapy outside school. She remained silent throughout the literature discussion.

- **Group 3: En la bahía de Jobos: Celita y el mangle zapatero and ;Hombre de color!**

- **Armando** was a six-year old boy who initiated dialogue and who was also a first year student in the multiage classroom. Within the second literature circle his voice was part of the dialogue, however, in the classroom he sat in silence, constantly searching for a lending hand from the teacher. Since kindergarten he was identified as a special education student. When he began his first grade, the intention was to place him in the special education room. However, his ideas and dialogue flowed and were extraordinarily thoughtful. Armando's family is composed of six children and his position is the fifth. This means that he has four older siblings, one of them an undergraduate student. His

father is a professor in the Faculty of Physical Education and his mother is a graduate student, both at the University of Puerto Rico.

- **Jorge** and **María** are both seven year olds in their second year in the multiage classroom. They both know how to “hold the floor” and establish interesting interactional patterns as well as negotiate discourses that move back and forth from the private to public domains. Jorge lives with his mother who is a secretary in a private company and his grandmother who is a nurse employed at the state hospital. On some weekends he visits his father. María lives with both parents and is the youngest daughter. She has two other sisters who had studied at the same school as she before moving on to the University of Puerto Rico’s High School. For María, friendship is important and it is exemplified for example on playground. She establishes good relationships with her classmates, though reserve in the classroom context. Within literature circles she demonstrate participates actively and interesting thoughts.
- **Fabián** was a six year old fascinated with basketball and the only child of divorced parents. His mother works in a private company and his father did not provide information. His peers identified him as an extraordinary basketball player. Inside the classroom he was reserved and could barely be heard talking in whole group discussions or with other peers.

- **Group 4: ¡Hombre de color!**
 - **Adri** was a seven year old girl who was shy like Yara. She has an older sibling who studied in a different school, and is the daughter of a secretary who worked at the University of Puerto Rico Elementary Laboratory School while her father worked in a private company. Her voice was always low in volume, but she interacted comfortably in small groups.
 - **Alex** was a six year old boy and was outspoken, the leader of the class. He is the youngest of three boys. The two oldest were university undergraduate and high school student. His father worked as an attorney and his mother worked for a private company. He expressed what he liked to, engaged in dialogue, and his statements were infused with humor, but also were ideologically invested, as will be exemplified in the analysis.
 - **Angélica** was a six year old reflective girl, who brought her connections and tensions concerning things she had read, talked about, and lived into group discussions. She has three older siblings; two of them were undergraduate students and one an elementary school student. She is the daughter of two engineers who worked at one of the biggest telephone companies in Puerto Rico.
 - **Yara** was a six year old girl who had arrived at the multiage classroom in August. She is the daughter of a secretary at the University of Puerto Rico and a policeman, and has an older sibling. She was exceptionally introverted, the quietest of all students in the classroom, and preferred to work individually

although the classroom experiences were collaborative. Within literature circles, she shared a thought provoking statement, but mostly she remained silent.

All the children began kindergarten at the laboratory school, with the exception of Adri and Gaby who started in the school in first grade-multiage classroom.

Data Analysis

Fairclough (1992, 1995) and his notion of critical discourse analysis informed my in-depth analysis of children's racial discourses within of these literature circles. Both Fairclough's (1992, 1995) social theory and language analysis are theoretically and practically useful since I examined the changes in language use that are linked to wider social and cultural processes. The analytic procedures include a three-tiered model or three dimensional concept of discourse. This analytic framework brings together three analytical traditions: these are the traditions of close textual analysis within linguistics, the macrosociological tradition of analyzing social practice in relation to social structures, and the interpretivist (macrosociological) tradition of seeing social practice as something which people actively produce and make sense of within a shared commonsense perspective of the world.

The analysis is grounded on Fairclough's (1992, 1995) perspective of critical discourse analysis and Holland, Lachicotte, Skinner and Cain's (2003) notion of figured worlds which are intimately tied to identity work. From Fairclough's (1992, 1995)

critical discourse analysis perspective, I draw on his three dimensional conception of discourse to illustrate the ways in which children within the figured world of literature circles engage in discourses that are structured and restructured through discursive practices, therefore creating changes in language, as well as in social and cultural change. CDA enables me to look at the ways in which children represent, construct, receive, and interpret language, and the social effects thereof. Students' language choices work together in a network to form social practices, thus, capturing the sociocultural processes in the course of their occurrence, in their entire, complex, contradictory, incomplete, and often-messy materiality (Rogers, 2003). Orders of discourse form social practices, and have an ordered set of discursive practices associated with a particular social domain or institution and any boundaries between them. Discursive practice involves analysis of the process of production, distribution and consumption, making visible the relationship between language and society and the relationship between analysis and the practices analyzed.

The analytical framework consists of three levels of analysis which explore the link between particular discursive events that have three facets: the text, the discursive practice, and the sociocultural practice. The textual analysis of texts is referred to as description and discourse practice and social practice, of which discourse is a part, are referred to as interpretation. Each discursive event can be oral or written (text) as an instance of discourse practice involving the production and interpretation of texts and so is part of a social practice (Fairclough, 1992, 1995). Fairclough, distinguishes three aspects of the constructive effects of discourse. Discourse contributes to the construction

of social identities and subject positions, discourse helps construct social relationships between people, and discourse contributes to the construction of systems of knowledge and belief. At the same time, these three effects correspond to three functions of language and meaning which coexist and interact in all discourse, what Fairclough (1992) calls the identity, ideational and relational functions of language. The identity function relates to the ways in which social identities are set up in discourse, the relational function to how social relationships between people are enacted and negotiated, and lastly the ideational function to the ways in which texts signify the world and its processes, entities and relations. According to Fairclough (1992), Halliday groups together the identity and relational functions as the interpersonal.

Fairclough (1995) views any text as simultaneously enacting the ideational, interpersonal, and textual functions of language. The ideational functions are the meta-narratives that circulate in society; the analysis in this level includes transitivity, which involves the different processes or types of verbs existing in the interaction. The interpersonal functions are the meanings of the social relations established between participants in the interaction; the analysis in this level includes the mood (whether the sentence is a statement, declaration or question) and modality (the degree of assertiveness in the exchange). Lastly, the textual level involves the thematic structure of the text.

According to Fairclough (1995), textual analysis necessarily involves analysis of the form or organization of texts, as he has named it after Halliday's description of their texture. Fairclough makes clear that content or meaning since form is part of content;

and he also regards textual analysis as subsuming complementary types of analysis - linguistic analysis and intertextual analysis. I think that textual analysis as stated by Fairclough (1995) is closely tied to Bakhtin's notion of intertextuality, how texts may transform these social and historical resources, how texts may re-accentuate genres, and how genres (narratives) may be mixed in texts. Fairclough (1995) states that the intertextual properties of a text are realized in its linguistic features.

A systemic correspondence exists between the semiotic structure and situation (field, mode, tenor) and the functional organization of the semantic system (Fairclough, 1992, 1995). The mode would be the different genres in which language is encoded (poetry, political speech, informal talk between friends) and is primarily textual. The enacting of certain social relationships within an utterance is the tenor, and is primarily interpersonal. The field of language would be that every utterance operates within a broader framework of what is possible, given the cultural constraints. Every utterance is made up of three different functions, textual, interpersonal, and ideational. I think that it is important to point out that there is another distinguishing feature of Systemic Functional Linguistics, this is the conscious or unconscious choice of meaning (Rogers, 2004). Options such as singular/plural and past/present are available to every speaker and this is called system (systemic linguistics). As Rogers (2004) points out, "social practices control the selection of certain structural possibilities and the exclusion of others" (p.9).

Discursive practice involves analysis of the process of production, distribution and consumption, and their relationship to the soft and hard structures of language. This is concerned with how people interpret and reproduce or transform texts. CDA begins with the assumption that language use is always constructing and constructed by social, cultural, political, and economic contexts, and insists on an analysis of context to understand language use (Rogers, 2004, p. 11).

Fairclough (1995) tries to combine a theory of power based on Gramsci's concept of hegemony (the winning of consent in the exercise of power) with a theory of discourse practice based upon the concept of intertextuality or interdiscursivity. By interdiscursivity Fairclough (1995) clarifies that it highlights the normal heterogeneity of texts in being constituted by combinations of diverse genres and discourses (p.134). Moreover, he states that this concept is related to Kristeva's work on intertextuality which highlights a historical view of texts as transforming the past through existing conventions or prior texts, into the present. By this statement he means on the one hand, the combination and recombination of genres and discourses in practice are limited and constrained by the state of hegemonic relations and struggle, and on the other, are expanded by the possibility of social change. First of all, interdiscursivity extends intertextuality in the direction of orders of discourse (the discursive practices of an institution, and relations between them).

Fairclough (1992) stresses that an intertextual perspective enables us to view production within the historicity of texts--how they always constitute additions to

existing chains of speech communication consisting of prior texts to which they respond in terms of distribution. This conceptualization helps explore how texts move along and transform as they shift from one text type to another (political speeches), and consumption as how the text is not only intertextually constituted and shaped as interpretation, but also influences the other texts which interpreters invariably bring to the interpretation process (p. 85). Heterogeneity is viewed as constituting text, identities and social relations from continuous combination and recombination of diverse discourses and genres. I share the idea with Fairclough (1995) that texts are characterized as a configuration of heterogeneous and contradictory properties.

Lastly, sociocultural practice is concerned with issues of power as a construct that is realized through interdiscursivity and hegemony. The analysis in this dimension explores the ways in which discourses operate in various domains in society, and concepts such as ideology and hegemony are central in the analysis (Rogers, 2005; Fairclough, 1992). Orders of discourse are a key concept in Foucault's understanding of social practices, which are the discursive practices in a society or institution and the relationships among them (Rogers, 2004; Fairclough, 1995, 1992).

This analytical framework also includes a description, interpretation and explanation of discursive relations and social practices that occur at the local, institutional and societal domains of analysis (Fairclough, 1995). The local domain means a particular text (newspaper, political speech, literature circle), the institutional domain concerns the social institutions that enable and constrain the local domain (the newspaper company,

classroom, school), and the societal are the policies and meta-narratives that shape and are shaped by institutions and local domains. This is, in other words, a framework that uses three complementary ways of reading a complex social event. Fairclough's hypothesis is that a significant connection exists between features of text, the ways in which texts are put together and interpreted, and the nature of the social practice.

Within the local, institutional and societal there are three levels at the micro-level of interaction: genre, discourse, and style. These three levels, in systemic functional linguistic terms are part, of written text analysis. Genre, discourse and style are three properties of language that are operating within and among the local, institutional and societal domains. Fairclough (2004) explains that the main ways of social practice are genres (ways of being), discourses (ways of representing), and styles (ways of knowing), arguing that classroom teaching articulates particular ways of using language by both teachers and students, with particular forms of action and interaction, the social relations and persons of the classroom, and the structuring and use of the classroom as a physical space (p.228).

The analyst's goal is to describe the relationship among certain texts, interactions, and social practices (describing the grammatical resources), to interpret the pattern of discourse practices, and lastly to use both the description and interpretation to explain why and how social practices are constituted, changed, and transformed in the ways that they are (Rogers, 2005, p. 371). In other words, the connection between text and social practice is seen as being mediated by discourse practice. What Fairclough (1995) means

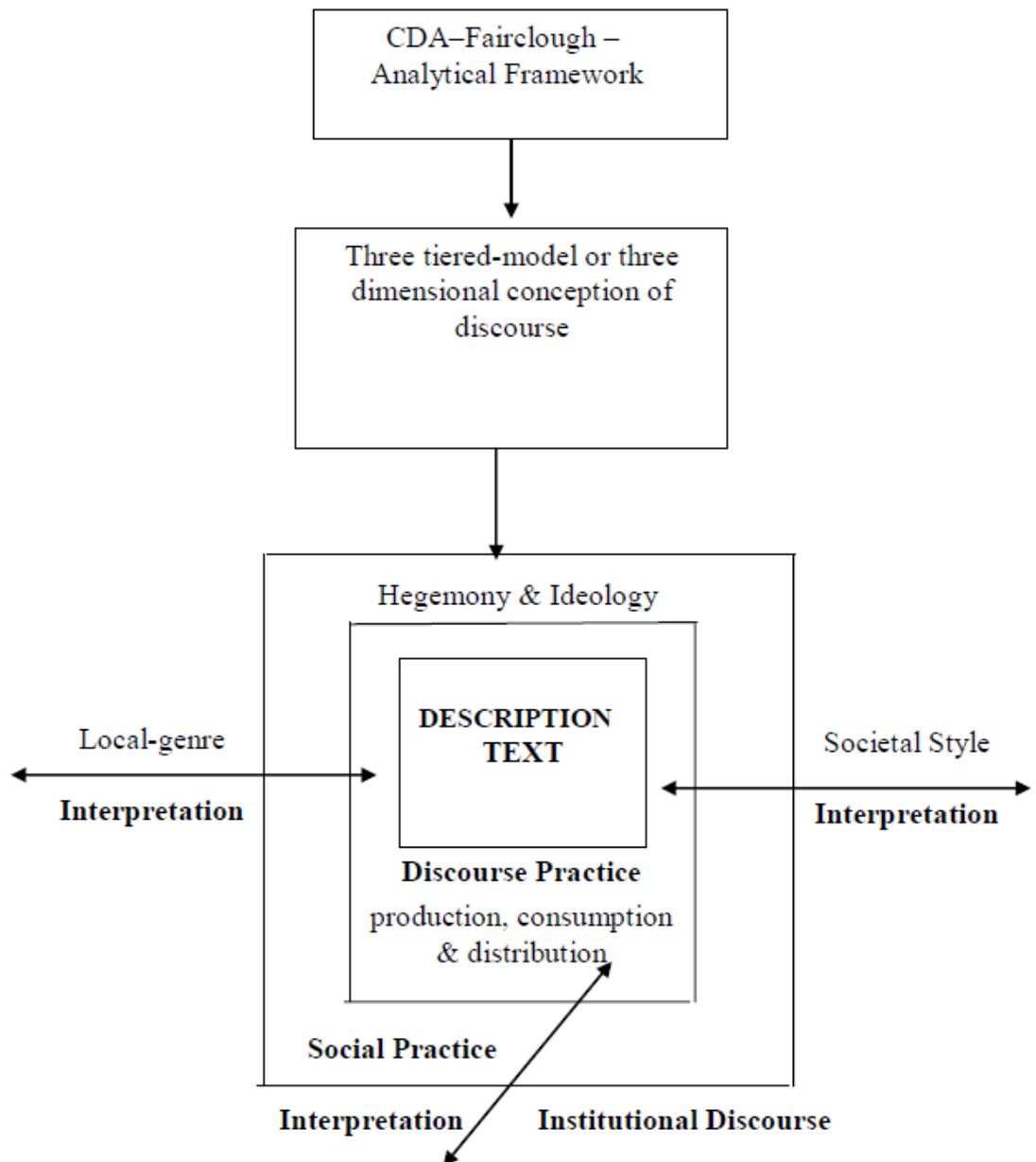
is that the processes of text production and interpretation are shaped by the nature of social practice, the production process shapes the text, and the interpretative process “operates upon cues in the text” (p.133).

Including both language and social theory equally is what Fairclough (1995) called a textual oriented approach to discourse analysis (TODA). Using critical discourse analysis as an analytical model enabled me to think and examine the different ways children use language to express their racial ways of knowing and being in educational settings, such as within the figured world of literature circles in the classroom context. Recently teachers have turned to CDA to explore the interrelations of language and society in their classrooms, so this terrain is still being explored.

Diagram B is adapted from Fairclough’s three dimensional conception of discourse (1992) and the analytical model (1995).

It is important to clarify, what is “Critical” in CDA. Approaches to CDA vary across disciplines and these variations may be at the level of critical, discourse, and analysis; interrelated and important parts in CDA. My emphasis will be in what is critical in CDA.

Diagram B: Three dimensional Conception of Discourse



According to Rogers (2004) there are three interpretations with what critical means in CDA. The first one is associated with studying power relations. This interpretation is rooted in the Frankfurt school of critical theory, the analyst's purpose is to uncover power relations and demonstrate inequities embedded in society, this may lead to disrupting the power relations in the social contexts in which the study takes place (p. 3). The second interpretation is the attempt to describe, interpret and explain the relationship between the form and function of language. The form of language consists of grammar, semantics, syntax and the function focuses on how people use language in different sociocultural contexts to achieve an outcome. The purpose of the analysis in this framework is to study the relationships between form and function and explain why and how certain patterns are privileged over others (Rogers, 2004). Lastly, the interpretation of "critical" in CDA attempts to solve social problems through the analysis and accompanying social and political action. This is an action-orientated perspective. Its intention is to locate social problems and analyze how discourse operates to construct and is historically constructed by such issues (Rogers, 2004). From this perspective the focus is to analyze the texts to the social and political contexts from where the texts emerged.

By critical Fairclough (1995) means that CDA aims to systematically explore the opaque relationships of "causality and determination" between discursive practices, events and texts, and wider social and cultural structures, relations and processes; to investigate how such practices, events and texts arise out of and are ideologically shaped by relations of power and struggles over power; and to explore how the opacity of these

relationships between discourse and society is itself a factor securing power and hegemony (p.133). It is important to clarify the concept of “opacity” in Fairclough’s explanation, which he draws from the work of Bourdieu (1977) and suggests that the linkages between discourse, ideology and power maybe unclear to those involved and that social practices are bound up in causes and effects which may not be at all obvious.

Having stated this, in this study children’s explorations of racial discourses are analyzed from this perspective, the ways racial discourses of Puertorrican six and seven year olds operate within race in Puerto Rico. Therefore, by no means young children’s racial discourses are analyzed in a judgemental or negative way. Instead, they are described, interpreted and explained gaining insight and celebrating that literature circles as the space where young Puertorrican children racial discourses were explored and the ways they operate within.

I combine ethnographic case study design (Genishi & Dyson, 2005) to illustrate children’s use of dialogue, a form of language about racial ideologies in literature circles, with critical discourse analysis (Fairclough, 1992, 1995) to examine children’s racial discourses within literature circles. I selected examples from the transcripts that illustrate students’ racial discourses, that is, any instance of language use within the literature circles which illustrates moments of tension with issues of racial terminologies, etc. Fairclough (1992) proposes to begin looking at broad terms or large parts of the corpus; this is summarizing the discourse or coding in terms of topics (p.230). This process of the selection of samples entails looking at what Fairclough (1992) calls the “cruces” and

“moments of crisis.” These may be moments in the discourse where there is evidence that things are going wrong - a misunderstanding, sudden shifts of style or silences (p.230).

The purpose of critical discourse analysis is to analyze not only what is said, but what is left-out or what is absent in the text. It is essential in CDA to examine the social and political ideologies that the data reveals, letting the data speak. Fairclough (1995) states that issues of power and ideology are inextricably embedded in language; discourse analysis is reformulated and seen as an exploration of how texts oral and written operate at all levels within a sociocultural practice. He clarifies that discourse analysis is not a “level” of analysis as phonology and lexico-grammar, purely linguistically. Critical discourse analysis in education combines aspects of sociopolitical and critical theory general analysis (Rogers, 2004), not rooted in any particular linguistic background or theory. This form of critical discourse analysis in education has not always been referred to as such. According to Gee (2004), any approach of discourse analysis that avoids combining grammatical and textual analysis with sociopolitical and critical theories of society and institutions are not forms of critical discourse analysis (p.20). Critical discourse analysts tend to work in a wide range of domains, including political discourse, ideology, economic discourse, advertisement with promotional culture, media language, gender, institutional discourse, education and literacy (Rogers, 2005).

According to Rogers (2004) there is not a formula for conducting critical discourse analysis. The analytical procedures one chooses to use depend on the research

situation. Fairclough (1992) states that there is not an order to begin with the analysis, but there is an overlapping in the practice. The textual analysis, which leads to the macro analysis of discursive practices and social practices, as in the case of Rogers (2002), all depends upon the data and research questions.

I began the analysis by identifying each excerpt of the transcribed literature circle that related to race and racism. I then noted the consistency and amount of racial talk. I literally cut out every excerpt from each literature discussion group transcript that exemplified racial talk and racism, and placed it in the middle of a piece of butcher paper for scrutiny.

Taking into account Fairclough's three tiered-model or three dimensional conception of discourse, I began to code with yellow marker the parts of the transcript where genre was illustrated, then the parts of the transcript that illustrated style were highlighted with blue marker, and finally I used pink marker to highlight the parts where discourse was illustrated within students' dialogue. I wrote around those excerpts describing the texts in terms of interactional control, turn taking, topic control, and modality; this is textual analysis. I then proceeded to look at each excerpt in terms of discourse practices - intertextuality and interdiscursivity. I looked at genre, style, mode, heterogeneity of texts and the diverse and often contradictory elements and threads which make up a text. Finally I looked at social practices. Social practices focus on constructing social reality and are concerned with issues of power as a construct that is realized through interdiscursivity and hegemony.

I looked at the speech genre in this study. Speech genres include a literacy lesson, interview, and dialogue, among others. Genres are distinguished through their participant framework, and include turn taking conventions, information focus, and cohesive devices. Then, I looked to describe and interpret patterns that signal relationships between and among discourse and social action: How is this student constructing the institutions from which he/she is speaking? What is the ordering of the consumption, distribution, and production of these texts? Style focuses on voice or the ideational domain of discourse; how are identities created and sustained in these interactions? What are the ways of being that are connected with this genre and this set of discourses?

Language works in conjunction with genre and discourse to present ways of being that create and sustain subject positions. During the analysis I integrated the social practice theory of identity from Holland et al. (2003) which enabled me to extend the analysis to the way children use racial discourses as a pivot to mediate theirs and other's relational and positional identities. I should make clear that this analytical framework should be viewed as the three tiered model where the function of text, discursive and social practice overlap and simultaneously are constructed at all domains. Lastly, I examined changes in language in the instances where students engaged in an activity (literature circle) and adopted new racial discourses and types of discourse (genre, style) within the literature circle. In other words, changes in social life affect activities within the classroom context and vice versa, as well as social relations and racial identities; students within literature circles reword and restructure the engagement or interactions by

adopting discourse practices (school as an institution, or literature circle) and types of discourse and new discourses.

As I analyzed the data using Fairclough's (1992, 1995) critical discourse analysis, I realized the ways children were racializing as they responded and assigned meaning to racial labels such as *negrito* or *indio*, among others. Moreover, the ways in which children are offered positions, and how racial labels served as "pivots" to mediate children's thoughts and to organize their responses or feelings. In this way, I integrated Holland, Lachicotte, Skinner and Cain's (2003) concept of figured worlds, which is one of the four contexts that they suggest as sites where identities are produced. In this study, I focus on the ways in which children figure who they are in relation to the social types (race, genre) that populate the worlds of the literature circle and in social relationships with the people (peers, teacher) who perform these worlds. Children develop new identities in figured worlds in the processes of participating in activities and in discourses organized by such worlds. In this study, children's responses are conceptualized as acts when they draw from the resources that are available to them such as sociocultural forms and local emerging forms. Hence, within the figured world of literature circles there are identities that are offered or dismissed.

I also examined how the literature circle's figured world is the context for meanings of artifacts such as objects, events, and discourses. Discourses, as the focus of analysis in this study, provide the means to evoke new discourses and figured worlds which gain force by mediating the thoughts, feelings, racial terminologies and responses

of children. For example, children are offered positions in different figured worlds and this affects children's distribution of rank, power, and prestige to varying degrees of accepting, rejecting, or negotiating the identities being offered. I also draw from Holland and colleagues the notion of the space of authoring, another context within figured worlds where children are in a position for rejecting, accepting and negotiating in social practice, therefore making choices (linguistic and experiential) and responding to their immediate circumstances. As students respond they shift to a conceptual world, in this case, to the conceptual world of race and racism wherein lies the possibility for making and creating new ways, artifacts, acts and discourses - more liberatory worlds (Urrieta, 2007).

As I worked through the analysis I connected the concept, from Rosenblatt's (1994, 2005) of evocation and Wortham's (2006) concepts of emerging identities, local forms, and mesh with that of Fairclough's CDA analytical tool and Holland et. al's (2003) social theory of identity. These concepts enabled me to explain the process of the ways in which children's racial discourses are explored and their effect within the figured world of the literature circles through dialogue. For example, young children use naturalized racial language which in different instances across literature discussion groups, and new discourses, evoke further new discourses through the different subject positions or relational and positional identities (Holland, et. al, 2003).

The explanation of the process by which racial discourses are constructed and constituted enriched the analysis. Cultural models are the standard taken-for-granted scenarios that we form and reform around and through, which should be considered as

living tools (Holland et. al, 2003). These cultural models may take different forms and meanings. This means that children within literature circles use inconsistent and ambiguous cultural models or local forms through dialogue. For example, the word or racial label, negro, with the ideological implication through social and self racial identification or colorblindness and essentialized discourses, is a cultural model. In this study, however, it may also take a different form within language use, that is, a “local emerging discourse” because as responses are evoked, children may use the same word, negro, to respond in a certain way; such as, through embodied identities and simultaneously the meaning that is assigned could be a “local emerging form” so that brown is evoked. Discourses then come together in the sense of their contradictory features, demonstrating a need for or reliance on each other. As children live through experience within dialogue, racial identities are also constituted.

There are two main themes that emerged from the data: Color: Social and self racial identification with embodied identities as a subtheme, and Colorblindness and Essentializing Discourses. I define Color: Social racial identification, as the multiple racial labels that are socially used to identify others, and self racial identification, refers to the multiple racial labels that are used to identify oneself according to skin tone. This means that depending on children’s relational position, then color can be identified as social racial identification or self racial identification. The subtheme, Embodied Identities is defined in this study as to represent the recognition of skin tones in a bodily form through touching and gaze. All the while we are recognizing the diversity, fragmentation, and fluidity of identities. In this way children express or exemplify in a

concrete or perceptible form their skin color. Colorblindness is defined as, “dismissing the significance and relevance of race, as if race has no significance” (Bolgatz, 2005). In other words, colorblindness avoids exacerbating differences. Essentializing implies that race is a fundamental and absolute category that means something concrete, as opposed to a social and historical construction that is constantly shifting. In addition, I discuss the racial terminologies that the children used in this study within the context of Puerto Rico. Godreau’s (2008) research on the use and meanings of racial terms in different sociocultural situations and contexts of Puerto Rico enables me to extend the racial term definitions. I include the ones that children used within the figured worlds of literature circles.

Godreau (2008) argues that among scholar’s of race relations in Latin America, racial terminologies are highly situational and intimately linked to context and of usage. For example, negro often carries a pejorative connotation because of its association with slave status. However, in certain interpersonal exchanges it can be used as a mark of solidarity or “sameness” among those who self racial identify as black. In other instances, negro/negra or negrita/negrito in its diminutive form may communicate affection and intimacy regardless of the skin color of the person to which it refers. but not regardless of the relationship between speakers. Godreau (2008) points out that the meaning to be ascribed depends on who is saying it, when and how (p. 6). The term blanquito/blanquita is the diminutive for white but the term is utilized according to Godreau (2008) to refer to upper class, often times with pejorative connotations. A wealthy black person may be identified as blanquito/blanquita, while the same may not

be said to of a white person or light skinned person who is poor. When a black person is called blanquito/blanquita, the label can be an accusation for “acting like a white person.” However, when a white person is called a blanquita/blanquito the connotation has to do with elitist, snobbish attitude or lifestyle. Other uses that I have experienced with the label blanquita/balnquito may be deployed with an attitude to describe a person who is too white and unattractive, as in jincha (ugly and pale) or pote de leche (milk container).

Grodreau (2008) states that other racial labels such as trigueño/a, de color (colored) and indio become even more complicated since the used term trigueño/a is often used as an euphemism to classify people considered black because of the belief that negro is offensive. In this case, the meaning is similar to the dated term, de color (colored). However, trigueño/a can indicate that a person’s color is lighter than black or darker than white. In other instances, trigueño is used by an “accurate” describe in a social context where mixed (trigueño) is interpreted as different from black. Children used other racial labels such as marrón which means brown, cremita which is “beige” and prieto/a may be used to refer to a person that is lighter then black but, darker than trigueño/a. Indio refers to people who are lighter than black, prieto and trigueño but the racial marker is focused on the hair. Indio has pelo bueno (not kinky or freezy hair). However, a trigueño/a like prieto and negro have pelo malo (bad hair).

Each table (below) presents the literature discussion groups, the book discussed and the central themes that emerged for each group.

- *En la bahía de Jobos: Celita y el Mangle Zapatero*

Table VI: Themes within Literature Circle Book 1 Group 1

Student	Themes
1. Gergy	Color: Social And Self Racial Identification
2. Raúl	Color: Social And Self Racial Identification/Colorblindness
3. Sara	Remained silent
4. Roberto	Color: Social and self racial identification

Table VII: Themes within Literature Circle Book 1 Group 2

Student	Themes
1. María	Transition discussion for the analysis of the colorblindness discourse in Group 3.
2. Armando	
3. Jorge	
4. Sofi	
5. Fabián	

Table VIII: Themes within Literature Circle Book 1 Group 3

Student	Themes
1. Gaby	Colorblindness
2. Jescy	Color-physical characteristics: Social And Self Racial Identification
3. Jaime	Color: Social and self racial identification-negrito
4. Joe	Segregation/justice
5. Sheyda	Remained silent

▪ **¡Hombre de Color!**

Table IX: Themes within Literature Circle Book 2 Group 4

Student	Themes
1. Yara	Colorblindness
2. Alex	Color: Social and self racial Identification Essentializing
3. Adri	Color: Social and self racial Identification Colorblindness
4. Angélica	Color: Social and self racial Identification Colorblindness

Table X: Themes within Literature Circle Book 2 Group 3

Student	Themes
1. Jescy	Color: Social and self racial Identification-Embodied Identity
2. Sheyda	remained silent
3. Carlos M.	remained silent
4. Gaby	Colorblindness
5. Joe	Color: Social and self racial Identification

Table XI: Themes within Literature Circle Book 2 Group 2

Student	Themes
1. María	Color: Social And Self Racial Identification
2. Yvonne	Color: Social and self racial Identification-Embodied identity
3. Jorge	Colorblindness/"de color"/Embodied identities
4. Sofi	Color: Social and self racial identification
5. Fabián	Color: Social and self racial Identification

In this study Color: Social and self racial identification and colorblindness and essentialized discourses are the themes that frame the analysis. These should be viewed as interrelated and overlapping; there is not a set of steps or order in the analysis. This means that these concepts appear and are exemplified differently across the literature circles.

Conclusions

In this chapter I described the design of this study as teacher research, and as qualitative ethnographic case study. I then described the school context, classroom context, curriculum, and presented children's profiles in order to gain a better understanding of the richness of the sociocultural contexts of the school, classroom and community.

I also describe the rationale critical discourse analysis Fairclough's (1992, 1995) as a methodology tool and social practice theory that enable me to examine and gain understanding of the nature of children's racial discourses within literature circles. I then introduced the main themes that emerged within the literature discussion.

CHAPTER 4: ANALYSIS OF THE DISCUSSION OF “EN LA BAHIA DE JOBOS: CELITA Y EL MANGLE ZAPATERO”

In this chapter I introduce the picture book, author and illustrator, discussed in the analyzed literature discussion groups, and integrate Puerto Rico’s historical background to emphasise the interrelationship between the picture book *En la bahía de Jobos: Celita y el mangle zapatero* and children’s explorations of racial discourses. The next three sections analyze children’s racial discourses within the literature circles and the final section concludes.

Getting to know the book

En la bahía de Jobos: Celita y el mangle zapatero (2004) is a picture book written by Ana Lydia Vega and illustrated by Yolanda Pastrana Fuentes, both Puerto Ricans. This is the story of a girl, Celita, and the boat of her grandfather, Don Felo Cora, who is named El Brujito, set in the Jobos bay area of Salinas, Puerto Rico. Salinas is a small, coastal, fishing town in the southeast part of Puerto Rico. The picture book begins with the grandfather’s oral storytelling about when the African, Pablo Yandá, was enslaved and brought to Puerto Rico to work in the sugar cane fields like many other Africans. The story recreates issues of racism and segregation, the situations of extreme work and inhumane conditions, and the religion and traditions of Africans that we Puerto Ricans have inherited.

The book is part of a collection of books; some of the titles are, *El Yunque*, *El bosque seco de Guánica*, *los manglares y las costas y la red de cavernas subterráneas*. This series, collectively titled San Pedrito, is published by the University of Puerto Rico. The intention of the book is for students to learn about the flora and fauna of Puerto Rico's scientific base and to stimulate sensitivity towards the nature by which we are surrounded. The scientific research for the book was contributed by Alida Ortíz Sotomayor, a professor of Biology at the University of Puerto Rico's Humacao Campus.

The author, Ana Lydia Vega, born in 1946 in Santurce, Puerto Rico, began writing in the 1970s. She is the recipient of both the Juan Rulfo (1982) and Casa las Américas (1981) awards. Her work achieved notice this decade for its excellence, specifically because the language she used is viewed as aggressive and irreverent. Ana Lydia Vega belongs to a generation of Puerto Rican writers who integrated into their writing mordant reflections on the ambiguous political status of their island nation. Ana Lydia Vega pursued an academic career as a professor of both French literature and Caribbean studies at the same time that she became an accomplished author.

