La identidad de los estudiantes con su propio campo de estudio a través de la lectura y la escritura

Students' Identity with their own Field of Study through Literacy

l'identité des étudiants avec son propre champ d'étude à travers la lecture et l›écriture

Identidade dos alunos com seu próprio campo de estudo através da leitura e escrita

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Resumen

El propósito de este artículo es compartir los resultados de una investigación realizada acerca de la identidad de los estudiantes como futuros psicólogos a través de las prácticas de lectura y escritura en inglés. El estudio proveyó a los estudiantes un ambiente apropiado basado en temas de psicología, el cual se caracterizó por la producción libre de los estudiantes, ellos tuvieron la oportunidad de hacer sus propias elecciones así como discutir, analizar y generar diagnósticos sobre los temas leídos (anexo 8). Los datos fueron recolectados a través de diarios, muestras escritas y una entrevista semi-estructurada aplicados a los estudiantes. Los resultados mostraron la identidad de los estudiantes con su propio campo de estudio a lo largo de los siguientes aspectos: se motivó su práctica oral y escrita acerca de temas de la vida cotidiana desde un punto de vista crítico, ellos fueron construyendo su identidad a través del interés por analizar y argumentar situaciones problemáticas; además, el uso de vocabulario especializado, junto con la vinculación de teoría y práctica se evidencian a lo largo de este estudio.

Palabras clave: adquisición del lenguaje, identidad de los estudiantes de psicología, lectura y escritura académica, práctica del idioma inglés.

Abstract

The purpose of this article is to share the results of an investigation into students' identity as future psychologists through academic literary practices in English. The study provided students an appropriated environment, based on topics about psychology, which was characterized by the students free production. They had the opportunity to make their own choices, as well as discuss, analyze, give opinions or diagnosis about the topics studied (annex 8). Data was collected through students' journals, written samples and semi-structured interviews. The findings showed the students' identity with their own field of study along the following aspects: the literacy practices enabled them to read and write about topics of daily life from a critical view point, they were building their identity through their interest for analysing and arguing problematic situations; additionally, the use of specialized vocabulary, along with the linking of theory and practice are evidenced in this study.

Keywords: academic literacy, English language practice, language acquisition, psychology students' identity.

Résumé

Cet article vise à partager les résultats d'une recherche sur l'identité des étudiants comme psychologues à avenir à travers de pratiques académiques littéraires en anglais. L'étude a fourni les étudiants d'un environnement approprié basé sur des sujets à propos de la psyshologie; ce qui a été caractérisé par la libre production

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des étudiants, ils ont eu l'opportunité de faire leurs propres choix; ainsi que de discuter, analyser, faire des opinions ou diagnostiques sur les sujets lus (annexe 8). Les données ont été recueillis à travers des journaux d'étudiants, échantillons écrits et entretiens semi structurés. Les résultats monstrent l'identité des étudiants avec leur propre champ d'étude tout au long des aspects suivants: les stages de littératie rendent possible la lecture et écriture concernant sujets de la vie quotidienne en partant d'un point de vue critique, ils ont bâti leur identité au travers de l'intérêt d'analyse et en argumentant des situations problématiques; en plus de l'usage de vocabulaire spécialisé, la liaison entre théorie et pratique sont montré dans cet étude.

Mots clefs : acquisition de connaissances en langue, identité des étudiants de psychologie, littératie académique, stage de langue en anglais.

Resumo

O objetivo deste artigo é compartilhar os resultados de uma pesquisa feita sobre a identidade dos alunos como futuros psicólogos através de práticas literárias acadêmicas em inglês. O estudo forneceu aos alunos um ambiente apropriado baseado em tópicos sobre psicologia; que foi caracterizada pela produção livre dos alunos, eles tiveram a oportunidade de fazer suas próprias escolhas, bem como discutir, analisar, fazer opiniões ou diagnósticos sobre os tópicos lidos (anexo 8). Os dados foram coletados através de diários de alunos, amostras escritas e entrevistas semi-estruturadas. Os achados mostraram a identidade dos alunos com seu próprio campo de estudo, nos seguintes aspectos: as práticas de alfabetização lhes permitiram ler e escrever sobre tópicos da vida diária desde um ponto de vista crítico, eles estavam construindo sua identidade através do interesse por analisar e argumentar situações problemáticas; Além disso, o uso de vocabulário especializado, juntamente com a vinculação da teoria e prática são evidenciados neste estudo.

Palavras chave: alfabetização acadêmica, aquisição de linguagem, identidade dos estudantes de psicologia, prática de língua inglesa.

Introduction

As English teachers in different programs of education such as law, engineering, architecture, psychology, accounting, business administration, among others, we have had the experience to develop reading and writing; thus, they showed particular interests in terms of knowledge; it made me think in their commitment and identity of a group of students with their career as future psychologists through academic literary practices, using texts of their field of study.

In this way, under the parameters of the descriptive case study, this research examines and reports how a group of students reveal their identity as future psychologists through academic literacy practices developed in the classroom. The pedagogical design describes the process carried out in the different classes and the data analysis permits to draw some conclusion from them. There are important implications not only for the specific settings where the study was carried out but also for the education system where similar conditions are present.

