**Students’ and academics’ social practices about academic writing in English in the MLAEI in the Department of Languages at University of Guanajuato.**

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**Draft Note:** We are still trying to narrow down the findings, to select the most insightful, to figure out how to combine the quantitative with the qualitative data, and how to link the literacy theory, social practices, and co-regulation in the discussion. So, any support on these themes is much appreciated.

**Abstract**

Academic writing (AW) at higher education is crucial and simultaneously difficult for both native speakers of English and postgraduate students in non-English speaking contexts. To help students learn to write, diverse pedagogical approaches like product, process, and genre-based have been implemented in English speaking contexts (e.g., USA, UK) and adapted in other foreign contexts (e.g., Mexico). However, although research has shown these approaches are useful, none of these is focused on the process dimension of practice that the student needs (e.g., engage in searching, reading and writing practices, engages with sequences of genres, interacts with peers, tutors, administrators, uses digital tools in specific ways, deploys strategies to develop and articulate arguments (Green, 2016, p. 101). Social practices according to Englander (2006) and Corcoran (2017) are paramount and beneficial for second language students and scholars, who often need to disseminate their research with the international community (Lillis & Curry, 2010, p. 68). However, more research is needed from a social practices view, which Lillis and Curry (2010), Aitchison and Lee (2006) suggest investigating. Thus, this study aims to unveil and understand the social practices MLAEI current students, graduates, and professors engage in to create the thesis and articles in English in the languages department at a public University in Guanajuato, Mexico. To this aim, the research questions guiding the study are ‘In which social practices do students, graduates, and professors engage in during the MLAEI at a Mexican university when creating their thesis or articles in English? And Why?’. To answer these questions, 21 male and female students, graduates and professors of the MLAEI answered a survey and an interview from June 12 to July 31, 2023. Survey’s frequency distributions showed social practices such as that participants talk about writing with some recurrent people, that participants engage in using some recurrent technology to manage writing issues, and that participants write in some recurrent places in the Mexican context. The inductive analysis of interviews revealed diverse social practices of MLAEI professors and classmates who often played diverse roles such as being a thesis director, reader, reviewer, teacher, editor, proofreader, mentor, mentee; that MLAEI participants in general write in isolated places (own house’s room or office, empty classroom, library) to build knowledge as opposed to social places such as online meetings, public coffee shops, or classmates’ houses to revise diverse thesis aspects with professors, research collaborators, or students’ classmates. Findings also revealed that they used technology for diverse purposes such as to consult and manage linguistic topics, to send texts or drafts to others, to send feedback to writers, to be informed on research and writing topics, to use applications to stop distractions or help them work distractedly. The findings revealed that social practices vary according to whom the participants are, the places where they write, and the technology they have at their disposal. Findings also revealed that MLAEI students generally received from professors written feedback on text, and that they talk about writing with their classmates. However, for some participants, professors’ written feedback is sometimes unclear and the classmates’ one is sometimes unhelpful. Findings also revealed that students and graduates generally manage linguistic issues of their thesis writing with support of online editing software (e.g., Grammarly) and translators (e.g., Google translator), online dictionaries, and artificial intelligence (e.g. Chat GTP). Overall, this study revealed the social practices that MLAEI graduates, students, and professors engage in to create thesis and articles in English in a Mexican context, and presents some limitations, implications, and suggestions for academic writers and researchers in non-English speaking contexts.