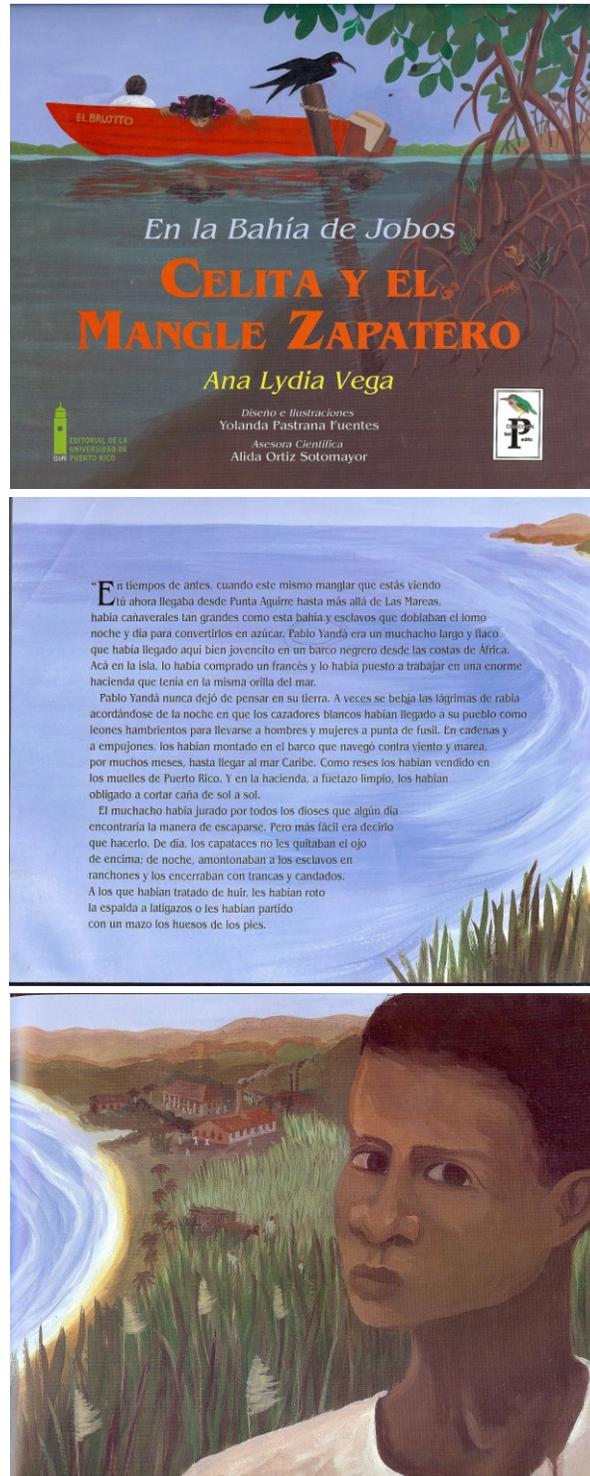
Yolanda Pastrana Fuentes is a graphic artist and painter, who graduated from the Escuela de Artes Plásticas (School of Arts) in San Juan in 1975 with majors in painting and education. In addition, she worked as an art teacher in different high schools until 1979. She designed the cover of well known newspapers such as Claridad and El Mundo and illustrated books for the Instituto de Cultura Puertorriqueña, University of Puerto

Rico, Ediciones Huracán, Editorial Plaza Mayor, and Editorial Cultural y Ediciones Gaviota, among others.

The illustrations in the picture book used in this study are colorful and vivid, and realistically represent the historical and racial experiences within its time period. Bright illustrations reflect the harsh conditions of slavery in Puerto Rico and even the idiosyncrasies such as the religion, Santería. In contrast to Zenón's (1974-75) research on the vague appearance of black characters in Puerto Rican literature, this picture book carefully represents its characters within a specific time period and highlights the social issues around race. The particularity of this analysis is that the picture book, which is characterized as having a scientific intention by presenting an historical account, stimulates students' dialogue to reveal the ways race and racism are experienced and signified through racial ideologies.

Textbooks in Puerto Rico and the social studies curriculum emphasize the founding Groups of Puerto Rico (*los negros, los blancos y los indios*) which are part of school discourses. Godreau (2008) states that the intermediary racial terms such as *prieto, trigueño, cremita* and brown are the "social etiquette" in Puerto Rico, particularly in formal contexts when speakers do not know each other well. I extend this discussion by exemplifying that students, within the literature circles where they know each other very well, also use these intermediary racial terms, inconsistently and ambiguously.

Figure 1: *En la Bahía de Jobs - Celita y el Mangle Zapatero* Sample Pages



As I began analyzing the data and writing this chapter, the religious festivities of San Juan/Santiago Apostle were being celebrated in *Loíza*, Puerto Rico. The San Juan apostle is the Saint of *Loíza*. In every town of Puerto Rico there is a saint characteristic of the town that is honored once a year. Though this practice has vanished through the years. San Juan/Santiago Apostle in *Loíza, Aldea*, is the only festivity of this type which remains in Puerto Rico. From an historical perspective, this festivity was introduced by the Spanish colonizers, existent prior to 1868 when the Spaniards ceded the island to the United States. According to Ricardo Alegría, a Puerto Rican anthropologist who studied the festivity in honor of San Juan/Santiago Apostle, there are certain elements of the festivity that relate to the African culture. However, it is important to point out that the festivity in honor of San Juan/Santiago Apostle is an expression of the syncretism of “Afrohispano” (Zenón, 1974) culture where Spanish culture through the saint and the masquerades of *vejigantes* reflect the dominated culture of the Africans. Some of the similarities to the African culture are evidenced by the particular characteristics of the *vejigantes* masquerades, comparable to Yoruban sculpture where grotesque faces reflecting appreciable expressions are painted with many details. For example, facial expressions are exaggerated, specifically the mouth and eyes, and the elaborately painted details are similar to Yoruban visual culture. Also, the figure of the apostle and the date of honor July 25th is significant in astronomical terms. The “afro-boricuas” (Zenón, 1974) concentrates on the representation of Christianity and the Spanish representation of Santiago, the worrier. The African tradition establishes, three *Cofradías*/brotherhoods. In addition, the festivities in *Loíza, Aldea*, include the Three *Santiagos*, three different

images - a Santiago of the men, the Santiago of the women and the *Santiaguito* of the children. This is a way of maintaining social groups organized according to age and sex, each one functioning as determined by their classification. For example, men's masquerades represent *diablitos* /devils/ who chase the children and women. This pageant reflects religious syncretism, in the Afrohispano language, and hence in the catholic perspective. Africans did not believe in the supernatural and malign representations of their ancestry. Their Santiago in *Loíza* functions as a transformation to a *cofradía*/brotherhood, and children and their *Santiguito* represent "Christianization" of the movement into puberty. Elders within the masquerades are representative of the survivors of América. According to Zenón, (1974) the social grouping of people into categories such as age and sex is common in Occidental Africa.

As I read in the newspaper about the festivity in honor of *San Juan/Santiago* Apostle in Loíza, the participation of children and adults in the carnival with music and moving to the rhythm of drums, *bomba y plena*, as well as the presence of the Catholic Church was highlighted. The people that participate in this festivity recognize and adore the apostle; these are families that have lived for generations in *Loíza, Aldea*. The tradition has passed from one generation to another. Our presence, mine and the students,' was invisible in that we had not been part of the festivities in the time/space/place of one of the towns with a major concentration of blacks in Puerto Rico or black Puerto Ricans as Zenón (1974) would describe them. We experienced *Loíza* through the accounts of student peers, via Wenmi's visits to *Loíza* and Gaby's visual presentation with a book about the festivities.

In contrast to the occurrence of the historically based festivities of San Juan/Santiago Apostle as celebrated in *Loíza*, Puerto Rico, and reflecting contemporary time, the judicial committee hearings in the United States of America's senate for Sonia Sotomayor, the first Latina-Puerto Rican candidate to be confirmed as one of the Supreme Court judges, were being held. Both events contrast and reflect the sociopolitical and sociocultural complexities of Puerto Rico.

Although the picture book, *En la bahía de Jobos: Celita y el mangle zapatero*, is not set in *Loíza*, but in *Guayama*, a small, coastal town on the southwest part of the island, we see that children's literature is an important cultural tool – a pivot - for making connections across time and place. In this chapter I analyze students' language choices and how their language is structured and re-structured through vocal perspectives, and how these are constituted in discursive practice, through the process of production, consumption and distribution.

Structure of the Analysis

Considering the definitions of the two main themes of this study, Chapter 3 I presented the organizational structure and the main themes that emerged from each literature discussion group. The format of this analysis is organized in the following way: I present the excerpt of transcription of the excerpt from the discussion, then, there is a chart with the transcription on the right side and interpretation on the left side for the

purpose of guiding the reader to the analysis. Last, I present the analysis of the excerpt from the discussion group.

There are two main themes that emerged from the data: Color: Racial social and self identification with Embodied identities as a subtheme, and Colorblindness and Essentializing Discourses. I define: Racial social identification refers to the multiple racial labels that are socially employed to identify others, and racial self identification refers to the multiple racial labels that are used to identify oneself according to skin. This means that, depending on children's relational positions, skin color can be the basis for racial social identification or racial self identification. Embodied identities, as defined in this study, means representing race in a bodily form through touching and gazing at skin tones and recognizing the diversity, fragmentation, and fluidity of identities. In this way children express or exemplify their skin tones in a concrete or perceptible form. In this study colorblindness is defined as, "dismissing the significance and relevance of race, as if race has no significance" (Bolgatz, 2005, p.81) In other words, colorblindness avoids exacerbating differences. Essentializing implies that race is a fundamental and absolute category with concrete meaning as opposed to a social and historical construction that is constantly shifting.

Three literature discussion groups of this book took place and were designated **Group 1**, which only works with this first book and **Groups 2 and 3**, which also work with *Hombre de color!*.

The analysis for **Group 1** was subdivided into three sections; each section elicited an excerpt of the dialogue among the children which is followed with analysis. The purpose of dividing the transcription excerpt into three sections was to allow for in-depth analysis.

Within the theme of *Color: Racial social and self identification*, three sub-themes emerged from the analysis: *Section I: Racial discourse of uncertainty and ambiguity: Students' explorations of Black Puerto Ricans*, *Section II: "Bien prieto, bien prieto, prieto color labio": Local emerging forms to explore racial social identification*, and *Section III: Chavito prieto and indio: Pivots to negotiate race as Puerto Ricans*.

Section I highlights students' racial ideological constructions through their racial social identification of *negros* who live in *Loíza*, Puerto Rico. They evoke a comparison according to skin tones, as students negotiated if Africans still live in *Loíza* or if, indeed, these are Puerto Ricans. Students draw on a peer as a resource to explain that people have certain skin colors. This excerpt exemplifies the connections and understandings of Puerto Rican sociocultural processes and identities, or as Zenón (1974-1975) would point out, understandings of black Puerto Ricans' processes and identities. However, students' racial ideological constructions are explored through the negotiation of who is and who is not African through place/space. Through the historical event of slavery in Puerto Rico, subjectivities are explored through students' connections across place (*Loíza*, Puerto Rico), persons (Wenmi and her father, and Gaby-peer), and spaces, figured worlds.

Section II explores racial social and self identification use of *bien prieto*, *indio*, and *negro*. Students negotiated the use and correctness of the racial term *negro* and *prieto*; these are conceptualized as binaries. Racial Social Identification as *bien prieto* serves as a pivot to new meanings of who is, what it means and why it is used. Lived experiences enable students to elaborate, enhance and extend their explorations and negotiations concerning race.

Finally, Section III regards how students explored what *prieto* means, based on a student's personal experiences racially socially identified as *negro*. People's names as a neutral form and naturalized language become part of the negotiation and an alternative to identify people as well as a way of avoiding confronting the issue of skin color. Feelings became part of the discourse characterized by colorblindness, as a way of homogenizing race and enhancing the discourse that Puerto Ricans are "all the same." An example is the 2000 census where racial frames were introduced and contradicted people's expectations of a government apparatus that represents Puerto Ricans as part of a "Great Puerto Rican Family" (*La gran familia puertorriqueña*) Godreau (2008), which declares a color blind ideology of racial mixture and teaches it to its citizens in the context of school.

The analysis for discussion Group 2, deals with students' perspectives on working conditions and the physical consequences of being black African slaves in Puerto Rico. Hence, these students' negotiations illustrate their ideologies of the colonizers by racial social identification. The analysis serves as a transition to the

analysis in Group 3, in which a more extensive discussion on the constitution of *negrito* through slavery emerges.

The analysis for the third literature discussion, **Group 3**, was divided into two sections. *Section I* (see 01 through 17); *Constituting negrito through slavery*, was analyzed within the main theme of ***Color: Racial social and self identification*** as a main theme. The focal point was on students' racial ideological constructions through the assumptions of slaves' capabilities, the work conditions of the African slaves in Puerto Rico, and also on explorations of the term slave through racial social identification, of *negrito* by means of physical descriptors, and of religion. Additionally, hegemony was explored through the racial label of *negrito* as solely due to the skin color of slaves.

The *Section II* (see 18 through 28), *Feelings and Sameness: Intertextual linkages* was analyzed within the ***Discourse of colorblindness*** theme. The focus of this analysis was on the premise that students' racial discourses are constituted through colorblindness, hence, evoking and constituting a discourse of colorblindness as feelings and the discourses of sameness, segregation and fairness.

This analysis focuses on students' language choices in social practice, how they occur in complex and contradictory ways, and how discourses are interpreted, reproduced, constructed and sustained. Also, how relational and positional identities play out and are produced and experienced within the figured world of literature circles.

Analysis : Group 1

The figured world of this literature circle was peopled by the actors; Germey, Raúl, Roberto and Sara, who composed a new group with different ideas. We sat in a round table and I stated “Who would like to start?” With no hesitation Raúl begins with connection- information focus statement.

Section I: Racial discourse of uncertainty and ambiguity: Student’s explorations of black Puerto Ricans.

01-Raúl- Por lo menos yo sé que el papá de Wenmie es africano. / At least I know that Wenmi’s father is African./

02-Roberto- En Loíza todavía quedan africanos. / In Loíza there are still Africans there./

03-Raúl- Ellos son africanos? Bueno, el papá de Wenmie es africano y... / They are Africans? Well, Wenmie’s father is African and ... (inaudible)./

04-MP- ¿Por qué tú dices que en Loíza viven todavía africanos? / Why do you say that in Loíza Africans still live there?./

05-Roberto- Porque allí, porque Gabriela lo dijo cuando leyó su libro y también su proyecto. Y porque yo he visto programas en Internet, digo en Internet no, en televisión que se trata de los africanos. Y yo también vi uno... / Because there, like Gaby mentioned when she read her book and also her project. And because I’ve seen programs on the internet, I say on the internet, no on television, that talk about Africans. And I also saw one... (inaudible)./

06-MP- Pero los africanos que viven en el pueblo de Loíza en Puerto Rico, ¿no son puertorriqueños? ¿Las personas negras? / But the Africans that live in the town of Loíza in Puerto Rico, are not Puertorricans? The black people?

07-Roberto- Sí, puede ser. /Yes, it could be./

08-MP- ¿Y por qué tú dices que son africanos?/ Why do you say that they are Africans?/

09-Roberto- Puede ser. Algunos pueden ser africanos y otros son puertorriqueños. /Some could be Africans and others are Puertorricans./

10-MP- Acuérdate que nuestra herencia, nosotros tenemos herencia africana, pero ellos realmente son puertorriqueños. (murmillos) / Remember that our heritage, we have African heritage, but they are Puertorricans./

11-Roberto - Esa es la palabra que yo estaba buscando. Que una de nuestras herencias es, una de sus herencias de nosotros es la plena y la bomba./That is the word that I was looking for, one of our heritage is the bomba and plena./

12-Raúl- Y Wenmi que tiene el color de africanos y también que ella no es africana y ella es puer...Ay!!, ¿cómo se dice puertorriqueña? /And Wenmi has the color of the Africans and she is not African and she is puer..ahhh! How do you say, Puerto Rican?

Transcript	Interpretation
01-Raúl: Por lo menos yo sé que el papá de Wenmie es africano./At least I know that Wenmi's father is African.	"At least" presupposes that knowing about or someone from Africa relates or connects to a classroom peer.
02-Roberto: En Loíza todavía quedan africanos./In Loíza there are still Africans there./	Affirms that in Loíza there still are Africans
03-Raúl: Ellos son africanos, bueno, el papá de Wenmie es africano y.../They are Africans, well Wenmi's father is./	Clarifies if there is any difference between a black Puerto Rican and an African.
04-Maestra Patricia: ¿Por qué tú dices que en Loíza viven todavía africanos?/Why do you say that in Loíza there still live Africans?/	Invites the students to extend his thinking
05-Roberto: Porque allí, porque Gaby lo dijo cuando leyó su libro y también su proyecto. Y porque yo he visto programas en Internet, digo en Internet no, en televisión que se trata de los africanos. Y yo también vi uno.../Because there, well Gaby said so when she read her book and shared her project. And because, I've seen computer programs on the internet, I mean, no on television about Africans./	Uses his peer and information shared in class as resources, a mediating device to claim black Puerto Ricans from Loíza as Africans

Transcription	Interpretation
06-Maestra Patricia: Pero los africanos que viven en el pueblo de Loíza en Puerto Rico, ¿no son puertorriqueños? ¿Las personas negras?	The teacher restates the question.
07-Roberto: Sí, puede ser./Yes, could be./	Uncertainty
08-Maestra Patricia: ¿Y por qué tú dices que son africanos?/Why do you refer to them as Africans?/	
09-Roberto: Puede ser. Algunos pueden ser africanos y otros son puertorriqueños./It could be. Some could be Africans and other Puerto Ricans./	Ambiguity
10-Maestra Patricia: Acuérdate que nuestra herencia, nosotros tenemos herencia africana, pero ellos realmente son puertorriqueños. (murmillos)/Remember that we have African heritage, but they are Puerto Ricans./	The teacher shares an example of our African inheritance and how that formed who Puerto Ricans are nowadays.
11-Roberto: Esa es la palabra que yo estaba buscando. Que una de nuestras herencias es, una de sus herencias de nosotros es la plena y la bomba./That's the word I was looking for. That one of our heritage from Africans is the Bomba and Plena (dance)./	The relationship between black Puerto Ricans and Puerto Ricans is solely through ancestry such as the music.
12-Raúl: Y Wenmi que tiene el color de africanos y también que ella no es africana y ella es puer...Ay, ¿cómo se dice puertorriqueña?/And that Wenmi has the color of Africans and that she also is not African she is Puertorriqueña./	Important clarification. Black Puerto Ricans have the color of Africans (avoidance of the word "negro").

The dialogue began with Raúl's statement which included "at least" as a modality marker. The interactional patterns (genre) varied, but the focus was on how students structure and restructure racial language or discourses in social practice, the ways in which texts were interpreted and reproduced, and the ways they operated in various domains within society. The interactional control was exercised collaboratively, specifically by Raúl, Roberto, and myself as teacher, in negotiations regarding social relationships in social practice. However, the interactional control was exercised by

Roberto in many instances (see 05, 07, 09, 13, 15, 19, 20, 21, 23, 25, 27, 29, 32, 35 and 38), and the topic he intended and offered was maintained, as well. In addition, Roberto's agenda was manipulated or policed (Fairclough, 1992), by powerful speakers, such as Raúl and myself. Despite his ambivalence (see 13, 15, 29), Raul's agenda was to keep in sync with Roberto's ideas. Roberto's transactions with the book, within his family members' conceptions of race, and through his baseball related lived experiences were resources and thus pivotal in exploring and producing new racial understandings.

Students self selected themselves to respond to other's texts. Gemy's response was to remain silent. In other parts within this group, she interacted and shared thought provoking issues. Both Sara and Gemy positioned themselves as silent in relation to others' texts, acts, and discourses. The relational position rests on the manner in which one identifies one's position relative to others, mediated through the ways one feels comfortable or constrained; these are to speak to another, to command another, or to enter into the space of another (Holland, Lachicotte, Skinner and Cain, 2003, p. 127).

Roberto's, Raúl's and Maestra Patricia's solidarity and affinity (style) were cojoined by responding, extending and enhancing the focus on race/color, essentializing race to construct black Puerto Ricans and by exploring through connections and experiences in and out of school those that were available to us. Through social interaction, Sara's and Gemy's social positions developed into a positional identity of refrain and even silence within the literature circle. I think that their silenced identities, were a byproduct of doing and of imitation, thus profoundly embodied (Holland, Lachicotte, Cain and Skinner, 2003). Moreover, in certain discourses such as colorblindness and essentialized

discourse, multiple racial categories reproduce and sustain discourses of “silence” (Godreau, 2008). Raúl and Roberto’s relational identities enable them to feel comfortable and therefore through dialogue it seemed they positioned others in silence, a significant way of fitting into the comfort zone, which sustained the colorblindness and essentializing discourse as well.

Raúl’s, Roberto’s and Maestra Patricia’s powerful discourses positioned them to devise cultural artifacts and discourses, to respond in ways that moved beyond their immediate surroundings to the conceptual world of race. They explore racial social identification of black Puerto Ricans and Africans through dialogue. Also, students responded by connecting experiences such as a town where there was a considerable population of black Puerto Ricans, which was presented to the class consciousness through a picture book by a classmate, and Wenmi’s racial self identity when she stated, “I’m half Puerto Rican and half African, that’s how I feel” (shrugging her shoulders, presentation, 2005).

It should be noted that *Loíza* and *Guayama* were both considered towns where the most African slaves were placed, and *Loíza* has been associated through the media with stereotypical connotations because of the population’s composition. Therefore, this figured world of the literature circle extended these connotations. Furthermore, power is distributed and works implicitly and explicitly, both in society at large and in relation to figured worlds and their participants (Urrieta, 2007). Meaning was constructed through Roberto’s, Raúl’s, and Maestra Patricia’s racial uncertainty of “who is who,” through

essentializing race, and our musical (*bomba y plena*) ancestry from the African slaves in Puerto Rico and by identifying the color of African slaves as the same as black Puerto Ricans and by means of the resources that were available, to us, for example, Wenmi. In this way, the differences evolved through dialogue to be viewed as sameness between black Puerto Ricans and Africans. Interestingly, the statements (1 through 10) excerpted were infused with uncertainty, since the negotiation of “who is who” and what racial characteristics constitute Puerto Ricans related to racial category, which was avoided (see 06-10). The idea of sameness is enhanced through physical racial characteristics sustaining the notion that Puerto Ricans are all the same or promoted the idea of the Puerto Rican family. There were two important issues that emerged from this small excerpt: avoidance of the word *negro* (although I used the word [see-06], and skin color as a racial marker for determining blackness.

Raúl's racial ideological construction began with a connection with one of his peers from the other multiage classroom, Wenmi, specifically noting her African heritage from her father's side. Her father is from Togo, Africa, while her mother is from a state within the United States. Wenmi and her mother were fundamental in the gestation and development of the curriculum on the issue of race. When I began to inquire about the curriculum and its relation to students' knowledge about our African heritage and the racial categories they used in and out of school, it reflected superficiality. This is the case, despite the fact that the food, music, language, religion, and places were part of our everyday lives as Puerto Ricans. In this sense, both Wenmi and her mother were important sources for knowledge and resources. Roberto extended and enhanced the

discussion by connecting space, location and racial classification with *Loíza* and Africanos as synonyms. He also drew from the resources that were available to him, lived by him in the process of making meaning about race as a biological characteristic, and as Puerto Ricans constructed racial identities according to skin color. However, Raúl made an interesting point, referencing and enhancing Roberto's text and returning to his previous text (see-01), but the tone seemed to highlight that Wenmi's father is African and Puerto Ricans were not, despite their conclusions as expressed above. The figured world of the literature circle is a context where discourses come together and local forms evoke new meanings to acts and discourses.

What stands out in this excerpt was the way Roberto glossed his utterances with the modals (style) it could be (see 07) and could be (09). In both instances he presupposed a degree of uncertainty. For example, Yes, it could be (07) referred to my question regarding if black people who live in *Loíza* are Puerto Ricans, and to his previous statement (02) that in *Loíza* there were still Africans left. The apparent ambivalence about Africans, blacks and Puerto Ricans was re-accentuated by this modality marker. Raúl, on the other hand, glossed his utterance with experiences that were informationally focused (see 01 through 11). These statements enhanced and extended Roberto's and my ideological constructions of race, as the either/or with skin color determining Africans or Puerto Ricans. However, his statements were glossed by lived experiences with his peer Wenmi within the figured world of the classroom. Consequently, their perspectives come together as they overlap, reanimating what is and what it means to be Puerto Rican. Students' racial constructions of Puerto Ricans,

includes African heritage as represented by the skin color and music. Since Puerto Ricans have the color of Africans, thus, there are black Puerto Ricans. School curriculum in Puerto Rico emphasizes the construction of race through African inheritance.

Roberto, Raúl and I chose certain elements of others' texts and structured and restructured those to be understood at the local domain. Students negotiated and established that Puerto Ricans can have the color (although the word negro was avoided) of African slaves, and not necessarily be an African. Cohesive devices (genre) such as the repetition of the words "Puerto Ricans," "Africans," and "*Loíza*" illustrate how students use assumptions (racial) from their experiences and prior texts to make connections across the intertextual diverse elements of experiences, generating coherent interpretations such as Raúl's-11. Through the eyes of society, the presence of African slaves in Puerto Rican history are invisible, contrary to the white colonizer. Through the eyes of the institutional domains, skin color is primarily employed to racially classify people and conglomerate them into categories such as the census, to develop and perpetuate narrow views of culture and deficit views in children. Invisibility means the ways children avoid or reject the word *negro* as in this excerpt and thereby express negation of blackness. They chose the word "color" which made it seem that we all knew what we were talking about, and is a form of racial discrimination which becomes naturalized. Therefore, we construct through orders of discourse (genre, discourse and style) the institutions from which we speak (social practices). This means that through dialogue as a form of language, students devised cultural artifacts such as discourses to

respond and shift to a specific situation, they reproduce the discourse of uncertainty, that is the Puerto Rican sociopolitical and economic ideology as a colony of the United States.

Section II: “Bien prieto, bien prieto, prieto color labio”: Explorations of racial-social identification

In Section II of the transcript the intertextual chain continues when Roberto talks about a friend, Plota (a baseball friend) and racially labels him the following way.

13-Roberto- ...bien prieto, bien prieto, prieto color labio, como el color de él. Era bien prieto, bien prieto, bien prieto. Era amigo de Plota. / very prieto, very prieto, prieto the color of his lip, like his color. He was very prieto, very prieto, very prieto. He was a friend of Plota.

14-MP- ¿Es prieto o es negro? /Is it prieto or is it negro?/

15-Roberto- Es negro. /It's negro/black/

16-MP- Ah, ¿y por qué tú dices es bien prieto? /Ahhh! then why do you use very prieto?/

17-Roberto- Porque es que a mí no me gusta usar.../Because I don't like to use .../

18-Raúl- negrito/negrito/

19-Roberto- No, negrito así. A mí no me gusta usar esa cosa de negro así. /No, negrito, that way. I don't like to use that thing of negrito./

20-MP- ¿Por qué? /Why?/

21-Roberto- Porque, no sé, algunas personas, se siente como si se estuvieran así rechazándolo, a algunas personas. /Because, I don't know, some people might feel as being rejected, some people.

22-MP- ¿Y qué palabra tú crees que es correcta: prieto o negro?/And what word do you consider that is correct: prieto or negro-black?/

23-Roberto- Preferiría mejor negro. /I would prefer negro./

24-MP- ¿Por qué? /Why?/

25-Roberto- Porque algunas veces me dicen prieto a mí./Because sometimes they call me prieto./

26-MP- Pero si tu dices que es mejor, decir, utilizar la palabra negro, pero, por otro lado, también me estás diciendo que esas personas se pueden sentir mal./But you mentioned that it is better to say or use the word negro, but on the other hand, you also say that they could feel bad./

27-Roberto- Por eso mismo./That's why./

28-MP- Qué personas? Las personas negras?/What persons? Black persons?/

29-Roberto- Sí, porque un día como tú me dices que algunas veces yo le puedo decir a alguien negro o prieto, pues un día yo le dije a un nene, que era prieto, que yo le pregunté si quería jugar conmigo. Y yo le dije: Mira negro ven acá. Ven acá un momentito./Yes, because one day you said that sometimes I can say to someone negro or prieto, and I said to a boy, who was prieto, I asked did he want to play with me. I said, "Hey negro come over here, come over here for a second."/

Transcription	Interpretation
<p>13-Roberto: ...bien prieto, bien prieto, prieto color labio, como el color de él. Era bien prieto, bien prieto, bien prieto. Era amigo de Plota./...like the color of the lips. He was bien prieto, bien prieto, bien prieto. A friend of Plota./</p>	<p>Debating over the correctness of racial social identification between prieto and negro</p>
<p>14-Maestra Patricia: ¿Es prieto o es negro?/Is it prieto or negro?/</p>	<p>Alludes to the wording "bien prieto" adjective describing the intensity of the skin color</p>
<p>15-Roberto: Es negro./Its negro./</p>	
<p>16-Maestra Patricia: Ah, ¿y por qué tú dices es bien prieto? Ah, and why do you say bien prieto?/</p>	<p>"Negrito" an affectionate tone/diminutive form to refer to black Puerto Ricans. Also, an alternative to using the word "negro" since it may sound harsh.</p>
<p>17-Roberto: Porque es que a mí no me gusta usar.../Because I don't like using.../</p>	
<p>18-Raúl: Negrito/Negrito./</p>	

Transcript	Interpretation
19-Roberto: No, negrito así. A mí no me gusta usar esa cosa de negro así. /No, negrito. I don't like using that thing like negro./	19-21/The words negro and negrito seem to mean from his perspective a way to reject or that people may feel rejected.
20-Maestra Patricia: ¿Por qué?/Why?/	
21-Roberto: Porque, no sé, algunas personas, se sienten como si se estuvieran así rechazándolo, a algunas personas./Because, I don't know, some people would feel rejected, some people./	
21-Maestra Patricia: ¿Y qué palabra tú crees que es correcta: prieto o negro? /And what word do you think is correct, prieto or negro?/	The teacher focused on the correctness of using the racial labels negro or negrito.
22-Roberto: Preferiría mejor negro./I prefer negro./	
23-Maestra Patricia: ¿Por qué?/Why?/	
24-Roberto: Porque algunas veces me dicen prieto a mí./Because sometimes they call me prieto./	22- 24/Negro as a solution since he has been socially racially identified as prieto. Negro may seem that it is equal to prieto, and it has the individual effect of "feeling bad" and the social effect of racism through essentializing and colorblindness discourses.
25-Maestra Patricia: pero tú dices que es mejor, decir, utilizar la palabra negro, pero, por otro lado, también me estás diciendo que esas personas se pueden sentir mal. /But you mentioned that its better to use the word negro, but on the other hand you are saying that people could feel bad./	Highlights ambiguity in the use and meaning between negro and prieto
26-Roberto: Por eso mismo. /That's why./	
27-Maestra Patricia: ¿Qué personas? ¿Las personas negras?/Who? Black people./	
28-Roberto: Si, porque un día como tú me dices que algunas veces yo le puedo decir a alguien negro o prieto, pues un día yo le dije a un nene, que era prieto, que yo le pregunté si quería jugar conmigo. Y yo le dije: Mira negro ven acá. Ven acá un momentito./Yes, because one day you said to me that I could call someone negro or prieto, and one day I asked a boy who is prieto if he wanted to play with me. And I said "hey negro come over here, come over here a second"/	Establishing a similitude between negro and prieto- synonyms

In this excerpt, Roberto's interactional control (genre) (see 12, 14, 16, 18, 20, 22, 24, 26, 28) stands out. It is interesting that the topic revolved around defining *trigueño* and unfolded through personal experiences. He held the floor and introduced the topic which evolved and unfolded according to the agenda which was overtly set in discourse. Moreover, Roberto's discourse as a cultural artifact mediated his knowledge about race and he strategically used the cultural resources available to devise a new action/response to a specific situation. Despite his own *negro* skin tone, he socially identifies as *prieto* (see 24) and also socially identified and labeled a friend of his as *bien prieto*. This is an example of how his discourse type (genre) was constituted through a combination of elements of orders of discourse. He evoked a local emerging form, *bien prieto* discourse, which mediated the students' knowledge about race through the interplay of discourses and social structures (style). In contrast, this went back to the students' negotiations within the figured world of literature circles. Roberto glossed his discourse with an adjective and an adverb in his utterance *-bien prieto/ /very prieto/* which presupposed a new locally emerging form, that defined someone's skin color and characterized it as */very/* in a high degree emphasizing skin color- *prieto*. Additionally, his talk explores categorical modalities such as adjectives and adverbs which may presuppose categorical representations of reality positioning and shaping social subjects, and contributing to social racial control and reproduction (Fairclough, 1992).