This study was supported by authors like Goodman (1996) who made important contributions to this study about literacy, Green (1999) who defined Academic literacy and the conceptions of academic, operative, cultural and critical literacy and Norton (1997) who started some ideas about identity and professional identity, among others.

The implementation of academic literacy practices in this study allowed the researcher and students to develop different activities where reading and writing practices were intensively carried out in each class, process that helped the researcher to gain insights to have a view of students´ identity as future psychologies.

Literature framework
The theory which supported this project was taken from different authors' perspectives and research about the following topics: literacy, academic literacy practices and professional identity.

Literacy
Literacy not only involves reading and writing but also social practices. Kern (2000) states: "literacy combines a focus on language use in social contexts (essential to communicate approaches) with an additional component of active reflection on how meanings are constructed and negotiated in particular acts of communication" (p. 39). In this sense, literacy allows users to manipulate printed material, produce their own concepts and criticize according to their own experience in relation to the context.

However, literacy opens doors to users in order to deepen in different topics according to their interests, it also allows them to take risks to manipulate information and create their own thinking. Kramsch (1998) argues: "To be literate is to have the capacity to understand and manipulate the social and cultural meanings of print language in thoughts, feelings and actions" (p. 23). Moreover, Kern (2000) points out: "Literacy is constructed as a collection of dynamic set of psychological attributes" (p. 23). In this way, literacy requires dynamic participants that make sense of reading and be able to enrich their cultural and academic knowledge which is part of students' growth, besides, their reading and writing

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development contribute them being more analytical and and also help to structure their perceptions of the life.

Literacy practices allow developing different activities in the classroom such as identifying characteristics of people and locations, criticizing, creating new stories, making comparisons and making self-reflection, among others; at the same time, it allows training in the use of the target language and acquisition of knowledge through the manipulation of knowledge.

For the development of this study, it was taken into account some literacy practices proposed by Kern (2000) "interpretation, collaboration, cultural knowledge, problem solving, reflection and self-reflection and language use" (pp. 16-17); because psycology students require specific characteristics such as: acquisition of specialyzed knowledge, information about the context and people´s daily life situations, as well as team group when necessary for analyzing and reflecting on behavioural problems.

Academic literacy practices

This study was based on the concepts that literacy is a set of social practices which are commonly cultural where people talk about and make sense of written language; literacy practices are usually developed in the educational environment, taking into account that students are frequently faced to write a paper in the way to construct knowledge about topics of their field of study; in this way, Kern (2000) suggests seven principles that can be implemented in language teaching:

- **Interpretation.** Writers and readers need developing interpretation in order to get a conception of texts; hence, they interpret texts according to their own conception of the world and their prior knowledge about it; in the same way, PISA[2] (2006) says "Developing interpretation requires readers to extend their initial expressions so that they develop a more specific or complex understanding of what they have read...readers must process the organization of information in the text" (p. 7). Thus, this factor contributes to this study in the different interpretations students need doing along the analysis of each topic taking into account their own understanding and background that permit them to emit a judgment, a criticism, a suggestion etc.

- **Collaboration.** Writers write for themselves and for an audience, their views are complemented with those of the addressee. The readers contribute with their interest, knowledge and experience to make the writer's text meaningful. In this way, we can see a direct relationship between writers and readers

2 PISA: Programme for International Student Assessment

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focused to make sense about a topic in common; Goodman and Goodman (2014) argue that we must begin instead by looking at reading in the real world, at how readers and writers try to make sense with each other. Along this study, there are spaces for this relation; for instance, students grew up a special interest for specific topics, and also it was an opportunity for students working together around themes of interest.

- **Literacy involves conventions**. It is related with the manner people have to read or write a text, it is guided by cultural conventions; however, they can change according to personal objectives or habits. Budiyanto (2013) argues: "From a sociocultural perspective, reading and writing are communicative acts in which readers and writers position one another in particular ways, drawing on conventions and resources provided by the culture" (p. 74). Thus, this principle show s the direct relation between the reader and the writer because they meet at a particular time, and are linked by the same interests; additionally, the conditions of literacy are created accoding to the conventions of the society and the context , not as a natural process.

- **Cultural knowledge.** Literacy is developed in a cultural environment. Kern (2000) states: "Reading and writing function with particular systems of attitudes, beliefs, customs, ideals and values" (p. 17), in turn, notes that literacy and education are cultural expressions. Since education is a dimension of culture, it is considered an act of knowledge and therefore it has to explain what culture involves. This study deals with cultural knowledge because it approaches as field of education and science, and is devised to serve a social purpose in the way that contributes to build the students' knowledge in the field of psychology.

- **Problem solving.** Literacy is a tool that everybody can use not only in daily situations for exchanging information but also for inquiring about new and unknown situations, about it, Goodman, (1996) "The students use reading and writing to serve the many functions of problem – solving, inquiring, engaging in functional discourse and organizing and acquiring knowledge" (p. 136). It implies the fact that students identify problems, and try to give solutions to them, bearing in mind their academic conditions, interests and beliefs.