**Introduction**

Writing is important in higher education because many students need to study, research, and write a thesis and research articles to obtain a postgraduate degree (Aitchison & Lee, 2006, p. 267). To help students learn to write, diverse pedagogies like product, process, and genre-based approach have been implemented in English speaking contexts (e.g., USA, UK) and adapted in other foreign contexts (e.g., Mexico). However, although research has shown these approaches are useful, none of them is focused on the process dimension of practice (e.g., searching, reading and writing, interacting with peers, tutors, administrators, using digital tools in specific ways, deploying strategies to develop and articulate arguments that students need to engage in when creating a text (Green, 2016, p. 101), e.g, thesis. Moreover, not all students in non-English speaking contexts receive instruction on how to write a thesis in English. The lack of fulfilling a thesis inhibits graduation. At higher education in Mexico, between 60-80% of undergraduate students (UGs) do not finish their studies due to the lack of fulfilling the requirement of writing a thesis, among other social factors such as family and economic issues (Díaz de Cossio, 1998; Hernández-Zamora & Zotzmann, 2014, pp. 80-81). Indeed, from 2000-2017, about 46% of undergraduate students in the bachelor of English and Spanish at a public university in Guanajuato, Mexico, did not graduate due to the lack of writing the thesis (Zimanyi & Houde, 2022). Likewise, students of postgraduate programs in the disciplines with English as a second language (ESL) often need to write a thesis or article (Coffin et al., 2003, p. 5). However, Giridharan (2012), and Hanauer and Englander (2013) argued that academic writing causes problems to natives and non native speakers of English, and Díaz and González (2019) argued that academic writing is a barrier for many Mexican academics and postgraduate students when trying to disseminate scientific knowledge. This problem, according to Starkie and Sidotti (2017), is because some institutions do not pay the attention to academic writing that it deserves (p. 10).

When instruction is given, writing is often regarded as an individual activity and instruction generalized to all students. In addition, some writing pedagogical approaches like product, process, and genre-based limit their focus to specific types of knowledge (Badger & White, 2000) such as linguistic (Xu & Li, 2018); cognitive and metacognitive (Rusinovci, 2015); and texts/genres features (Hyland, 2007; Bhatia, 1997; Paltridge, 2001; Swales, 1990; Curry & Lillis, 2019; Green, 2016), marginalizing practices (Lillis & Scott, 2007, p. 11; Green, 2016, p. 100), activities such as those cited by Green (2016) including ‘searching, reading and writing, interacting with people, using technological tools (p. 101), in which students need to engage to create texts (Green, 2016, p. 101). Ann M. Johns (1997) summarizes the pedagogical approaches to literacy as traditional, learner-centered, and socioliterate. In traditional literacy, the focus is on forms, sometimes even ignoring the communicative reason behind those forms. Learner-centered views in the current case would entail a focus on the end goal and what and why the writer wishes to communicate. Rigid and inflexible standards by journals might conflict with this view and approach, yet writers might seek publication venues more in line with their desires. Also, writers might learn as they interact with texts and feedback. Finally, in the socioliterate view, writers should immerse themselves in the types of text they wish to reproduce, developing a conception of the genre they wish to compose and how potential readers will use their text. This will also allow the writer to enter a discourse community with its shared values and definitions. However, writers must follow conventions; and individual writers do not have the freedom to innovate in many genres such as scientific journal articles (Johns, 1997, pp. 30-31). Moreover, the socioliterate view ignores the social practices in which writers of academic texts in English engage in to create their texts, and the texts reveal no insights on the writers’ practices (Green, 2016, p. 101).

A sociocultural perspective has often focused on the processes of ‘co-regulation’ (Castelló, et al., 2010, p. 1265) that implies interactions of writers with other peers of higher level to negotiate meaning through dialogue (Englert, Mariage & Dunsmore, 2006). Coregulation involves sharing through interpersonal interactions centered on who does the regulation for the individual in the zone of proximal development (Hadwin et al., 2010; Hadwin & Oshige, 2011). Studies from the sociocultural perspective have addressed the supporting role of partners in the planning of course texts (Higgins et al., 1991), revision between peers related to thesis problems (Castelló et al., 2010), undergraduates’ and graduates’ comments, and teachers’ comments about the students’ texts together with the helpfulness of the comments (Cho et al., 2006), and the comparison between regulation processes of individual writers (Iñesta, 2009). We know about social practices that EFL writers might use, but we want to know more about those in action in the Mexican context. Especially because social practices can be useful as held by Englander (2006) and Corcoran (2017), or because Lillis and Curry (2010), Aitchison and Lee (2006) suggest that scholars investigate. This is important because according to Crawford (2007), writing is a cultural activity in which people from diverse cultures address writing learning and use in different ways, this implies that socio-cultural processes surround writing, which need unveiling.