I pointed out and re-directed the negotiation (see 12 and 21) by means of establishing *prieto* and *negro* as binaries, the either/or racial discourse, and also engaging students to evaluate the correctness of using the racial labels *prieto* and *negro* to refer to

other people. Godreau (2008) points out that racial categories become complicated with terms like *trigueño*, *de color*, and *indio*. The widely use of the term *trigueño* is often used as a euphemism to “soften the blow” (Rogers, 2001) and classify black people because of the belief that *negro* is offensive. In addition, as exemplified, the term *negrito* it may be used as a euphemism. Moreover, this excerpt (15-21) illustrates that the use of *negro* presupposes that other people may feel rejected; thus, the term *negrito* (see 18) becomes a way of establishing relationships by communicating affection. In this excerpt, contradictory discourses interplay within the figured world of the literature circle, making visible the ambiguity in language choices.

Discourses as paradoxes are also evident in this excerpt. Roberto, like everyone, functioned paradoxically, this means that his discourse combined contradictory features. Racial discourses as exemplified in Roberto’s views regarding *negro* as the correct way to refer to other people (22), that dismissed the word *negrito* as a “thing” synonymous with rejection, and that assumed *negro* and *prieto* are synonyms (see 28). He found acceptable ways for linking words and a complex subject position as a careful boy when selecting words; he was polite, showed both certainty and uncertainty, and dealt with elements in terms of ideological effects which imbedded issues of hegemony. Though contradictory, there were also elements of coherence, and it was up to the others within the literature circle to link these contradictory discourses and racial identities into a coherent whole.

Fairclough (1992, 1995) bases his concept of hegemony in Gramsci's analysis of western capitalism and revolutionary strategy in Western Europe. Roberto's racial construction can presuppose significations and constructions of reality (Fairclough, 1992). This means that the physical world, social relations, and identities are built into various dimensions of the forms and meanings of discursive practices, and contribute to the reproduction as students respond to the situation. Holland, Lachicotte, Skinner and Cain (2003) point to the idea that, in this case, students' identities are mediated by cultural artifacts and discourses, which are the site of self-making. As students draw on past experiences as Roberto did, and bring them to the actual situation, strategically using the cultural resources to devise a new action or response to a specific situation, what Holland and colleagues (2003) call improvisation could produce centripetal discourses and hegemony. As Fairclough (1992, 1995) points out, the ways that students (in this case) structure, re-structure and re-orchestrate orders of discourse and constitute discursive practices of texts is a dimension of hegemonic struggle.

Hence, Roberto's response was to use *negro*, despite the fact that I re-directed the discussion for the second time to understand his rationale concerning his statement of *bien prieto*. Strategically, like other students, I use discourses to construct the institutions from which I speak; institutional herein refers to race/skin color as an either/or and the function to categorize. Thus, institutions are pivotal in constructing deficit meanings and social practices that serve and extend institutions, such as schools and governments, and construct cultural artifacts such as children's literature or language to perpetuate deficit perspectives on children, families and their social practices.

However, I believe that within the literature circle, despite perpetuating discursive practices and patterns of knowledge, students recreate through social engagement negotiations of racial discourses and identities that give voice to particular experiences and the distinctive features of a particular situation play out within this figured world.

Within the literature circle, students are ordered and ranked and power is distributed, it is peopled by actors and also is the context for making/constructing new racial discourses and acts.

This particular literature circle exemplified students' active participation through dialogue. Thus, it reflected the diversity of competing discourses. The resources were what each student drew from their mediated ideological understandings and identities within the sociocultural context of the literature circle. I framed dialogue within a critical theory framework, as discourses occurring in dialogue and not isolated, in relation to and in contrast and opposition to other utterances, and as the primary condition of discourse where all speech and writing is social (Mills, 1997). This group of students reflected the diversity of experiences and social positions as regarded race, social class, gender, and age that characterize a multiage Puerto Rican classroom. Thus, they reflected the diverse competing discourses and resources from which each student drew in order to mediate their racial understandings and identities.

Section III: Chavito prieto (penny) and indio: Pivots to mediate racial meanings

Students' discourses of race are negotiated as they respond to the situation, giving voice to new understandings through comparisons utilizing both colorblindness discourse and the racial social identification of *indio*, a local emergence form which evokes acts of emotions.

The interactional control (genre) was equally distributed and experientially focused as well. It was interesting how the negotiations' focal point was on the teachers' (myself) two statements (see 29 and 33). This excerpt highlights students' language choices and comparisons between *trigueño* and *chavito prieto* (meaning that the color tone *trigueño* is like the color of a penny) and secondly, *trigueño* and *negro* as binaries, and then racial social identification as *trigueño*, *indio* and *negro* and the effects of these terms had individually and socially within the literature circle. With this in mind I turn to the excerpt and analysis.

29-MP-Tú sabes lo que es prieto? Tú sabes que significa prieto?/Do you know what prieto is? Do you know the meaning of prieto?/

30-Raúl-Un chavito prieto./Like a penny./

31-Roberto-Como un chavito prieto, exacto. Como, este, así trigueño. Entonces yo le dije, y él me dijo a mí, solamente yo le digo lo el me dijo a mí. Yo tenía como cuatro años o cinco años. Que yo, cuando yo le dije, yo dije, "Ay, se me olvidó la palabra que iba a decir y dije negro y él me dijo: "Es que a mí no me gusta que me digan negro." / Yes, like a penny, exactly. Like, him trigueño. And then I said and he said to me. I had like four or five years. Ahhhhh! I forgot the word that I was going to say and I said, "I don't like to be called negro."/

32-Raúl-Yo le hubiera preguntado cuál era el nombre de él. / I would have asked him what his name was./

33-MP-Entonces, me quedé pensando, Roberto, en lo que tú me estás diciendo, ¿qué es mejor o qué te parece correcto, decir prieto o negro...o ninguna de las dos? / And then, I'm thinking, Roberto, about what you were saying. What is the correct way to say, prieto or negro or nothing?/

34-Roberto-Ninguna de las dos, yo creo./ Neither of the two, I think./

35-MP-¿Por qué? / Why?/

36-Raúl- Trigueño. / Trigueño./

37-Roberto-Trigueño y algunas veces a mí me dicen indio y yo me siento normal, bien. Antier, este yo me acuerdo cuando me decían...de ayer, yo a mí un día me dijeron negro yo me sentía, como que mal. Entonces, a mí como que esa palabra me daba vuelta en al cabeza y yo Dios mío...yo oía como que así me decían: indio, prieto, indio, prieto, indio, indio, las tres a la misma vez. Y yo, ayyyyyyyyyy!!!!.... / Trigueño and sometimes I'm called "indio"- "indian" and feel normal, okay. The day before, I remember when I was called...yesterday, one day, I was called "negro" and I felt like bad. And then those words kind of stayed around my head...and I heard that I was called indio, prieto, indio, prieto, indio, indio, and the three words at the same time. I was like AHHHHHHH!

Transcription	Interpretation
28-Maestra Patricia: ¿Tú sabes lo que es prieto? ¿Tú sabes que significa prieto?	Soliciting and inquiring- his knowledge about the meaning of prieto. It may presuppose that there is a difference between black-negro and prieto. See Isabelo Zenón (1974).
29-Raúl: Un chavito prieto.	Interesting analogy. Prieto is the way we describe a penny-color.
30-Roberto: Como un chavito prieto, exacto.	An example to justify "prieto" wording through a personal experience. Emerging local form- "trigueño." So trigueño is the same as "chavito prieto."

Transcription	Interpretation
31-Maestra Patricia: ¿Y qué más?	
32-Roberto: Como, este, así trigueño. Entonces yo le dije, y él me dijo a mí, solamente yo le digo lo que él me dijo a mí. Yo tenía como cuatro o cinco años. Que yo, cuando yo lo dije, yo dije: “Ay, se me olvidó la palabra que iba a decir y dije negro y él me dijo: “Es que a mí no me gustan que me digan negro.”	Names (peoples names) as an alternative to identifying people. This is a way of avoiding the dialogue about racial social and self identification and an example of colorblindness.
33-Maestra Patricia: Ah, pero entonces no le digas... (murmullos)	
34-Raúl: Yo le hubiera preguntado cuál era el nombre de él.	
35-Roberto: Pues eso mismo. Cuando yo lo conocí yo le dije cuál era su nombre. Y él se llamaba Héctor.	Interesting how wordings evolve through dialogue, personal experiences, local quotidian expressions as analogies. Also
36-Maestra Patricia: Entonces, me quedé pensando, Derick, en lo que tú me estás diciendo, ¿qué es mejor o qué te parece correcto, decir prieto o negro...o ninguna de las dos?	words are tied to emotions, connection to new self understandings.
37-Roberto: Ninguna de las dos, yo creo.	
38-Maestra Patricia: ¿Por qué?	

Chavito prieto, the color of the penny (coin), is used as a comparison. According to Raúl-30 and Roberto-31, that *prieto* is like the color of a penny. However, it also can mean the skin color of the Indians -Táinos, which is *cobrizo*/copper colored./ This usage contrasts with María’s and Jorge’s (Group 2) negotiations of *trigueño* as “like” and “around like that.” Students negotiate the assumption that *prieto* and *negro* are binaries. Conceptually, students dialectically and dialogically moved back and forth between *prieto* and *negro* and their meanings, evoking local emerging forms such as *indio*. Roberto establishes comparisons of his experiences as being socially identified as *negro*

and also evoking the emergence of local forms such as *indio* as a category with which he felt comfortable, “feeling normal” (see-36). This is contrary to when he was racially social identified as *negro* which made him feel “like bad.” Roberto’s exploration of racial discourse supposed according to his experiences that *negro* was not acceptable or well viewed by society, having the individual effect of his feeling “like bad”, but that *indio* was okay.

The words used in institutional and societal domains stress identifying people by categories based on skin color. Although the racial label, *indio*, is used in more mundane spaces, this example illustrates how Roberto constructed the discourse of institutions responds by means of using a racial label, *indio*, that he was familiar and comfortable with. In contrast, Raúl positioned and was positioned as accepting and offering possibilities (see 30, 32, and 36). What catches my attention was the way in which, for instance, he offered a solution to racial identification that of asking for the person’s name before referring to them as *negro*. This highlights how Raúl constructed the colorblindness discourse. People’s names are considered “neutral” which may have the intention to hide and dismiss the importance of race. I should point out that in the institutional and societal domains names are used as a way of re-dressing the colorblindness discourse.

It is important to note that there were two instances where Roberto used two modal markers (31) /exactly/ and (34) /I think/. The latter is a subjective modality, although after his definitive answer, the final phrase was glossed with a degree of affinity

with what the teacher proposed. Therefore, the modal adverb /exactly/ with its equivalent adjective, *trigueño* emphasized the accuracy of the description. Roberto's "authorial stance" in the making of meaning for *chavito prieto*, *bien prieto* and *indio* built from preexisting materials, words, phrases. His vocal perspectives are seen in flux, as they change and transformation, creating new ways, discourses, and acts. This illustrates how students' languages and voices are inevitable, inextricable ideological, lived racial perspectives on the world and on Puerto Rico that are in a state of flux and fluidity through life.

Within literature circles, students recreated themselves through social engagement, giving voice to distinctive features of particular situations and experiences in localized and mundane spaces. For example, the issue in this dialogue was how students re-conceptualize who they are as *trigueño* or *indio*, according to who they understood themselves to be as individuals and members of collectives. As they were being racially socially and self identified by others, as with Raul's role, they were offered positions that they accepted, rejected and negotiated in response. All the racial labels, either as racial social or self identification, such as *bien prieto*, *trigueño*, and *indio* - may presuppose that are used as euphemisms to hide the importance of race, even the re-dressing or intertextual linking of words or languages hide the importance of race by means of layering racial terms. Like Roberto, Raúl seemed to be shifting according to his past experiences which he drew on and brought to the present situation in order to make meaning of *bien prieto*, *indio* and *chavito prieto*. These are not simple constructions, instead this excerpt illustrates webs of significance (Geertz, 1973) through intertextual

links. Discourses depend and overlap in a need for each other. This means that students explored and negotiated meanings through racial linkages that are inconsistent and ambiguous.

Analysis: Group 2

This specific literature discussion is an excerpt from a long transcript. The excerpt that I will analyze follows a short excerpt (transcript below) where Jorge, María, Sofi, Armando and Fabián dialogue about the work conditions and the physical consequences of being black African slaves in Puerto Rico. Hence, these students' explorations illustrated their ideologies of the colonizers by racial social identification "as the white" and to develop a comparison concerning the violence now with that during Puerto Rico's slavery period. Students' discourse constructions of race are explored through the violence embedded in the physical treatment of African slaves in Puerto Rico and how that issue is something of the past.

With this in mind I present the short excerpt:

01-Jorge- Por eso se podían romper los pies tan fácil, cuando se trataban de escapar. Si tuvieran zapatos.../ That's why they could break their feet so easily, when they tried to escape. If they had shoes...inaudible.

02-MP-Y qué ustedes piensan sobre esos castigos?/What do you think about that?/

03-Jorge- Que son muy violentos./That they are very violent./

04-Jorge- Eso era antes./That was before./

05-MP- ¿Y ustedes creen que hoy día no existe esa violencia?/Do you think that now a days this type of violence does not exist?/

06-María-No

07-Jorge- Un poco diferente. Ahora es un poco más violenta, por que ahora usan pistolas y matan a la gente./Differently. Now it is a little bit more violent because they use guns and kill people./

08-Armando- Pero le daban en la espalda.../But they hit them on their backs... inaudible/.

09-MP-¿Los latigazos, tú dices?/Do you mean they whipped them?/

10-Armando- Si. Me dijeron que este tipo es el jefe (apuntando a la ilustración.)/ Yes, they told that this was the chief (pointing to the illustration./

11-Jorge- ¿Qué tipo?/What guy?/

12-Armando- Este el blanco./This one, the white (pointing to the illustration).

A brief analysis emerged which I think is important in relation to the subsequent analysis. Jorge's response reflected the dialogue the students were engaged in. The text (picture book) as a cultural artifact served as a pivot to mediate the meanings, conditions and consequences of being enslaved. The dialogue began with Jorge who connected issues, where the conditions and consequences of being enslaved (genre) were characterized and informationally focused. Though he did not mention Pablo Yandá, the African slave in the picture book, he used the character's experience, as narrated in the story, as an example to think of how it would be different if "they had shoes." Although the end part is inaudible, the phrase "if they had shoes" that he offered was received and interpreted by the teacher differently. Hence, the dialogue narrowed to reflect about the issue of slaves' punishments.

I thought the excerpt, although short, would be appropriate in order to contextualize the subsequent analysis, since students' ideological constructions of race were through their negotiation of violence. Different from other excerpts analyzed, it illustrated students' negotiations of race through the lens of the violence of the white colonizers. However, the next analysis, connected with this issue, but extended the meanings of *negrito* through slaves and slavery. More importantly, this dialogue evoked the exploration and negotiation of the racial term, *negrito*.

Analysis: Group 3

Negrito is constructed through racial markers, such as the form of the nose and hair as well as religion, are negotiated in this literature discussion. The negotiation is extended as they introduce religion as a racial marker, thus enlightening differences. In addition, the discussion on the perception of African slaves as worthless from the colonizers' perspective is also addressed in this literature discussion group.

In the following excerpt the analysis revolves around the racial discourses developed around and through slavery by the students in **Group 2** (Joe, Gaby, Jaime, Jescy, Sheyda). Racial terms such as *negrito* evoked the exploration and negotiation of discourses such as fairness, colorblindness, segregation, work and rights; reflecting the inconsistency and ambiguity of the use and meanings of these racial labels. This analysis focuses on how the sociocultural forms such as the colorblindness discourse are used as a

resource and pivot for the emergence of local forms such as fairness, rights, work and segregation.

With this in mind I turn to the analysis.

01-MP-¿Por qué eran esclavos? ¿Por qué fueron esclavizados?/Why were they slaves? Why were they enslaved?

02-Joe-Yo creo, porque yo creo que la gente creían que no servían para nada importante, nada mas que para trabajar./I think, because I think that the people thought that they were not worth anything but to work./

03-MP-¿Por qué? Eran diferentes a nosotros.*/Why? They were different from us?

04-Variou voices-Sí/Yes.

05-Jescy- Ellos tenían narices y tenían pelo así (looking at the illustration)./They had noses and the hair like this (looking at the illustration).

06-Jaime- Y eran negritos./And they were “negritos.”/

07-Jescy- risa./laughter.

08-MP-Cuál es la risa? Y las carterísticas físicas como el cooloor de la piel./Why are you laughing? And the characteristics like the color of the skin./

09-Joe- Y la religión./And religion./

10-MP- Y eso nos hace diferentes a los demás?/And does that make us different from others?/

11-Jescy- No/No./

12-Gaby- Que las personas que compraban esclavos, ellos creían que ellos no servían para nada importante -eran blancos./That the people that bought the slaves, they thought that they were not worth anything but to work, were whites./

13-MP- ¿Y por qué tu crees que ellos pensaban?/And why do you think they thought that way?/

14-Gaby- Porque tal vez ellos pensaban los que compraban, que eran de otras religiones./Because, maybe, they thought that the ones that bought them, that they were from different religions./

15-Jaime- Y los hacían trabajar más rápido con, con/And they made them work more fast, with, with

16-Jescy- Latigazos/whips

17-Jaime- Con un latigazo para que trabajen más rápido./They were whipped to work more faster.

Transcript	Interpretation
01-MP-¿Por qué eran esclavos? ¿Por qué fueron esclavizados?/Why were they slaves? Why were they enslaved?	Students' racial construction emerges from their perspective of the conception of the colonizer's (white) perspective on slaves as unworthy, different, and physical characteristics are embedded in these.
02-Joe-Yo creo, porque yo creo que la gente creían que no servían para nada importante, nada mas que para trabajar./I think, because I think that the people thought that they were not worth anything but to work./	
03-MP-¿Por qué? Eran diferentes a nosotros./Why? They were different from us?	
04-Varios voces-Sí/Yes.	03-05/Although they described the physical characteristics of slaves, students dismiss the "sameness" similitudes with black Puerto Ricans.
05-Jescy-Ellos tenían narices y tenían pelo así (looking at the illustration)./They had noses and the hair like this (looking at the illustration).	
06-Jaime- Y eran negritos./And they were "negritos."/	"Negrito" is used as a descriptor-being different.
07-Jescy-risa./laughs.	
08-MP-Cual es la risa? Y las carterísticas fisicas como el cooloor de la piel./Why are you laughing? And the characteristics like the color of the skin./	Focus on skin color

Transcript	Interpretation
09-Joe-Y la religión./And the religion./	Religion is brought up as a difference between us (Puertoricans and whites...) and slaves.
10-MP-Y eso nos hace diferentes a los demás?/And does that make us different from others?/	However, the teacher (I) seems to insist on homogenizing through the colorblindness discourse. Dismissing the importance of race and differences with other people, seemed to elicit that differences don't matter.
11-Jescy- No/No./	
12-Gaby-Que las personas que compraban esclavos, ellos creían que ellos no servían para nada importante -eran blancos./That the people that bought the slaves, they thought that they were not worth of anything but to work-were whites./	(12, 13, and 14) Perceptions of the colonizer (white). Restates Joe (02)
13-MP-Y por que tu crees que ellos pensaban?/And why do you think that they thought that?/	
14-Gaby-Porque tal vez ellos pensaban los que compraban, que eran de otras religiones./Because, maybe, they thought the ones that bought them, that they were from different religions./	Evokes a response which highlights that the slaves were the different ones because of religious differences, and also the reason to be mistreated. Justifies slaves' mistreatment.
15-Y los hacían trabajar más rápido con, con/And they made them work more fast, with, with]	
16-Jescy- latigazos/whips]	Conditions and consequences of slavery
17-Jaime-Con un latigazo para que trabajen más rápido./They were whipped to work more faster.	Conditions and consequences of slavery

As we sat in a round table, the dialogue had three important issues that overlapped. First, exploration of concepts such as fairness, segregation, work conditions and rights, and second, sociocultural forms such as colorblindness discourse were represented and reconstructed as feelings which dictated human relations within the

literature circles. Third, other figured worlds were available to the students which were peopled with characters from collective imaginings (of class, race, gender, nationality), in which students figured how to relate to one another over time and across different time/place/space contexts. Students' ways of interaction became roles, but not in the static notion. Thereby, in this study, students' racial discourses within the figured worlds of literature circles were formed dialectically and dialogically.

Section I: Constituting *negrito* through slaves and slavery

The dialogue began with the teacher (myself) setting the agenda. The interactional patterns (genre) focused on the students' exploration of slave through the physical descriptors of hair, religion, and a local emerging form, *negrito*, which function as a racial marker. Moreover, it functions as an ethnic marker for determining slaves. This means that the racial discourse construction of slaves was that they were *negritos*, have a different religion and those are the reasons slaves are treated badly. In this sense, *negrito* and *trigueño* are not synonyms. It seems that in this collective construction and constitution of slaves, students did not avoid the word *negro* or *negrito*, but, instead signaled a specific ethnic group dismissing the importance and recognition of black Puerto Ricans.

Godreau (2008) argues that blackness is not necessarily relegated to the past, but to narrow stereotypical physical characteristics such as *negritos* having very dark skin, and kinky hair among other attributes, and further, to distance from it. From this point of view, the correspondence of signaling slaves as *negritos* is evident thus distancing from

them is not purely coincidental. This is part of the school discourse, which historically has tried to deal with the stigma of blackness through, for example, the ethnographic spectacle (Tobing Rony, 1996) and to whiten its mark of slave origin which informs a language practice. Hence, the interactional control is exercised collaboratively by students' negotiations of social relations in social practice. Students, throughout the dialogue, self selected themselves to respond to others' texts.

Joe's-02 response of "I think" is characterized as a subjective modality (Fairclough, 1992); meaning that the selected degree of affinity with the teacher's question was made explicit. Joe's own degree of affinity (see 02) with what the teacher proposed was expressed through the modality--"I think." Specifically, the modality, "I think," presupposes a degree of affinity in relation to the questions regarding slavery and being enslaved. Moreover, the degree of affinity is in relation to Joe's lived experiences such as reading. He extended his experiences and ideas through his interpretation of the text (picture book) and my introductory statement.

The complete excerpt is glossed with pronouns of /them/ (style) (see 05, 12, 13, 14,) and in one occasion is linked to a past tense verb. For example, Jescy (05) began with a pronoun /they/ and a past tense verb /were/. However, past tense verbs (see 01, 03, 05, 06, 12,) presuppose that students' discourses of race are treated through dialogue as something from the past or far away from our reality; a linguistic example is the substitution of the word slaves with the pronoun /they/ or /them/ (genre). However, it also exemplifies Bolgatz's (2006) notion that racism of the past is linked to racism today.

In her study students did not have evidence of that relationship or the ways in which racism manifests itself in the present. In this study, the use of the pronouns /they/ /them/ and past tense verbs referred to and posited race as something distant or far away from their reality. Thus, making racism as something of the past through these forms or orders of discourse, “softens the blow” (Rogers, 2003) of the contested issues of race and racism, particularly through the inconsistent and ambiguous use and meanings of racial labels. Nevertheless, Joe -02 seemed to link important issues such as slavery and ideological assumptions from the perspective of the colonizer-white person (style), as also illustrated by Gaby-12. In addition, students constructed the institutions (government and school) that they were speaking from in their colorblindness and essentialized discourse (see Gaby-14). Also, I as a teacher (MP) constructed and reconstructed the institution (see-10), I spoke from through essentializing and colorblindness discourses.

I imposed racial ideological assumptions through dialogue as a form of language to essentialize race, portraying it as a predetermined and deterministic aspect of personality and life as opposed to a social and historical construction that is constantly shifting (Bolgatz, 2005, p. 79). This means that when I stated “And that makes us different from others?” I imposed the assumption that there are differences (physical), specifically racial and religious, the dialogue and responses to a fixed notion of race or colorblindness. In other words, an opposite extreme to essentializing is colorblindness, my statement seemed to embrace both, dismissing the significance and relevance of race. It seemed that it was in an indirect way, since I ignored the significance of race by asking

if the physical, religious and racial identification of *negritos* made us different from others, and thereby I constituted “us” as “humans” instead of invoking the reality of Puerto Rico skin colors. There can also be an element of irony in my statement where I was saying one thing and meaning another. In other words, I was echoing the words of others’ texts such as Jescy-05 and 07, Jaime-06, Joe-09 and even my previous text (see 03).

The interpreter of my text, Jescy-11, responded with a “no” answer and so the dialogue did not go further. His response towards my utterance was interpreted as a yes or no answer to a closed ended question; it seemed that he recognized the intention, though was not necessarily able to recognize the irony of an echoed text (Fairclough, 1992), which was not the real meaning of my text. There is a disparity between the meaning I was giving voice to and the real function of my utterance within the literature circle.

Gaby-12 elaborated the earlier statement of Joe’s-02 by clarifying with the phrase, “were white,” referencing the use of the first pronoun /they/. The use of pronouns (they, them) in the same utterance points to both colonizers and slaves (see Gaby-12). She elaborated the statement by adding a phrase which clarified Joe’s and her point that “the people who bought slaves were whites and they thought that the slaves were not capable of anything or worth anything except to work.” Another example was Gaby’s-14 response to my question about her rationale for why the whites thought that the slaves were not capable of doing anything other than work. Interestingly, her response was

glossed with a modality (style), specifically an adverb modal that is */tal vez/-/maybe/* (see-14) with the adjective */religion./* It seems that because the whites who bought the slaves were from a different religion, blacks then were submitted to the work conditions as slaves (see -15, 16, 17) and whipped to work faster. The intertextual processes were exemplified when Gaby's-14 statement evoked responses (see Jaime-15, Jescy-16, and Jaime-17) that I characterize as enhancing. Jaime and Jescy enhanced the meaning of Gaby's text by qualifying it as situated in a specific historical period where the condition of being slave and *negrito* brought about mistreatment. This construction means that the cause of being from a different religion and *negrito*, brought about the work condition of slaves during a specific historical period, as set in the picture book.

The intertextual chain is a series of types of texts which are transformationally related to each other in the sense that each students' text is transformed into one or more of the others in regular and predictable ways (Fairclough, 1992 1995). This chain is illustrated in how texts are shaped by prior texts to which they are responding, and by subsequent texts that they anticipate; thus indicating how students are in a state of addressability, answering and anticipating dialogism. Identity in this study was framed from this perspective. As Fairclough (1992) states, intertextuality has important implications in the constitution of subjects through texts and the contribution of changing discursive practices to changes in social identity. Holland, Lachicotte, Skinner and Cain (2003) suggest in their theory of identities in social practice that there are identities offered to the students as well as positions to which they make choices and respond, as

they accept, reject or negotiate these. Nevertheless, within the figured world of literature circles lies the possibility for making/creating new discourses.

An example of this is when, Joe-02 was offered an explanatory position and his response as he drew from both linguistic and experiential resources, that were available to him, came together and shifted him to the conceptual world of race. His response entitled him as knowledgeable, which went beyond the text (picture book) and was recognized by Gaby-12. Gaby-12 was offered a position, despite the dialogue before her response which positioned Jescy-05, 07 and 11, Jaime-06, and Joe-09 to respond in a certain way by focusing on physical characteristics which described or constituted slaves. However, I do acknowledge the in between dialogue of Joe and Gaby. Gaby-12 accepted and negotiated the meaning of who were the ones who bought the slaves and thought that they were not worth anything but work; she did this by stating they were whites. On the one hand, this example highlights how texts are structured and restructured and, on the other, how Gaby and others were positioned, and new understandings were evoked in this figured world. This example also illustrates how discourse is generated in particular settings such as the economical, political and institutional which are reproduced and constituted in this figured world.

As part of the intertextual chain, there is an important element used in different ways by students throughout the dialogue; it is coherence which is at the heart of interpretation. In order for students to make sense of texts, they had to find ways of fitting the diversity of elements in a text into a coherent whole, though as emphasized by

Fairclough (1992), not necessarily unitary, determinate or ambivalent (p.133). This points to the idea of identities existing in a state of flux and fluidity. Nevertheless, coherence in this excerpt is illustrated in the ways students bring racial ideological assumptions through dialogue into the figured worlds of literature circles.

Coherence is not a property of texts, but a property which students as interpreters impose on texts, generating different coherent readings of the same text, for example, the dialectical and dialogical extension, elaboration and reference to others' texts, such as in the case of Gaby-12 and Jaime-15, Jescy-16 and Jaime-17. There are also words which collocate lexically since they are repeated and link words and expressions into meaningful relations. These words are, slaves, *negritos*, whips and work faster, This creates a degree of affinity with other's statements of other text producers. For example, Gaby-12 showed affinity with Joe's-02 offers, since his statement was marked with the modality marker "I think," and Gaby showed solidarity as she drew on others' vocal perspectives, demonstrating knowledge and extending Joe's-02 statement by adding something new to it, that is, "were whites." Within this figured world, Gaby's discourse was connected to institutional spheres, the colorblindness discourse, and an emerging local form of fair, which was evoked through dialogue as a personal and evaluative statement as she responded to others' texts. This also presupposes an element of power relations, the intersection in discourse, between the signification of reality and the enactment of social relations between *negritos* and *blancos*.

Students' ideological constructions of race were exemplified by means of the language choices or orders of discourse to represent and construct slaves and slavery as something of the past, as *negritos* with specific hair characteristics and religion, and worthless to do any other job, and the work conditions. The constitution of discursive practices in this small excerpt (from 01 through 12) highlights that students' (text producers) texts are produced in a specific way within the literature circle. Then, dialogue is produced (Fairclough, 1992,1995) dialectically and dialogically within the literature circle, considered as a social reality (Urrieta, 2007), and is consumed differently in different social contexts. Individually and collaboratively, students interpret others' texts and evoke the exploration and negotiation of racial meanings and identities. The distribution of these texts is, according to Fairclough (1992), simple since dialogue as a form of language belongs to the immediate context of the situation in which it occurs. Discourse practices, in this example, generates a view of race and of the world as colorblindness. This world is peopled with the view of race as insignificant and irrelevant, focusing on the physical characteristics and dismissing the significance of race in our life circumstances.

Interestingly, the students seemed to simultaneously construct slaves, slavery and *negrito* through the colorblindness discourse, thus dismissing the construction and constitution of black Puerto Ricans. In Zenón's (1974-75) study, the emphasis is on the prejudice and racism in diverse social domains such as academia. He begins with anthropology in the University of Puerto Rico, politics, education, children's literature, music, history of Africa, and religion, among others. I extend Zenón's discussion by

stating that focus on external physical characteristics and religion serve as a pivot to simultaneously dismiss and en-lighten the differences in skin color among people and to construct a superficial view of race as feelings or emotions; what matters is what we (humans) internally and emotionally share. In this analysis permeates what I term within the colorblindness discourse to be a false embracement as a problem of false consciousness which undermines the true nature of what the students were doing linguistically and discursively, reducing their racial ideological construction of race to a fixed one, instead of racial terminologies co-existing. In other words, students' mental representations of the language relations around them systematically obscured the realities of race and racism, through subordination and segregation, among other. The individual and social effect to embrace and this is illusory. Their racial discourse was through the lens of the colonizer (the white), dismissing the similitudes between slaves and black Puerto Ricans, and enlightening the conditions and consequences of slavery.

Students' sociocultural forms such as colorblindness discourse are used as a pivot for the emergence of local forms such as *negrito*, which is constructed through slavery from a white perspective. Other local emerging forms were religion as an issue and excuse for slaves to be mistreated, and segregated, although this was an intertextual connection and students treated the issue as something far from our reality which happened in another country such as the United States.

Section II: Feelings and Sameness: Intertextual linkages

Extending the discussion of colorblindness discourse within the conceptual world of race, Gaby's response may be characterized as colorblindness discourse which evoked concepts such as segregation and fairness. She made connections across sociocultural tools such as the media (newspaper), books she had read and personal experiences. These connections were not isolated and her connections were intertextual. This section looks at how the colorblindness discourse, which Gaby drew from, and used as a resource, is pivotal in constituting sameness. As Fairclough, (1992) points out, discourses not only represent the world, but in signifying their worlds, constitute and construct the world in meaning.

18-Gaby- Aunque sean diferentes por fuera somos iguales por dentro./Despite our outside differences, we are the same in the inside./

19-MP- Qué tú quieres decir con iguales?/What do you mean with "same"?

20-Gaby- Que tenemos los mismos sentimientos./That we have the same feelings./

21-Joe- A veces en las escuelas cuando iban de excursión, los blancos iban al frente y los negritos iban detrás./Sometimes in schools when they would go to a field trip, the whites sat in the front and the "negritos" in the back./

22-MP- A eso se le llama segregación. Otro ejemplo es que las fuentes de agua tenían un rótulo que decía que la fuente era exclusivamente de blancos./That's called segregation. Another example is on the water fountains there was a sign which said that it was exclusively for whites./

23-Jaime- Eso es malo. Por que si ellos no toman agua mueren en la camioneta./That's bad. Because if they don't drink water they die in the bus./

24- Gaby- Y eso no es justo./And that's not fair./

25-MP- ¿Qué es para ti “justo”?/What does fair mean to you?