- **Reflection and self-reflection.** Literacy is a social event that involves the transformation of knowledge through reflection; in this way, learners can state their ideas in order to build on the knowledge presents by other authors. Kern (2000) states: "Through literacy, learners make efforts to create, interpret, and reflect on discourse and knowledge, in order to promote their awareness of how meanings are made and received in both, reader and

writer" (p. 22). Reflection and self-reflection contributes along this study in the sense students deepen in each topic in order to express their opinions and diagnose the cases proposed in the journals.

- **Language use.** Kern (2000) asserts: "Literacy requires knowledge of how language is used to create discourse in spoken and written contexts" Thus, this study motivates students use the English language as the mean of communication, it does not center the attention in how students use the language but in what they say, in their thinking, their beliefs and also how they manifest their identity as future psychologists through their ideas and analysis.

In addition to the principles proposed by Kern, this study takes into account making sense, reading real material, and the teachers' role, as part of the academic literacy practices:

- **Making sense.** Written mistakes are not obstacles for students to make sense, Goodman (1996) argues that the most important aim of writing is communicate ideas, generate meaning and make sense. It highlights the purposes students have to communicate over the grammatical rules or pronunciation, aspects that can be improved along language practice.

- **Reading real material.** The purpose of this study is to approach topics related to students´ area of knowledge; in this case, psychology; real material involves newspapers, articles, magazines, videos, among others which are not designed for teaching but it has been used as a great tool for teaching other languages; about it Al Azri and Al-Rashdi (2014) argue "Authentic materials encourage learners to learn a particular language successfully, because they notice they are dealing with the language in real life" (p. 253). Real material rewards students encouraging and motivating them to improve their communication skills and also help them to feel self-confidence with the foreign language and real situations.

- **Teacher's role.** In this study, the teacher's role is relevant because she have to provide the conditions for developing students' schema, ways to build up meaning, make sense, and offer students opportunities to express their ideas, thoughts and beliefs about their real world.

  The results manifest that subjects feel that for second language teachers it is important t that they must be conscious about the role of motivation in foreign language teaching as well as in a position to teach English by involving the learners which is possible when teacher leaves dominat-

ing role and gets himself/herself involved in learning process equally.
(Nadeem, 2013, p. 66)

However, in the Colombian context, teachers focuses their work not only in teaching English but also in motivating students to learn because some of them think that this subject is not relevant for their lives; only few students who have expectation of advanced education or plans for traveling abroad, have the purpose to learn this language, as a result, the international exams (PISA), show that our country has how level in the acquisition of this language. As regards, this study evidenced that the teacher offered spaces to use English through reading and writing practices as a way to motivate students' abilities in a communicative way.

Academic literacy

Academic literacy involves more that the ability to read and write. It also encompasses the students' own literacy styles, which includes specialized vocabulary and specialized way of reading and writing according to their prior process of acquisition of knowledge. As academic literacy includes using thinking and meaning, it means building knowledge from literacy. Green in Baleiro (2011) mentions three dimensional models of academic literacy: O*perational literacy, Cultural literacy and Critical literacy*, which contributes to understand this field; thus, *Operational literacy* is related to the use of language, especially in written form; *Cultural literacy* deals with how to communicate in the language of a specific group of people or in the particular language of a subject, matter understanding what to say and how to say it, for example, the language of geology, economics, social science, law, psychology, among others; *Critical literacy* is related to how knowledge is constructed and how it can be transformed, (i.e. reading a newspaper critically as to make a personal stand) it is linked with beliefs and assumptions about written texts.

As a matter of fact, the students involved in this investigation met the requirements of *Academic literacy*; as *Operational literacy* implies, these students had taken some English courses so they had attained certain command of English. In terms of *Cultural literacy*, they were able to communicate what they had learnt about their area of study as they were in forth semester of psychology. In terms of *Critical literacy*, students had enough tools for dealing with different subject matter and social topics in order to express their own thinking, beliefs and feelings from a critical point of view.

Additionally, for the development of academic literacy practices, students needed to use the first language (Spanish) L1 as well as the foreign language, they must be able to carry out reading and writing activities because these generate concepts and ideas from the topics. Starfield (1994) reports in a study done by an Academic Support program at the University of Witwatersrand ,Johannesburg, with

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Afro-American students of higher education from the Department of Education Training. He asserts that it is highly important to construct a common underlying proficiency which facilitates the transference of academic literacy and conceptual knowledge from L1 into foreign language, and enables the development of literacy in the foreign ; thus, the knowledge of both languages is the base for students to advance academic literacy practices.

Academic literacy practices implies students' appropriation of knowledge of specific disciplines, it requires of active readers and writers, students who are engaged with their field of study, students who consult and investigate about topics of their interest; studies done by Butler (2013) show that academic literacy in south Africa provided ample recent evidence to suggest that academic literacy interventions are increasingly being situated within disciplinary contexts; in the same way, students must demonstrate their understanding from reading, develop their abilities of thinking and defend their ideas with valid arguments on front of a public in written or oral way.