To Zotzmann and Sheldrake (2021), writing is a complex process that can involve diverse types of regulation. Social regulation implies a series of activities in which writers regulate their individual writing activity together with their collective writing activity in which these writers are participating (Hadwin, et al., 2010). Social regulation can be influenced by student professors in the academic field and their target genres, and by additional interlocutors beyond the academic context. Thus, Zotzmann and Sheldrake (2021) demanded more research to listen to the narrations and accounts of the students about their writing from a social perspective, and Castelló et al. (2010) acknowledges that little is known about the types of ‘scaffolding’ that have their objective to facilitate the acquisition of the regulation processes of writing, and how the professors and students use these processes (p. 1270).

From a sociocultural perspective and regulation, writing is learned and regulated through discursive practices of writers and social interactions with members of the scientific community (Castelló et al., 2010). Social practices (SPs) imply a connection of what writers do with the language to what writers do in the social context involving also ‘habitus’, conventionalized practice(s), interpersonal relation(s), and professional networks (Zotzmann, 2013, p. 2) of social and institutional interactions with readers, reviewers, editors, and publishers (Aitchison & Lee, 2006, p. 271), i.e.., writers’ social practices are influenced by other interlocutors. So this last point can explain why Lillis and Curry (2010) conceptualized academic writing (AW) and publishing as social practices. However, it is writers themselves, who set these practices based on the chances and limitations that exist in their national or international context (Lillis & Curry, 2010, in Zotzmann, 2013, p. 2).

**Literate activity**

The sociocultural view conceives writing (literate activity) as a social practice, a situated activity rather than just writing texts full of sentences and paragraphs. Writing from a social practice perspective or as a situated activity takes place at different moments and using different materials (paper, pencils, computers), semiotic tools (language systems, images, numbers), and flows of activity (reading, speaking, observing, acting, processing, thinking, and feeling) (in Narvaez-Cardona & Chois-Lenis, in book of Madson, 2022, pp. 25-37, Ch. 2). So, writing involves many social practices, which some have a name such as writing for grants and scientific writing. Scientific writing includes writing a research article for publication, or writing an academic genre such as a thesis. With the “literate activity” concept, we can see writing for the MLAEI thesis as an interactive social process that weaves not always harmoniously through minds, actions, times and spaces (in Narvaez-Cardona & Chois-Lenis, in book of Madson, 2022, pp. 25-37, Ch. 2). Thus, from a sociocultural approach, students learn to write by participating in literacy events to achieve social goals, which are meaningful for them. According to Narvaez-Cardona and Chois-Lenis (in book of Madson, 2022, pp. 25-37, Ch. 2), in Latin America, two ways of learning writing exist: instruction and enculturation. Enculturation refers to “natural encounters with real-world writing and communication situations”. Students learn the literate activity by participating in a disciplinary community consisting of their peers and other professionals in their discipline (in Narvaez-Cardona & Chois-Lenis, in book of Madson, 2022, pp. 25-37, Ch. 2). So, learning literacy implies instruction and enculturation, which is useful to interact, share resources and ideas within research groups (peers, professors, advisors). Thus, this Mexican study reveals and presents new insights to understand the practices MLAEI graduates, current students and professors engage in to create thesis and research articles, which are part of advanced literacy in the languages department.

About literacy, Street (1995, p. 1, in Snyder, 2003, p. 268) holds that:

“Integral to the New Literacy Studies (NLS) are 'approaches to language and literacy that treat them as social practices and resources rather than a set of rules formally and narrowly defined' (Street, 1998: 1). These social practices and resources are 'embedded in specific contexts, discourses and positions' (Street, 1996:1). The NLS reject the dominant view of literacy as a 'neutral' technical skill, conceptualizing it instead as an 'ideological practice, implicated in power relations and embedded in specific cultural meanings and practices' (Street, 1995: 1).”