26-Gaby- Que todo el mundo tiene derecho, tiene derecho hacer lo que es necesario para, necesario para el cuerpo./That everyone has the right to do what ever is necessary, for, necessary for the body./

Transcript	Interpretation
18-Gaby-Aunque sean diferentes por fuera somos iguales por dentro./Despite our outside differences, we are the same in the inside./	Colorblindness-external physical differences and sameness (feelings and emotions) are on the inside-what people all share. Focus is on what people share instead of the differences among people.
19-MP-Qué tú quieres decir con iguales?/What do you mean with “same”?	“Same” means having the same feelings.
20-Gaby- Que tenemos los mismos sentimientos./That we have the same feelings./	Evokes “segregation” and provides an example of segregation, particularly from the United States, although we Puerto Ricans experienced segregation as well. An example of the way Puerto Rican education has been colonized.
21-Joe-A veces en las escuelas cuando iban de excursión, los blancos iban al frente y los negritos iban detrás./Sometimes in schools when they would go to a field trip, the whites sat in the front and the “negritos” in the back./	The teacher extends Joe’s example and focuses on segregation in the United States.
22-MP-A eso se le llama segregación. Otro ejemplo es que las fuentes de agua tenían un rótulo que decía que la fuente era exclusivamente de blancos./That’s called segregation. Another example is on the water fountains there was a sign which said that it was exclusively for whites./	Emphasis or evaluative statement of segregation as something bad and the consequences of segregation
23-Jaime-Eso es malo. Por que si ellos no toman agua mueren en la camioneta./That’s bad. Because if they don’t drink water they die in the bus./	24-26/intertextual linkages Evokes a local emerging form “justice”
24- Gaby-Y eso no es justo./And that’s not fair./	Elicits to signify “justice”
25-MP-¿Qué es para ti “justo”?/What does fair mean to you?/	Evokes local emerging form “rights” Defines “human rights” as inextricable and necessary for health (body).
26-Gaby ?Que todo el mundo tiene derecho, tiene derecho hacer lo que es necesario para, necesario para el cuerpo./That everyone has the right to do what ever is necessary, for, necessary for the body/	

Gaby's-14 colorblindness discourse was glossed with affection. In this case, instead of an embracing discourse, I think her connection served as a unifier and stabilizer discourse. Affection was linked to the tone she uses and also the word used to describe what matters, the feelings. For example, sameness means that everyone's feelings are the same despite the outside skin tone differences. In contrast, as in the previous analysis, the colorblindness discourse was glossed with affection and served as a pivot for the local emerging forms such as "special" (see Gaby-08, Group 3-analysis), and in this case, the local emerging form was feelings. This means that Gaby used the resources that were available to her such as the colorblindness discourse which presupposes neutrality from the private domain, and reproduces the exact words of the institutional and societal domains (discourse), which softens the blow (Rogers, 2003) of a contested issue.

Voices merged, this means that she chose to represent discourse in one way rather than another. It seemed to implicitly acknowledge social and powerful relations, she spoke from the voice of society and institutions, becoming naturalized (Fairclough, 1992), which was reproduced and constituted, as mentioned previously.

The colorblindness discourse was represented orally by grammatical features and the discursive organization positioned her with a positive face (style). These are elements that she chose to represent in the colorblindness discourse. Language use as shaped by Gaby's intended politeness (Fairclough, 1992). Gaby was positioned by others' texts and made the decision to accept and respond from the institutional, societal, and private

domains. Colorblindness discourse, like other deficit racial intentions for dismissing or obscuring racial realities, acts neutral, and is guided by a model of deficiency that centers the experiences of white students, biological and social scientists, and historical accounts that indicate what the good white colonizers did to the native people, *indios Taínos*. Once again, this example demonstrates false embracement as a problem of false consciousness since students' social relations within colorblindness obscure racial realities. In contrast, Bolgatz (2005) states that one way for student handling of discomforts is by what she calls "diversion." This means that students may divert the dialogue away from racism, changing the subject or making jokes. In this case it is through colorblindness discourse, highlighting sameness instead of differences.

Joe's-21 statement seemed to enlighten Gaby's-18 and 20 texts. This means that he drew from previous texts and shifts to focus on information and historicity (genre) by means of providing an example of segregation. Segregation was evoked as a local form through the process of contested discourses and vocal perspectives coming together. He does not dismiss Gaby's colorblindness discourse, but his comment is pivotal in shifting the focus to race and racism. In other words, despite her dismissal, Joe redirected and put forth the issue of race and racism.

Verb tense signals segregation as something of the past and not as something that we live now. In Puerto Rico, slaves were placed in towns near the coast where the production of sugar was immense. Also, coastal towns were the places/spaces where Puerto Ricans stayed to raise their families, a lived through experience with *bomba y*

plena, religion, and linguistic features. It seems that Joe blended the voice of historical knowledge from the transaction with the picture book and author; thus, evoking knowledge and pleasure.

Along the same line, Jaime's-22 and Gaby's-24 statements were in present tense. Specifically, /is/ is considered a categorical modality which shifts the expressions from something of the past, such as segregation, to an evaluative statement in simple present tense /is/. Then the responses are characterized as both personal and evaluative. Both, Jaime and Gaby seemed to respond from a personal and judgmental/evaluating position. Their responses were means for the ways they recognized each other as a particular sort of actor (Urrieta, 2007). This means that students such as Jaime and Gaby, within figured worlds, valued certain outcomes over others, and recognized and attached significance to some acts and responses and not to others. Furthermore, I agree with Urrieta (2007) that each figured world of a literature circle, as in this case, depends on who the participants are and their personal social histories, and that implies drawing on past experiences and bringing them to the present circumstances.

Jaime-23 enhanced his statement by means of providing an example of what he meant. Therefore, he spoke from the voice of experience, media, social and governmental domains. For example, the media presents daily the death of hundreds of Dominicans from the Dominican Republic who attempt to cross the *Mona Canal* to arrive at the coast line of Puerto Rico for a better future, mainly employment. Deaths are due to the lack of drinking water, one of the reasons for dehydration and death, similar to

situations and issues elsewhere around the world. This situation probably influenced Jaime's response.

Local emerging forms such as, fair/justice as well as rights are evoked; this is an example of how the issue of racial segregation is shifted to the present form, by means of a personal judgment/evaluation type response. I, as teacher, asked Gaby her definition of fair, or what fair meant to her, with the intent to produce new self understandings from her position of evaluating. Fair then is linked to the rights people have to conserve their bodies and stay alive; access to water being a right that people have in order to live. This is an example of how Gaby voiced the discourse of the United Nations and other institutions who have worked to constitute the rights of children which had previously initiated many whole group discussions in the classroom.

Interestingly, an element of coherence is illustrated in this excerpt. Gaby imposed on texts words such as segregation, fair and rights, generating a coherent reading of the text. A coherent text depends upon assumptions of an ideological nature that others bring to the interpretation as they respond. Others' texts (see-Gaby-18 through 26) postulate and implicitly set up interpretive positions for interpreting subjects who are capable of using assumptions from their prior experiences to make connections across the intertextually diverse elements of texts (both orally and written), and to generate coherent readings. For example, in this excerpt as well as in the previous one students mixed heterogenous styles and genres which are associated with the complexity of relational meanings. This excerpt exemplifies the complex subject positions which were

constituted from a diverse range of elements (*negrito*, colorblindness, segregation, fair and rights) and discourses, which were put together into a coherent whole. Students' statements exemplified how these words collocate lexically by linking words and discerning the meaning of relations between them, what Fairclough (1992) conceptualizes as cohesion. This underpins a significant mode of ideological work going on within texts.

Conclusions

This analysis points to the productivity of texts and restructuring of existing conventions (genres, discourses) to generate new ones. Students' ideological constructions of race by means of the language choices represent and construct colorblindness, segregation, fair and rights are constitutive of a discursive practice. The constitution of discursive practices in this excerpt (from 18 through 26) highlights that students' texts are produced in a specific way within literature circles.

Dialogue is produced (Fairclough, 1992,1995) dialectically and dialogically within the figured world of the literature circle and is considered as a social reality (Urrieta, 2007), consumed differently in different social contexts. Individually and collaboratively, students interpreted others' texts and led to the exploration and negotiation of racial meanings and identities of *negrito*, colorblindness, segregation, fairness/unfairness, and human rights. Therefore, students within the literature circle

decide who they want to be and who they have to be as actors who are submitted to certain circumstances or to the situation.

The figured world of literature circles, simultaneously within the figured world of the school and classroom, represents and constitutes deficit discourses which serve to rationalize discriminatory curricular processes that maintain racial structures, as in this case, but in other cases, gender and class inequality. Multiple layers of racialized language within the literature circles are reproduced and perpetuated by deficit discourses that originate from the traditional curriculum processes. What captured my attention was that race is constructed through slavery, rather than to ourselves as Puerto Ricans and black Puerto Ricans. This means a world peopled by dismissing the significance and relevance of race and of black Puerto Ricans. Zenón (1974) argues that people have constructed blacks as a strange Narciso (narcism); instead of discovering the beauty of their faces, they discover their “rear ends.” The irony and hypocrisy is that black beauty is accessible to others, but is denied through historical accounts, poems, literature, jokes, religion, lyrics to songs, and popular culture (Zenón, 1974,1975).

This is important since I believe that young children begin to reflect critically and engage in the politics of everyday life when they reflect and question what is fair and not fair. The literature circle as a social reality provides possibilities through dialogue as an intertextual relation between different voices brought to the interaction by different students who are envisioning the circle as a site of possibilities. They envision discourse as agency, acting, thinking, and cause for reflection (Freire, 1987, 2000; Yosso, 2002) in

developing new competencies, to participate in and further develop within new figured worlds. They create new ways, artifacts and discourses as Holland and colleagues (2003) point out, and accessing new liberatory worlds.

Students' exploration of racial labels such as "*bien prieto*", "*indio*", *negro* and "*prieto*", stand out in this analysis. Colorblindness discourse, interestingly, took two different forms while having the same intention. Within racial labels, comparisons between people, characters from the picture book, friends, and personal experiences are used to constitute embodied identities as to to who was who. Hence, the exploration of racial labels entailed the use of diverse cultural artifacts, such as the themes of slavery in the picture book (slavery), to which students brought personal experiences and memories, and the color of a penny, illustrated the inconsistency in racial labels' use and meaning.

CHAPTER 5: ANALYSIS OF THE DISCUSSION OF “¡HOMBRE DE COLOR!”

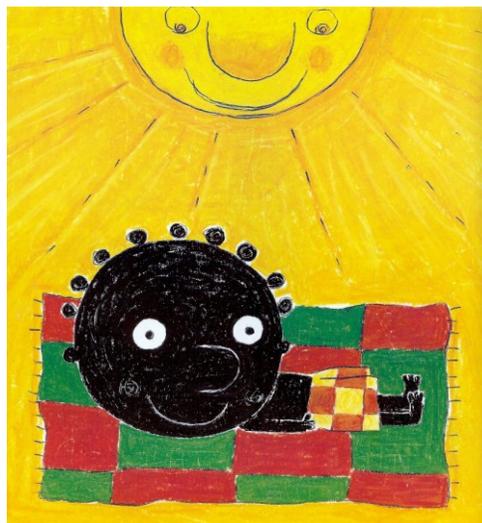
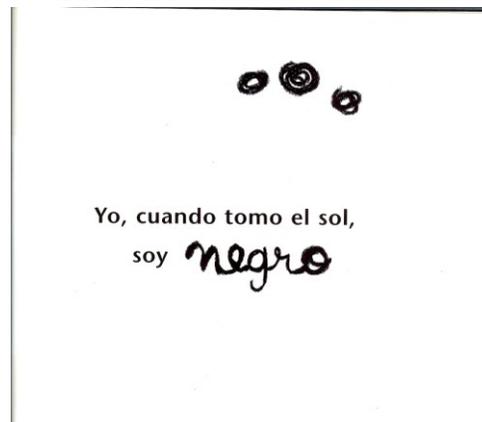
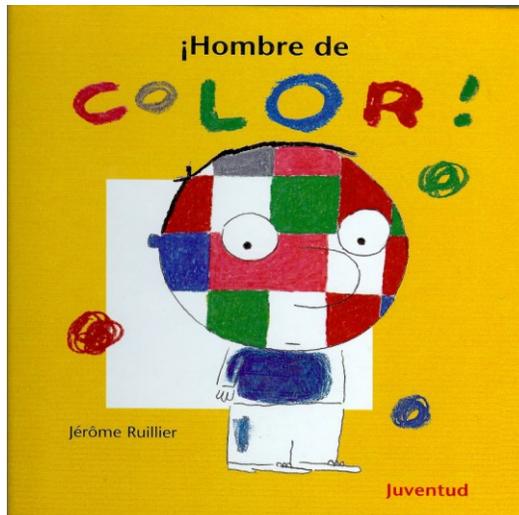
In this chapter the text discussed in the three different literature circles was *¡Hombre de Color!*. The first section introduces the book, its author and illustrator. The next three sections analyze children’s racial discourses within the literature circles and the final section concludes.

Getting to know the book

¡Hombre de Color! was written and illustrated by Jérôme Rüiller (2004). Among racial categories used in the sociocultural context of Puerto Rico, *de color* is considered an old fashioned term that is used contemporarily as a euphemism to classify people considered black because of the belief that *negro* is an offensive appellation. Thus, it is not necessarily similar to the meaning of *trigueño* (Godreau, 2008).

The text is a poem infused with humor and inspired by a story of an African tradition which has been transmitted from generation to generation through African oral tradition. The book illustrates the false injustice of preconceived ideas by questioning the validity of the phrase *¡Hombre de color!* or “Colored man” to refer to black people. History has demonstrated that this way to refer to and describe other people would be more appropriately applied to the white people than to the black people. However, the book invites readers to reflect, question, and accept others without preconceived ideas.

Figure 2: *¡Hombre de Color!* Sample Pages



Jérôme Rüiller, the author and illustrator, was born in 1966 in Madagascar and studied decorative arts in Strasbourg. His illustrations are a composite of multiple techniques. His notable books are published in French and some have been translated into other languages such as Spanish, English and Korean.

Structure of the analysis

This literature discussion group was divided into three sections in order to facilitate an in-depth analysis. In the first section, the interaction primarily revolved around a comparison of African and Puerto Rican characteristics such as skin color and then the discussion turned to the sense of “othering” when people objectified the “other” color. Thus, the common acceptance of white as a skin color was valued, and finalized with what I call the stabilizing discourse which emerged from the colorblindness discourse. This implied both affection and a way to soften the contested discourses, which accommodated the speakers themselves into a comfort zone. In addition, heteroglossic languages (Bakhtin, 1981) formed an intertextual chain that morphed through various changes or transformations. In the first analysis in this chapter for **Group 4** focuses on the ***Colorblindness*** theme analysed in *Section I: Dialogical: From colorblindness to essentializing discourses* and *Section II: Intertextual linkages*

The analysis for **Group 3** illustrates how student’s continued with racial social and self identification of who’s who and local emerging forms such as *cremita*, and *marrón*. Students reproduced and appropriated gaze as an embodied identity to explore

who's who in Self racial identification and what was implied in Social racial identification.

Within the theme of ***Color: Social and self racial identification*** is *Section I: Discourses as Paradoxes: De color/ colored*, and “in between” and within the theme ***Embodied identities - Section II: Self racial identification as “brown”: An embodied identity***

Lastly, the analysis for **Group 2** is divided into three parts. The students shift to the conceptual world of race, specifically of *negrito*, and then the dialogue shifts to negotiate the meaning and correctness of *negrito*. Other students such initiates a dialogue about *trigueño* and who was *trigueño* through social and self racial identification.

This dialogue is divided into three parts due to the extensiveness of the dialogue and in order for an in-depth analysis to occur. Thus, it should be viewed as a continuous intertextual chain. That is why I refer to the “beginning” statements as initiating and the “ending” statements as continuing the intertextual chain. Hence, the insights that emerged from the data of the third excerpt are:

- *Section I-* Within the theme of ***Embodied Identities*** the sub-themes *“Negro”*: *recognizable and reanimated defined embodied identity*; within the theme of ***Color: Social and self racial identification*** the sub-theme of *“De color”/ “colored”*: *The discourse of “othering”*, and within the theme of ***Colorblindness*** the sub-theme of *A unifier and stabilizer discourse*.

- Section II - Within the theme **Color: Social and self racial identification** the sub theme, Marrón, blanquito and cremita and within the theme of **Embodied Identities** the sub-theme of Blanquito, a bit marrón and cremita: Social and self racial identification through gaze.
- Section III- Within the theme of **Embodied identities** the sub-theme Previous texts: From negrito to marrones as an embodied identity and within the theme of **Color: Social and self racial identification** the sub-theme Back to “negrito” and “trigueño: Students negotiation of the use and meaning of “trigueño”.

The structure of this chapter is organized as follows: I present the excerpt of transcription of the discussion, then, there is a chart with the transcription on the right side and interpretation on the left side for the purpose of guiding the reader to the analysis. Last, I present the analysis of the discussion group.

I intend to illustrate the ways in which students' racial ideological constructions through dialogue entail embodied identities, colorblindness and essentializing discourse, and self and social racial identification. I emphasize how relational and positional identities play out within the colorblindness and essentializing discourses. For example, how the colorblindness discourse is represented and constructed and how embodied identities are reproduced and appropriated by students through social and self racial identification as marrón, trigueñito and cremita as forms of local emergence. I should point out that those linguistic elements such as pronoun and verb tense usage are also part

of this analysis, enhancing students' vocal perspectives to show how discourses are received and interpreted, and the effect they have on the students within the figured worlds of literature circles and society.

As mentioned before, in this study children's racial ideologies and racial discourses are conceived as explorations. Thus, their racial explorations are examined in the analysis as part of their active participation as social subjects. Being social subjects means that their active participation, by means of drawing from the resources or cultural artifacts that are available to them; to make sense of the world which is a life long experience, even as adults. Any concept that emerges from the analysis such as false embracement is part of the methodological process of CDA: describe, interpret and explain. Therefore, the analysis celebrates young children's thinking and understandings of race.

Analysis: Group 4

Power is dispersed within the literature circle via dialogue through social relations, producing particular ways of knowing and interacting. Most importantly, through dialogue students engage in signifying their worlds and particularly in the politics of everyday life. Group 4 was constituted by MP (Maestra Patricia) Adri. Alex, Angélica and Yara.

01-Yara- Que no importa de que color sea, tu eres igual a los demás. /No matter what color you are, you are like everyone else./

There is a long pause of about 10 sec.

02-MP- ¿Quién quiere comentar algo sobre lo que dijo Yara? /Does any one want to comment on what Yara said?/

03-Alex- ¡Oh no! Todo el mundo en el pueblo no puede ser negro. ¡Imagínate! ¿Quién va ser Alejandro? Pues, ¿Quién va a ser...(silencio)? Pues no todos pueden ser negros. /Oh, No! Not everyone can be black. Imagine! Who is going to be Alejandro? So, who is going to be...(silence) So not everyone can be black./

04-Angélica- Porque después cada persona...(murmullos.)/Because, then each person...(whispering./

05-MP- Pero sin en África la mayoría de sus pueblos, de las ciudades son negros. /But, in Africa the majority of the people in their towns and cities are black./

06- Angélica- Pues reconocen a las personas. /So they recognize the people./

07-MP-¿Y cómo reconocen a las personas? /And how do they recognize the people?/

08-Angélica- Por su pelo. /the hair./

09-Adri- Por su nombre. /the name./

10-Yara- Porque si tú le dices como tú te llamas él te dice tu nombre. /Because, if you say your name he can call you by your name./

11-Alex- Porque. Mira si toda la gente se parecía a mis papás yo no sabría cuáles son mis papás y mis papás. /Because. Look, if all the people were the same as my parents I would not know who my parents were./

12-MP- O sea. ¿Que lo que distingue a una persona es su color? /So, What distinguishes a person is his or her color?/

13-Yara- Sí. /Yes/

14-MP- ¿Por qué? /Why?/

15-Adri- Yo creo que no. /I think that no./

16-MP- Adriana/Adri pero dilo, compártelo, lo puedes decir en confianza. ¿Por qué no? ¿Por qué tú crees que el color no es lo que nos distingue? /Adriana/Adri you can say, share it you can say it Why not? Why the color is not what distinguishes us?/

17-Adri- Por que, porque no todas las cosas son iguales y las personas las puedes reconocer porque no todo el mundo tiene las mismas cosas. /Because, because (pause) not all things are the same, people you can recognize because not all people have the same things./

18-MP- ¿Las mismas características, tú quieres decir?/What do you mean? The same characteristics?/

19-Angélica- Que no todas las personas tienen que ser iguales, pueden ser diferentes las personas. Porque si todas son iguales... (silence) /That not all people are the same, they could be different. Because if they are the same...(silence.)

20-Alex- Porque, porque todo el mundo es negro y...yo digo mamá y papá y ellos están lejos y cojo otros papás me confundo. /Because, all are black and .. I say mother and father and then they are far away and I chose other parents I get confused./

Transcription	Interpretation
<p>MP- (Maestra Patricia), Alex, Yara, Adri and Angelica.</p> <p>01-Yara: Que no importa de que color sea, tu eres igual a los demás. /No matter what color you are, you are like everyone else./</p> <p>There is a long pause of about 10 sec.</p> <p>02-MP: ¿Quién quiere comentar algo sobre lo que dijo Yarelis? /Does anyone want to comment on what Yarelis said?/</p>	<p>Pronoun use /you/ inclusive -addressed everyone-pointed to the members of the lit. circle-“positive face” and “politeness”-and how they (members in the lit.circle) should feel and act.</p> <p>Colorblindness statement-naturalized language/direct discourse-reproduced the exact words of the popular discourse such as media.</p> <p>A form of hegemony.</p>

Transcription	Interpretation
<p>03-Alex: ¡Oh no! Todo el mundo en el pueblo no puede ser negro. ¡Imagínate! ¿Quién va ser Alejandro? Pues, ¿Quién va a ser... (silencio)? Pues no todos pueden ser negros. /Oh, No! Not everyone can be black. Imagine! Who is going to be Alejandro? So, who is going to be... (silence) So not everyone can be black./</p>	<p>Essentialization of race Whiten identity Translated Yara's statement. Moved from the public to the private (included himself in the example) domain. Blended the public (Yara's) social domain with the private discourse, his own voice, to fit and which was accessible to others. Held the floor and set the agenda. Established social relationships and Social racial identification.</p>
<p>04-Angélica: Porque después cada persona... (murmullos.)/Because, then each person.../(whispering./</p>	<p>Although the statement was not finished it seemed that Angelica added to Alex and</p>
<p>05-MP: Pero sin en África la mayoría de sus pueblos, de las ciudades son negros. /But, in Africa the majority of the people in their towns and cities are black./</p>	<p>developed/continuum of the essentializing discourse.</p>
<p>06- Angélica: Pues reconocen a las personas. /So they recognize the people./</p>	
<p>07-MP: ¿Y cómo reconocen a las personas? /And how do they recognize the people?/</p>	<p>I also supported and fostered the essentializing discourse.</p>
<p>08-Angélica: Por su pelo. /the hair./</p>	
<p>09-Adri: Por su nombre. /the name./</p>	<p>Name as an important aspect of self identification</p>
<p>10-Yara: Porque si tú le dices como tú te llamas él te dice tu nombre. /Because, if you say your name he can call you by your name./</p>	<p>Continuum of whitening discourse.</p>
<p>11-Alex: Porque. Mira si toda la gente se parecía a mis papás yo no sabría cuáles son mis papás y mis papás. /Because. Look, if all the people were the same as my parents I would not know who my parents were./</p>	<p>It seemed "positive face" and "politeness" use of personal characters within his family was to make everyone in the literature circle familiar with the situation/issue.</p>
<p>12-MP: O sea. ¿Que lo que distingue a una persona es su color? /So, What distinguishes a person is his or her color?/</p>	
<p>13-Yara: Sí. /Yes/</p>	

Transcript	Interpretations
14-MP: ¿Por qué? /Why?/	
15-Adri: Yo creo que no. /I think that no./	
16-MP: Adriana/Adri pero dilo, compártelo, lo puedes decir en confianza. ¿Por qué no? ¿Por qué tú crees que el color no es lo que nos distingue? /Adriana/Adri you can say, share it you can say it Why not? Why the color is not what distinguishes us?/	Solidarity and affinity with Alex./ “things” soften the blow of race. Moved beyond external characteristics to materiality-skin tones white/black.
17-Adri: Por que, porque no todas las cosas son iguales y las personas las puedes reconocer porque no todo el mundo tiene las mismas cosas. /Because, because (pause) not all things are the same, people you can recognize because not all people have the same things./	
18-MP: ¿Las mismas características, tú quieres decir?/What do you mean? The same characteristics./	
19-Angélica: Que no todas las personas tienen que ser iguales, pueden ser diferentes las personas. Porque si todas son iguales... (silence) /That not all people are the same, they could be different. Because if they are the same...(silence.)	Continuum of essentializing discourse.
20-Alex: Porque, porque todo el mundo es negro y...yo digo mamá y papá y ellos están lejos y cojo otros papás me confundo. /Because, all are black and .. I say mother and father and then they are far away and I chose other parents I get confused./	Extended and enhanced Adri’s statement Construction of difference as something “positive” through colorblindness discourse Alex used personal characters-parents- as part of his whitening ideological. Performative white identity construction enabled him to formulate the issue so everyone (private domain) could relate to and become part of. Also Intertextual chain Words that semantically collocated -color, people, world.

Section I: Dialogical: From colorblindness to essentializing discourse

Yara's-01 affirmative sentence initiated an intertextual chain and was what Fairclough (1992) calls "direct discourse" since she reproduced the exact words of the popular discourse of media, politics, family, and specifically of educational contexts. This illustrates the tendency for text producers within the wider social structures to market their commodities through written and spoken discourses in ways that maximize their fit into the world or by fitting in with positions set up for them in texts. In other words, media, politics, and education among other institutions are in the business of constructing people who fit and reproduce discourses such as Yara's-01 that enable them to accommodate themselves in the domain of the lifeworld of common experience, that of the colorblindness discourse. But this also exemplifies the colonization of education from the outside by types of discourse (style, genres, etc.), including media, literacy materials, workshops, policy documents, etc.

The introduction or opening sentence in this transcript, Yara's 01, has a strong voice which I consider an ideological statement that is a false embracement in the Foucaultian sense of false consciousness. Yara's-01 discourse is aligned with or seems to be an attachment to (Holland et al., 2003) the cultural forms among those institutions mentioned above which perpetuate a fixed view of race as biological characteristics and not as a social construct characterizing race as natural and essential. In this way, discourse has been naturalized (Fairclough, 1992) and has gained widespread acceptance as a form of (cultural) hegemony that routinely normalizes social relations, as exemplified in this figured world. On the other hand, Yara's expression, "No matter

what color you are, you are like everyone else” positioned her with positive face (style) to be understood, liked and even admired; this is what Fairclough (1992) calls politeness. She addressed everyone (genre) in the circle. However, this statement hides a negative action and implication, and is considered a euphemism. Her social identity (race, genre, social class) entitled her to speak or address everyone with a particular idea that illustrated her relational identity, which depended on others, and also her positional identity in which her texts signified the world and its processes and relations. Yara’s discursive practice (orders of discourse) was structured and restructured through the negotiation of meanings with others in her literature circle.

Yara’s spoken discourse mediated others’ vocal perspectives by means of her interpretation of the language of the picture book *¡Hombre de Color!* into a version of the popular discourse in order to establish a relationship of affinity and solidarity with the specific audience, the teacher and her peers. It is important to point out that the picture book, inspired by a story of African tradition and transmitted from generation to generation through oral tradition also was subjected to editorial revisions (official language of editors) in order to be published. Yara, by rearticulating the relationship between the public domain of sociopolitical events and individuals, shifted linguistically from the public domain of politics (religious, educational) to the private domain, the domain of lifeworld and common experience such as hers when she read the picture book with her mother. The private domain is illustrated in her use of the pronoun (/you/, /you are/-01 and /you/-10) various times in the same utterance which attributed and pointed to her peers within the literature circle. Pronoun use /you/ not only communicates

information, but constitutes relationships (Godreau, 2008). She inverted the utterance into a form of example and integrated her peers within her example (see 10). Her use of a pronoun /you/ (style) within the utterance highlighted or pointed to identification, the ways in which her peers should act, feel, and see themselves; that is, to see others as equal despite their skin color. This leads to my argument of colorblindness discourse as a false embracement that children and adults formed and reformed by means of embracing the colorblindness discourse within activities. For example, Zenón (1974, 1975) looked at how, in texts from Puerto Rico's Department of Education, the absence of black Puerto Ricans from illustrations and other genres such as poetry, ultimately portrays black Puerto Ricans as exotics. Also, he noted that music radio stations avoided the *bomba and plena* and promoted the *danza* which also had African influence, but for *el pueblo*/the towns people the *danza* is considered white and the *bomba and plena* are black, thus what was promoted was an appreciation for the white. This exemplifies the binary white/black conception of race in the context of Puerto Rico.

The ethos (Fairclough, 1992) of the models from other genres and discourse types that were deployed to perform and reform her identity signaled Yara's talk as generally the way that the media, school (teachers) and politicians produce and reproduce through oral and written texts and sociocultural forms which are standard scenarios that go towards multiple identities within a particular context. Yara-01 provided evidence of the dependence of coherence as she and others in the process of interpreting drew upon assumptions of an ideological nature. Her discourse unfolded throughout the dialogue, and evidenced that the popular ideology had influenced her in this particular situation.

There is a double-sided quality producing simultaneously social phenomena and a phenomenon of the person/self. In this study, children participated in relations of power and were “imagined in social narratives” (Holland et al. 2003, p.5). Hence, particular persons were socially figured (constructed) according to these identities/phenomena. At the same time, identities are personal phenomenon in that they are important on intimate terrain as well. This means that children may construct their selves for themselves in the figured worlds.

Alex translated (linguistic shift) the popular discourse or public language that Yara-01 brought to the table in order to essentialize race through private language. In addition Alex, as well as Yara, shifted to accommodate and fit, which exemplifies what Fairclough (1992) calls discourse representation, by blending the voice of the political and social domains with their own voice. Furthermore, Alex also blended the voice of the narrative of the picture book with his own voice by using the resources available to him such as his parents, along with that of the experiences of the picture book. Discourse representation also entailed that both Yara and Alex chose to represent (style) their texts (oral) in one way rather than another, not only in the grammatical features, for example, the affirmative sentence and use of the pronoun, but also in their discursive organization (genre and Discourse) and the tone (exclamation and question). This shift involved a process of translating skills from a legitimate terminology as used by Yara-01 to a personal or private language which was accessible to others (Alex-03) within the literature circle. However, I think the movement from the public to the private domains and vice versa were part of social/discursive practices, thus Alex’s identity was one way

of naming the interconnections between these. Also, Alex's-03 expression, "Oh no!" "Not everyone can be black" restructured the public and private domains which involved style and subject-matter knowledge, for example, the use of present tense, colorblindness and essentializing discourses. Yara's-01 expression led to Alex's answer-question (style), manifesting also the voice of ordinary experience. Alex set the tone and controlled the topic, glossed with a quotidian and personal tone as he accepted Yara's-01 expression and framed her text, thus exclusively focused in on skin color.

Alex's-03 expression was one that positioned him to be understood and not necessarily liked or admired (contrary to Yara), but the politeness relied on his orientation to other students' autonomy (see Adri and Angélica) and reflection. This example also presupposes that Alex indexed both solidarity with Yara and distance with others.

Adri's-15 utterance also is described as politeness. She firmly stated her point, once again the teacher elicited an explanation and Adri expanded on the previous utterance. In this respect, language use was shaped by the intentions of other individuals.

The intertextual chain partially ended with Alex's-20 voice of ordinary experience which once again posed essentializing discourse and kept other students as well as their contributions to his agenda in what Fairclough (1992) calls a policed maneuver. For example, Alex did not interrupt the exchange, but sustained his whitening discourse of race as fixed in physical characteristics and not as a social construct and negation of

blackness. However, Alex as well as Yara did not limit who was going to talk next; other students self-selected as the next speakers.

The /so/ in Alex's-03 comments, "So who is going to be?... (silence)" "So not everyone can be black" enhanced the meaning of colorblindness, thus rejecting the existence of black people in what I define as whitening discourse or the negation of black people. Therefore, he questioned and declared his racial point of view. Holland, Lachicotte, Skinner and Cain (2003) assert that entitlement is characterized by people who speak, stand, emote and hold the floor as they carry out privileged activities in ways that are appropriate to both the situation and their position within it (p.133). Alex's entitlement to negate the black community as part of his world was motivated, evoked a privileging activity, and was appropriate to both the situation and his position in and out of the literature circle.

Interestingly, as mentioned previously, there are towns in Puerto Rico such as Loíza in which there exist a large concentration of black people, since when Africans were enslaved and brought to Loíza, this town was a major producer of sugar. Angelica's-06 "So recognize the people" reference affirmed MP's-05 expression, "But in Africa the majority of the people in their towns and cities are black," and also enhanced the meaning of the black community among the people in Africa, not in Puerto Rico. Also the /so/ in Alex's-03 statements referenced back to Yara's text. The words that were repeated throughout the dialogue such as /color/, /people/, /world/ and the linking of words and expressions collocate (Fairclough, 1992), that is they belong to the same

semantic domain and co-occur. This is also described as cohesion by Fairclough (1992) as one factor of coherence, that is, the students were actively setting words and expressions up in the process of positioning themselves and also as they developed their collocational relationships. Clearly, Alex made choices to design and structure his statement, thus to signify and construct social identities and social relationships within the literature circle. The linkage was achieved through using vocabulary form, a common semantic field, and repeating words.

