



Original article

Empirical characterization of the written expression ability in English in a high school in the Mayabeque province

Caracterización empírica de la habilidad expresión escrita en inglés en un preuniversitario de la provincia Mayabeque

Caracterização empírica da capacidade de expressão escrita em inglês em uma pré- universidade Mayabeque

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ABSTRACT

The development of the written expression ability in English in the Cuban Pre-University is a necessity. Characterizing this process was the objective of the study. Initially, a historical-logical analysis of the literature revealed the need for the design of authentic and contextualized tasks, to achieve the communicative, interactive and reflective character of said process, and a flexible, strategic, action-oriented process-product approach. that stimulates self-regulation and technological mediation. It was an empirical characterization of the development of said ability in the province of Mayabeque, which constituted a descriptive qualitative study in which a class observation guide was used. A study guide of the teachers' lesson plans and a pedagogical test with a sample of 78 people, made up of students, teachers, managers and methodologists, revealed that the students did not reach the pre-intermediate level of development of the written expression skill in English. Insufficiencies were also identified in the authenticity of the writing tasks designed, in the interactivity of the writing process, in the lack of balance between activities aimed at linguistic correction and those focused on appropriate use. Additionally, the non-inclusion of reflection and self-regulation, insufficient technological mediation and limitations in the cognitive-affective unit were identified. The results obtained demonstrate the need to transform said object of study through the design of a communicative, developer and technologically mediated methodology.

Keywords: empirical characterization; writing ability; English; pre-college

RESUMEN

El desarrollo de la habilidad expresión escrita en inglés en el Preuniversitario cubano es una necesidad. Caracterizar dicho proceso fue el objetivo del estudio. Inicialmente, un análisis histórico-lógico de la literatura reveló

la necesidad del diseño de tareas auténticas y contextualizadas, de lograr el carácter comunicativo, interactivo y reflexivo de dicho proceso, y un enfoque proceso-producto orientado a la acción de carácter flexible, estratégico, que estimule la autorregulación y la mediación tecnológica. Fue una caracterización empírica del desarrollo de dicha habilidad en la provincia de Mayabeque, que constituyó un estudio cualitativo descriptivo en el que se utilizó una guía de observación a clases. Una guía de estudio de los planes de clases de los profesores y una prueba pedagógica con una muestra de 78 personas, integradas por estudiantes, docentes, directivos y metodólogos, reveló que los estudiantes no alcanzaban el nivel preintermedio de desarrollo de la habilidad expresión escrita en inglés. Se identificaron, además, insuficiencias en la autenticidad de las tareas de escritura diseñadas, en la interactividad del proceso de escritura, en la falta de balance entre actividades dirigidas a la corrección lingüística y aquellas centradas en el uso apropiado. Adicionalmente, se identificó la no inclusión de la reflexión y autorregulación, la insuficiente mediación tecnológica y limitaciones en la unidad cognitivo-afectiva. Los resultados obtenidos demuestran la necesidad de transformar dicho objeto de estudio a través del diseño de una metodología comunicativa, desarrolladora y mediada tecnológicamente.

Palabras clave: caracterización empírica; habilidad de escritura; inglés; Preuniversitario.

RESUMO

O desenvolvimento de habilidades de expressão escrita em inglês na pré-universidade cubana é uma necessidade. Caracterizar esse processo foi o objetivo do estudo. Inicialmente, uma análise histórico-lógica da literatura revelou a necessidade do desenho de tarefas autênticas e contextualizadas, para atingir o caráter

comunicativo, interativo e reflexivo desse processo, e uma abordagem processo-producto flexível, estratégica e orientada para a ação. estimula a autorregulação e a mediação tecnológica. Tratou-se de uma caracterização empírica do desenvolvimento dessa habilidade na província de Mayabeque, que constituiu um estudo qualitativo descritivo em que se utilizou um guia de observação de aulas. Um roteiro de estudo dos planos de aula dos professores e uma prova pedagógica com uma amostra de 78 pessoas, composta por alunos, professores, diretores e metodólogos, revelou que os alunos não atingiram o nível pré-intermediário de desenvolvimento da habilidade de expressão escrita em inglês. Também foram identificadas insuficiências na autenticidade das tarefas de escrita projetadas, na interatividade do processo de escrita, na falta de equilíbrio entre as atividades voltadas à correção linguística e aquelas voltadas ao uso adequado. Além disso, foram identificadas a não inclusão da reflexão e autorregulação, mediação tecnológica insuficiente e limitações na unidade cognitivo-afetiva. Os resultados obtidos demonstram a necessidade de transformar este objeto de estudo através do desenho de uma metodologia comunicativa, desenvolvidora e tecnologicamente mediada.