Additionally, Digest (2002) reports an investigation done by Greenleaf, Schoen-bach, Cziko, and Mueller in 2001 under the parameters of academic literacy practices based on the integration of four dimensions: social, personal, cognitive and knowledge-building, explored together by teachers and students. Thus, the social dimension centers on building a community of readers who use literacy to make connections between their interests and the larger social world they are engaged in learning about. The personal dimension of reading apprenticeship develops students' awareness of themselves as readers, of their purpose in read-ing, and of their goals for improvement. The cognitive dimension provides tools for monitoring comprehension, for problem solving to assist comprehension, and for developing flexibility in reading. The knowledge building dimension focuses on such areas as developing content knowledge, knowledge of the discipline, specific vocabulary, and text and language structure; thus, this study really shows the benefits of working with academic literacy and also the dimensions teachers can explore in the English classes to motivate students language use. Besides, Digest et al. (2002) concludes: "The model provides a framework and means for teachers to explicitly show students how to reflect on their own and each other's ways of using language and how to connect their knowledge and experiences to academic literacy practices" (p. 5). In addition, literacy permits students advance in the language proficiency levels according to their self-work and interest; however, students can move from novice to proficient performance in content area with the support of the teacher.

Indeed, academic literacy practices are useful for students as they open windows in students' own career and facilitate not only to develop their capacities in reading and writing but also to express their own thinking about topics of their interest.

In addition, during academic literacy practices, teachers are just facilitators of this process, they guide and provide the spaces and students develop tasks and obtain benefits in terms of knowledge for their academic development. However, literacy contributes to create habits in students to be active members of the community.

Professional identity

For defining professional identity it is necessary to know how personal, cultural and social identities are constructed, as they contribute to shape the professional identity of a person, we need to understand that this is a long process that involves different levels of education and matures along people's experiences.

Personal identity deals with the conjugation of physical and psychological characteristics that a person joins with the passing of time. Cultural identity is related to the cultural background of a community which involves people´s heritage transferred from generation to generation; likewise, the development of a person's social identity is the basis for his/her professional life. Norton (2000) states that the social identity refers to the relationship between the identity and the larger social world, and some institutions that mediate people´s behavior such as families, schools, workplaces and social services. In this way, social identity is concerned with the different fields of human beings and the nature of a particular identity.

Furthermore, professional identity, in turn, is related to the decisions that students make during their academic life; it transcends the future of students and its development depends on their experiences and interests in changing a particular role. About it, Trede, Macklin and Bridges (2011) Agree that professional identity occurs when a member of a profession develops the attitudes, beliefs and standards which support the practitioner role and the development of an identity as a member of the profession which a clear understanding of the responsibilities of being a health professional. Besides, the students' culture, social and personal characteristics contribute in some way to the construction of their professional identity.

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When students decide to study a particular career, they decide to participate in a specific group in society, in thus way, they are conscious that this group has particular rules and functions in the society. Thus, the professional identity involves choices people make for doing a job according to their vocation; however, vocation is influenced by likes, beliefs, family and, in some cases, by the demands of the

environment or the society; and also the identity people assume will contribute to the development of both society and people's life project.

On another hand, as this paper reveals the students' identity as future psychologists of a group of students from the Antonio Nariño University sede Tunja, it is necessary to point out some characteristics of students' profile:

- Psychologists support their concepts in scientific principles. It involves the use of psychological theories and the use of technical vocabulary.

- Psychologists need to be at the vanguard of the forefront of development in science, it is done through activities such as reading, writing, participating in public conferences and also being active learners of their own experience.

- Psychologists are people who must treat with the problems or conflicts of society, it involves capacities such as analysis, reasoning and decision making.

- Psychologists' emotions need to be stable because they receive strong emotional charge from the problems of people who require their service.

- Psychologists require acceptable behavior into the society and be equilibrated people according to the norms of society because they take decision according to them.

- Psychologists require capacities of expression; it involves assurance, congruence, logic and coherence in the analysis according to the different situations.

- Psychologists require being creative in order to solve problems according to the context and the patients' needs.

The theory above contributes to understand the development of this study, taking into account that students of psychology were living a process of learning and also exploring the different fields of their career.

Research design

Type of research

According to the characteristics of this research project, the qualitative descriptive case study was carried out; it was undertaken by a researcher that finds a particular situation in a specific group of students and considered that it was the opportunity to observe it in detail and to analyze happenings in the English classes. Baxter and Jack (2008) assert that case study research has the potential

to deal with simple through complex situations, it takes into consideration how a phenomenon is influenced by the context, it enables the researcher to gather data from a variety of sources and converges the data to illuminate the case. These conceptions show how any particular situation can be subject to research under the vision of a researcher through a case study.

According to the last assumptions, this research defines the following research questions which guide the procedures for collecting data and making the analysis of a specific situation; main research question: how do students reveal their identity as future psychologists through academic literacy practices?, sub-questions: what type of literacy practices do students engage in? And what are the characteristics of psychology students´ identity?

Setting an population

This research was carried out at Antonio Nariño University which is a private institution of higher education in Colombia and one of the branches is located in Tunja. It offers the program of psychology, among others within English is part of its curriculum, the program requires students to develop reading comprehension in their subject matter. This study was done with students from fourth semester of psychology who were attending second level of English, the class was composed by 16 students, from this group, 8 were chosen at random to participate in this research in order to be impartial in the selection of students; however, the activities were developed to all of them. This group was chosen among others because in fourth, students were in the capacity to emit judges based on knowledge acquired in different subjects, and because they were in the last level of English and also they had the bases of the foreign language for expressing ideas.