This example illustrates significant ideological work and connections across discourses as common sense within the literature circle's dialogue. Ideology in this dialogue between students in literature circles is a conception of the world that is implicitly manifested in education, law, art, (Fairclough, 1992, 1995) and in the manifestations of individual roles such as those of students and within the collective life. In addition, the possible ideological orientation of the text (written) is determined by the choice of process type (event, action) to signify skin color as a biological characteristic. The text (written) mediates the action of students to construct meaning from the text, which is essentializing race from my point of view; portraying race as a predetermined characteristic and deterministic aspect of personality, as opposed to a social and historical construction that is constantly shifting. Furthermore, it also presupposes that the text's use of the expression "*de color*"/colored/ is pivotal in the construction of whitening discourse. Interestingly, Alex's construction of white was not by means of avoiding the word *negro*, instead he used it as a response to Yara's statement and as part of shifting to the conceptual world of race.

This is exemplified in the dialogical movement from the public domain to the private domain, enduring struggles that enabled them to draw from different voices to mediate their responses and identities. The diverse ways in which Alex performed and reformed his identity were open ended. For example, in his translation/interpretation of Yara's-01 statement into a particular view of race,(white), he also figured (constructed) himself by means of Yara's discourse and also through others' voices such as the picture book's and local emerging forms. This developed through the overlapping and coming together of his personal and lifeworld experiences. Outcomes took place within the literature circle as he and others engaged and were pushed by contradictory discourses, circumstances and conditions within the figured worlds. Individually and collectively students were appropriating cultural artifacts (language, picture book) that students within the literature circle produced to interpret and construct in order to signify their worlds.

The private domain was illustrated in Yara's use of the pronoun (/you/, /you are/-01 and /you/-10) at various times in the same utterance as she attributed and pointed directly to persons, in this case to her peers in the literature circle. She inverted the utterance into a form of providing an example and integrated her peers within the example she gave (see 10.) For example, the use of a pronoun /you/ (style) within the utterance highlighted or pointed to identification, the ways in which her peers should act, feel, and see themselves; the intent was thus to see others as equal despite their skin color.

False embracement is conceptualized here as Foucault's (1984) false consciousness. Students' circumstances, such as living in a colony of the United States, being part of the Hispanic, French, Dutch, British, or Caribbean cultures and living within a society of diverse skin color discourses, systematically obscures their realities of subordination and domination. Institutions and social mechanisms emerge and distort children's and adults consciousness. Institutions that shape children's and adults' thoughts, ideas, frameworks, and identities, develop in such a way as to generate false consciousness and ideology. Therefore, students such as Yara, express false consciousness through the discourses of colorblindness, essentialization, and the ideologies of dominant institutions that subordinate people. However, as a critical pedagogue (Freire, 1996, Giroux, 1991), I believe that adding critical reflection within this figured world/literature circle requires us to ideologically critique the social and political factors that produce dominant social and educational knowledge and whose interests create transformations in social relationships and practices.

Yara's relational and positional identities were in constant shift as she responded to the text and local emerging forms such as Alex's whitening discourse evoked. Yara's ethos (Fairclough, 1992) was concerned with the models from other genres and discourse types that were deployed to constitute or construct identity, signaling Yara's talk as generally the way that the media, school (teachers), and politicians produce and reproduce colorblindness discourse through oral and written texts. Also, Yara-01 evidenced the dependence of coherence as she and others in the process of interpreting drew upon assumptions of an ideological nature. Her discourse unfolded throughout the

dialogue, and evidenced that the popular ideology had influenced her in this particular situation.

Alex's statement about being "black" and confusion (I would say tension) expressed by imagining not being able to recognize his parents and taking others as his parents, confusion because of everyone being black, was made explicit. So, the two words "black" and "confusion" were socially interdependent and semantically related. Interestingly, as mentioned above, his ideological construction of race was by means of his use of the word *negro*, not the avoidance of the use of the word as in Yara's and other's cases. This may seem he was constructing whitening discourse through intertextual linkages by colorblindness and essentializing discourses. This means that the use and meaning of *negro* simultaneously positioned him as both distancing from *negro* while also affiliating him with other peers through colorblindness and essentializing discourses. Hence, white was evoked within the figured world of the literature circle as competing discourses, and vocal perspectives such as colorblindness and essentializing discourses came together. Students' resources, linguistic and experiential, were brought to the present situation, student's resources mediated their ideological constructions of race meaning and use, and whitening was embedded in both essentializing and colorblindness discourses.

Adri and Angélica (see 6, 8, 9, 17 y 19) engaged in intertextual linkages that were reflected throughout their utterances. They seemed to be "referencing" previous utterances throughout the interaction as they sustained and constituted the identity of

colorblindness. Although they tried to move Alex away from skin color, they sustained a fixed view of race where physical characteristics such as hair and names dominate. Names (see Adri-09) as an option are considered in this excerpt as a neutral term to strategically avoid the use of the words *negro* and other racial labels such as *trigueño* and *prieto*, among others. As Godreau (2008) found in her study, it may seem that avoidance is a strategy used because of the belief that *Negro* is offensive or even inferior and ugly, or associated with African people as may be presupposed in these examples (see 6,8, 9, 17 and 19).

The ethos (Fairclough, 1992) concerns the models from other genres and discourse types that are deployed to constitute or construct racial identities. This ethos signaled Alex to essentialize race and thus essentialize the space, a particular privileging space in the figured world of literature circles. This space seemed to allow the use of racial terms that became an important factor in distancing from or affiliating with other peers. His essentializing discourse drew from previous texts as cultural and local emerging forms such as the configurations of discourses that Yara-01 and others unfold as the interactions take place. These discourses implied the coming together of cultural forms and local emerging discourses such as linguistic (use of verbs, pronouns, among other) and non linguistic aspects (individual and collective experiences), discursive practices and conventions, circulating discourses, colorblindness, essentializing, whitening, and so forth. The different vocal perspectives broadly and locally came together to constitute racial identities, what Bakhtin (1981) calls “authoring selves,” to

constitute identities since students' vocal perspectives were accentuated with their own meanings.

Alex's, Yara's, Adri's and Angélica's statements were considered and conceived as living tools of the self (identity) that enabled Alex and others to figure their identities in open ended ways within the literature circle (see Alex-03-11-20). This was exemplified in the dialogical movement from the public domain to the private domain and in enduring struggles that enabled them to draw from different voices to mediate their formation and reformation of identities.

Yara, in contrast to Alex, was silent throughout the dialogue except for two times (10 and 13). In 10 she sustained her idea and in 13 she answered a close ended question elicited by the teacher in which her "yes" response also aligned and enhanced the agenda within the circle that the difference among humans was their skin color. Sameness in skin color as a biological characteristic was a problem. For Yara, Adri and Angélica (08, 09, 10, 15, 17 and 19), their solidarity and their affinity (style) were joined by responding, extending and enhancing the focus on race as defined by biological characteristics. However, this is an example of how, through social interaction, her social position led or developed into a positional identity of refrain and even silence within the literature circle. Her formation of identity was a byproduct of doing, of imitation, and thus profoundly embodied.

Specifically, Yara's identity formation and reformation was not a reproduction of the cultural world, but by means of the diverse configurations of orders of discourse

between the ways of interacting, representing and being with that of our daily experiences and that of this particular figured world. Holland et al. (2003) argue that cultural worlds are continuously figured in practice through the use of cultural artifacts inscribed by the collective attribution of meaning. Yara interacted, represented and figured as she identified herself with the figured world and cultural forms, both developing together, and became an actor in the world of the class circle. Yara used the cultural resources that were available to her to respond to the subject positions afforded in the literature circle.

I view Yara's colorblindness discourse as well as Alex's essentializing discourse as part of those cultural forms which we develop around and through the cultural practices of social life. These are not pervasive, but conceived as living tools or living artifacts (Holland, Lachicotte, Cain & Skinner, 2003) that she and others explored and produced. For example, Alex's-03 metadiscourse demonstrated his position of controlling and manipulating as he reworded and reformulated a previous statement (see Yara-01). Alex's social position illustrated his entitlement to hold the floor and manifest an individual and collective view of the world as he appropriated the situation of the literature circle and others' (students') positions, the world in which the socialization of students was constituted. The ideological work within the literature circle is exemplified in the ways students are organized through responses that rise from the transaction with the text and others' texts. In both cases, the social identities of Yara and Alex within the literature circle were embodying claims about social and power relations. Thus, their identities, as Holland, Lachicotte, Cain and Skinner (2003) remind us, are not stable; they are in flux and their long term developmental formation moves through improvisation (as

a sign of positioning by powerful discourses), embodiment, conflicts and dialogue through social and historical time (p.17). This means that identities are in heuristic development; others and we move to and fit into new spheres of activities and remain as multiples.

Alex's relative position depended on others being present, on the way he identified his position relative to others, and by means of or in relation to the discourses that he had learned and identified with, either positively or negatively, though, as in this case, he rejected the idea of all people being black. The relational position rests on the way one identifies one's position relative to others, as mediated through the ways one feels comfortable or constrained; such as to speak to another, to command another, or to enter into the space of another (Holland, Lachicotte, Skinner and Cain, 2003, p. 127). For example, Yara's-01 as well as Alex's powerful discourses positioned them to use their cultural resources, including linguistic resources, to respond in ways that moved beyond their immediate surroundings to the conceptual world of race. Also, meaning was constructed by both Yara and Alex and identity was formed and re-formed while moving from the public domain to the private domain as both simultaneously brought along their own experiences and used their resources to respond with others in certain ways to the current situation.

Discourses are a pivotal element of the perspective that people bring to the new construal activities such as literature circles and new figured worlds (playground, music class etc.). Intertextuality within the construction of social identities is an important

aspect to discuss in this interaction within the literature circle. There is not a mismatch between the students' exchanges, they drew from others' genres and discourse types to construct identities and new racial discourses through dialogue. Student's discourses projected intertextual linkages from others' words and experiences and, in this case, the modality was that students' identities were constructed in relation to common experience, solidarity and membership.

This is another example of how students, through dialogue in the literature circle, existed in relation to the other or others who validated their presence. Also, while the space was still a literature circle, everyone adopted a position that concerned the racial issue of skin color as a biological characteristic and as a predetermined and deterministic aspect of personality or life, as opposed to a social and historical construction.

The literature circle required students to figure the activity of dialogue within the circle, considering the broader social and personal context. Alex's discourse is a fine example of how he used Yara's colorblindness discourse as a pivotal mediating device, not only to organize a particular response, but to pivot or shift into a conceptual world beyond his immediate surroundings, from that of the literature circle to the conceptual world of race (Holland, Skinner, Lachicotte, Cain, 2003). Moreover, students within the literature circle became actors who submitted to the literature circle's premises and treated its events as real. Among the students within the circle, talk signaled friendship, membership, respect on perspective taking, and solidarity. Once again, the models were taken from the institutional discourses of school, politics, and media. This illustrates the

ways in which societies categorize and build identities for their members and, as Fairclough (1992) states, also illustrates a fundamental aspect of how they work, how power relations are imposed and exercised, and how societies are reproduced and changed. This literature circle was peopled by the figures, characters, and types who carried out tasks (reading the book and dialoging) and who also had styles of interacting within the literature circle that were visible perspectives on and orientations toward it. The diverse and often contradictory elements and threads which go to construct texts highlight the compatibility of intertextuality, structuring and restructuring of order, discourse, and identities in social practice.

This excerpt demonstrates, on the one hand, that colorblindness and essentializing discourses are part of the whitening or bleaching Puerto Rican perspectives that maintain white skin color as superior, *la raza* (Duany, 2005), and on the other hand, promote a harmful and subtle form of politeness as a double-sided knife. In other words, Alex's essentializing discourse and Yara's colorblindness discourse intended to soften the blow (Rogers, 2002) within the literature circles and also simultaneously to promote white as superior, both constructing and representing the institutions in which they participate. This explains the ideological constructions of race by means of the movement from private and public domains and vice versa as determined by the family and sociopolitical contexts in which Alex participated and Yara's influential institutional forces such as the media and the school.

Section II: Intertextual linkages

Alex's statement was an extension of Yara's-01 statement and thus was an invitation to Yara, Adri and Anglica to respond. The pattern of interactions was symmetrical within the exchange and thematically illustrated as well in Yara's-01 and Alex's-03 setting of the agenda; Alex reworded Yara's expression which was affirmative and made more explicit what she was stating and thus evidenced the interactional control. Other students responded by questioning the differences among people, but remained fixed on physical characteristics and returned to Alex's response. The intertextual chain is evident when a particular discourse type enters in a way of specifying the production, distribution and consumption of texts. This means that the different types of texts, in this case a conversation or dialogue within the literature circle, vary radically in the sort of distributional networks (each student's networks of family, peers, and community) and intertextual chains they enter into, and therefore the sorts of transformation they undergo (see Alex-03, Adri-09-17 and Angélica-08-19). Discursive practices within the literature circle are viewed as intertextual chains for producing, through dialogue, specific texts individually and collectively. Texts are also consumed in different social contexts; in this case the interpretative work of other peers' texts by the students is a closed, focused, and transitory one within the literature circle.

The interpretations are constrained in a double sense by peers' resources which have internalized social structures, norms, and conventions and also are constrained by the social practice of which they are part, which also determine what elements of members' resources are drawn upon and how they are drawn upon. In this example they

are drawn upon in a normative and creative way, which is an essential aspect of intertextuality. Also the transformations between text types are exemplified in an intertextual chain of diverse sorts, for example, in discourse representation (see the discussion about Yara-01 and Alex-03), as well as the way dialogue was organized (see from 01 to 20) and the vocabulary each chose. Also, these texts lead to further dialoguing and changing of students' attitudes, beliefs and even practices. Distribution, such as dialogue within a literature circle, belongs to the immediate context of the situation in which it occurs.

Fairclough (1992) emphasizes the connection between intertextuality and hegemonic struggle. Hegemony harmonizes the view of discourse with discursive change. Hegemony is illustrated in this analysis in how the media or politics have important roles in reproducing and also restructuring the relationship between the private and public domains. Fairclough (1992) defines hegemony as a mode of domination which is based upon alliances of subordinate groups and the generation of consent (p. 9). Moreover, Fairclough (1992) states that hegemony is leadership as much as domination across the economic, political, cultural and ideological domains of a society (p.92). Hegemony (as in Yara's-01 expression) not only played an important role in reproducing and restructuring students' relationships in the literature circle, but also students' racial explorations discourses were reproduced and restructured moving from public domain to private domain and vice versa. Hegemony was illustrated in the naturalization of the colorblindness and essentializing discourses.

These examples illustrate the heterogeneity of texts and intertextuality as students responded to written texts and each other's texts, and can be seen as the complex relationships with the conventions (genre, style and discourse) that were structured together to constitute an order of discourse. All of these processes were social and required reference to the particular economic, political and institutional settings within each discourse as generated. Thus, meanings within these texts (spoken and written) coexisted, and interpretations within the figured world of literature circle were designed, this was why students used language. They had to select from options available in the structures; they had to make lexical, grammatical and sequencing choices in order to say what they wanted to say. Halliday (1985) views language as meaning potential. Along this same line of thought, Janks (2005) argues that all the selections are motivated; are designed to convey particular meanings in particular ways and to have particular effects. Moreover, they are designed to be believed and to reflect students' interpretations in a particular way, which in the case of these literature circles did not collapse the heterogeneity or intertextuality of texts.

In these literature circles a dialectical and dialogical relationship between discourse and identity was illustrated as students' identities were positioned and constructed in discourse, but they also engaged in practice which contested and restructured the orders of discourse. Within a dialogic perspective, I think that these struggles were within the multiple and mixed thoughts and feelings which tended to take in a number of views in virtual simultaneity and tension. Students' racial discourses generated representation and organization of students into binaries - who's who (white or

black) and who belongs to a certain category (all black or all white), and “what if.” The environment was one of expectation and disposition. This means that texts postulated and implicitly set up interpretative positions for any interpreting students who, as exemplified in Yara-01, Alex-03, Adri and Angélica, were capable of using assumptions from their prior texts (written and spoken) and experiences to make connections across the intertextual diverse elements of a text, and to generate coherent interpretations from their social and individual experiences. They used their dispositions to gain a sense of the “field” (Bourdieu 2004) and to act in the figured world of literature circles and that of their immediate surroundings.

All the students in these literature circles imposed coherence upon the texts as they interpreted by rereading each other’s texts; the textual process and transformation was exemplified from Yara-01 to Alex-03. This reflects that the identity formation, re-formation and performance of students within the literature circles was constituted from diverse elements (that of a child, multiage student, girl, boy, upper class, middle class, etc.), simultaneous thoughts and perspectives or tensions that were within each discourse. Thus the intertextual chain in this interaction locates discourses of essentializing and colorblindness as pivots to organize and construct meaning through their constant shifts in order to make sense of their immediate surroundings and who’s who and what if. Students in the literature circles functioned not only as discourse subjects, but also as social subjects with accumulated social experiences.

Alex's-03-11-20 utterances indicated the intertextual linkages in which his identity was constitutive within each stance as he referenced his previous utterances. He began with an affirmative sentence, then (see 11) the utterance was characterized by offering a personal example in which confusion was made implicit, and lastly (see 20) offered simultaneously a broader and personal example infused with the specific word "black" and, again, confusion. I would say tension was expressed by imagining not being able to recognize his parents, because of being black, and the imagined outcome of therefore taking others on as his parents. Adri and Angelica (see 6, 8, 9, 17 y19) reflected intertextual linkages throughout their utterances and seemed to reference previous utterances throughout the interaction as they sustained and constituted the identities of essentializing, whitening, and colorblindness. Although they tried to move Alex away from focusing on skin color, they sustained the racial issue fixation on physical characteristics (hair, name).

Alex's discourse, as I have pointed out, is a good example of how he used Yara's colorblindness discourse as a mediating device to organize responses and to shift into a conceptual world beyond his immediate surroundings of the literature circle and the conceptual world of race as well (Holland, Skinner, Lachicotte and Cain, 2003). Moreover, students within the literature circle became actors who submitted to the circle's premises and treated its events as real. Within the interactions in the literature circle the students signaled friendship, membership, respect on perspective taking and solidarity. Once again, the models were taken from the institutional discourses of school, politics, and media. This illustrates the ways in which societies categorize and build identities for

their members, and as Fairclough (1992) states, illustrates a fundamental aspect of how they work, how power relations are imposed and exercised, and how societies are reproduced and changed. The literature circles is peopled by the figures, characters, and types who carry out tasks (reading the book and dialoging) and who also have styles of interacting within the circle that are visible perspectives on and orientations toward it. The diverse and often contradictory elements are threads that construct texts, highlighting the compatibility of intertextuality, structuring and restructuring orders of discourse, and identities in social practice.

The relationship of the students was obvious as they built upon others' words; what Bakhtin (1981) calls "multivocality" or reorchestrating voices and experiences, and perspective taking (construction of social reality). It is important to point out that there were overlaps between the functions of relational and positional identities. The connections between them concerned purpose, setting the agenda, dialoging about skin color and the relationships between the producers of the texts (oral) with other students. The most explicit evidence was, again, Yara's-01 "No matter what color you are, you are like everyone else" that predicted what the dialogue was going to concern or at least should have been about. This is an example of dialogism, how Yara's statement was the result of always existing in a state of being addressed and in the process of answering. Holland, Lachicotte, Cain and Skinner (2003) point out that "people coexist, always in mutual orientation moving to action, there is no human action which is singularly expressive" (p.169). This means that Alex, Yara, Adri and Angélica were

simultaneously engaged with and pushed by discourses that were not contradictory to their positioning, but unexpected outcomes were the effect of the situation, nonetheless.

A classroom (literature circle) is infused with tension and struggles. Students' lived identities (Holland, Lachicotte, Cain and Skinner, 2003) enabled Alex to be entitled to speak, to enter a space of others, and furthermore, to imagine himself and others in a world that was not yet barely realized, such as where everyone was black. Through important tools such as Yara's discourse and the picture book, Alex was able to manage his and others' discourses and their responses.

Alex and Yara had been influenced by others and drew on the voices that they carried from his previous experiences. Students evidently declared and affirmed what they had experienced directly, but also what they had heard and read. The sociocultural experiences they had orientated them to a fixed view of race, hegemonizing race. I also think that their understandings of race, in this case referring to skin color as a biological characteristic, were concepts that were socially constructed and reinforced through language. Moreover, as Holland et. al (2003) state, we are individually and collectively, not just the products of our culture, not just respondents to the situation, but also critically appropriators of cultural artifacts that we and others produce (p.17). Yara's and Alex's examples come to be produced within discourse. This means that as the teacher invited the students to dialogue in the literature circle and responses arose, within the exchange the students recognized and accepted that they were the ones to respond, dialogue, and interpret. Through this process we appropriated artifacts such as the written text and

through dialogue as a form of language which we all produced within the literature circles. The formation of new identities within these worlds led students to come to dispositions as prompted by the social encouragement and insistence of others (teacher, peers), to interpret the world in new ways and to position themselves and emotionally invest themselves in the world. Holland et. al (2003) state that individuals do this through participating in group activities, learning to produce and enact cultural forms particular to that world, and taking up these forms as devices for mediating their own conceptions of self and the world (p.73); in this case, conceptions of self through their racial labels and worlds. For example, Alex's rewording of Yara's-01 discourse to fit his personal story, not only signaled membership, but was also an important process for self understanding. Self understanding in this case meant a reinterpretation of self, a new identity by means of a new way of figuring the discourses (who's who, who's going to be, and what if) within the activity.

This analysis highlights how discursive practices were constrained by conventions, but also led to a view of orders of discourse as unstable, heterogeneous or intertextual in their constitution and were disarticulated and rearticulated in the course of hegemonic struggle. Within the figured world of the literature circles there was a particular intertextual chain, a series of types of texts that were transformationally related to each other in the sense that each student was transformed into one or more of the others in regular and predictable ways (see Alex, Adri and Angélica).

The dialogue in the literature circles manifested the movement of the public sphere discourses to the personal-private sphere as noted. Furthermore, discourses seen as public forms and social tools within the literature circles mediated the doings and sayings of the powerful; thus the written (picture book among other cultural artifacts) and spoken language influenced the formal speech and the shift towards media, politics and educational discourses. In terms of orders of discourse, commodity (Fairclough, 1992) is the colonization of institutional orders of discourse by discourse types. For example, Yara-01, Alex-01, Adri and Angélica blended information and persuasion through written and spoken language about the discourses of colorblindness and essentializing. Whitening was evident, but their talk also exemplified the important role that a powerful text (literature) can provide as a place for children to explore their thinking and their world. The colonization of education by types of discourse (genre, style, etc.) should not be dismissed from the outside restructuring of the discourse practices of education, specifically of the classroom and literature circle. In this respect, the social identities of the students and that of the wider social world are defined in terms of race. However in the figured world of a literature circle, a change in the discourse practice of education, contributes to change in knowledge including beliefs and common sense, social relations, and social and relational identities.

Mostly importantly, within the literature circle's figured world, the group did not come to a conclusion. This means that this issue needed further reflection and constant dialogue. Students in this literature circle put together existing conventions in new combinations, or drew upon conventions within the situations of the literature circle

which were excluded or prohibited to them in other contexts and situations; this is what change implies and contributes to change in knowledge (beliefs and common sense). The critical social discourses demonstrate that the process of critical literacy in both learning and teaching is an interactive process between students and teacher in the local domain, and the written text of the picture book and curriculum in the institutional domain (Rogers, 2002). The discourses that are within the literature circle and critiqued would be at the societal domain.

This particular literature circle evidenced the ways in which students' discourses were regulated or synchronized themselves, whereby constructs of discursive structures or practices, made up or constituted the discourse of colorblindness, essentializing and the exploration of negrito, evoking whitening. These discursive structures within children's colorblindness and essentializing discourses are at the mercy or understanding of genre, style, and discourse. I argue that discourse constitutes action and effect through the clash (Foucault, 1982), mesh (Wortham, 2006) or a coming together of existing and local emerging discursive practices and conventions; circulating discourses that mediate the ways in which students' ideological constructions of race are in negotiation with the existing power relations in and out of the literature circle. I view discursive practices as not only structuring and restructuring students' texts, but within this process forming and reforming students' identities. The coming together entails that students use cultural and local emerging resources such as language, experiences, and peers, all available for outcomes upon past experiences in response to those positions afforded in the present within the literature circle - what Holland et. al (2003) refer to as "history in person."

Intertextuality also means students' ways of shifting to a conceptual world of race, through colorblindness or essentializing, thus through whitening discourses that not only represent their worlds, but signify and constitute their worlds. This means that intertextuality constitutes students' texts and identities in the way students rearrange, rephrase and restructure their texts. They are also shifting to another sphere in which they form and reform their identities.

The students' statements were engaging, dynamic, and politically invested, as they participated and negotiated meanings through dialogue within this figured world. Each statement was structured in particular ways; for example, Yara's statement introduced others to a colorblindness discourse. This statement was a pivot to transform or give meaning to the discourse of essentialization and unfolded in relation to snatches of prior texts, both oral and written. Students' statements counted as knowledge that not necessarily constituted a world view, but the interactions kept up the existence of particular discourses, such as that between Yara and Alex. Students spoke and were responded to within the bounds of what other discourses from peers mapped for them, whereby discursive constraints from a dialogical perspective meant multiple thoughts and feelings had the propensity to encompass a number of views "virtually, simultaneously, and (with) tensions" (Holland et. al 2003, p. 169), thus enabling them to explore ideas and texts of race.

Through dialogue, students not only represented the world, but, as Fairclough (1992) states, signified the world, constituting and constructing the world in meaning. In

this way, dialogue within the figured world of the literature group illuminated the particular discourse configurations of genre, style and discourse, revealing how students made sense of their reality and their racial ideological constructions through the discourses of colorblindness and essentializing.

Analysis: Group 3

In this particular figured world of the literature circle, students' embodied identities as self racial identification stand out; this is the use of action through their bodies to explore race, constituting an order of discourse. Within the literature circle embodied identities became outcomes or responses that students structured in their language and their conventions in order to explore the black/white dichotomy as associated with the social domain discourses of school and community, as well as the political, historical and economical, as in the case of Puerto Rico. Other interesting issues that emerged from the dialogue are the students' ideological constructions of race through the use of sociocultural forms such as social racial identification as either black/white binaries, and students' focus on the differences in peoples' skin color (people's skin tones are different from others and do not have to be the same). Therefore, the idea that to be black is not the same as to be white is a dichotomy, consequently the local emergence of brown.

This analysis indicates how students' ideological constructions of race entail binary modes of racial identification such as black/white and how this evokes a multiplicity of ways of using a black/white dichotomy. This acknowledges one of

Godreau's (2008) findings concerning what she termed "slippery semantics" or binary modes of racial identification such as the black/white dichotomy as a way of fixing racial identities. She emphasizes that within this dichotomy exists the back and forth movement of multiple racial terminologies which allows for a "multidimensional interpretation of power relations in everyday encounters" (p.10). The following examples illustrate precisely that the binary black/white dichotomy implicitly tries to narrow and fix racial identities, while other racial discourses like brown, colorblindness, whitening, and specialness are suspended in the figured world of the literature circle. Dialogically and dialectically these movements exemplify inconsistent and ambiguous uses and meanings of racial discourses.

Specifically, I discuss how María's euphemism *de color/* colored, which I consider a sociocultural form, is not an issue of the past, but of the present contemporary Puerto Rican context and signifies the emergence of an "in between" conception of race. *De color/* colored is used in Puerto Rican vernacular as a euphemism to classify people considered black because of the belief that *negro* is offensive and thus has a pejorative connotation to index "otherness." I should point out that *de color/*colored does not have the same connotation as in the United States. The term "colored" or "people of color" in the United States is used to refer to any ethnic and racial groups (Latin@s, African American, etc.) other than white. Racial terminologies are constructed and constituted by means of the divergent competing and contradictory discourses and meanings. Competing discourses, such as the binary conception of race in the black/white dichotomy (see Joe-02), serves as a pivot for local forms to emerge such as brown,

colorblindness, and specialness among others. In the picture book, *¡Hombre de color!*, the phrase *de color* identifies the black character as “the other,” although that is not the intention of the book. It could also be read as a euphemism, serving as a pivot, as students individually and collectively assigned different meanings to the same text which extended their ideological constructions of race.

These are the issues discussed within this analysis. I highlight the ways in which students’ racial discourses were explored and constituted through dialogue within this generic world of interpretation in which a particular set of characters and actors were recognized, significance was assigned to certain acts, and particular outcomes were valued over others (Bartlett and Holland, 2002).

The interaction among these students is one of tension or inquiry (Lindfords, 1999). When both teacher and students engaged collaboratively to purposely understand something or build further understandings; tensions were anticipated, initiated and addressed through dialogue and reading, but not necessarily solved. Everyone’s statement or expression seemed threaded, intertextual, glossed or accentuated with strong political and ideological perspectives. Bakhtin (1981) conceived language or discourse as “authoring selves.” Through dialogism people always exist in a state of being addressed and in the process of answering and anticipation. Students’ racial explorations were through a process of texts that converged. Authoring selves in the process of making meaning and putting words to the world are the ways they responded to their

immediate surroundings, as glossed or accentuated with their own experiences and transforming semantic and expressive intentions.

As in the discussions with the first book, **Group 3** was composed of Jescy, Sheyda, Carlos M., Gaby, Joe, and Maestra Patricia (MP). Everyone sat at the round table used for literature circles and Gaby begins this excerpt by responding to Gerny.

01-Gaby- Yo pienso de que, Hombre de color, no es, no puede, no es real que es fantasia, porque un hombre normal no puede, no puede, cambiar de color, cuando los sentimientos no cambian. / I think that, *Hombre de color* (picture book), it can't be, it's not real it's fantasy because a normal person can't change color when his/her feelings don't change./

02-Joe- Que todo el mundo es de color, blanco o negro./That everyone is of color, white or black./

03-Jescy- Jescy se mira su brazo y dice- Y marrón, mira! Tocando su brazo con el dedo de la mano moviendolo hacia arriba y hacia abajo. /Looks at his skin and says-And brown, look! (Touching his skin, moving his finger up and down.) 5 seconds of silence.

04-Yescy- He is moving around his chair and putting his hand on his mouth and laughing. Looks at me with shyness and what he expresses is inaudible until he decided to share his thought. Que ser negro no es tan malo. /To be black is not that bad./

05-MP-Que tu quieres decir que ser negro no es tan malo?/What do you mean with to be black is not that bad?/

06-Jescy-Que el, que, que el color que tenga no tiene que ser igual que tu. / The, the, the color that you have doesn't have to be like yours./silence

07-MP-Alguien quiere comentar algo con relación a lo que dijo Yescy? /Does anyone want to comment on what Yescy said?/

08-Gaby- Que no importa si tu eres de otro color, blanco, negro, o de otro color, tu eres especial./ It doesn't matter what color you are, white, black, or another color, you are going to be special./

09-MP-Fíjate, algo que me llamó la atención es cuando Yescy dijo y sus respuestas, también. Qué tú quieres decir con que ser negro no es tan malo?/Something that caught my attention was what Yescy said and your responses. What do you mean with “to be black is not that bad”?/

10-Jescy-Qué, no entiendo?/That, I don’t understand?/

11-MP-Qué? Ser negro es malo?/What? Is being black something bad?/

12-Jescy-Que ser negro no es lo mismo que ser blanco./That, white is not the same as black./

13-MP-En qué sentido? Qué tú quieres decir con eso?/In what ways? What do you mean?