Palavras-chave: caracterização empírica; habilidade de escrita; Inglês; pré-universitário.

INTRODUCTION

Valery (2000) refers that "the written language has transformed human consciousness because it allows the development of new forms of thought and the construction of new knowledge", which "has led to seek an explanation about the

relationships between thought, language writing and its learning" (p. 39).

The importance of acquiring knowledge and skills to communicate in writing is necessary. The potential that writing has to promote learning, its nature as a tool for social action and a means of identity construction, as well as its application in different work and academic contexts in today's knowledge society provide necessary skills for the development of English as a language. foreign.

In Pre-University, according to Pinillos and Domínguez (2016), communicative cognitive competence must be developed, which implies "the expression, interpretation and negotiation of meanings through the interaction between a person and a written text" (p. 7). The development of habits and basic skills that allow them to "understand and produce coherent and simple texts in the foreign language at a pre-Intermediate level" (p. 8) should be promoted, since:

Writing well involves a meaningful message and good use of language. Writing involves searching for content and generating new ideas, deciding how to organize the text, thinking about the recipient, being clear about the effect to be achieved and managing the language to achieve that effect, using syntax correctly, selecting vocabulary, making decisions about the style, guarantee the coherence and logic of the text, avoid misspellings, produce a clear and transparent text, use punctuation marks properly and control the length of the text (Inca, Célleri, Guano and Velasteguí, 2022, p. 357).

Other authors, who emphasize that the development of writing in English is an integrative process that displays and demonstrates all aspects of the development of students' communicative competence, propose the following:

The action-oriented process-product approach is, from a procedural perspective, one in which the writer deploys strategic actions to organize, execute and control his writing process, integrating the treatment of linguistic, pragmatic, discursive, syntactic elements. essential to achieve effective communication in the foreign language and fulfill the proposed communicative purpose (González, Rodríguez, and Ledo, 2019, p. 20).

The teaching of writing in English implies, on the other hand, a group of traits or qualities that have been consolidated throughout history.

A necessary quality in the process of developing the written expression skill in English is its communicative and interactive nature. Bermello and González (2021) refer, regarding said communicative and interactive nature, to the need to promote "interaction, communication and articulation among all the participants in the process" (p. 83).

In this regard, the processual approach, where each task to be carried out is immersed in a significant sociocultural context for the student, in which the uses and functions of language are considered (Crespo and Pinto, 2016), seems to be another desired feature.

The authenticity of the designed writing tasks reinforces the communicative

character. It is achieved by including a communicative situation that reveals the needs and interests of students. In this regard, the creation of texts should be framed in various contexts, with different intentions, addressed to various recipients, through tasks approximated to the uses of written language in real life.

The developer character in the written production process is also a remarkable quality. This must be focused on solving independent tasks. From this perspective, activation-regulation, significance, and motivation to learn by the student and teacher must be integrated into knowledge management and learning (González, 2021).

Another quality that has been highlighted in the literature is the stimulation of self-regulation of learning. In this regard, Akhmedjanova and Moeyaert (2022) state that "Writing is susceptible to self-regulation" (p. 02); In addition, when "self-regulation is integrated, it helps to develop deep processing strategies in students, emotional control, motivational internal dialogue and use of feedback" (p. 02).

Collaborative work is one of the most significant characteristics. Fonseca and Ugalde (2018) demonstrated how the combination of virtual and face-to-face classes through virtual forums stimulate collaborative work in students, which strengthens their participation and interaction with their peers.

The referential study of the development of the written expression skill in English made it possible to identify, as essential, the design of authentic and contextualized tasks, the achievement of the communicative, interactive and reflective nature of said process, and an action-oriented process-product approach. of a flexible and strategic nature, that stimulates self-regulation and technological mediation, and that includes in an integrating way the development of all

aspects of communicative competence, to facilitate the collaborative construction of descriptive and narrative texts in the Cuban Pre-University.