Instruments for data collection

Due to the characteristics of this type of research, it was used semi-structured interviews, students' written samples and classroom journals, for gathering data.

Semi-structured interviews

This technique was used to collect data because its flexibility allows knowing in detail specific and relevant aspects of the research; Corbetta (2010) recommends this type of interview to provide an appropriate environment for a fluid dialogue between interviewer and interviewee, it also facilitates to clarify and deepen in the information. This instrument (annex 7) contains five questions in Spanish, it was applied to a sample of eight students and looks for having cordial dialogue between interviewer and interviewed.

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Students' written samples

These are considered the students' written production (annex 9) in the development of this research; they evidence the students work and langue use in the English classes, they were the result of the students' reading comprehension and also include the feedback done by the teacher along the activities. Mohite (2014) argues that written samples serve as a way to confirm the students' language proficiency, and English writing performance; however, it permits to observe their self-reflexion and self-awareness. This instrument also permited the researcher to evidence the students' reading and writing progress and also their acquisition of specialized expresions in their field of study.

Students' journals

Journals are students written responses to teaching events. They have the function to point out the principal aspects that emerge from the processes of teaching and learning; furthermore, journals help exploring students' reactions, the classroom and school phenomena, problem situations, ideas for future analysis or reminders of things to take action on, etc. Burns (2003) points out: "Journals provide continuing accounts or perceptions and thought processes, as well as of critical events or issues which have surfaced in the classroom" (p. 89). In addition journals are recommended for registering the small things that add up to the big things that happen in the world around us. In this study, the journals were used for guiding students to write down their analysis and diagnosis based on a problematic situation proposed at the end of each topic.

Pedagogical design

The academic literacy practices developed in this study were organized following a logical order with spaces for students' choices, dialogue, expressions of opinions and taking decisions. Next, there is the description of the principal activities carried out in each class:

Activity: Choosing the topic

Students did a brainstorming about different topics of psychology and chose one. (this exercise was done at the end of each class)

Activity: Looking for information

Students looked for information about the different topics on Internet and in books. (most of the articles were written in English, just few in Spanish , but it was not an obstacle for the development of the study).

Activity: Reading process

- Students read the articles of their preference, they used different techniques. (reading aloud, silent reading, individual and group work and exchanging information).

- Students shared the information of their own articles in small groups or with the whole class.

- Students developed a graphic organizer based on the reading.

Activity: Writing

- Students developed different writing activities such as: choosing an aspect of the reading and giving opinions about it, the teacher indicated one aspect related to the topic and the students argued their opinions about it, the teacher asked about a specific aspect of the topic and students answered the question (s) according to their own thinking.

- Students made self-corrections in order to reviewed mistakes of grammar or sense. (During this process students asked their classmates and teacher, or looked at the dictionary, when it was necessary).

- Students shared their written production with their classmates in small groups or with the whole group.

Moreover, this project is developed under the parameters of the university curriculum because it is mandatory for this career to develop reading comprehension about topics of students' field of study. Thus; this project managed texts related to psychology taken from Internet and from psychology books, as follows: Methods of science, Emotions, motivation, the learning process, neurosis and love.

Data analysis

After reading and analyzing data, two categories emerged in order to revealed students' identity as future psychologists through academic literacy practices: *developing reading and writing about topics of psychology in English class and choices to assume the role as professional psychologists*.

First category: Developing reading and writing about topics of psychology in English class

Through data analysis, the importance of developing reading and writing became evident, taking into account that these activities are permanent throughout

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students´ academic life; thus, students were conscious of the importance of developing these abilities because they are means of acquisition of knowledge and also a way to express ideas.

The academic literacy practices developed in this study provided students the opportunity to read, write, consult, analyze and share information about topics of their field of study, in a permanent way. Goodman (1996) starts: "Reading and writing are both dynamic and constructive process" (p. 2). In fact, these processes contributed with meaningful activities that enrich the students' knowledge and allow them to make self-reflection and to see their world from a critical point of view.

Reading and writing activities are meaningful for students in the way that they make part of their constant intellectual growing; students assert that they need to develop these activities at the university and incorporate them to their daily situations, as they argued:

> I like reading about my career because I am a person who is in love of what I do. I have always liked to read, I like the scientific reading because it gives one great knowledge for the spiritual and intellectual education.[3] (Student 1, interview).