Therefore, considering that more research is needed from social practices that writers engage in when creating texts, and the scant attention given to writing in Latin America (Molina-Natera & López-Gil, 2019); this Mexican study gathered quantitative and qualitative data to reveal social practices of MLAEI graduates, current students and professors, who use English to create thesis and articles required in the MLAEI program in the languages department. The quantitative data showed the most recurrent social practices involving engagement with diverse people (e.g., classmates, professors, thesis directors, relatives, friends), resources (e.g., technological means/tools), and diverse specific contexts (home, school, and social public places) reported by MLAEI graduates, current students and professors. The qualitative data shed more details on the social practices as Green (2016) and Corcoran (2017) suggested to investigate, and as Lillis and Curry (2010) also asked to find out how and with what consequences texts are created (p. 21).

**The MLAEI program**

To graduate in the Masters of Applied Linguistics in English Teaching (MLAEI) four- semester-program in the languages department of a Mexican public university in the State of Guanajuato, the MLAEI students need to cover 104 credits, do research, publish a single research article as well as write a thesis based on that research. Students are assigned a thesis director to guide them on thesis work since the first semester. In the fourth semester, students are enrolled in a subject called ‘Elaboration of degree work’ to write up the master thesis. In this class, students do microteaching presentations on academic writing topics related to their thesis, to get across the topics, and to engage their MLAEI classmates in a task to understand the topics and to be able to revise their theses. Students also do a reflection presentation on a main problem faced while writing their thesis and present the solutions to manage it. The ‘Elaboration of degree work’ subject professor reads the first whole students’ theses drafts by weeks 12-13 and their final drafts by weeks 16-17 out of 18 weeks. Alongside the students’ master program and writing up of their research thesis, some of the MLAEI’s subjects’ professors, including a thesis director, offer feedback on thesis drafts. However, it is the students’ responsibility to read and progress on their research and thesis, and to accept or reject the professors’ feedback. However, despite the professors’ and thesis director’s support as well as the ‘Elaboration of degree work’ class, the MLAEI students experience difficulties while doing the research and writing up the thesis because generally for them is the first time they get engaged in empirical research and writing a thesis in academic English. Eventually, students achieve their thesis, but the social practices they engage in to create it is a theme Zotzmann and Sheldrake, (2021), Lillis and Curry (2010) also claim to explore. Therefore, the research question and objectives guiding this study are:

In which social practices do MLAEI graduates, students and professors engage at a public Mexican university when writing thesis or articles in English? Why?

Objectives:

* 1. To reveal specifically the people, or resources with which the MLAEI and professors at a Mexican university got engaged when writing thesis and articles in English, and Why?
  2. To document the most common practices that MLAEI graduates, students and professors at a Mexican university got engaged when they write thesis and articles in English? Why?
  3. To describe how the social practices in which the MLAEI graduates, students and professors got engaged are at a Mexican university when they write thesis or articles in English? and Why?
  4. To detail from the perception of MLAEI graduates, students and professors at a Mexican university, how social practices in academic writing of thesis and articles in English in which they got engaged influence themselves as writers? Why?

**Research Methodology**

To answer the research question and achieve the objectives, this empirical research used mixed methods because writing is a complex ability that can imply diverse types of regulation and influences from students and professors in one or more social contexts; so different methods (reports of the same participants, interviews) and approaches (content analysis, thematic analysis) were useful to show new insights (Zotzmann & Sheldrake, 2021, p. 13; Hadwin & Oshige, 2011, p. 258; Castelló et al., 2010, p. 1274). Qualitative data using phenomenology to describe the personal experiences of the participants through the eyes of someone else (Denscombe, 2010, p. 4).