14-Gaby-Yo, que no importa de que color seas porque naciste así, y si tus papás y todas las personas y tus familiares son diferentes, porque tu naciste así./Me, that it doesn’t matter what color because you were born that way, and your parents and all the people and your family are different, because you were born like that./

Transcript	Interpretation
<p>01-Gaby- Yo pienso de que, Hombre de color, no es, no puede, no es real que es fantasía, porque un hombre normal no puede, no puede, cambiar de color, Cuando los sentimientos no cambian. /I think that, Hombre de color (picture book), it can’t be, it’s not real it’s fantasy because a normal person can’t change color when his/her feelings don’t change./</p>	<p>Opening statement-interplay of reality and fantasy - connection with the picture book to extend the issue of race.</p>
<p>02-Joe- Que todo el mundo es de color, blanco o negro./That everyone is of color, white or black ./</p>	<p>Establishing color as either black or white-dichotomy.</p>

Transcript	Interpretation
<p>03-Jescy- Jescy se mira su brazo y dice- Y marrón, mira! Tocando su brazo con el dedo de la mano moviéndolo hacia arriba y hacia abajo. /Looks at his skin and says-And brown, look! (Touching his skin, moving his finger up and down.)</p>	<p>Draws from cultural forms-seems strong minded-combination of social, institutional and discursive pressures Embodied identity-use of action to signal a different color-marrón /brown/ Sense of self-It seems that he uses his color -brown-as part of “figuring” constructing himself and pin points or validates a different color out on the world. Jescy’s gaze is an example of “improvisation” (Holland) a particular way of organizing his thinking and responding.</p>
<p>5 seconds of silence</p>	
<p>04-Jescy- He is moving around his chair and putting his hand on his mouth and laughing. Looks at me with shyness and what he expresses is inaudible until he decided to share his thought. Que ser negro no es tan malo./To be black is not that bad./</p>	<p>Ideological construction of race as negro, black-fix view of race and departing from the ideology that being black is something bad. It seems also the meaning he has constructed through the transaction with the reading and the author is that black is not bad, but not good either.</p>
<p>05-MP-Que tú quieres decir que ser negro no es tan malo?/What do you mean with” to be black is not that bad”?/</p>	<p>Local emerging form ”In between” discourse -means it is not bad, but it’s not good either. Euphemism-hiding in a subtle form the social construction of negro as something bad, ugly... Inquiring to extend his thinking.</p>
<p>06-Jescy-Que el, que, que el color que tenga no tiene que ser igual que tú. /The, the, the, color that you have doesn’t have to be like yours./silence</p>	<p>Acknowledgment of differences but, avoids the use of racial labels. Color is used here as part of peoples’ differences.</p>
<p>07-MP-Alguien quiere comentar algo con relación a lo que dijo Yescy? /Does anyone want to comment on what Yescy said?/</p>	<p>Invitation, inquiring.</p>
<p>08-Gaby- Que no importa si tu eres de otro color, blanco, negro, o de otro color, tu eres especial. /It doesn’t matter what color you are, white, black, or another color, you are going to be special./</p>	<p>Locally emerging form, “specialness.” It is evoked through colorblindness, and differences between being black and being white- as binaries. Power relations.</p>

Transcript	Interpretation
<p>MP-Fijate, algo que me llamó la atención es cuando Jescy dijo y sus respuestas, también. Que tú quieres decir con que ser negro no es tan malo? /Something that caught my attention was what Yescy said and your responses. What do you mean with “to be black is not that bad”?/</p>	<p>Inquiring and inviting to extend his thinking.</p>
<p>10-Yescy-Que, no entiendo? /That, I don’t understand?/</p>	
<p>11-MP-¿Que?, ¿ser negro es malo? /What? is being black something bad?/</p>	<p>Tension</p>
<p>12-Jescy-Que ser negro no es lo mismo que ser blanco. /That, white is not the same as black./</p>	<p>Shares the idea that black is not bad, and that there is a difference between being black and being white</p>
<p>13-MP-En qué sentido? Que tú quieres decir con eso? /In what ways?, What do you mean?/</p>	
<p>14-Gaby-Yo, que no importa de que color seas porque naciste así, y si tus papás y todas las personas y tus familiares son diferentes, porque tu naciste así. /Me, that it doesn’t matter what color because you were born that way, and your parents and all the people in your family are different, because you were born like that./</p>	<p>Once again the colorblindness discourse enhances and exemplifies color as a biological, natural characteristic - being born that way with a certain skin tone. Pronoun use, /you/ -directs to everyone making everyone part of the issue. Positioning her with “positive face.”</p>

Section I: Discourses as Paradoxes: De color/ colored and in between discourses

Dialogue revolved around Jescy’s statement-05, which was ideologically invested. Interestingly, his statement was transformed from Gaby’s and Joe’s previous texts, and consequent texts interplayed with Gaby’s and mine. Within this group, Jescy’s figuring self was by means of the interplay between his and other’s voices coming

together. Within the coming together, Gaby's statement was a response to Jescy's statement and demonstrated what I call a "happy medium" which reanimates sociocultural forms such as viewing race as either white or black binaries, thus allowing for the emergence of local forms such as brown by means of the dialogic relationship. In other words, through dialogue, students draw from sociocultural forms and linguistic resources which come together with the effect of students' embodied identities as a response. I should point out that in this study the concept of "reanimation" refers to how discourses in certain situations are revived dialogically and give impetus to the new meanings that children assign to racial labels.

In this section my focus is on discourses as having contradictory qualities. From a Bahktinian perspective this means that language is inevitably and inextricably ideological and represents lived perspectives on the world. Therefore, life is seen as heteroglossic with the simultaneity of different languages and their associated values and presuppositions. Hence, it is within a diverse and contentious social world that students' everyday life entails orchestrating and arranging overheard elements, themes, and forms, while working within and against a set of constraints. I consider these a set of possibilities for students' racial explorations and understandings within the figured world of the literature circle. With this in mind, I begin with Gaby's comparison.

Gaby's expression about reality, fantasy, normal people and their feelings, as well as physical changes that produce feelings was an interesting connection. Although these words were not repeated throughout the interaction, the words did collocate (Fairclough,

1992) in their linkage and expressions. Moreover, they seemed to be a combination of contradictory features or qualities that were part of her ideological construction of race. This presupposed that a normal person does not change color, except when feelings within people produce those (color) changes, otherwise, it is a fantasy. However, who is a normal person - a White person?

In addition, an analysis of transitivity, or how individuals position themselves in relation to the verb, is important in understanding Gaby's -01 ways of being. For example, in Gaby's -01 statement, "I think that the, man/-colored-woman," this cognitive statement (Rogers, 2003) was combined with the idea that a normal person cannot change color. Gaby's active position functioned to construct a view of who was a normal person (white) along with the colorblindness discourse.

This example illustrates how Gaby was actively setting words and expressions in the process of repositioning herself and others. She used her resources, the picture book, and other sociocultural forms, as resources for local emerging forms such as a binary conception of race as a black/white dichotomy. Therefore students' intertextual linkages enabled other discourses to emerge like the brown and special discourses. Her statements mediated and evoked responses in certain ways, thus shifting her and others to the conceptual world of race through the colorblindness discourse. Moreover, her racial exploration was due to the contradictory qualities of her statement. For example, the specialness discourse which was evoked by means of a conception of race as a black/white dichotomy, brown as an embodied identity, and the colorblindness discourse

(see Gaby-08). In this excerpt, colorblindness seems to hide a negative action and implication; being a different color, black/white or another color makes you a special person. It highlights those two other colors as black/white, consistent in the popular racial discourse of Puerto Rico. For example, Gaby stated, “or another color” (see at the end of the sentence). The latter, on the one hand, avoided the use of “those other colors” (*trigueño, prieto*, among others), and on the other hand, enlightened black/white as binaries which were glossed with the adjective “special,” that seemed to appeal for “embracement.” Hence, the words “other color”, black/white, or “another color,” both at the beginning and at the end of the sentence, seemed to strategically enlighten the black/white dichotomy and avoided the use of multiple racial labels that are frequently used and part of Puerto Rican popular discourse such as, *trigueño, prieto, or prietita*. It minimized the importance of race through a “doing good” discourse.

Joe’s response and positioning by a powerful discourse led him to think of people’s skin color as either white or black, or negro/black as an identity distinct from blanco/white. His present tense statement, “Everyone in the world is colored, black or white,” can presuppose an absolute truth; this is what is out there in the world of either white or black. According to Godreau (2008), within the sociocultural context of Puerto Rico, binary uses of negro as an identity distinct from *blanco*/white is common in narratives of the past, specifically in historical and educational accounts about Spanish conquerors and African slaves rather than in the actual representations within Puerto Rico (p.14). Joe’s knowledge was strong-minded from a combination of social, institutional and discursive pressures. This is an example of a fixed view of skin color, dismissing the

wide range of skin color tones that converge in Puerto Rico and a homogenizing notion of race. Holland, Lachicotte, Skinner and Cain (2003) assert that people tell others who they are; moreover, they also tell themselves and act as who say they are. Joe's self understanding of everyone in the world as *de color*/ colored or white/black, is an example of how he told others who they were racially, and how they should act through black/white binary discourse. Interestingly, his racial discourse, contrary to Gaby's, was that colored was a synonym of black/white. Therefore, this also evoked the emergence of a local form since brown is a racial label inextricably interrelated to Puerto Rican culture.

Interestingly, Jescy-03 & 06 used resources such as the category, *de color* within the picture book and others' sociocultural forms to expand (see Gaby's and Joe's) on the notion of skin color which could be brown like his skin tone. This locally emerging form was evoked through the mediation of the colorblindness and essentializing discourses. This means, that he moved beyond the idea of skin color as a binary to a broader conceptual world of race, to think about other colors such as brown, which include Puerto Ricans and African Caribbean such as himself and others. It is through his embodied identity, thus self racial identification that he constituted brown as a racial label. Previous discursive texts as well include the local emerging forms like, for example, brown or "either black or white." Gaby and Joe, and then Gaby's consequent discourse of specialness served as a pivot which shifted Joe and Jescy to the conceptual world of race, a multidimensional world in which they responded, submitted to the literature circle rules, and treated its events as real, black and white as binaries, or brown. Hence, the

mediating devices, racial discourses in this example were mechanisms that developed in social interaction, to which students assigned meaning and which became tools that reproduced in practice as they actively engaged with the environment.

Other important devices that were part of discourses or enhanced these are the use of personal pronouns such as /you/ (style)-(see Yescy-03 and Gaby-08 and 15) that once again took the position of positive face to be understood, and also addressed everyone (genre) which illustrates what Fairclough (1992) calls politeness by establishing relationships.

According to Wortham, (2006), the use of pronouns is a relevant sign in the utterance. For example, the use of the pronoun /you/ seemed to mean “you others in the literature circle” including students and parents in the examples and made others in the literature circle part of the situation, but also an interactional organization was exemplified between Gaby, the teacher and Jescy. Gaby’s-08 example presupposed affection (style) and aligned with the colorblindness discourse. In addition, the utterance was accentuated or glossed with a personal attribute and described how other people were and should feel, that skin colors were not important, and therefore you (all) are special persons (genre and style). This example dismissed the importance of people of color or black Puerto Ricans, and signaled Gaby attributing to others a quality of special, thus a special embracing despite the skin color. The special embracing becomes a false embracement in the sense of false consciousness or how economic and social relationships distort and obscure the realities of peoples’ thoughts, ideas, frameworks and

identities, their social realities. This means that Joe, Gaby and Jescy engaged with the environment through social mechanisms such as language, that they systematically explored and represented, obscured or distorted racial realities of subordination, exploitation, and domination. Within the obscurity, the figured world of the literature circle is the space of ambiguity in usages and meanings of racial language or racial talk.

The subsequent statements revolved around Jescy's expression, "it is not so bad to be black." I define this expression as the "in between," meaning that his racial exploration may seem to mean that it's not bad but it's not good either, and which implicitly presupposes that it could be worse. Jescy did not distance himself from blackness, rather he reflected on the inconsistency of the use and meaning of negating black. This means that blackness was constructed through the colorblindness discourse, a local emerging form of brown, a binary conception of race as black/white, and through differences between black and white (see Jescy-03, 06, and 12). Interestingly, although part of Jescy's vocal perspectives employed fixed racial identities by using the binary racial terminology, the consequent texts indicate how he brought out sameness, distance, and differences between speakers.

This excerpt illustrates that racial discourses are used differently in different contexts and meanings play out differently. Godreau (2008) asserts that the constant back and forth movement among racial terms and binary discourses allows us to construct alternative solidarities based on multiple social positions through social class, gender, religion, and multidimensional interpretations of power relationships in everyday

encounters. Therefore, fixed binary terms prevail through dialogue over multiple and ambiguous racial terms within the literature circles.

Sociocultural forms and dominant interpretations of blackness construe black people as inferior, ugly and less fortunate (Godreau, 2008), a stigma that Jescy-04 seems to have expressed and Gaby-08 interpreted as acceptable. Her interpretation of Jescy's texts relied on grammatical and lexical elements, and the design (the ways texts are linked) of his statement enabled Gaby to validate and accept Jescy's blackness. In addition, active voice (style) was also an important aspect in the analysis since the verb marks a relationship of being (Janks, 2005) - in this case, of being a different color, either black/white, and another color besides black and white. Gaby re-dressed rather than challenged, and softened the blow (Rogers, 2003) of Jescy's blackness and negation of black strategically, a part of the domain of lifeworld discourses. This means that words are put together strategically; therefore students accommodate themselves and fit to reproduce such discourses. Also, re-dressing means that through discourse everyone shifts and fits into familiar scenery, therefore, into a comfortable zone. Her expression was attached to positive face and politeness (Fairclough, 1992). In this example, both the public and private circulating models which are enduring struggles (Holland et. al, 2003) with and among people and groups are exemplified within the literature circle and within institutions such as schools, churches, government offices, and governmental policies.

The actions of Jescy, Gaby, Joe and I, and the events that took place before the literature circle (reading the book with a family member or friend and as a whole group), intervened and transformed these struggles which were always mediated by widely circulating sociocultural forms that concern race and gender among others. As Wortham (2006) asserts, local models are evoked in the literature circle. Discourses as paradoxes means that language and identities are always in a state of contradiction; in other words, always combining contradictory features or qualities by means of linguistic and experiential elements that students choose, to orchestrate and re-orchestrate texts with the outcome/responses of multiple ideological constructions and meanings of racial labels. For example, how Gaby softened the blow or re-dressed Jescy's statement is an example of how Gaby drew on the linguistic and experiential resources, the ones that were available to her, and brought them to the present situation to mediate their thinking and racial explorations through dialogue. Thus, in this case, threading texts or intertextual linkages such as the picture book and Jescy's statement were assigned different meanings. This also demonstrates the unstable state of long term development and the imaginative/inventiveness of discourses. For example, discourses are evoked by means of others within the figured world. In this case, discourse took place when students within the literature circle engaged in vocal perspectives or multivocality (Bakhtin, 1981) to reanimate discourses that were in the environment such as sociocultural forms and the colorblindness discourse that gave place to the emergence of local forms such as the specialness and blackness discourses. Students' responses exemplified the ways in which they chose elements and designed texts, to consequently assign different meanings to an

idea or concept, giving a different meaning to race. It was within the enduring struggles of vocal perspectives and hegemonic forces such as the colorblindness discourse that locally emerging forms as tools continuously were evoked. I should make clear that discourses coming together entail the enduring struggles of social and self racial identification with students developing a sense of self and learning within the figured world of literature circles

Section II: Self racial identification as “brown”: An embodied identity

The pattern of exchanges across and within the literature circle was evidently symmetrical both in theme and in the number of students participating in the exchange. On the one hand, Gaby kept up with Jescy’s private domain, getting the message across in terms which others could understand and relate to. However, my utterances functioned to invite (see 08 and 12) Gaby and Jescy to respond, but also took an invitation/clarification form (see 06 and 14). My active voice (style) when stating, “What? Is being black something bad?” referred to previous texts (Jescy’s and Gaby’s) which re-set the agenda that Jescy-04-06 had previously set for the literature circle. The patterns of signs as Wortham (2006) states or patterns of identities collectively come to indicate a particular identity within the literature circle, for example, Jescy’s identity as brown and simultaneously of blackness (see Jescy-04), as well as Gaby’s colorblindness discourse. However the way that students interacted, the ways of exploring their discourse, and the ways of being within the figured world of the literature circle presupposed that students’ discourses were intertwined with that of the Puerto Rican

popular discourse and the local emerging forms in constructing an order of discourse. Discourses overlapped and moved back and forth; students' maintenance of the popular discourse invoked positional identities (race, gender, ethnicity) and racial social and self identification as brown in ways that fit their immediate surroundings and enabled them to also shift to think individually (see Jescy-03) and collectively (see Gaby-15).

Interestingly, Gaby-15 drew from her cultural tools to organize her response in a certain way. Her response drew from, extended and transformed Jescy's-03 discourse of self racial identification as a "brown boy", and blackness into a colorblindness discourse (see Jescy-04). This movement was from an individual to a collective colorblindness. However, the particularity of this utterance (Gaby-15) was glossed with specific people and human processes such as "born with a certain color," which made it personal/intimate, and identified her and others as "different" (skin color) and "special" (unique).

I should make clear that there is not a dichotomy or an order in using or identifying with a particular discourse, either emerging from the public domain or private domain. These are contradictory and dispersed discourses and we decide when, where and how to use them and to assign meaning. Holland et al. (2003) remind us that we form and reform around and through sociocultural models or forms. Students' sociocultural models/forms are not pervasive, but are living tools that they explore and appropriate, not only to organize their responses, but also to shift to a conceptual world that goes beyond their immediate surroundings (Holland et. al, 2003). This means that

shifting to a conceptual world that went beyond their immediate surroundings, the figured world of school, classroom and community, was precisely the way in which students dialogically inhabited their lifeworld and common experiences. For example, naturalized language such as a discourse of colorblindness was lived in, and derived from the discourse of specialness. Students extended and found ways to signify their worlds through dialogue (Fairclough, 1992, 1995). For example, Jesci's-03 active voice (style) allowed others to recognize a different color and to communicate information, but also signaled him as brown, a form of self racial identification. This meant that he constituted relationships with others from the perspective of a brown boy. In this example, I conclude that the ways of structuring and re-structuring discourses involved students' choices of pronouns, genre, style etc. to reanimate powerful systems that indexed social and self racial identification. This includes ways students racially perceived and identified others, as well as how people racially perceived and identified themselves.

Jescy's relational and positional identity as brown enhanced the intermediary racial labels of Puerto Rico and pointed to his idea of blackness (see Jescy-03 &05); he did not see himself as black, but as brown. Through action within the literature circle, he reassured his "brown" skin tone by looking at his skin and moving his finger back and forth on his arm. His social position was a disposition he used to participate in, identify with, and felt entitled to express and emote within the circles. Hence, this was an act that constituted relations of distance or affiliation (relationships) with other Puerto Ricans, black Puerto Ricans and African Caribbeans. In addition, this seemed to demonstrate the embodied identity of Jescy, since he responded to others (peers) with his body and

verbally, beyond what he and others represented in order to make sense of these connections.

Fairclough (1992) states that ethos not only involves discourse, but the whole body. Jescy's expression signaled ethos through his bodily disposition, that is, his movement and particularly his way of responding physically to what was said. In contrast, Holland, Lachicotte, Skinner and Cain (2003) assert that bodily practices form in the past, and discourses and practices to which we are exposed are in the present. Then, identities develop in the interface, within the interplay between social and embodied sources that we have of the self.

In Jescy's-07 statement, his embodied identity signaled embracement. This discourse was reanimated as he highlighted the differences among peoples' skin colors and simultaneously made visible the uniqueness of everyone by stating, "doesn't have to be like yours." This presupposed that it was okay to be different and that you don't have to feel bad. In this way, the utterance (Jescy-06, 12) kept up his agenda and the relational position within the figured world of the literature circle for others (peers) to feel unique by essentializing race, thus portraying race as a predetermined and deterministic aspect of personality or life. Interestingly, Gaby's discourse (colorblindness) was not isolated, but was produced by means of Jescy's discourses (brown boy and blackness). Gaby's response to Jescy's embodied identity was through a configuration and linkage of previous utterances, as Bakhtin (1981) asserts, that each utterance is a link in the chain of speech communication. However, Rogers (2003) makes clear that language functions

across orders of discourse, the ways of interacting, being and representing, in order to privilege some meanings over others and multiply meanings as demonstrated. Jescy's embodied identity had a privileging meaning; his body was language.

The interactional organization in this literature circle was one in which there was a group of students that included the teacher, a six year-old boy, and a seven-year-old girl. It seems that the diversity of discourses threaded Yescy's (-03, 13 &15) texts with Gaby's (15); their alignment did not necessarily mean affinity, but may presuppose sympathy for the way in which others should feel and think about race. In this way, the intertextual chain was initiated as they collectively figured the agenda for the literature circle. The way that the intertextual chain unfolded meant that students such as Gaby, Joe and Jescy explored and figured as they drew from their local resources and other's texts (both written and oral) that emerged in the literature circle, as well as broader sociocultural forms, in order to think about what race meant in terms of skin color. They made sense of the experience in the literature circle when both came together and interrelated. Students' relational identities (these are to speak to another, to command another, or to enter into the space of another) mediated how one felt comfortable or constrained. Joe and Jescy seemed to feel comfortable and not constrained by previous texts such as the picture book and Gaby's expression. They used their social identities as dispositions to express and to emote in appropriate ways and according to the situation within the figured world of literature circles. According to Holland et. al, (2003), speaking certain dialects, giving particular opinions and holding the floor are indices of claims to be privileged (p.133). In addition, students responded to what they found in the

environment in the context of an historically, socially and culturally constructed form of social interaction, that is dialogue in the literature circle within the school and classroom context.

Students' identities are not given or fixed, but these form and reform from a configuration of resources in heterogeneous contexts or spaces. For example, the spatial layout within the literature circle, the text (picture book) and the habitual embodied stances (Wortham, 2006) of students, specifically of Jescy (brown boy) and myself, mediated eventual processes and constrained the emerging structure of the literature circle. Also, the ways in which students brought together heterogeneous resources (text, family, curriculum, sociocultural forms) to accomplish partially and facilitate the meshing (Wortham, 2006) were a coming together or emergence of local forms. Within the figured world, students' examples were rich in their implications for identity construction as they took on different roles (see Jescy and Gaby), as they dialogued in the literature circle, and contributed topics in indirect and direct ways as they referenced family members and their physical characteristics.

All the discourses, spaces, heterogeneous contexts, and resources that students drew from and that mediated their ways of signifying their worlds are examples of Bakhtin's (1981) concept of intertextuality, Fairclough's (1992, 1995) intertextual chain, and Wortham's (2006) speech chain in which a linkage of speech events caused a particular student in the literature circle to go on to circulate a particular discourse as the speaker in a subsequent event. That was the case of Gaby when she extended and

transformed Jescy's-04 expression into a smoothing and recognizable form.

Intertextuality sees texts as transforming the existing conventions and prior texts, into the present (Fairclough, 1992, p.85). Within this literature circle, the linkages between and among texts circulated around and through us, and began to circulate also in students' texts, but these texts were transformed as students' ways of using elements of other texts, creative configurations of contradictory elements of orders of discourse, and new modes of intertextuality happened. Intertextuality mediated students' identities; these also circulated widely and endured over a longer time. This explains that students did not reproduce or represent discourse; the enduring struggles of Gaby, Joe, Jescy and myself (teacher) evoked certain kinds of people (identities) within the context of the literature circle and moved back and forth from the lived common experiences to other particular events within the households, community, and school. Identities are part of the processes of transforming conventions and previous texts and simultaneously making sense of experience, enabling constant shifts within particular contexts.

Students' constant enactments of and dialogue about race or racial talk (Godreau, 2008), leading to individual and collective knowledge, illuminated the ongoing experiences within this particular figured world.

This interaction among six and seven year-olds exemplifies language in use, how they selected from options available in the system - lexical, grammatical and sequencing choices - in order to say what they wanted to say (Janks, 2005). In this way, identities formed and reformed in relation to re-orchestrating voices and responses. Therefore, the

way students' choices of lexical, grammatical or any linguistic options were put together and designed to convey particular meanings. Intertextuality across different language forms such as media, as well as connections and experiences with diverse texts, are also exemplified in this particular literature circle. In this analysis, students' statements are an example of forming linkages or (intertextuality) by means of the state in which people are always being addressed, answering; or anticipating. As individuals, and as part of this figured world, students did not hold one perspective at a time. Instead their sociocultural resources and tools that emerged in practice were pivotal since they allowed for the creation of words, phrases, ideological statements, or ideological "linkages" to signify, through diverse forms, who's who and what is *de color*, brown, or black/white. For every student, these terms were constructed and signified differently within the figured world of literature circles. This means that dialogue as a language form was essential to exploring and understanding students' inconsistent and ambiguous racial constructions. In other words, within this figured world, a context of possibilities about where meanings are constructed, evoked both binary black/white types of classifications and multiple and ambiguous racial formulations, such as brown that are socially constructed and constituted.

At the interactional level (genre) there was not a predictable set of events that occurred in the literature circle. In contrast, the thematic structure unfolded in a different way, which exemplified heterogeneity by students' competing discourses that came about through different readings and transactions with diverse texts. An example is Gaby's-(08) reading of Jescy's-(12) texts to create an intertextual ambivalence and make up

individual as well as collective texts within the literature circle. This means that the broader sociocultural forms reoccured across events (Wortham, 2006) such as the colorblindness discourse that students brought to the figured world that was reanimated, recognized and, transformed, and could even be discarded, which was not the case in this excerpt. Sociocultural forms were reanimated and transformed within the literature circle by means of the coming together of the resources selected and used for local forms to emerge in the process. This presupposes that Jescy's and Gaby's identities depended on the publicly circulating cultural forms (discourses and figured worlds), but also on others' identities. For example, the different discourses or set of signs (Wortham, 2006) presupposed a certain kind of person and were also relevant for interpreting, as in the case of Gaby, identifying an individual or individuals as a kind of person (identity) as special despite their skin color, thus may seem to highlight the insignificance of race. The same was true with Jescy who identified himself as brown and others as black, but added that "it is not so bad to be black." In other words, Gaby and Jescy both embraced an explicit ideal that schools also embrace and that occurs and re-occurs in academic and interpersonal relationships within the figured world of the literature circle.

The discourse of specialness that emerged from the colorblindness and essentializing discourses is recognized and reanimated across institutions and even through children's literature. Educators both informally and formally identify students by embracing the colorblindness and essentializing discourses. Although the colorblindness discourse intends to accept and do good to everyone, it is a discourse that becomes a false embracement that permeates, intervenes in, and transforms students' ways of

responding, as well as the ways in which they signify their worlds through multiple racial terminologies.

Identities were mediated through the intervention of circulating discourses that we developed around and through, but also as they came together with the local forms/discourses within the literature circle. These served as pivots with which Gaby, Jescy, Joe and I shifted into a conceptual world that went beyond the literature circle, one that took them to the exploration and figuring of selves. Gaby seemed to construct colorblindness as an embracing discourse (socially) within the environment (interpsychologically) that she was engaged in and then individually (intrapsychologically) by using linguistic and experiential devices to modify the environment and direct others' discourses.

Analysis: Group 2

Students in this particular literature circle's figured world, negotiated discursively the meanings of *negro*, *negrito*, *trigueñito*, *un poco marrón*, *cremita*, and *blanquito*. These sociocultural and local emerging forms arose from individual and collective experiences. I argue in this analysis that the figured world of literature circles enabled students to negotiate and "figure" themselves through social and self racial identification, as they reproduced and appropriated cultural resources to signify these labels. In the previous analysis we saw how Jescy used an embodied identity to signify brown. In this analysis, I also look at how Armando and Jorge used language and body (gaze) to racial social identify and define *negro* and to self-racially identify as "a bit brown."

Students developed the ability to sense (see, hear, touch, taste and feel) and the figured world became embodied through continuous participation, (Holland, Lachicotte, Skinner and Cain, 2003) as exemplified in the previous analysis with Jescy-02. Students constructed an intertextual chain through dialogue about what was *negrito*, who was *trigueñito* and *cremita* and what these racial terms meant through social and self racial identification and embodied identities. Through Self racial identification and embodied identities students explored what was *negrito*, signaling who was *cremita* (teacher) and the meaning of *trigueñito*, thereby making visible the inconsistency and ambiguous usage and meanings of these racial terms within the literature circle. This figured world was peopled by students' ideological constructions of race through discourses like *de color*, colorblindness, *marrón*, *blanquito*, *cremita*, *negrito* and *trigueño*.

Students' relational and positional identities were pivotal in the emergence of local forms such as social and self racial identification. The dialectical and dialogical relationships were essential in the coming together where discourses were contested through dialogism. They drew on linguistic and sociocultural forms which were dependant on each other and overlapped. Within this process, students concurrently structured interpretations (orders of discourse) in which they, with their particular characteristics, were recognized by others and positioned or assigned to certain acts, and their outcomes or responses were valued over others. Colorblindness and essentializing discourses as shown in the two previous analyses also stand out in this analysis. Interestingly, these discourses are ideologically loaded and served as pivots to explore racial labels. It is also interesting to note the ways in which students arranged, rearranged

and orchestrated different vocal perspectives by means of racial labels, through self and social racial identification and embodied identities was a form of social and self racial identification; across the three literature circles.

Section I: From Negro as an embodied identity to colorblindness discourse

As in the discussions with the first book, **Group 2** was composed of María, Armando, Jorge, Sofi and Fabián. We all sat at the round table in the library. Armando was looking at the illustration which had a post it note marked on the page he wanted to share with his peers.

01-Armando-Yo creo que es negro porque tiene una boca grande. (He touches his mouth)./I think is black because it has a big mouth./

02-Jorge-Eso es un Africano africano, si lo llegan a coger, inaudible./That is an African, African, if they catch him. Inaudible./

03-MP- ¿Por qué? Qué te hace pensar eso?/Why? What makes you think that? /

04-Jorge-Por que aquí dice que es un libro de África y me parece que es negrito... Y esto no se, pero me parece, que para mi es Puertorriqueno./Because here, it says it is a book about Africa and I think is “negrito” and this I don’t know (looking at the picture book), but it seems, for me is Puerto Rican./

05-MP-¿Que te hace pensar eso? /What makes you think that? /

06-María- Antes decían que, que antes decían que cuando la gente nacía así (señalando la ilustración) le decían que eran de color en algunos países y aquí alguna gente lo dice./Long ago. They say that long ago they used to say, that when people were born, like this (pointing to the illustration) they called that they were of color in some countries and some people here too (Puerto Rico) say it./

07-MP-A mí me parece que María y Jorge señalaron algo importante, que a las personas negras, verdad, se les refiere como hombre, mujer de

color. ¿Por qué ustedes creen?/I think that what Maria and Jorge said is important, right, people refer to black people as men or women of color. Why do you think so? /

08-María- Porque son de un color diferente que las otras personas. /Because they are a color different from other people./

09-Jorge- Pero lo más que importa es que somos personas. No importa el color. /But the most important is that we are humans. No matter the color. /

Transcript	Interpretation
Analysis III: María, Armando, Jorge, Sofi and Fabián	
01-Armando-Yo creo que es negro porque tiene una boca grande. (He touches his mouth)/I think is black because it has a big mouth./	Identifying and defining through external characteristics (boca grande/big mouth) to constitute who and why “negro” Sets the agenda “Ethos” discourse and the whole body
02-Jorge-Eso es un Africano africano, si lo llegan a coger, inaudible./That is an African, African, if they catch him. Inaudible./	The words mouth, thick lips and negro/black –collocate, thus it is a cohesive text.
03-MP- ¿Por qué? Qué te hace pensar eso?/Why? What makes you think that? /	
04-Jorge-Por que aquí dice que es un libro de África y me parece que es negrito... Y esto no se, pero me parece, que para mi es Puertorriqueno./Because here, it says it is a book about Africa and I think is “negrito” and this I don’t know (looking at the picture book), but it seems, for me is Puerto Rican./	Connection with current issues and social and institutional discourse. Ideological construction of “negrito” The idea of “negro” as either African or Puerto Rican.
05-MP-¿Que te hace pensar eso? /What makes you think that? /	Inquiring and eliciting to extend thinking.
06-María- Antes decían que, que antes decían que cuando la gente nacía así (señalando la ilustración) le decían que eran de color en algunos países y aquí alguna gente lo dice./Long ago. They say that long ago they used to say, that when people were born, like this (pointing to the illustration) they called that they were of color in some countries and some people here too (Puerto Rico) say it./	“De color”- “colored” euphemism to identify people of a different color is not something of the past, but of the present. She constructs an actual world view-current form of racism. Avoids the word “negro” by means of pointing to or using the illustration to represent the word. Draws from the resources that are available to her to the present situation or sociocultural context of lit. circle to construct meaning-world view. Constructing meaning of the phrase “de color”/colored/ as “othering”

Transcript	Interpretation
<p>7-MP-A mí me parece que María y Jorge señalaron algo importante, que a las personas negras, verdad, se les refiere como hombre, mujer de color. ¿Por qué ustedes creen?/I think that what Maria and Jorge said is important, right, people refer to black people as men or women of color. Why do you think so? /</p> <p>08-María- Porque son de un color diferente que las otras personas. /Because they are a color different from other people./</p> <p>09-Jorge- Pero lo más que importa es que somos personas. No importa el color. /But the most important is that we are humans. No matter the color.</p>	<p>”</p> <p>Jorge-colorblindness -constructs a “humanizing,” “unifying” and “stabilizing” discourse</p> <p>Students are recruited or drawn to the figured world of the -comfort zone</p> <p>“Positive face” everyone is familiar with and relates to the words and meaning of the statement.</p>

- **Negro recognizable and reanimated: Embodied identity**

Armando’s introductory active voice (style) not only set the agenda, but the verb function of being (he is negro because it has a big mouth and thick lips). Sociocultural forms such as the embodied identity circulate around and through Armando and intervene in his discourse. Foucault, (1984) argues that the circulation of discourse is due to internal and external mechanisms which keep the existence of certain discourses and structure our knowledge. Sociocultural tools (picture book) and others’ texts are ideologically loaded and have developed historically to continue and circulate. These tools intervened in his discourse, so the way he spoke and acted were within the bounds of what discourses mapped out for him within the figured world of the literature circle.