This study aims to empirically characterize the development process of writing in English in a Mayabeque high school.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

A descriptive qualitative study was carried out. Table 1 shows the details of the population and sample quantitatively. A sample of 78 people was selected, made up of students, teachers, managers and methodologists who make up groups 2, 3 and 4 of the 10th grade of the "Ignacio Agramonte y Loynaz" Urban Pre-University Institute, which represents approximately 92% of the population. Purposive sampling was used.

Table 1- Population of students, teachers, directors and methodologists of the 10th grade of the Urban Pre-University Institute "Ignacio Agramonte y Loynaz"

Population	Students	teachers	managers	methodologists
Group 2	19	7	two	1
Group 3	twenty	8	two	1
Group 4	16	6	two	1
Total	85 people			

Source: Official registration list

Taking into account the objective proposed in this research, the object of study was identified: the development of the written expression ability in English in Pre-University. Following is its operational definition and some of its dimensions, according to the authors.

The development of the ability of written expression in English in Pre-University is the process that, directed by the teacher, and as

a result of the application of a system of communicative, developer and technologically mediated activities, favors the development of the ability of written expression in English. at a pre-intermediate level in Pre-university students.

The operational definition of the object of study clearly reveals two dimensions:

The didactic dimension refers to the method used and is defined as the system of technologically mediated learning activities, which is carried out inside and outside the classroom, characterized by its communicative (authenticity, interactivity, correct and appropriate use) and developer (mediation) nature. technology, reflection, self-regulation and cognitive-affective unity), to promote the development of writing skills in English at a pre-intermediate level.

The learning dimension refers to the expected result in students: the ability to express themselves in written English at a pre-intermediate level, which is defined as the basic mastery of linguistic, discursive and sociocultural codes and their strategic and socioculturally appropriate use, which results in the construction of coherent, correct and appropriate descriptive and narrative texts in English at a pre-intermediate level.

In the empirical characterization carried out during the 2020-2021 school year, the following instruments were designed and used to characterize the acting methodology for the development of written expression in English in the 10th grade of the "Ignacio Agramonte y Loynaz" Urban Pre-University Institute:

- Guide for the analysis of the written expression activities of the teacher's lesson plan (three didactic units selected at random from the lesson plan were analyzed).
- Observation guide to written expression activities in English

classes (six classes were observed, where written expression skills were stimulated).

For the evaluation of both guidelines, the scale of "High" (+ 80%), "Medium" (51 to 79%) and "Low" (- 50%) was used in the parameterization, which is presented in Table 2, next:

Table 2- Parameterization of the didactic dimension

Sub-dimensions and Indicators	Measurement Scale		
	High (+80%)	Medium (51-79%)	Low (-50%)
1. Level of authenticity of the writing tasks designed	Most of the written expression activities describe a communicative situation that reveals the needs and interests of students (sociocultural contextualization). In most writing activities the specific writing action or outcome that the task requires is possible (realistic) in the contextual conditions of the students (sociocultural relevance). Most objectives of writing the activities designed are oriented to the production of meaning, not to the use of the linguistic forms. Most of the texts (input) used are genuine, publicly accessible, not created or modified for use in the classroom. Most written expression activities use of digital technologies by students, in search of information, interaction and communication of the writing result produced by them.	Some written expression activities describe a communicative situation that reveals the needs and interests of students (sociocultural contextualization). In some of the written expression activities, the specific writing action or result that is required is possible (realistic) in the contextual conditions of the students (sociocultural relevance). Some of the objectives of the written expression activities designed are oriented to the production of meaning, not the use of linguistic forms. Some texts (input) used are genuine, publicly accessible, not created or modified for use in the classroom.	Few written expression activities describe a communicative situation that reveals the needs and interests of students (sociocultural contextualization). In few of the written expression activities the specific writing action or result that is required is possible (realistic) in the contextual conditions of the students (sociocultural relevance). Few of the objectives of the written expression activities designed are oriented to the production of meaning, not the use of linguistic forms. Few texts (input) used are genuine, publicly accessible, not created or modified for use in the classroom. Few of the written expression activities involve the use of digital technologies by the students in the search for information, the interaction and the communication of the writing result elaborated by them.