**Ethics considerations**

The study was approved by CEPIUG (CEPIUG-P09-2023) at the University of Guanajuato, on June 2023. Recruitment was with the support of the administrative office, which distributed via email the research invitation to the postgraduate students and professors and the link to answer a survey and participate in an interview. The survey link was also shared through the website for social communication with the MLAEI graduate students. The participants consented to participate by clicking on the online survey ‘I give my consent to participate in this research’ and pseudonymized themselves.

**Participants**

Twenty-one male (n=4) and female (n=17) individuals voluntarily participated from the ‘Maestría en Lingüística Aplicada a la Enseñanza del Inglés (MLAEI)’ in the Languages Department at a public university in Guanajuato, Mexico. Table 1 shows participants classified in three groups.

Table 1. Participants from the MLAEI program:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Current MLAEI professors (n=4) | Graduate MLAEI students  (n=9) | Current MLAEI students  (n=8) |
| P1. Daniel  P7. Marina  P12. Sandra  \*P2. JaneCampion | P11. Dante  \*\*P13. Annie  P21. Natalia  P4. Elsi  P5. RenataChavez  P8. Amy  P14. Amelia  P19. Valentina  P20. Martha | P3. Maya  P9. Adrián  P15. Teresa  P16. Ximena  P18. Diana  P17. Alex  P6. Lily  P10. Kida |
| \*From Hungary  \*\* From USA  Note: Except for JaneCampeon and Annie, 19/21 participants were Mexicans.  All participants adopted a pseudonym. | | |

All the graduates and current students studied the MLAEI at University of Guanajuato as opposed to the professors who studied it in other institutions. The four MLAEI professors and one MLAEI graduate obtained a doctorate overseas as opposed to only one MLAEI graduate, who was still studying it in another institution in Guanajuato. The 17 MLAEI graduate and current students were either writing or had written a thesis at University of Guanajuato, as opposed to professors who wrote it in another overseas institution. Most MLAEI graduates and current students had published at least one research paper in English as opposed to professors who had published more than one article either in English or in Spanish. The four professors participating had been working in the MLAEI for several years. Only four MLAEI graduates were working as professors in the languages department. Nineteen out of twenty-one participants were Mexicans with English as an additional language.

**Data collection**

**Survey**

To identify recurrent social practices, the participants answered an online (Google Docs) survey that included multiple choice questions, each followed by ‘other’ as an open answer so participants could add any unlisted options. The survey contained demographic questions to gather data from the sample, so we could evaluate and report the degree of similarity between the sample and target population and to generalize results (Tipton, 2020). Other questions in the survey were to identify the recurrent participants’ social practices in which they engage to write a thesis or article in English. For instance, the most frequent social practices in which participants got engaged, people from who they receive support to write, people they seek to support language (grammar, technical vocabulary), the people they meet to achieve text/publication, mode of communication they use to communicate with supporting people, mode to share and receive feedback, thesis/articles’ sections they seek support, the online resources they used to support their writing needs, the common useful resources they used to cover their writing needs, the places where they generally write, the strategies they used to write in English, the recommendations received from classmates and which they used, and the thesis’ sections they would write differently if they had to write them again. The survey was distributed randomly to the target population (Ayiro, 2012, p. 501), including graduates, current students, and professors from the MLAEI in the languages department at a public university in Guanajuato, Mexico. However, only 21 MLAEI people (graduates, current students, professors) consented to participate.

**Interview**

Interviews involved follow-up questions to get deeper insight on social practices, i.e., the people, places, resources participants engage in to create thesis and articles. Interviews happened according to participant’s and main researcher’s availability. Four interviews happened in a face-to-face format in the Languages Department, and 17 via Zoom as preferred by participants. Two external recorders were used simultaneously to avoid possible technical issues, and to back up interview data for later transcription and analysis on MAXQDA 2022 software. Interviews lasted 30-60 minutes, 19/21 were in Spanish and 2 in English, so participants could express themselves freely.