Moreover, academic literacy practices are meaningful for students' acquisition of knowledge or concepts from science, tools that students can use to argue their own options, make self-reflection, or in the case of psychology, students are able to give their own diagnosis about specific situations. As it is seen in the students' written samples:

> Students' journal about Scientific Methods. (Annex 1)

> I consider that the comparative method calls my attention because it consists of observing different situations, people or events, which all the time are changing and these have differences and similarities in order to create different strategies for research, get knowledge and discover human behavior. (Student's written sample about learning (annex 2)

> Habitual learning: When you are used to life in a hot place, suddenly you have to move to another place for your job, and this place is cold. First, you could get sick and you have to change your lifestyle, you have to wear different clothes and may be you have to eat varied food. You do not feel comfortable with this kind of life, but

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3 This excerpt was translated from Spanish.

little by little you begin to feel better in the new environment until you achieve to make a habit of your new life. (Student 1 written sample 4)

Students' journal about neurosis (annex 3)

As a student of psychology my opinion is that the patient presents stress problems closed by bad work organization. I recommend that he goes to a therapy, like a behavioral procedure and start to find what are the aspects that produce stress in his place of work, and with the time have positive results in which the patient finds peace in all what he does. (Student 1, journal7)

The excerpts above show some of the strengths of of this study which were the students' acquisition of knowledge, expressions, and vocabulary related with their own field, useful to explain, analyze and estate their own thinking. Besides, literacy lets students understand the importance to learn English as a mean of communction and also an important sourse to investigate about topics of their interes, having in mind that the latest information is usually written in English, thus, students can reach it through this foreign language.

Academic literacy practices provide spaces for students to practice reading and writing, in this way, students acquire the benefits of them in the way to practice techniques, create habits which can be useful for investigating in their field of study; they acquire vocabulary, concepts, and knowledge of topics of their interest. However, students practice in making sense and analysis form reading which is important their career as psychologists; likewise, in a study done by Turkan, Bicknell and Croft (2012), about literacy practices, they report that this kind of work motivate students' reading and writing skills, reading stimulates their learning process and they also suggest to apply to ELL (English Language Learning) to particular grade levels. Additionally, Goodman (1996) argues: "Reading and writing is making sense by transacting with text. Students must develop strategies and learn to use textual cues to make sense of text". However, this study shows how students make self-reflection from reading and construct their own judgments as is revealed by one of the students, (annex 4)

I love interacting with other people, listen to them, understand them, my career has relation with interpersonal intelligence, I believe that I have ability to communicate easily with other people; although, I am a little bit shy, by I have the natural capacity and attitude to share with another people. (Student 3, written sample)

Moreover, the student made sense in the written sample about love (annex 9):

The love is a complex meaning to explain and understand: it is an inexplicable feeling that is present in people's life and grows up with them. First, we love our

parents; then, we love our relatives, our friends and other people. However, we love special persons like our boyfriend, next we discover that love is the essence of the life because everything is beautiful, idealistic, and fantastic.

Last excerpts show how students made sense from reading and reproduced their own ideas, judgments and self-reflection. It demonstrated that they practiced permanent process of academic literacy practices that permitted them to internalize aspects of their field of study and also to use the foreign language as a means of communication. However; the topics worked in class contributed to evidence the students' commitment and identity with their career.

Second category: Choices to assume the role as professional psychologists

As it was mentioned in the theory of professional identity, there are specific aspects that students must perform in the way to construct their identity as psychologists. The analysis of this category shows the following aspects: students' appropriation and use of scientific knowledge and their capacity for solving problems of real life from their view as future psychologists, as way to assume their roles as future psychologists.

The Areas of human knowledge (mathematics, biology, psychology) work specific scientific concepts and technical vocabulary that is used according to the situations, the context and the needs of users, these aspects can be reinforced form the classroom with activities that involve reading; thus, Taffy (2001) argues that language is a key in the development of our identities as professionals; likewise, Xhaferi (2009) states "In order to develop an ability to learn new vocabulary, for both general and technical vocabulary (ESP |English with specific purposes) in learning, students should become aware of the importance of language learning strategies and be trained to use them appropriately" (p. 233). Hence, this study evidences that students made use of scientific concepts and also technical vocabulary among the development of the different activities, it was shown in students' journals, written samples and the interview; it was product of their previous knowledge from the different subjects, product of their own searchers about different topics worked in the English class, as it is perceived in the following excerpts.

Student's journal about the topic of motivation (annex 5)

"From my point of view and according to my experience and knowledge as psychologist student, the motivation of Julian requires a long-term program where constant feedback must be given. The theory suggests that we will seek balance or homeostasis in our lives and will resist the influences or expectations to change through time; according to Piaget, it is the biological development, we mature cognitively and organize the knowledge progressively". (Student 5, journal 3)

Student's written sample about Memory (annex 6)

"Definition of memory: you can learn and remember better if you can group ideas into some sort of meaningful categories or groups, memory is increased when facts to be learned are associates with something familiar." (Student 5, written sample)

Student's journal about Neurosis (annex 3)

"From my point of view and according to my experience and knowledge as psychologist student, anxiety or tension is our body is way of telling that something is wrong and we need to correct it. It is and absolute essential signal, necessary for our survival and well-being. It is normal to feel a variety of emotions, including shock, fear and anger. To cope, many people find it helpful to become involved in local groups, some patients do relaxation therapies, others use hobbies as a way to relieve tensions; these are ways to reduce the level of anxiety or stress." (Student 6, written journal)

Last excerpts evidence that students have the capacity for expressing their own thinking along a process, they evidence their appropriation of scientific knowledge and technical vocabulary in the context of psychology. Besides, students showed appropriation of specialized vocabulary and concepts of their own field of study:

Student´s interview, question 2 (annex 3)

In my academic study of psychology, i must present many academic reports about the different subjects, I use specialize vocabulary because I know what it means, for example in the topic about neurosis, I have read and studied about it." (Student 5, interview)

According to this student's answer, she used to use technical vocabulary because she had previous knowledge about it and felt comfortable using these terms into the context. She also revealed that the use of technical vocabulary is the appropriate way to express ideas about her field of study.