2. Level of interactivity that the writing process favors	The solution process of most written expression activities involves technologically mediated interaction between students and between them and the teacher. Most of the authentic texts are used as mediation instruments that favor the activation of the previous knowledge of the students. The solution process of the majority of the activities of written expression implies the interaction of the students with multiple drafts (own texts or those of others).	The solution process of some of the written expression activities involves technologically mediated interaction between students and between them and the teacher. Some authentic texts are used as mediation instruments that favor the activation of the students' previous knowledge. The solution process of some of the written expression activities implies the interaction of the students with multiple drafts (their own texts or those of others).	The solution process of few of the written expression activities involves technologically mediated interaction between students and between them and the teacher. Few authentic texts are used as mediation instruments that favor the activation of the students' previous knowledge. The solution process of few of the written expression activities implies the interaction of the students with multiple drafts (their own texts or those of others).
3. Level of linguistic correction that the learning activities centered on the language favor	Most of the learning activities, in and outside the classroom, are aimed at increasing the variety and complexity of the vocabulary, responding to group and/or individual needs. Most of the written expression activities, in and outside the classroom, are aimed at improving spelling and punctuation correction, responding to group and/or individual needs. Most of the written expression activities, in and outside the classroom, are aimed at improving spelling and punctuation correction, responding to group and/or individual needs. Most of the written expression activities, in and outside the classroom, are aimed at improving grammatical accuracy, responding to group and/or individual needs. Most written expression activities, in and outside the classroom, are aimed at improving the cohesion of the text, responding to group and/or individual needs.	Some learning activities, in and outside the classroom, are aimed at increasing the variety and complexity of the vocabulary, responding to group and/or individual needs. Some written expression activities, in and outside the classroom, are aimed at improving spelling and punctuation correction, responding to group and/or individual needs. Some written expression activities, in and outside the classroom, are aimed at improving grammatical accuracy, responding to group and/or individual needs. Some written expression activities, in and outside the classroom, are aimed at improving the cohesion of the text, responding to group and/or individual needs.	Few learning activities, in and outside the classroom, are aimed at increasing the variety and complexity of the vocabulary, responding to group and/or individual needs. Few written expression activities, in and outside the classroom, are aimed at improving spelling and punctuation correction, responding to group and/or individual needs. Few written expression activities, in and outside the classroom, are aimed at improving grammatical accuracy, responding to group and/or individual needs. Few written expression activities, in and outside the classroom, are aimed at improving the cohesion of the text, responding to group and/or individual needs.
4. Appropriate writing level of written expression activities centered on the discursive and sociocultural norms they favor.	Most of the written expression activities, in and outside the classroom, are aimed at making students aware of the relevance of revealing their attitude towards the subject of writing, their values and cultural identity.	Some written expression activities, in and outside the classroom, are aimed at making students aware of the importance of writing a text, of considering the purpose of writing the text, and the potential readers to whom it is addressed.	Few written expression activities, in and outside the classroom, are aimed at making students aware of the importance of writing a text, of considering the purpose of writing the text, and the potential readers to whom it is addressed.

Developing Subdimension	High (+80%)	Medium (79%)	Low (-50%)
1. Level of technological mediation that the teaching of written expression promotes.	Most written expression activities encourage the use of technology, inside and outside the classroom, in students. Teaching promotes the use of a flipped classroom methodology, inside and outside the classroom.	Some written expression activities encourage the use of technology, inside and outside the classroom, in students. Teaching moderately promotes the use of a flipped classroom methodology, inside and outside the classroom.	Few written expression activities promote the use of technology, inside and outside the classroom, in students. Teaching rarely promotes the use of a flipped classroom methodology, inside and outside the classroom.
2. Level of reflection and self-regulation that the teaching of written expression promotes.	Most of the written expression activities stimulate mastery of ways to self-diagnose and plan the learning process in cooperation with others based on the student's sphere of action. Most writing activities promote self and peer assessment through rubrics or checklists.	Some written expression activities stimulate mastery of ways to self-diagnose and plan the learning process, in cooperation with others, based on the particular needs in the student's sphere of action. Some writing activities promote self and peer assessment through rubrics or checklists.	Few written expression activities stimulate mastery of ways to self-diagnose and plan the learning process in cooperation with others based on the particular needs in the student's sphere of action. Few writing activities promote self and peer assessment through rubrics or checklists.