In this case, the intervention entailed Armando's use of body action to construct and manifest his statement. It presupposed that his discursive practice of embodied identity allowed him to respond to others with his body, although he is not black, but considered *marrón* (see-19). Ethos (Fairclough, 1992) is not only discourse, but also the whole body. The bodily dispositions that he manifested were the movements of his arm and mouth, demonstrating his particular way of responding physically to what he said. Moreover, the ways in which he transacted with the text locally, became part of the particular way of responding physically to what he said and others' ways of extending conceptually to what it means to be African, Puerto Rican, African Caribbean or black Puerto Rican. Godreau (2008) has noted that blackness is essentialized and narrowed to stereotypical physical characteristics, such as having wide lips, kinky hair, and a specific nose shape (Zenón, 1974). These stereotypical characteristics are associated with slave status to the extent that *negro* is construed as pure and thus unrepresentative of the Puerto Rican multi-racial population of the present time (p. 14). However, Armando does represent the mixed representation of Puerto Ricans through Self racial identification as *marrón*.

An important mediating device within this interaction is that by means of the picture book, Armando expressed himself as he looked at the picture book and even touched the illustration, which mediated his knowledge and action. Hence, his response seemed to illustrate his words and thinking. The picture book accompanied what was said, but mediated what was said with the action of looking at and touching (style) the picture book. What he was saying was that the picture book character's wide lips

revealed that the characters' skin color was black. Thus, wide lips functioned as a racial marker for determining black skin color. In this way, Jorge also used the text (picture book) as a mediating device to assert and validate Armando's expression and also to shift to the conceptual world of *negro* in Puerto Rico. This example also illustrates the figured world of Puerto Rico, racially, simultaneously with that of the literature circle.

The racial markers that are commonly used to identify African Caribbeans and black Puerto Ricans are, for example, the nose which is bigger and larger on the sides (*chata*), curly hair (*pelo malo, pelo de mapo*), and skin color (*trigueño, mulato, negrito, quemaito, color café*). "Big mouth" refers to the width of the lips and other terms are *bemba*, and *bembóm*. In this example, thick lips/big mouth also functions as a racial marker. We identify people as black, white or *trigueño*, according to the shape of the lips. So if the lips are thin, the person is white, and if they are wide, black. *Trigueño* could be on either the wide or thin side, depending on who is talking and the context of usage - even "*jabao*" (high yellow). The comparison Armando made between being black and having a "big" mouth, or in other words, thick lips, indicated that Armando's processes for making meaning of his experiences was by means of the coming together of what he had actually lived and what he vicariously lived through the transaction with the *¡Hombre de color!* within the literature circle. The comparison also illustrates the identification of physical characteristics with the skin color (black = big mouth/thick lips). His discourse of essentializing race portrayed it as a predetermined and deterministic aspect of personality, thus, as in this case, evidently of life. These words do collocate semantically; therefore, this text is cohesive and moves from the public domain

(width of lips as a racial marker) to the private domain of putting in his own words the characteristic thick lips of the character in the picture book to be identified as *negro*.

Jorge extended Armando's text and identified the person, not only as African because of physical characteristics and skin color, but also connected identity to an action. So being black or African, according to Jorge's construction, presupposed that one could be caught for whatever reasons for criminal intentions like robbery. This is an example of an interesting intertextual connection with the book, *En la bahía de Jobos: Celita y el mangle zapatero*, by Ana Lydia Vega and a class presentation given earlier by another student concerning the town, Loíza Aldea, that is referenced in the first literature circle's discussion of the picture book. Interestingly, students had no prior knowledge about this town which is only a thirty five minute drive from school, until it was introduced in class as part of an inquiry project. However, this also presupposes an intertextual connection with the ways in which the mass media presents its viewers and readers, Puerto Ricans and their lives, constructing the rest of the island as non-black.

In order to understand Jorge's statement, it is important to point out that the African slaves were displaced to certain locales or towns on the island according to the production of sugar. Such towns were *Loíza* and *Guayama*. The same idea emerged from the initiative of the governor in the 1950s when the political agenda of the governor was to put an end to poverty. His plan was double sided: to build apartment complex in San Juan for the people who lived in the mountains (rural areas) and hence to displace them from their everyday ongoing activities within their families and residences, etc.

The result of this initiative was that the people who lived in the apartment complex, what we call *residenciales públicos* or *caceríos*, are in a space where poor people are conglomered. Of course, the apartment complexes (housing projects) were located in particular areas of the cities and towns. A great concentration of people now live in this type of apartment complex; this means that people cannot afford such things as health insurance so they are deprived of health insurance, have a high unemployment rate, and also a high level of household violence. Thus, drug dealing becomes an attractive alternative to sustain them. Unfortunately, the violence that circulates in this particular sociocultural context is evident in daily newspaper and television coverage and thus within peoples' awareness. Godreau (2008) states that there is a popular perception that "where black people live" is a place of crime. Certainly, Jorge's discourse presupposes a connection to his lived experiences with different modes of media and thus displaces blackness to specific communities like *Loíza*. This also then presupposes a construction of the rest of the island as non-black. He constructed meaning of Armando's text by constituting the boy in the picture book as African because he appeared to him to be *negrito* and he extended the expression by including black Puerto Ricans as having the same physical characteristics such as wide lips, like Africans.

The picture book, mass media, and lived experiences together mediated the creation of an assumption, that if it is an African book, then the character is *negrito* and also Puerto Rican; this extended or reaffirmed the definition of what racially constitutes a black Puerto Rican. Though still quite a narrow conception of race, this view displaces the Puerto Rican reality that its population has a mix of skin tone colors, such as

trigueñito and *prieta/o*, but also black Puerto Ricans as Zenón (1974) would point out. Therefore, in this example, dialogue conceived as a pivot organized responses within the literature circle and extended the meaning and conception of Puerto Ricans and black Puerto Ricans through the avoidance of the term *negro*. In this case, the embodied identity of *negro* and the discursive practices (spaces of criminal activity and physical racial markers) represented and constituted black Puerto Ricans.

- ***De color: The discourse of “othering”***

Armando invited and elicited Jorge’s and María’s responses. Jorge reaffirmed the identity of what is *negrito* and María extended this identity by means of providing an example that racial wordings from the past such as *de color* are not an issue of the past, but of the present in our country, Puerto Rico, since some people continue to use the phrase (see-06). Godreau (2008) states that establishing the significance of racial categories becomes complicated with terms like *de color*, *trigueño* and *indio*. For example, María extended others’ ideological constructions of race through Puerto Rican popular discourse, including “*de color*.” In Puerto Rico, the meaning and use of the racial category, *de color*, depends on who is saying it and the context of its usage. Godreau (2008) states that in certain interpersonal exchanges, *negro* can also be used to mark racial solidarity or sameness among those who identify as black, but that it often carries a pejorative connotation because of its association with slave status. The euphemistic meaning permeates, since the apparent mild expression, *de color*, is used to substitute for one judged to be too harsh, such as *negro* and also to “other.”

This analysis reveals that racial labels/categories are in a continuous and unstable state, a strategy used by the students which may be contingent on the context of use. Within different figured worlds, those who previously participated and those that will, or who will enter temporarily and peripherally, take along different form and meaning. The dialogue of the literature circle may reveal avoidance of racial terminologies such as *negro* or the substitution of other racial labels such as *trigueño* and *prieto*; therefore to distance from blackness and enhance a whitening discourse.

María's popular discourse was for others to understand that a racial label such as *negro* and racial categories such as *Puertorriqueño* and *Africano*, as used within the literature circle, were equal to combining everyone into one racial position and space. She referenced other countries, but also locally the way we Puerto Ricans use language to refer to and identify other *negritos*, such as black Puerto Ricans and African Caribbeans from Cuba, Santo Domingo, Jamaica and the Small Antilles islands. This presupposes a continuum of the discourse *de color* man/woman, since "they" are the different ones or as she states, "Because they are a color different from other people" (see-08). Bolgatz (2005) indicates that seeing racism as something of the past is an excuse for not looking at current forms of racism. However, part of María's racial exploration was to reference the past and link it to present wordings or phrases in Puerto Rico, which may presuppose a contemporary form of racism.

María extended the idea that the use of the phrase *de color* was not an issue of the past, but of the present in Puerto Rico. Both expressions (-06 and 08) presupposed a

coming together of broader circulating discourses (public domain) and linguistic elements. This points to the idea that it is black men and women who are colored because they are the ones who have a color different from other peoples, other people who are white like her, Jorge and me, or other people such as Armando who self racially identified as “a bit marrón.”

María dismissed the intention of the picture book text which was not to “other”, but instead to create a contrast (see 08), moving from the private domain to the public domain (style) (see 06). María began her statement in the past tense as if long ago, “*antes*”/“before”, and inserted the present tense form to clarify that the wording of this racial term (genre) is used by some people in Puerto Rico. This transformed the statement to the present situation and sociocultural context of Puerto Rico. Her construction of black, partially as a “past identity,” resonated with the dominant national discourses in Puerto Rico. I highlighted the importance of Jorge and Maria’s expressions and put forward two questions (see 03 and 05) in order to understand their reasoning of what it meant and why they named people as “colored” men/women.

Aspects of identities developing in practice (Holland, Lachicotte, Skinner and Cain, 2003), through “here” and “before,” play an important role as shifters that link to the specific moment such as “long ago” and “nowadays” whose meanings are to situate discourse. The same colored discourse reoccurs. This is illustrated with Maria’s and Jorge’s open ended transactions with the texts, peers, the picture book, and the ways they authored a response in this figured world and other figured worlds, therefore their

positions and the ways they positioned others, and their ability to perform and reform within this space. For example, present/past tense forms circulated and were on hand for students as they drew, not only from their experiences, but also from their linguistic experiences as they dialogued and transacted with the picture book and their peers. The process of students making sense of experiences as they socially and self racially identified, connected them to historical and present issues through different modes, and the reoccurrence of the colorblindness discourse signaled them as different and multiple within the literature circle. Specifically, Jorge's racial connection between Africans and Puerto Ricans and at the same time acknowledgement of the hard times they go through in society, being caught for racial reasons, later shifted to the colorblindness discourse (see 09) which served as a stabilizer. In other words, it was an effect of the contested discourses that circulated within and around the students. Notwithstanding, Maria's reference to the past and to actual ways some people used to reference others as colored (see 06) enabled her to shift and respond by stressing whiteness, by "othering."

Throughout these examples, the process of making meaning was not a simple, creative way to author the world. Instead, it was where students were exposed to heteroglossic languages (social forms of language such as dialects, registers, accents) and a space of struggle, that meanings joined or came together, giving human voice and tone. Therefore, for students such as María and Jorge, their identities formed and reformed through, within and against languages, dialects, and the contradictory words of others. For students, this particular figured world was a site and space of possibilities, to re-orchestrate vocal perspectives for authoring selves.

- ***Colorblindness: A unifier and stabilizer discourse***

My emphasis on the colorblindness and essentializing discourses is due to their constant use and various meanings across the literature circles. In this section I intend to examine and emphasize the importance of these discourses that circulate both broadly and locally by illustrating their significance as they are ideologically explored and represented through the re-orchestration of vocal perspectives and the reoccurring emergence of local forms such as the specialness discourse.

Once again, this type of discourse is glossed with an affectionate (style) tone, but without incorporating additive words into the utterance such as “we are the same”, “you are special”. In other words, Jorge’s expression did not re-dress his intention. Instead his partial final statement was a means of using a common or popular phrase of unity among humans, which simultaneously functions within different institutions such as schools or religious organizations. Moreover, unity despite color differences also signaled him as a unifier of diverse people since the important message was that we are all humans as a way to stabilize the unstable, uncertain, and contradictory qualities of language or multivocality within the figured world of the literature circle.

The difference of Jorge’s colorblindness discourse, which I characterize as stabilizing the ongoing intertextual chain within the literature circle, from previous colorblindness discourses such as Gaby’s, is that the process of constituting an order of discourse was different. That is, the initiative statement (see 01) and subsequent texts (see 02, 03, 04, 05, 06, 07, 08) illustrate the ways that students were in a state of

addressability and answerability through dialogue as they structured and restructured theirs' and others' racial discursive texts. The coming together of students' ideological perspectives shifted Jorge to create this type of discourse with an effect, which was a way of cooling off and consequently stabilizing the enduring struggles and thus positioning himself and others in a comfort zone. As naturalized language (Fairclough, 1992, 1995) it set everyone in the position of a comfortable, common, and recognizable discourse. Simultaneously, it signaled him, as Fairclough (1992) states, with politeness and positive face. This is an example of his and others' relational and positional identities. His relational identity enabled him to feel comfortable and therefore through dialogue he positioned others in the comfort zone.

He also acted as a mediator of both broadly and locally circulating racial discourses. In other words, the colorblindness discourse does not exist in neutral and impersonal language; accordingly, this example could mean a dependence on coherence, as he, in the process of interpreting, drew upon assumptions of an ideological nature to respond according to what he had been exposed to within the literature circles. In this way, it initiated the continuum of the intertextual chain, to address someone and also answer by responding to others' texts. In other words, the dependence of coherence in this case was part of the process of making meaning and taking an authorial stance (Holland et. al 2003), the ways in which they orchestrated and arranged (Fairclough, 1992) elements, themes, and forms, but which became one's own when Jorge populated it with his own intentions, accents, and tone, so he appropriated the world through his own semantic and expressive intentions.

Jorge's visible interactional position throughout the transcript unfolded (see 02, 04, 09) and threaded to create an inclusive discourse. The thematic structure also threaded continuously and contrastingly and varied in form, as to who talked and what was expressed. Creating turn taking was also part of the thematic thread. For example, Armando (see 01) began with the subjective modality- "I think" - (Fairclough, 1992) since it was expressed with the modality marker ("I think") and a causal conjunction (*porque/because*) which implied the cause and the reason of *boca grande*/thick lips -thus, the addition of the adjective *boca grande*/big mouth-wide lips to explore, describe, assert, and validate his thinking and expression. Another way to view the nature of the thematic thread was when Armando (01) introduced his statement with a modality marker (style) and Jorge (02) asserted, but simultaneously inserted the "if" phrase of "*si lo llegan a coger*"/ If he is caught!/ and uses the diminutive "*ito*"-*negrito* which is a diminutive form for *negro* and a way of minimizing the significance of something, and also marks the expression of alert. Thus, he kept a positive face by addressing everyone in the same way or tone that the media and the popular discourse does, a recognizable way.

The use of the invisible pronoun is what Fairclough (1992) calls transitivity (style) of /he/ (see 01, 02, 08 and 09) which integrated the picture book to the utterance and made the picture book visible or palpable. Students referred to the characters of the picture book as 01- "I think (he) is black", 02- "(he) is African", and also the use of "They"- 08 and "we" -09 connecting themselves to the picture book, being able to see themselves as part of the issue, extending the issue to their figured worlds. In addition, the transaction between the author, text, and reader occurred collectively in the local

literacy event. Armando and Jorge used the picture book to mediate their knowledge (syntactically and semantically) and ideas about who is and why they are African, through dialogue. In other words, the picture book was used as a mediating device to think about race through racial labels and to shift specifically to the conceptual world of *negrito* (genre) in the Puerto Rican context. Then the transaction between the reader, the text, and the author did not necessarily happen individually and in isolation, but occurred collectively through dialogue, a continuum of expressions, statements and discourses through simultaneous transactions with others' texts and the picture book.

Section II: Continuum of the intertextual chain - Embodied identity through gaze: racial construction as a bit marrón, blanquito, and cremita

In this group, Fabián, the previously silent member of the literature circle, became a participant in the dialogue. He had remained silent throughout the beginning, and in this excerpt, the dialogue shifted as the students extended their racial constructions by means of the use of racial labels such as *marrón* and *cremita* (genre) and these labels became part of the students' vocal perspective repertoire. I will expand on the linguistic elements regarding the use of the adjectives *colores* (genre), *marrón* and the diminutives *ita* and *ito* in the words *cremita*, and *blanquito*, and how Armando's self racial identification as "a bit marrón" was constituted through gaze, as well as María's Social racial identification as *cremita*.

What stands out in this second excerpt is the way the students explored who's who and what color. This meant that they positioned themselves and others in relation to

social positions (gender, race, etc.), social racial identification, relational and positional identities and self racial identification. All are embedded in orders of discourse (style, genre, and discourse). It is important to point out that this discussion is the continuation of the previous excerpt and treated in the analysis as a continuum. Within the figured world of the literature circle, there was an interruption after Jorge's stabilizing discourse. The dialogue shifted to talk about illustrations and emotional connections with the book. Armando mentioned that he felt scary because one of the illustrations looked like a dinosaur. Once again the conversation shifted when Jorge said "Pero Armando de cómo, de qué se trata?"/ But, Armando What is it about?" (Referring to the picture book) and Armando responded:

10-Armando-De hombre de color./Man of color./

11-Maria-Como, de que se trata? (Emphasis)/ What is it about?/

12-Fabián- Que somos de colores. Que los dos son de colores./We are of colors? That they are both of color?/

13-MP-Que somos todos de colores? (I repeated the phrase that Fabián said.)/That we are of all colors?/

14-María-No! No somos colores, somos de un solo, solamente. /No! No! We are not of colors, we are one color./

15-Armando-De to' colores, por que somos marrones también./Of every color, because we are "marrones"-brown also./

16-Jorge-Bueno si mira todos los colores que hay. (3 second silence.) Yo también (looking at his arm). Yo soy blanquito como José. /Well, yeah look at all the colors. (3 seconds of silence.) Me too (looking at his arm) I'm white like José./

17-Armando-Si pero eso es un cuento./Yeah, but this is a story.

18-María-Tu eres cremita (looking at MP, the teacher)/You are beige./

19-Armando- Yo soy un poco marrón./I'm a little bit brown./

Transcript	Interpretation
10-Armando-De hombre de color./Man of color./	Marrón, blanquito and cremita new ideological forms of racial social and self identification.
11-María-Como, de que se trata? (Emphasis)/ What is it about?/	Repetition of diminutive in cremita, blanquita and negrito-ita/o endings of words direct voices to hegemony.
12-Fabián- Que somos de colores. Que los dos son de colores./We are of colors? That they are both of color?/	Seems through his expression to enhance the diversity of colors within the literature group. "Colores/colors/" seems to be used as a way of avoiding racial labels, a form of hegemony.
13-MP-Que somos todos de colores? (I repeated the phrase that Fabian said.)/That we are of all colors?/	Throughout the transcript seems that "I am" "You are" compare/contrast as well as the "here"-nowadays and "before"- long ago-seems as part of making sense of self.
14-María-No! No somos colores, somos de un solo, solamente. /No! No! We are not of colors, we are one color./	Students entered the lit. group with dispositions and social racial identification and these are clarified and enhanced in the lit. circle.
15-Armando-De to' colores, por que somos marrones también./Of every color, because we are "marrones"-brown also./	
16-Jorge-Bueno si mira todos los colores que hay. (3 second silence). Yo también (looking at his arm). Yo soy blanquito como José. /	
17-Armando-Si pero eso es un cuento.	
18-María-Tu eres cremita (looking at MP, the teacher)/You are beige./	Social racial identification such as cremita- local emerging form.
19-Armando- Yo soy un poco marrón./I'm a little bit brown./ Looks at his arm.	Self racial identification-"marrón" and "a bit marrón" are local emerging forms.
	Social racial identification of "negrito"-local emerging form. Re-orchestrates María's statement. Explains when people are negrito, then they are called "de color"/ "colored" A strategy of avoiding the word "negro."

▪ **Social and self racial identification: A bit marrón, blanquito and cremita**

Within this literature circle there was an important cohesive device and that was affinity (style and genre). Throughout the dialogue the focus was on who's who (we, I

(MP) and you) and what color we are (*marrón, blanquito or cremita*). In this case, sociocultural forms like social and self racial identification came together and were inextricably intertwined. Both overlapped and depended on each other for the emergence of local forms such as *a bit marrón* and *cremita*.

The term *blanquito* is the diminutive for white. Historically the words such as *blanquito* (discourse) have been utilized to refer to upper class status, but is contemporarily used with a pejorative connotation because of its relation to slave status and derogatory tone. Its meaning depends on the context and who is saying it. When it refers to people who are socially identified as wealthy within a particular space, it means elitist and snobbish attitude and lifestyle (Godreau, 2008). On occasions I have glossed expressions with the word *blanquito* by means of connecting to a specific location in Puerto Rico such as Garden Hills where wealthy people live. Accentuating that in that figured world they are not only wealthy, but moreover, they carry a *blanquito* identity. However, the statement is recognizable and reanimated, a form of social racial identification; “you are *blanquito*” or “you act like a *blanquito*” which is a quotidian expression to make explicit a discursive practice. *Blanquito* situates people with a social identity and in a socially situated activity, as an accusation made for someone “acting like a white person.” In this case, if students racially social identify or racially self identify as *blanquito*, they are situating their identity according to an activity and/or action. Godreau (2008) contextualizes this to the sociocultural context of Puerto Rico where, for example, a wealthy black person may be identified as *blanquito*, while the same might not necessarily be said of a white or light-skinned person who is poor (p. 6). This means that,

although bearing some relationship to skin color, its application does not necessarily depend on the observable characteristics of people, but results from their interactions with their environments, applications can vary. This is why a wealthy black person may be called *blanquito* when the label can mean an accusation for “acting like a white person.”

A linguistic example is the use of pronouns, although invisible (see 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 18, and 19) which signaled Fabián, MP, Armando, Jorge, and María, through the process of making meaning or authorial stances (Holland et al. 2003). Simultaneously, there were several important aspects of coherence, repetition and the use of the diminutive “*ito*” in *blanquito* (masculine) and “*ita*” in *cremita* (feminine) as well as the ways in which certain words within the utterances were structured and the use of the pronouns /we/, /me/, /you/ which seemed inclusive so that students related to and felt part of the situation.

The use of the diminutives “*ita*” and “*ito*” in words demonstrated politeness and positive face (genre) since they socially and individually identified and addressed everyone. Moreover, diminutives can communicate affection, intimacy and even a relationship of solidarity, however, this depends upon who is speaking (Godreau, 2008). *Blanquito*, in the figured world of Puerto Rico and of the literature circle meant how outside social racial identification enhanced self racial identification. *Blanquito*, the diminutive of white to refer to a person of the upper class, but with pejorative connotations having to do with elitist behavior and lifestyle. In addition, the racial label

is used to describe a person who is too white and unattractive (Godreau, 2008) as in *jincha*/pale or *pote de leche*/milk container. In contrast, Godreau (2008) situates this issue within the figured world of Puerto Rico, providing an example of how *negro* within a conversation is avoided and substituted with a term like *prieto*, or *como yo/like me/* (p.9). In this excerpt, the word *blanquito* was used to reassure by means of the statement “like Jose” and not necessarily to avoid *negro* or *trigueño*, but part of the racial exploration and constitution of *blanquito*/whiteness.

Armando’s Social racial identification as *marrones* shifted to self identify as “a bit marrón” which revealed an even more complex racial construction which began socially and shifted to an individual identification. A social public domain recognizes *marrones* skin color as an in between discourse (see Jescy-analysis 2); “a bit marrón” exemplified the shift to the private domain. His syntactic and semantic move illustrated that his skin tone is neither *blanquito*, *cremita*, nor *negro*. So the Puerto Rican “mix” (*trigueño*) was not considered or displaced and “a bit marrón” instead was constructed. It also can mean that *trigueño* was reconstructed as *marrones* and as “a bit marrón”. Therefore, it can presuppose to be a rejection of the term *negro* in favor of intermediary terms like “a bit marrón” as an affirmation of identity. This means that he attempted to use an accurate description within this figured world where “a bit marrón” was interpreted differently from *marrones* and black. His process of constructing meaning, his authorial stance (Holland, Lachicotte, Cain and Skinner, 2003) was by means of improvisation. He responded and acted according to the situation, to what he found in his

environment - racial identities such as *marrones*, *blanquitos* and *cremita* - thus, “a bit marrón.”

Hence, the sociocultural resources such as *blanquito* and *marrones*, racial labels that students drew upon and the local forms that emerged (a bit *marrón*, *cremita* and *blanquito*), seemed to represent particular realities and particular meanings. In addition, simultaneously, students within figured worlds of Puerto Rico and literature circles discursively constructed racial identities and community. Below, I extend the discussion and show how, through gaze, social and self racial identification as *blanquito* and *cremita* and “a bit *marrón*” emerged locally.

- ***Blanquito, A bit marrón and cremita: Social and self racial identification through gaze***

Jorge’s and María’s ideological constructions of race found in lines 16 and 18 were explored through gaze. For example, Jorge looked at his skin color in order to enhance the term *blanquito* and to signal himself as *blanquito* like Joe, one of his classmates. Jorge explored and constructed the meaning of *blanquito* by means of the discourse of the picture book when his responses alluded to skin as the *colores* of the picture book - not red, green and so on, as in the text, but those of Puerto Ricans such as *blanquito*. This idea was extended through others’ texts, such as María’s. Jorge (16) and consequently María (-18) used their eyes (gaze) to socially racial identify MP (teacher) as *cremita* and not white as I have been racial social identified. This is an example of how discourses are produced in context. For example, the discourse of

blanquito, *negrito* and *trigueñito* are part of the popular sociocultural forms of Puerto Rico, so these discourses are connected to other discourses. Sociocultural forms are intertextual and heterogeneous in nature within the literature circle and are dependent on one another. In this way, intertextual and heterogeneous discourses enabled local emerging forms within the context of the literature circle such as a bit *marrón* and *cremita*. This illustrates that the discourses that were explored and represented earlier such as *blanquito*, *negrito* and *trigueñito* are connected synchronically to subsequent discourses such as a bit *marrón*, *cremita* and *blanquito* which were enhanced by means of a child looking at his arm and comparing it with another peer to constitute whiteness. The simultaneity of both figured worlds, Puerto Rico and the literature circle, illustrates that discourse is historical (Van Dijk, 1997). This means that discourses are produced and understood, taking into account the context. Hence, intertextuality as well as sociocultural knowledge is within the concept of context.

This example also illustrates that students' racial ideological constructions, through the sociocultural forms *blanquito* and *trigueñito*, were pivotal in shifting to the conceptual world of color tones, Social and self racial identification. This means that their texts and society were mediated by orders of discourse, the ways in which students structured and restructured language, and the particularity of the way they used language (Fairclough, 1997). In addition, the shifts from public to private domains' discursive practices also played out in the conceptual world of race. An example is the public domain constitution of *blanquito* and the movement to the private domain by means of the shift on the orders of discourse (genre, style and discourse). Jorge used his eyes/gaze

to signal and enhance the color *blanquito*. Moreover, this connected to how Armando's and María's relational and positional identities played out within the conceptual world of race.

In this way, relational and positional identities were interrelated. Relational and positional identities, as Holland, Lachicotte, Skinner and Cain (2003) state, are those that have to do with how one identifies one's position relative to socially identified others. One's sense of social place and entitlement are mediated through the ways one feels comfortable or constrained; these ways are to speak to another, to command another, or to enter into the space of another. (p.127). However, relational identities are linked to the pragmatic aspect of identity and/or indexicality, as exemplified in the analysis. Jorge (-16) and Armando (-19) identified as *un poco marrón* and Jorge as "*blanquito like Joe*," since both were entitled to because they made clear that people are not one color as María-14 stated, but of other colors such as a bit *marrón* and "*blanquito like Joe*." "A bit *marrón*" on the other hand, indexed a color, his particular skin color and in Jorge's example denoted a comparison to another peer. This indicates that the meaning of a bit *marrón*, *blanquito* and *cremita* as María signaled me, depends on the context in which they are used or in relation to the social situation of use. I believe that Jorge, María and Armando were apprehensive (perception and understanding) of their social positions, evidently within the figured world of literature circle position depends upon the others present.

Section III: Continuum of the intertextual chain – Embodied identities: From negrito to marrones

The particularity of the following excerpt is that the students continued figuring themselves as *blanquitos*, *negritos*, and exploring the definition of what *trigueño* meant. Notice that the teacher (I) participated in the dialogue by questioning the use of “*negrito*” and the meaning of *trigueño*. With this in mind, I continue with the analysis.

20-Jorge- Me explicaron, cuando unas veces uno es negrito, y uno dice de que color?, en vez de decir negrito dicen es de color./ They explained that in some in occasions that we are negritos and we say “de color” instead of saying negrito it is said “de color.”

21-Armando- Porque en Puerto Rico son asi (touching his arm) y marrones. /Because in Puerto Rico they are like this, and marrones (brown)./

22-María-Y blanquitos./And blanquitos/white./

23-Jorge-Se quedan negriiiiiitooooooooos (touching the illustration)./They stay negriiitooooos./

23-MP-Y Por qué tu dices negrito (referring to Jorge)./Why do you say negrito?./

24-Sofi-Es trigueño./Is trigueño./

Transcript	Interpretation
20-Jorge- Me explicaron, cuando unas veces uno es negrito, y uno dice de que color?, en vez de decir negrito dicen es de color./They explained that in some in occasions that we are negritos and we say “de color” instead of saying negrito it is said “de color.”	References Maria’s previous text. Begins by substituting the word “de color” with “negrito”
21-Armando- Por que en Puerto Rico son asi (touching his arm) y marrones. /Because in Puerto Rico they are like this, and marrones (brown)./	“Ethos” and embodied identity marrones- Social and self racial identification and local emerging form
22-Maria-Y blanquitos./And blanquitos./	
23-MP- Yo me vi reflejada en este cuento por que cuando voy a la playa me pongo roja./I was reflected in this story because when I go to the beach I get red./	
24-María-Queeeeeee?/Whaaat?/	
25-Jorge- Se quedan negriiiiiitooooos (touching the illustration)./ They stay negritooooos./	
26-MP-Y Por que tu dices negrito (reffereing to Jorge)./Why do you say negrito.??/	Students negotiate the use and meanings of “Negrito” and “trigueño.”
27-Sofi-Es trigueño./Is trigueño./	

The dialogue continued with students establishing who is what color. For example, Jorge’s statement, “Yeah, like Roberto, who is *trigueñito*.” In this case *trigueñito* served as a pivot to move from his immediate surroundings to mediate the racial construction to others’ (peers’) skin tones.

In this last excerpt, the pattern of exchanges continues with Jorge’s-20 reference to previous texts (see María-06 above), extending the discussion of what *negrito* means and the correctness of using that type of racialization. Consequently, Armando’s response is an embodied identity. Contrastingly, his previous texts, “we are brown also” (see-15) and I’m “a bit marrón” (see-19), were transformed (linguistic shift) into a

reaffirmation by means of touching his arm, using his body to represent and constitute his skin tone as “a bit marrón.” In this way, this text was received and interpreted by María-22 by means of reaffirming *blanquito*. This form of structuring and restructuring orders of discourse was mediated by referencing a previous text (see Jorge -16) and re-orchestrating words. Ideological languages are glossed with her own intention. I view the racial term *blanquito* in María’s, Jorge’s and Armando’s statements as a partial authorial stance, since Holland and colleagues (2003) remind us that the development of an authorial stance in any figured world requires a long time. However, in the process of making meaning, María, Jorge, and Armando, began to rearrange, reword, and re-orchestrate different ideological voices, seeing the world by authoring it as “a bit marrón” and *blanquito*, through embodied identities and gaze.

- **From *negrito* to *marrones* as an embodied identity**

In this excerpt, the heterogeneity of vocal perspectives became intertextual as students dialogued, explored and defined *negrito*. First of all, Jorge (-20) referenced María’s text (see-above) by substituting María’s wording *de color* and the picture book illustration of the black character to *negrito*. His interpretation of María’s text and embodied identity (pointing to the illustration) was that *de color* means *negrito*. He used the past tense “explained” to refer to María’s previous text as something that had been explained and to highlight that instead of saying *negrito*, people say *de color*. On the one hand, this illustrates how the phrase *de color* hides or makes opaque the connotation of the word *negrito*, and on the other it softens the blow of the connotation or meaning of

the phrase within the the literature circle. Interestingly, it reflects how he sustained or reproduced the words of the public domain (genre and style) in an explanatory form. This is an interesting example of direct discourse (Fairclough, 1992) reproducing the exact words of the public domain, but it is explanatory since he used not his own words, but the social languages to explain, interpret and represent a social effect. That means that the popular saying or discourse of *de color* has a pejorative connotation and the social effect is to hide or avoid the pejorative connotations that equate the word *negro* with slave status, as mentioned before. This could be traced to 19th century practices in Puerto Rico that distinguished between a non-white free population who called themselves *morenos* or *pardos*, and the slave population who were racialized as “black” by both whites and non-whites (West-Durán, 2003).

Jorge drew from the sociocultural forms and previous text to re-orchestrate how people socially identify *negros* as *de color*. Interestingly, this is an important issue which was brought to the table in group two and Jorge brought it back. He initiated and held the floor for vocal perspectives to explore and define *negrito*.

In this way, Armando’s (-21) response was through an embodied identity. He looked at his arm to racial self identify himself as “a bit marrón” and at the same time this presupposed the reproduction of the public domain (genre and style) to socially identify as marrón since Puerto Ricans are marrones. This embodiment seemed to both socially identify and self racially identify by means of noticeable and palpable skin color which constituted himself as Puerto Rican and Puerto Rican “mix.” As mentioned previously,

the use of the pronoun, /they/ referring to Puerto Ricans presupposes politeness and positive face (Fairclough, 1992) since he addressed Puerto Ricans, his peers and himself, as being *marrones*, thus making everyone comfortable and part of the situation.