Prior knowledge is relevant for students in decisions making. It is given by reading, by teachers or students´ proper interest for consulting about topics of their interest. About it, Brown (1994) argues "What the reader is able to understand and learn through reading depends on what the reader knows and believes before the reading" (p. 284). However, he remarks in the importance of the fact to make relation between the previous knowledge and the new one, it allows students to enrich their knowledge for using it in real situations like in the solution of problems as we can see in the analysis of students' journals and compositions. In addition, the application of theory to real life is relevant in students' development

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as professionals, it is not an easy task, but when students achieve it, we can think that they are assuming their role as professionals in the society, as follows:

Student's journal about Emotions (annex 7)

> The process of catharsis always supposes to bring at conscious level the repressed emotions. To speak of the feeling agitators and of the conflicting events it can produce a superficial relaxation, to get through some form of structured therapy it allows the durable elimination of anxiety. I recommend relaxation, acceptance of the new situations, communication with other people and resignation. (Student 6, journal)

Furthermore, in one of the written activities students meet and discuss in order to look for the best solution of a specific problem, related with their area of study, as follows:

> About the journals, I analyze for my own, but sometime I prefer to discuss with my partners in order to look for the best solution; thus, each one can propose his or her own analysis and get out the best conclusions according to the situation. [4] (Student 6, interview)

When theory is assimilated, it is the students´ task to put theory into practice, which is to transfer it to their reality; Zuñiga (2000) states that the texts help to the identification and solution of relevant problems from the concrete world. Thus, this study shows how students use their knowledge for analyzing specific situations of problems in the field of psychology, in relation to the scientific methods (annex 1).

> Several methods of study of human behavior exist in the present times in psychology but the most important are the deductive one and the analytic one, by means of these two, there is bigger understanding of attitudes, thoughts and people behavior. (Student 3, written sample)

In most of the cases of the journals students had to solve problematic situations of real life; hence, they associated theory and practice for solving these situations and use their capacities of analysis; here there is an example about Memory, it also illustrates how students show their identity through their decisions. (Annex 1)

> There are many cases that exist for difficulty to learn at the present time for causes of a bad memory, as well as it happens to Juliana. Psychologically and instrumental techniques were developed to improve the memory. It is the mnemonics that

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4 Originally done in Spanish.

> supposes the use associations and other that tricks to remember concrete stimuli. (Student 3, Journal)

In this study students looked for different ways in order to solve the problems they must face. For instance, they consult with people of higher experience such as psychologists, teachers, share information among them, search information in books, specialized magazines or in Internet. It demonstrated that they assumed their role as psychologists and went to the sources that contribute with their decisions as it is shown in the interview, question 4 (annex 3).

> In the case of a guy who painted a lot in the classes and did no pay attention to the classes, I asked the teacher Juan Carlos about the compulsivity in children. As this case called my attention a lot, I also investigated in Internet about studies related with it. (Student 6, interview)

In this case, we can see that students require the guide of teachers or people with higher experience in order to clarify information and take decisions; thus, the Council of the European Union (2014) assert that in the fast teaching world, the teachers need to face the challenges of new skills required by the rapid technological developments and the increasing of the social and cultural diversity, and the need to cater for individual teaching and special learners' needs. However, last excerpts evidence how literacy practices empower students' acquisition of theory related with topics of psychology and its application for analyzing and arguing aspects of real life, this is a way to demonstrate their role as future psychologists and at the same time the use of English as a foreign language as a mean of communication and acquisition of knowledge.

Conclusions

The construction of students´ identity is reveled in the following characteristics:

- Academic literacy practices contribute with meaningful activities that favor students' knowledge in their field of study; it allows developing their reading and writing skills, and also criticizing, analyzing, diagnosing and expressing their own opinions about topics of psychology from their perspective as students and future psychologists.

- The students´ appropriation and use of scientific knowledge from different sources (newspapers, specialized magazines, and socializing with teachers and partners) permit them to perform their role as professionals; it involves the acquisition of technical vocabulary and implementation of concepts in their interventions about topics of their field of study.

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- This analysis shows that this group of students is living a process of construction of their identity as future psychologists. This study helped them to find spaces for assuming their role as professionals through the development of activities focused in making progressive analysis about topics of their interest.

- After developing this study, as researcher, I sugest using literacy practices for teaching English at universities because students learn to use the language in real contexts; besides, teachers can work specialized topics as a way to motivate the class activities.

- The main difficulties for developing this study was having the permission from the manages of the university because it required changing the current English program in order to apply literacy; another aspect was the collection of materials related to the students' field of study in Englsih, but it was solved inviting the students to look for texts of their interest , related with the topics of class.

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ANNEXES

Annex 1

Students' written sample

Topic: Scientific Methods

According to your knowledge and experience as student of psychology, what method or methods call your attention for working in your field, explain your answer.