<p>3. Level of cognitive-affective unity that the process of written expression promotes.</p>	<p>The appropriate use of elements that promote independence, depth, logic or rationality, flexibility, originality, fluency and economy are included, when unfolding in the solution of problems and intellectual tasks in students. Most of the written expression activities include linguistic support, inside and outside the classroom, for the students. Most of the activities are interesting and challenging and encourage them to solve the motivational and learning problems of the students (learning to learn). The quality of the student's knowledge base, its breadth or volume (in general and particular spheres), its degree of specialization, its structure or organization, and its potential to generate new knowledge are understood. Most of the activities of written expression promote the development of the student's personality, which activate the appropriation of knowledge, skills and intellectual capacities in close harmony with the formation of feelings, motivations, qualities, values, convictions and ideals.</p>	<p>The adequate use of elements that promote independence, depth, logic or rationality, flexibility, fluency and economy are included, to a moderate degree, in the solution of intellectual tasks in students. Some written expression activities include linguistic support, inside and outside the classroom, for students. Some activities are interesting and challenging and stimulate the students' motivational and learning problems (learning to learn). Limited quality of the student's knowledge base, its breadth or volume (in general and particular spheres), its degree of specialization, its structure or organization, and its potential to generate new knowledge. Some written expression activities promote the development of the student that activate the appropriation of knowledge, skills and intellectual capacities, in close harmony with the formation of feelings, motivations, values, convictions and ideals.</p>	<p>The appropriate use of elements that promote independence, depth, logic or rationality, flexibility, fluency and economy are included, to a limited extent, when unfolding in the solution of problems and intellectual tasks in students. Few written expression activities include linguistic support, inside and outside the classroom, for students. Few activities are interesting and challenging and stimulate the student's motivational and learning problems (learning to learn). The understanding, the quality of the student's knowledge base, its breadth or volume (in general and particular spheres), its degree of specialization, its structure or organization, and its potential to generate new knowledge. Few written expression activities promote the development of the student's personality, which activate the appropriation of knowledge, skills and intellectual capacities, in close harmony with the formation of feelings, motivations, values, convictions and ideals.</p>
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For the diagnosis of the development reached by the written expression ability in English, the pedagogical test was used, which consisted of narrating an event through the use of a series of images. The exam included a communicative situation that contextualized and revealed the sociocultural needs of the use of the written production in English of the selected sample. The access by the students, during the exam, to the rubric of the assigned task was included, in order to stimulate the self-regulation of the students.

The rubric used for its evaluation is presented below (table 3), which was designed by the authors, aligned with the scale developed for written production

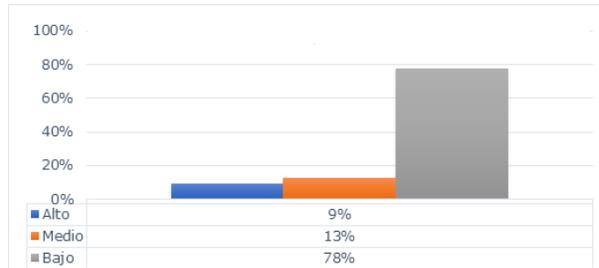
(Written Assessment Grid) of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (Council of Europe, 2020, pp. 187-9).

Table 3- Rubric used to evaluate the quality of the task assigned in the Pedagogical Test.

Indicators or evaluation criteria	Measurement Scale		
	High (+ 80% of students)	Medium (51-79% of students)	Low (-50% of students)
1. Level of completion of the task	More than 80% of the students manage to narrate the story, although with some tension in the reader.	Some students (51-79%) manage to tell the story, although with some tension on the reader.	Less than 50% of the students manage to narrate the story, although with some tension in the reader.
2. Level of coherence and cohesion	More than 80% of students tell the story in a logical sequence and link groups of words with simple connectors such as: 'and', 'but' and 'because'.	Some students (51-79%) tell the story in a logical sequence and link groups of words with simple connectors such as 'and', 'but' and 'because'.	Less than 50% of students tell the story in a logical sequence and link groups of words with simple connectors such as: 'and', 'but' and 'because'.
3. Vocabulary level (complexity and appropriate use)	Over 80% of students use basic, concrete vocabulary and memorized phrases to tell the story. Word choice and collocations are sometimes imprecise and can cause tension for the reader.	Some students (51-79%) use basic, concrete vocabulary and memorized phrases to tell the story. Word choice and collocations are sometimes imprecise and can cause tension for the reader.	Less than 50% of students use basic, concrete vocabulary and memorized phrases to tell the story. Word choice and collocations are sometimes imprecise and can cause tension for the reader.
4. Grammar level (complexity and correctness)	More than 80% of the students use simple sentences correctly, with basic structures and grammatical formulas	Some students (51-79%) use simple sentences correctly, with basic structures and grammatical formulas	Less than 50% of the students use simple sentences correctly, with basic structures and grammatical formulas