However, María's (-22) response may have signaled something different since she emphasized "and *blanquitos*" and Puerto Ricans are also *blanquitos*. These vocal perspectives illustrate how she explores and represents the way the public domain conceptualizes race. This means that María, as a text producer within wider social structures, marketed her commodities as *blanquita* through spoken discourse which maximized her fit into the world with positions set up for herself and her commodity in the domain of lifeworld common experience. She used the language *blanquito* through spoken discourse specifically by using strategic practices that as a "*blanquita*" enabled her and others to fit, explore and reproduce racial discourses.

- ***Back to negrito and trigueño: Student's rethinking of trigueño***

Jorge responded to María's and Armando's statements by using the illustration of *¡Hombre de Color!* to get across the intention of the book and also to come back to the utilization and meaning of the word. Interestingly, he used the pronoun /they/ to refer to multiple, plural, *negritos* when in the picture book the character is one (singular). This means that Jorge extended the meaning of *negrito* to his social experiences by means of bringing past experiences to the present situation and shifting to a racial world of multiple *negros*.

I responded by asking about the purpose of inquiring about words like *negrito* and *trigueño*. These are words that I hear all the time in and out of school, thus my observations led me to reflect and inquire about these specific racial terms. Sofi (-27) softened the blow with the word *trigueño*. Moreover, I would characterize her response from the voice of her skin color as *trigueña*. She has many times within the classroom self racially identified as *trigueñita*. In addition, socially this word, *trigueño*, is used to hide the meaning of *negrito*; for example, instead of using *negro* to reference or describe people, statements are made that it is *trigueñito* and not *negrito*. *Trigueñito* softens the blow since it is more acceptable to be *trigueñito* than to be *negrito*. In addition, this term represents the actual or modern “mix” of Puerto Rico. Godreau (2008) states that *trigueño* can be used to indicate that a person’s color is lighter than black and/or darker than white. Ivonne signaled the multiple usages and meanings of racial labels such as *marrón* or “a bit marrón.” I think that in this case students explored *trigueño* by attempting to use an accurate description in which “mixed” (*trigueño*) was interpreted as different from black.

Jorge (-29) responded with a tension, which initiated the discussion and negotiation of what is and means *trigueño*. As a tension that is lived and put forth by the “I” (style), Jorge’s way of putting words to the world drew upon the words of others to which he had been exposed. I thought that as I asked, “Why do you say *negrito*?”; “Why do you say *trigueño*?”; “Is there a difference?” On the one hand, it seems it is wrong to use the words *negrito* and *trigueño* and I used the pronoun /you/ (see 26) to signal Jorge to give a response. Instead, Sofi-27 responded and her voice as *trigueña* expressed,

listened and spoke since her identity as an expressible relationship with others was dialogical at all moments of expression, listening and speaking (Holland, Lachicotte, Skinner and Cain, 2003). On the other hand, I think it is important for people with certain social and relational positions to be part of the dialogue and negotiation of meanings as actors who are submitted to a situation. Jorge (see 29 and 31) with tension initiated a discussion of how to define what is *trigueño* and when its appropriate. Actually, people tend “to refer to them as *trigueño* because it is an intermediary term, not so dark as Africans and not so light as white. However, *trigueño* is treated as *negro* (see Jorge-31), glossed with a descriptor *como* (genre) meaning “something like” or “somewhere like”, but not yet. The descriptor *como* is often used to enhance and accurately express where *trigueño* is interpreted as different from black.

So *trigueño* is something like *negrito* and María (-32) extended and enhanced Jorge’s (-31) statement by adding *marroncito*, but infused with a phrase that also presupposed it as “somewhere around” *negrito* and *marroncito* and the in-between discourse emerged. The dialogical and dialectical relationship of sociocultural forms within the figured world of the literature circle evoked the emergence of local forms such as *marroncito*. Although *marroncito* was used previously as social and self racial identification, others such as Jorge and María used it to negotiate and define *trigueño*, thus situating others as in between. Skin color then has various colors and multiple identities. The descriptors of “like” (genre) and *trigueño* continued with Jorge’s (33) statement which included as an example two of his peers (Roberto) and Armando who

were part of this figured world of the literature circle-group and who racially self identified as *marrón*.

It seems that the intertextual chain wrapped up the negotiation when Sofi-35 seemed to link being born with a certain color that would remain through life and death, where it would still be *negrito*. Skin color or being *negrito* permeates through life. So *trigueño* is not “something like” *negro* or “somewhere in between” *negro* and *marroncito*, but *negro*. Sofi has racially self identified as *trigueñita* both in and out of school. This is an example of how people live paradoxically as discourses with contradictory qualities that come together re-orchestrating differing identities and differing voices to shape a place for their own activity. Students move through this space without occupying; singularly, by one identity, one discourse, or one subject position, but as Holland, Lachicotte, Skinner and Cain (2003) state, “figuratively”, where each statement is simultaneously a set of identifications, negations, orchestrations and arrangements of voices.

Conclusions

Across the three literature circles, social and self racial identification, colorblindness, essentializing discourse, and embodied identities were crucial in students’ racial discourse explorations. The figured world of the literature circle in these three analyses was a diverse space and contentious world. Each group had a particular form for representing and constructing racial discourse, thus interpreting and constituting it. What caught my attention is the way students across groups used colorblindness and

essentializing discourses and the pivotal aspect as they evolved syntactically and semantically across these particular figured worlds. In addition, the conceptual world of race entailed students' responses as embodied identities through social and self racial identification. As students dialogued, they reproduced unequal relations of power, and relations of domination or hegemonic struggles. Intertextuality, as in heterogeneous voices, relating to Bahktin's (1981) perspective on dialogue, voices, self and social racial identification, was used in this case as an artifact, a cultural resource. Students' dialects, genres and ways of holding the floor and moving the body illustrate that they were undergoing changes in social forms that had both substantive and indexical value (Holland, Lachicotte, Skinner and Cain, 2003, p.235). This means that students signaling their racial label construct relational positions and group affiliations which have a firm basis in reality and are meaningful in denoting words, expressions and meanings which are dependent on the context in which they are used within the literature circle.

This particular set of literature circles evidences the ways in which students' discourses are regulated or synchronized themselves, whereby constructs of discursive structures or practices make up or constitute the discourse of colorblindness or blackness. These discursive structures within children's colorblindness discourse are at the mercy or understanding of genre, style, and discourse. In other words, I argue that discourse constitutes action and effect through the clash (Foucault, 1982), mesh (Wortham, 2006) or as a coming together of existing cultural forms and local emerging forms. Discursive practices and conventions circulate and mediate the ways in which students' identities are in negotiation with the existing power relations in the literature circle. I view discursive

practices and orders of discourse as not only structuring and restructuring students' texts, but within this process forming and reforming students' identities as well. The coming together requires that students use cultural forms and resources such as linguistics, experiences, and their peers as available, to improvise (Holland, Lachicotte, Cain and Skinner, 2003) upon past experiences in response to students' positions afforded in the present within the literature circle. Holland et. al, 2003 call this "history in person;" with the effect of evoking local emerging forms in this particular context such as *trigueñito* and *cremita*. The coming together within students' texts also means students' ways of shifting to the conceptual world of race, not only to represent their world, but to signify and constitute their worlds through different uses and meanings of racial labels. This means that students' racial discourses constitute students' texts and identities. The ways that students' rearrange, rephrase and structure their texts also involves shifting to another sphere where students arrange re-arrange, re-orchestrate and re-animate existing and new local forms through dialogue, constructing variance of uses and meanings of Social and self racial identification, within the literature circles.

Students' statements are engaging, dynamic, and politically invested, as students participate and negotiate meanings through dialogue within the literature circle. Each statement was structured in particular ways, for example, Yara's statement introduced others to a colorblindness discourse and this statement was transformed into the discourse of essentialization and unfolded in relation to "snatches" (Holland et. al 2003) of prior texts, both oral and written. Students' statements count as knowledge, which does not necessarily constitute a world view, but the interactions also maintain the existence of

particular discourses and evoke emerging local forms, such as in the case of Yara with colorblindness discourse and Alex with blackness. Students speak and act upon and within the bounds of what other discourses from peers mapped for them, and whereby discursive constraints from a dialogical perspective mean multiple thoughts and feelings.

What is exemplified in this analysis is in part due to sociocultural experiences such as the schooling discourse where the emphasis on race is by means of historical narratives about the founding ethnic groups of Puerto Rican culture, *los negros*, *los blancos* and *los indios*/Taino indians.

CHAPTER 6: FINDINGS AND IMPLICATIONS

This study examined the racial discourses of first and second graders, within a multiage classroom, engaged in literature discussion groups during one academic year. My main research question was: How do young Puerto Rican children in a multiage classroom construct race through dialogue within the figured worlds of literature circles? The study, based on qualitative research design, examined the dialogue of 19 Puerto Rican children during five literature circles.

The nature of children's racial explorations through dialogue was analyzed through the following subquestions:

- How do children use racial terminologies in their talk to construct and constitute race?
- How do racial discourses, as cultural tools, mediate children's constructions of race and racial identities within literature circles?
- How are children's racial identities reformed and performed through dialogue within literature circles?

The methodological tool used to analyze the data in this study was critical discourse analysis to examine language use in social practice.

In this chapter, I first discuss the findings of this study in relation to the two main themes: Color: Social and self racial identification with Embodied identities as a subtheme, and Colorblindness and Essentialized Discourses. I then integrate these findings into a theoretical discussion on Teacher Research, Literature Circles as a Figured World, and the Importance of Quality Children's Literature and Reading Programs. In the third section I discuss potential areas for future research and finally I reflect upon the implications of this research for literacy education.

Findings

Literature circles are framed in this study as a figured world (Holland, Lachiotte, Skinner, & Cain, 2003) where Puerto Rican children (6 and 7 year-olds) actively negotiate racial discourses through dialogue. Two picture books were used to invite dialogue. The first picture book discussed was *En la bahía de Jobos: Celita y el mangle zapatero*, written and illustrated by a Puerto Rican author and illustrator. This book reflects the multiplicity of racial labels and their usage and meanings through students' conceptions of slaves and slavery within a specific historical period in Puerto Rico. In the second picture book, *¡Hombre de color!*, students' discourses illustrate the multiplicity of intermediary racial terms overlapping with other discourses such as colorblindness and the binary terminology of a blanco/negro.

Overall, the study highlights the multiplicity of "selves" in practice according to skin color. The inconsistency of usages and meanings of racial labels are seen to be

linked to colorblindness discourses, social and self racial identification and intermediary racial terms (*trigueño*, *prieto*, *indio*) across figured literature circles. Hence, the construction and constitution of these contrasting and contradictory discourses across literature groups reoccur within different sites of meanings.

The findings of this study evidence that colorblindness discourse is pivotal within most of the literature circles, evoking responses and meanings which reveal discourses such as the discourse of false embracement, sameness, unifier, stabilizer, and specialness, among others. These discourses are dependent on which aspects (linguistic, experiential, discursively) the students considered relevant within each context. This means that colorblindness and essentializing discourses evoke contrasting responses and meanings according to the situation and context of meanings. Through dialogue, heteroglossic languages or ideological voices, overlap becoming resources that evoke local emerging forms. As those racial discourses are offered by students' relational identities, their positionality is to accept or reject; this is how discourse and identities are maneuvered by students.

The ambiguity and inconsistency of racial labels are mediated through intertextual linkages between students' knowledge, responses and racial identities. Hence, fixed notions of race as solely skin color and as a system of classification are challenged. Thus, the interplay of culture and racial terminologies rests on how racial terms are negotiated within figured worlds of Puerto Rico (community, school, and classroom), and

its inconsistencies and ambiguities in their use and meanings are what students constitute as they undertake culture.

Students' threading voices in the use and meanings of multiple racial discourses are theorized as being heterogeneous resources. They are intertextually constructed, constituted, extended, and maneuvered differently across the two literature circles. Across the five groups discussing the two different picture books, the two recurring themes are: Social and self racial identification with embodied identities and colorblindness and essentializing discourses. These evoke and extend the perspective of race as a binary conception of black/white, involving multiple intermediary racial terminologies within students' racial ideological constructions. Students' racial ideological constructions within the figured world of literature circle involve social and self racial identification, colorblindness and essentialized discourses, and serve as pivots for individual and collective interpretations and responses.

The study highlights the variance of discourses and their ambiguity in terms of their use and meaning among students within the figured world of the literature circle. These discourses are interconnected and interplay with other figured worlds such as community, school and classroom. Moreover, they move from the private to the public domains and vice versa. Consequently, instead of fixating on who is included and who is not, we need to consider the way that we are all border dwellers who negotiate and renegotiate multiple places and spaces. The multiplicity, inconsistency and ambiguous usage and meanings of students' racial discourses within the figured world of literature

circles are understood in relation to their individual and collective experiences, social and self racial identification, and colorblindness and essentializing discourses.

In the following sections I discuss the findings for this study and how social and self racial identification, and colorblindness and essentialized discourses played out within the figured world of literature circles.

Social and self racial identification

Through literacy, the experiences of African slaves in Puerto Rico and the students' ideological assumptions of slavery in Puerto Rico are made visible in students' responses to *En la bahía de Jobos: Celita y el mangle zapatero*. These ideological constructions of race and racism come together through linguistic and conceptual patterns that reflect colorblindness and the essentialization of race, evoking local emerging forms such as *bien prieto*, *indio*, *trigueño*, *negrito* and *chavito prieto*. Within these local emerging forms, comparisons are performed between who is and who isn't African, and if Puerto Ricans are somehow Africans, as well as the comparison between *prieto* and penny (color of the coin) as examples of students' racial constructions and negotiations of race and racism.

Identity is a concept that is not only constituted by social and self racial identification involving the terms *negrito*, *trigueñito*, *cremita*, *marroncito*, *blanquito*, *indio* and *bien prieto* that children place on themselves and others, especially in the context of schools and out of it as well because these racial terms are embedded in

Puerto Rican culture. However, the terms are used inconsistently and ambiguously throughout the island. Nonetheless, racial labels are significant and embedded in Puerto Rican culture since people have appropriated them to racially identify others. Which labels are used depends upon the context of their usage, and their meanings vary as well. Therefore, in this analysis, racial labels are significant since they illustrate the variability in their usage and meanings within the school and other figured worlds such as literature circles.

The evolution of students' identities within figured worlds are how they come to understand others and themselves as *trigueños*, *marroncitos*, *negritos*, *bien prietitos*, or *indio*, how they come to figure who they are through the worlds they participate in, and how they relate to others within and outside of those worlds.

The figuring evolves through dialogue, in relation to those around them. Dialogically, identities are dependent upon social relations and material conditions which change, and dialogically, they are answered and old answers about who one is may be undone. In this study, the context of possibility in the figured world of literature circles is one of ambiguity and inconsistency, where experienced students begin to rearrange, reword, rephrase, and re-orchestrate vocal perspectives to develop an authorial stance. For example, Roberto's authorial stance was to negate black skin color and black people, as well as Alex, his classmate from a different literature group. In other words, students' authorial stance seems to evolve within a particular zone of proximal development (Vygotsky, 1995), (Holland, Lachicotte Cain & Skinner, 2003). Those participating and

performing in these worlds are dependent on social relations and changes. The opportunity exists for them to voice and take a stance toward what is offered and negotiated, rejected, or accepted.

Social and self racial identification serves as pivots to explore and constitute “who’s who” and “what if” related to skin colors, like *trigueño*, *blanquito*, *prieto* and *indio*. Racial labels function simultaneously, and this study points to the importance of the ways in which skin color plays out to construct racial discourses regarding “who am I”, “what are others like” and “what is *prieto*.” Moreover racial labels evoke responses in which the possibility of the existence of other skin colors, such as *cremita* and *indio*, mediate racial terminologies that are part of Puerto Rico’s idiosyncrasy. Thus students’ use of brown/*marrón* as in the case of Jescy and Armando *un poco marrón*/a bit brown, function both as self racial identification and social racial identification to highlight intermediary skin colors, constructing their Puerto Rican spectrum of skin colors through dialogue.

Additionally, racial discourses serve as a pivot for the emergence of local forms such as whitening discourse, as in the case of Alex,-group 1. Intermediary racial terminologies, such as *marrón*, *cremita*, *prieto*, *indio*, *trigueño* or *de color*, are also used to avoid the word *negro*. These are used as euphemisms to articulate a whitening discourse. Moreover, as evidenced throughout this study, these intermediary racial terms serve as a pivot to give different meanings to what is *prieto*. For example, students such as María and Roberto construct *prieto* as something “like negro” or “around negro.”

Through these means they also engage in a process of social and self racial identification, illustrating how these are pivotal in the exploration and construction of the self racial identities; essential in the reforming and performing of identities as *trigueño*, *blanquito*, *cremita*, *marrón*, *prieto* and *indio*.

- **Subtheme: Embodied Identities**

The embodied identity through gaze also is constructed by means of a broader social racial identification term, *marrones*, which means brown in plural, and *blanquito*. Armando racially self identifies as *un poco marrón*/a bit brown which shifted or by means of the move from the social to private domains. Hence, from a broader social racial identification such as *marrones* to an individual self racial identification such as “a bit marrón.” These shifts evidence an even more complex racial ideological construction. In this case, the Puerto Rican intermediary racial terms such as *prieto* or *trigueño* are not considered and Armando attempts to use an accurate description where “a bit marrón” is interpreted different from *marrones*, *trigueño*, and *prieto*, even if it still represents the Puerto Rican mix. Jorge also uses gaze to signal *blanquito* and affirms it by comparing his color tone to the one of his peers.

The three examples provide evidence of children’s relational and positional identities because they use actions with their bodies to make clear that there is not one color. In addition, their talk extends the idea that Puerto Rican popular racial terminologies are variable and semantically complex since *marrones* and “a bit marrón”

are new ideological racial constructs and thus have different meanings within the Puerto Rican mix.

Colorblindness and Essentialized Discourses: Usages and Semantics

Colorblindness and essentialized discourses in this study are used differently and the meanings are assigned to relevant aspects that students encountered and responded to within the contexts of meanings in their figured worlds. There are two different manners in which colorblindness and essentialized discourses play out. The first is that colorblindness and essentialized discourses evoke blackness, whitening, binary black/white conceptions of race, people's names as a neutral form of naturalized language, and hegemony. Secondly, the effects of colorblindness and essentialized discourses are conceptualized as false embracement, stabilizing, unifier and sameness.

Through these evocations and effects it can be seen that colorblindness and essentializing discourses reoccur across the analysis within the figured world of literature circles which are reproduced, evoked and furthered, extending racial ideological constructions such as blackness and whitening discourses, among others. Thus, the effects of colorblindness and essentialized discourses furthered the inconsistency and ambiguity of the meanings. For example, colorblindness discourse does not relate only to dismissing the importance of race, but rather to the fact that within particular literature circles the meanings constructed are inconsistent. Some have the effect of local emerging forms-discourses for others to feel at ease within a comfort zone.

The evocation and effects of discourses are constructed differently thus, they are semantically inconsistent; characterized as imprecise across figured worlds. This means that students maneuver discourses divergently, even in situations where naturalized language was reproduced within the literature circles; their maneuvers answered, negotiated, organized and orchestrated ideological voices; they took different paths both in terms of praxis and semantics.

In general, the reproduction of cultural models or naturalized language such as colorblindness, evokes inconsistency and ambiguity in the usage and meanings across literature circles. For example, colorblindness for Yara evoked discourses such as sameness, while in Group 3 colorblindness evokes stabilizing and unifier discourse. This means that for students within figured worlds, their statements and signs are understood in multiple ways through dialogue, depending on which aspects of the context are taken as relevant (Wortham, 2006).

Self and social racial identification was used as a form of mediation. The way in which students self and socially identified themselves and others mediated an action to signal skin color was through embodied identities. In this study embodied identities were performed through touching and gaze. The embodied identity through touching was maneuvered complexly. Intertextually, it signaled a construction of self as a brown boy, through whitening and colorblindness discourses. In addition, embodied identities as a brown boy also reproduced and performed as a racial identity. This form of social and

self racial identification that links back to the intermediary racial terms popular in Puerto Rican racial discourse.

In *En la bahía de Jobos: Celita y el mangle zapatero* during a discourse of colorblindness, students are evoked to respond and shift to the conceptual world of race, through racial identity labels. Students' responses are conceptualized as acts, when they draw from the resources that are available to them such as the sociocultural forms of social identification and self identification that come together with the effect of locally emerging forms such as *indio*, *bien prieto*, *negrito*, and *chavito prieto*. Within literature circles there are identities that are offered. The colorblindness offers students an identity of negation, dismissing the significance and relevance of race, and at the same time offers students possibilities to create and construct new identities, new self understandings through racial identity labels such as *indio* and *bien prieto*.

My inquiry as a teacher researcher began with reflecting on children's conceptualizations of race through dialogue. My aim in this study was to show the complexity and importance of young Puerto Rican children's thinking of racial terminologies to signify their worlds departing from the idea that there is "power in The WORD" (Chin, 2005) both, oral and written. Colorblindness discourse emerged as part of their racial explorations across literature circles during student's discussions. Colorblindness discourse as an emerging discourse of children's racial explorations is an instrument of power producing discomfort instead of neutral, inclusive and unifying racial constructions that overlook deeper ideologies that affected the distribution of

power within the literature circles. When children have texts and the space to dialogue about literature, there are discourses of power, as centripetal and centrifugal forces, along with racial harmony that celebrates goodwill and benevolence (Ching, 2005). This study aims for teacher researchers to provide the space for reflection with children where discourses of power and racial harmony meet (Ching, 2005). These two discourses of power and harmony, involve constant negotiation. The children in this study negotiated racial terminologies with along these two discourses.

Implications

Below I have laid out the important implications of this research for theory and practice. More specifically, I discuss implications of the findings on: The Importance of Teacher Researcher; Conceptualizing Literature Circles as a Figured world; and the Quality of Children's Literature and Reading Programs.

The Teacher Researcher

The inquiry of teacher researchers emerges from systematic observation, compilation of data, and the analysis of the tensions and critical reflections of outside and inside school mechanisms that are embedded in students' discourses (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1999). I acknowledge tensions as natural, which encourages growth as individuals and not competition. As this study began and continued, it went through different lenses and theoretical perspectives. Therefore, it was cyclical process in which teachers and

students engaged in collaborative activity. Namely, there was negotiation to include all voices. Through dialogue teacher researchers envision listening as a social process (Pradl, 1996), which is mutual acceptance of other's points of view and creation of reciprocity. We engage in negotiation in which possibilities are considered, not certainties.

The site of possibilities and contexts of meanings is where possibilities are explored as we question, challenge and struggle, and give space for others, particularly students' and teachers' responses, reflections, and thoughts. Hence, as a teacher researcher the focus is on understandings and not presenting absolutes, along with transformation and significant changes in perspective. Understandings arise from the meanings we make of the immediate world, and that entails subsequent changes, as in this case, of the curriculum, the importance of the quality of children's literature, reading program, the vision of dialogue and young children's immediate understandings of racial terminologies.

Teacher research allowed me to continually observe, reflect and examine closely racial issues that manifested here within the sociocultural context of the classroom. The challenge of those of us who are teacher researchers is to recognize entities that we must recruit for ourselves in order to be more effective researchers. But, also we must learn to be "at home" on the street corners, school playgrounds, halls, barrios, churches, mosques, kitchens, and communities so that our work more accurately reflects their thinking and ways of being. Students' words as semiotic mediators are an

example of how we explore structures of privilege and identity. Teacher research as a form of qualitative research enables teachers as part of a sociocultural context to inquire with our students, make changes as well as to inform theory. These narratized identities are embedded in the stories and characters that make the cultural world of Puerto Rico.

Re-thinking literature circles as a figured world

In this study I reconceptualize literature circles, one of the many literacy engagements that are part of a balanced literacy program (Short, 1996). The literature circle moves beyond small group discussions where a group of students who have read the same text sit and dialogue about the meanings they have constructed from their understanding and personal connections to the text (Short, 1995). Students and teacher dialogue about what they experienced with the text along with discussing the author, characters, and interaction with the text with family members. Children are encouraged to “expand and critique their understandings about their readings through dialogue with others” (Short, 1995, p. x). Within the figured world of literature circles, the tensions within the text, the experiences and dialogue, exists as an interwoven encounter that enable them to make connections that enlighten them to new perspectives of themselves and the world.

Literature circles as a figured world can also be seen as a collaborative activity in which students, family members, peers and teachers engage through dialogue. Furthermore, identities are considered within sites of possibilities to envision the ways

we consistently construct our own social positions and social relations with each other. It moves us beyond viewing identity as fixed to identity as always embedded in social practice. Holland et. al (1998) remind us that representations of ourselves are not bounded, stable, enduring or impermeable. This is illustrated in the ways students' racial ideological constructions are constituted through general and intermediary racial terminologies, and power relations like Alex's blackness and Yara's colorblindness.

When rethinking and reconceptualizing the spatial practices in classrooms, we need to recognize within the figured world of literature circles the world itself is reproduced, forming, reforming in the practices of its participants, students and teachers. Literature circles are a site of possibilities and contexts of meanings in evoking students' responses which extend and move beyond their immediate circumstances. Freire's (1987, 2000) definition of dialogue is that teachers do not talk to or for the students but with the students. Within a dynamic social context, children are both readers and texts simultaneously. A democratic literature classroom revolves around literature as having a real and central relation to the social and cultural life of democracy, thus the relationship between teacher and students is that they participate and contest as part of a dialogue of inquiry and interpretation, leading students to come to understand and enact democratic values. This depends on the way "poems" are evoked and considered in the classroom; the reading experience is the initiating force in the literature classroom (Rosenbaltt, 1992).

Literature is not only a window to the world, “but a window inside oneself” (Niëto, 1987, p. 2). Literature is not a mirror of reality but diverse realities in which life perspectives are taken and developed through dialogue. Responding to literature involves moving across the continuum of the aesthetic and efferent stances we evoke from different interpretations of the text and this constructs the poem as a “parallel text.” Through dialogue about literature in democratic social conversation, children connect to and expand on what they are living and experiencing, moving children beyond the text to reflect, connect, question, about our surroundings and lived experiences. They engage in a dialogical back and forth movement between reader and text and an ongoing dialogue with others and other texts. In a democracy, children have the convictions of their own responses. By being open minded about alternate points of view, they are able to negotiate meanings and actions. Collaboration plays an important role in how spaces, such as literature circles and classrooms, are conceived and students support and learn from one another.

Literature circles takes children out of their comfort zones, leading them to engage in the politics of everyday through dialogue. Literature and dialogue as cultural tools become mediating devices of learning and knowledge, simultaneously organizing responses and moving us beyond our immediate surroundings. As in Rosenblatt’s “democratic reading,” these conversations extends readers on all sides beyond themselves. Literature circles open up figured worlds, and is the means by which figured worlds are evoked, collectively developed, learned in social interaction, and made personally and socially powerful. Dialogue about literature involves moments of

identity construction and representation. These moments are acts that support and challenge children's identities and provides a space to form and reform identities. Identity construction occurs within particular social, cultural and political relationships. Identity representations can be conscious and strategic.

In this study, children are continually part of the circle of praxis, moving from understanding to decision to action. Alternatively, without the dialogical approach to literature circles, reading would serve to perpetuate the status quo by extracting the correct meaning from a text with literature conceived as merely knowledge and propaganda and the teacher as dictatorial and dominating, speaking and questioning rather than listening. In contrast, Bakhtin (1981) emphasizes the pragmatic use of language. This study provides a view of dialogue as dialogical. This means that in terms of dialogism the emphasis is on both the text as literature and oral dialogue in a back and forth movement or relationship between institutional addresses, and not necessarily to have an agreement or solution. Without dialogue the figured world of literature circles would not have been constituted. Exploration and negotiation of racial terminologies would not have taken place, thus the racial discourses would have not been reproduced and constructed.

Dialogue within the figured world of literature circles exemplifies the complexity of language in use. This means that through dialogue, racial discourses are surfaced through personal and collective experiences. Therefore, students' positional and relational identities positioned others to negotiate by means of accepting or rejecting what

they are offered within the figured world of literature circle. Hence, students' racial discourses are inextricably embedded in school, classroom, and community discourses, therefore figured worlds. Students are able to use multiple racial labels to social and self identify, assign different meanings within a specific context through literature which has different significances, to think, and respond to their immediate surroundings. Moreover, naturalized language is maneuvered by students differently across figured worlds. Students as they participate, shape their toolkits (Gee, 1992) as they move within and across tasks, contexts of meanings, spatial and linguistic borders.

A literature circle is a figured world, a social reality and a site of possibilities where students conceptually and substantially produce new self understandings through racial identity labels. Reconceptualization of literature circles as figured worlds theoretically and methodologically enables teacher researchers and teacher educators to examine closely students' explorations of discourses and identities and the meanings they assign to these.

Importance of the quality of children's literature and reading program

I believe that texts, such as children's literature, are a semiotic tool with different significances. Students as readers transact with the text and the author in a continuum, a "give and take" relationship (Rosenblatt, 2003, 2005). In this study, both oral and written texts are in a continuum in which students' relational and positionality are framed in efferent and aesthetic stances. On the one hand, the efferent stance is exemplified in this study as students give and take from the text information which enables them to

experience positional identities and explore Puerto Rican racial terminologies. On the other hand, through the aesthetic stance, students draw on the individual and collective histories to explore and constitute racial ideologies. According to Beach (1993) readers may reveal subject positions when reading aesthetically. This means that they inhibit a critical reading, those that they position.

In curricular terms, I am framing literature circles within the perspective of “learning through language” (Halliday, 1977). This means that literature is part of learning to read but also part of thinking and critical reflections. A learning through language component enables students and teacher to look at the critical issues that are part of our everyday life but are often “taken for granted” (such as race and racial labels) despite being crucial in their development.

Therefore, I reflected on the themes or topics of study that are imposed by the Puerto Rico Department of Education and the school I worked in, and the ways that the students and myself could critically reflect through quality children’s literature about race. Particular ideological perspectives of historical accounts of Puerto Rico, slaves, slavery, Africans, Puerto Ricans, and binary white/black conceptions of race are imposed upon students and teachers and have permeated historically. These ideas were reproduced by means of the ways in which they used historical accounts of Puerto Rico’s slaves, slavery and racial terminologies. Interestingly, these served as pivots to reproduce and represent sociocultural forms such as *negro* as social racial identification

across contexts of meanings to give different meanings to racial terminologies and constituted racial discourses.

Further Research

There are several aspects of the children's discussions that emerged as potential areas requiring further study. Generally, Puerto Rican children's racial discourses are part of the idiosyncrasy Puerto Rico's context. As West-Durán (1997) notes, these discourses are embedded in the sometimes troubled misunderstandings and denials and Puerto Rico's centuries old racial history. This study informs teachers and university researchers in the areas of study such as education, linguistics and anthropology among others.

The following are interesting areas suggested for further research:

- To further trace the importance and complexity of young Puerto Rican children's racial discourses over time in the content of the children's discussions, as was addressed in this dissertation, by tracing their development in-depth over a longer period of time.
- To continue examining and analyzing Puerto Rican children's and adolescent literature. This dissertation partially addresses this aspect by using one picture book written and illustrated by a Puerto Rican. In general, the importance of Puerto Rican's children literature in classrooms and their racial explorations is a field in which further research should be carried out. As a teacher

researcher, I questioned and reflected about the reading program and the importance of the quality of children's literature in my multiage classroom. Although limited, as in my case, the quality of children's literature is an essential component of a reading program. These books, both simultaneously go along with and serve as pivots in mediating teachers and students' knowledge and responses to literature and their worlds. Further research in this area would contribute to the use and publication of Puerto Rican children's and adolescent literature, the importance of a critical curriculum, and the beginning of Puerto Rican critical discourse analysis as a theoretical and methodological tool for examining young children's discourses. In addition, this study is a first attempt to understand the complexity of young Puerto Rican children's racial discourses and further research in different sociocultural contexts around the island of Puerto Rico would extend the discussion on the ways young Puerto Rican children construct and constitute racial discourses.

- To continue researching the theoretical concept of literature circles as a figured world. This study contributes to the reconceptualization of literature circles within a Balanced Literacy Curriculum (Short, 2006), the importance of dialogue and children's literature, and variance and semantics of young children's Puerto Rican racial discourses.
- To stimulate and foster Puerto Rican teacher researchers to contribute to their fields of study and share or "make public" these findings. This

dissertation is the first attempt of a Puerto Rican teacher researcher to share and “make public” her experiences and those of students.

Final Remarks

Our representations of ourselves are neither bounded, stable, enduring nor impermeable (Holland, Lachicotte, Skinner & Cain, 2003). This is why as a teacher researcher, I refuse to perpetuate a hegemonic discourse of race. Dialogue is rare and even ignored in classrooms. As children and teachers dialogue and use literature within the figured world of literature circles, we participate in the politics of everyday life. With governments currently pushing harshly towards a unifying and fixed concept of culture in schools through standardized tests, curriculum, and policies, more democratic and critical approaches are needed in the classroom. I believe the problem goes beyond the view of mainstreaming children; it is the production of people as uniform in a monologically perceived and understood world. This ideology supports and perpetuates the idea that poor students share a “culture of poverty” in which we still instigate “cultural deficit” models in schools. Thus, it intends to fix teachers and students to become a factory model of teaching and learning. The ideology sustaining this structure is evidently one domain of hegemony in a Gramscian sense; the ways in which power relations constrain and control productivity and creativity in discourse practice, and partially stabilized configurations of discourse practices.

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