Annex 2

Students' written sample

Topic: Learning

Define learning with your own words according to your previous knowledge and experience and write an example of each kind of learning.

Annex 3

Student's journal 7

Topic: Neurosis

There is a businessman who lives under high levels of stress, he has different meetings during the day, and he also has to solve problems of work. Due to these situations, the man presents: irritability, sleeplessness, loss of appetite and stomach disorders among others. Make a diagnosis of this person and give him some recommendations from your own point of view as psychologist.

Annex 4

Students 'written sample 6

Topic: Multiple Intelligences

After developing a graphic organizer based on the text, you would have a clear idea about the multiple intelligences; thus, analyze each one carefully and make a self-analysis and reflection about your own kind of intelligence and how it could help in your professional life.

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Annex 5

Student's journal 3

Topic: Motivation

Julian is a 9 years old. He likes painting all the time, for this reason, he does not pay attention in class and he dislikes making homework at school and at home; his parents and teachers realized this behavior and were worried about this situation. They need to motivate him in any way. What do you recommend for motivating Julian in the academic activities?

Annex 6

Student's written sample 5

Topic: Memory

Choose one of the aspects that call your attention about memory and write your own thinking about it.

Annex 7

Semi-structured interview

Objective: to identify the kinds of literacy practices students are engage in.

1. ¿Qué tipo de lectura es tu preferida dentro y fuera de la Universidad? (científica, de humor, de cultura general, de tu campo de estudio) ¿Por qué?

2. ¿Qué tipo de escritura practica dentro y fuera de la universidad? (cartas, memos, notas, reportes de estudio, humor, e-mail y chat, etc.).

3. Muchas veces habrás visto que la información que recibes en clase no es suficiente sobre un tema, o quieres profundizar en el mismo, ¿qué haces es estas situaciones? (consultar en Internet, consultar en la biblioteca, preguntas a personas que tienen mayor experiencia que tú en el tema, etc.)

4. ¿Qué haces cuando te enfrentas ante una situación problemática como la presentada en los diarios, analizas por sí mismo, consultas a un psicólogo o aun profesor?

5. A lo largo de tus escritos se vio la presencia de terminología especializada de tu carrera (mental and sensorial information, hyperactive disorder, psychotherapy, self assessment tolos, affective learning, among others.). ¿Qué te llevó a utilizar este tipo de terminología?

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Annex 8

Sample texts used in class

MULTIPLE INTELLIGENCE

Intelligence is often considered how well you score on tests or what your grades are in school. In the 1900's, French psychologist Alfred Binet tried to come up with some kind of measure that would predict the success or failure of children in the primary grades of schools. The result was the forerunner of the standard IQ test we use today. This gave us a dimension of mental ability by which we could compare everyone. In the 1980's, Harvard University psychologist, Howard Gardner had a pluralistic view of the mind, and recognized the many discrete facets of cognition. Gardner defines intelligences as the ability to solve problems or to fashion products that are valued in one or more cultural settings. (Gardner) He acknowledged that people have different cognitive strengths as well as different cognitive styles. Gardner bases his view in part on findings from sciences that were nonexistent in Binet's time. The first is cognitive. Out of this came Gardner's "theory of multiple intelligences." (Gardner)

Instead of looking for a correlation between tests, we should look instead to how people develop skills that are pertinent in their culture. When a child learns to play the piano, he is learning several skills. Will the training he received learning the piano skills enhance his mathematics skills, or vise versa? The standard IQ test measures how intelligent a person is based, traditionally, on math and English. All other areas that a person may excel at or have natural ability in are not taken into consideration. Each individual is unique. We all have different physical features - we are not all blue eyed, brown-haired, five-foot tall men. We each have different personalities - some people are jokesters and comedians while others are quiet, reserved and serious. We all have our own set of talents, gifts, and abilities. Not everyone will excel in math and language. Why should we compare how smart children are or how successful they will be based on a test that measures only two aspects of who that little child is?

Gardner has identified eight intelligences. These areas in a culture are valued as having the ability to solve a problem or create a product in a particular way. The intelligences are like talents and gifts in that there are many combinations possible. Intelligences can also be strengthened. How readily the improvement occurs depends upon the biology of the persons' brain and the teacher that the culture gave the person. Gardners' eight intelligences are:

Linguistic - the ability to use language to describe events, to build trust and rapport, to develop logical arguments and use rhetoric, or to be expressive and metaphoric. Possible vocations that use linguistic intelligence include journalism, administrator, contractor, salesperson, clergy, counselors, lawyers, professor, philosopher, playwright, poet, advertising copywriter and novelist.

Logical-Mathematical - the ability to use numbers to compute and describe, to use mathematical concepts to make conjectures, to apply mathematics in personal daily life, to apply mathematics to data and construct arguments, to be sensitive to the patterns, symmetry, logic, and aesthetics of mathematics, and to solve problems in design and modeling. Possible vocations that use the logical-mathematics intelligence include accountant, bookkeeper, statistician, trades person, homemaker, computer programmer, scientist, composer, engineer, inventor, or designer.

Musical - the ability to understand and develop musical technique, to respond emotionally to music and to work together to use music to meet the needs of others, to interpret

Annex 9

Student's written sample