	memorized, although they still systematically make mistakes, which produces some tension in the reader.	memorized, although they still systematically make mistakes, which causes some tension in the reader.	memorized, although they still systematically make mistakes, which produces some tension in the reader.
5. Spelling level (spelling and punctuation)	More than 80% of students correctly spell the most common words. Punctuation marks are used such as: full stop, commas, question marks, but not necessarily with precision, which can cause some tension for the reader.	Some students (51-79%) spell the most common words correctly. Punctuation marks are used such as: full stop, commas, question marks, but not necessarily with precision, which can cause some tension for the reader.	Less than 50% of students spell the most common words correctly. Punctuation marks are used such as: full stop, commas, question marks, but not necessarily with precision, which can cause some tension for the reader.

Developing **Subdimension**
 Indicator 1. Level of technological mediation that the teaching of writing skills promotes (Low). Indicator 2. Level of reflection and self-regulation that the writing process promotes (Low). Indicator 3. Level of cognitive-affective unity that the writing process promotes (Low).



Graph 1- Result of the descriptors analyzed in the documentary analysis guide.

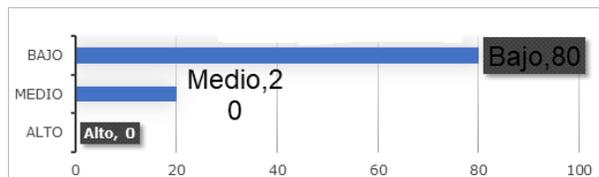
A class observation guide was also designed, which was applied in the observation of six classes, with the aim of evaluating the current state of the current methodology. The results are shown in graph 2.

RESULTS

After the application of the designed instruments, the study revealed the following limitations in the sub-dimensions and indicators of the didactic dimension of the development process of the written expression skill in English in Pre-University (table 4 and graphs 1 and 2):

Table 4- Results according to the sub-dimensions and indicators of the didactic dimension

Communicative	Subdimension
Indicator 1. Level of authenticity of the writing tasks designed (Low). Indicator 2. Level of interactivity that the writing process favors (Medium). Indicator 3. Level of linguistic correction that the learning activities centered on the language favor (Low). Indicator 4. Level of appropriate writing that learning activities focused on discursive and sociocultural norms favor (Low).	



Graph 2- Result of the descriptors analyzed in the class observation guide.

The tables and graphs show deficiencies (low level) in all the indicators of both sub-dimensions.

The communicative nature, with a low level of authenticity of the writing tasks designed. It was observed, as a regularity, the lack of a communicative situation that reveals the needs and interests of the students, and the design of the objective of the tasks oriented, not to the production of meaning but to the

practice of linguistic forms that, however, they are designed and applied in a pre-established way; that is, they do not adjust to the group needs diagnosed in the initial drafting process of the written texts. In addition, little inclusion of activities is perceived, in and outside the classroom, aimed at increasing the variety and complexity of vocabulary, spelling and punctuation correction, grammar correction and text cohesion. Finally, a low level of writing was identified, mainly due to the absence of learning activities focused on discursive and sociocultural norms. A limited inclusion of activities was revealed, aimed at making students aware of the importance of writing a text, of considering the purpose of writing and the readers to whom it is addressed. In addition, little inclusion of activities aimed at making students aware of the importance of revealing their attitude towards the subject of writing, their values and cultural identity was detected.

The developer character showed serious deficiencies in the level of technological mediation that the teaching of written expression promotes. There was little promotion of the use of technologies, inside and outside the classroom, by students, during the preparation and control of tasks, which affected the level of interactivity between the teacher and the students and between the students; authentic texts used as mediation instruments were not used to favor the activation of the student's previous knowledge and to discover, through reflection, regularities and linguistic, discursive and strategic resources used in said texts that could be transferred to the following drafts of the students. The level of reflection and self-regulation that the writing process promotes was evaluated as low, due to the fact that deficiencies were observed in the domain of pathways to self-diagnose and plan the learning process, in cooperation with others, based on their needs and the lack of inclusion of written expression tasks that promote self-evaluation and peer-evaluation, through rubrics or checklists.

The level of cognitive-affective unity that the writing process promotes was also evaluated as low, given the limitations in the linguistic support offered to students during the writing of their texts, which frequently produced feelings of dissatisfaction and lack of confidence, including failure to perform assigned tasks; very few tasks were interesting and challenging for the students, since they did not stimulate the students' motivational and learning problem solving. Finally, it can be affirmed that there was a predominance of tasks that did not promote the development of the personality of the students.

The learning dimension of the object of study was evaluated through the pedagogical test to three groups, with the objective of identifying the difficulties of the 10th grade students of the Urban Pre-University Institute "Ignacio Agramonte y Loynaz", regarding the quality of their written expression ability of texts in English (see table 5).

Table 5- Indicators of the learning dimension

Indicator 1. Level of completion of the task (Low). Indicator 2. Level of coherence and cohesion (Low). Indicator 3. Level of vocabulary (complexity and adequacy) (Low). Indicator 4. Level of grammar (complexity and correctness) (Medium). Indicator 5. Spelling level (spelling and punctuation) (High).

The previous table reflects that the students have serious deficiencies (low level) in the level of task completion, since very few managed to write the story by describing the actions in the sequence of images. Another indicator with a low level was that referring to coherence and cohesion, showing limitations in the sequencing of ideas and, as a regularity in most of the written texts, the non-use, or instead abuse, in the use of the conjunction **and**.

A third indicator, with a low level, referred to the use of vocabulary (complexity and

adequacy): the students showed a limited use of vocabulary to narrate the story, with the use of words in Spanish and frequent inaccuracies in the choice of words and phrases, all of which caused tension for the reader in his understanding of the text.

A medium level was identified for the level of grammar use (complexity and precision): simple sentences predominated, with incorrect selection of verb tenses and that did not conjugate properly.

On the other hand, the indicator corresponding to the level of spelling (spelling and punctuation) was identified as strength (high level), since the students generally wrote the most common words with a reasonable correction, they used punctuation marks as a full stop and commas generally of appropriately, that is, most made few spelling and punctuation errors.

DISCUSSION

There is a group of studies with similar results in the consulted literature. Abdul, Latiff and Hassan (2020) conducted research on the improvement of writing ability in English. This study confirmed the development of written communication skills, self-regulation, as well as the use of creativity and interactivity in writing. The study carried out in this article provided new and similar elements with respect to the commented article: it was demonstrated how students learned to exchange written information, as well as how to explain and clarify their tasks through teacher-student and student-student feedback, aspects to be developed by Pre-university students according to the current program of the subject. However, the empirical characterization revealed a lack of interesting and challenging tasks that would stimulate the solution of motivational and learning problems of Pre-University

students, deficiencies in the domain of pathways to self-diagnose and plan the learning process in cooperation with others from their needs, as well as little linguistic support in writing tasks. These results in both investigations alert about the complexity of self-regulation in the process of producing written texts.

The empirical characterization carried out in Mayabeque did not coincide with the research by Calderón (2018), who carried out a study on written production in English, evidencing medium and high levels of the use of technological mediation. In the Cuban context of the research carried out in Pre-University, there was no evidence of asynchronous or synchronous interaction, technologically mediated between students and the teacher, as well as low use of technologies inside and outside the classroom by students.

In this empirical characterization process in Mayabeque, the authors evidenced current challenges that limit the development of written expression skills in English. Resistance was found in the use of technological mediation due to the low literacy of teachers and students in the correct use of ICT, as well as in the use of interactive platforms and/or applications for educational purposes. Internet interconnection must be achieved, by the Cuban government, in the institutions belonging to the Ministry of Education (MINED), to gain a more accessible, inclusive and equitable environment, particularly in the most vulnerable areas, which will eliminate connectivity gaps.

The results obtained in this empirical characterization carried out in Mayabeque revealed the limitations that students present with respect to the lack of linguistic-communicative knowledge, skills, attitudes and independence to communicate. The qualities of the tasks and activities used in the acting methodology for the development

of the ability to write in English in the diagnosed context, are insufficient to favor the development of the ability of written expression in English.

The results obtained demonstrate the need to use alternative ways to transform the development of the written expression ability in English, in the 10th grade students of the "Ignacio Agramonte y Loynaz" Urban Pre-University Institute.

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The authors declare not to have any interest conflicts.

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