**Survey analysis**

The survey data was stored in a researcher’s personal laptop, backed up in an USB, and shared with the research collaborators through Google Drive for research purposes. For the analysis, per each option selected in a question, we used the number1 and 0 for the opposite case. Descriptive statistics of frequency distribution type per item (target social practices) were computed on Excel. All the tabulated values (1= selected answer, 0=no selected answer) within each item (target social practices) of the data set were added to report the number of occurrences per item (target social practices) within the data set, the totals were converted to percentages per each group of participants (MLAEI graduates, current students, and professors). The frequencies’ distribution describes the occurrence of data, or the number of times a data point (target social practice) occurred within the data set.

**Interviews thematic analysis**

Similar to Chapetón & Chala (2013), the main researcher recorded, transcribed, analyzed, and codified interview data inductively and thematically. Specifically, the main researcher downloaded the recorded interview’s data in a personal laptop, heard each whole interview, transcribed all interviews word by word, kept pseudonyms adopted by participants, and imported the data into MAXQDA 2022 software for qualitative thematic analysis. In the inductive coding, many topics emerged (see figure XX), which were later categorized in major themes including interaction with people, interaction with technology to support writing, places to write, actions to write a thesis in English. The Analysis allowed us to identify reasons why participants got engaged in target practices, and the perceived influences (e.g., emotional) on their academic writing.

**Data triangulation, validity, and reliability**

Survey results were triangulated with interviews’ findings; and interviews’ information’ validity was increased by inviting participants who have written or were writing a thesis or article in English, and who due to their writing experiences were in the position of commenting on the social practices in which they got engaged and which are of interest for researchers (Denscombe, 2010). Furthermore, reliability of interview recurrent themes found was augmented by focusing the analysis on looking for themes occurring across interviews rather than basing findings on one participant’s interview (Denscombe, 2010). Interrater reliability was also done among the three researchers. We coded the interview data individually to later compare whether the three researchers’ codes were consistent. If coding differed among the three researchers, they discussed it until they agreed the most suitable name for the code addressed. Some data excerpts were double or tripled coded because they fall into different social practices. For example, receiving feedback through videoconferencing or through email was either part of social practices involving people (thesis director), and simultaneously of social practices involving technology (Zoom, Word files shared by email), and of social practices involving online spaces.

To measure the internal reliability of the survey, data from the survey was downloaded in Excel to compute Cronbach's Alpha. However, the result (α= 0.672) was low. Thus, we considered an Omega coefficient as an alternative to Cronbach’s Alpha as suggested by Lozano, García,-Cueto, and Muñoz (2008, in Ventura-Leon, Caycho-Rodríguez, 2017). The Omega coefficient was computed in R version 4.3.1 (2023-06-16 ucrt) -- "Beagle Scouts" Copyright (C) 2023 The R Foundation for Statistical Computing Platform: x86\_64-w64-mingw32/x64 (64-bit), which showed a reliable value (ω=0.93).

**Survey Results on social practices**

**Survey results about people that supported participants when writing**

In the following section, the frequency distribution per each of the following questions Q8, Q11, Q12, Q14, Q15 involving people that supported participants’ writing is presented and then summarized.

The following Table Question8 presents the total frequency distribution per item concerning the people with whom the participants mainly communicate and who generally help them when writing the thesis or research article in English.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Personally | By Phone | By Videoconference Apps | By Text Message | By Email | None cited |
|  | Frequency and % | Frequency and % | Frequency and % | Frequency and % | Frequency and % | Frequency and % |
| Profesores (n=4) | 2 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 |
| Profesores % | 50 | 25 | 50 | 50 | 50 | 50 |
| Graduates (n=9) | 4 | 0 | 3 | 2 | 7 | 1 |
| Graduates % | 44 | 0 | 33 | 22 | 78 | 11 |
| Current students (n=8) | 3 | 0 | 4 | 1 | 4 | 1 |
| Current students % | 38 | 0 | 50 | 13 | 50 | 13 |

Gráfico, Gráfico de barras

Descripción generada automáticamente

The following Table Question11 presents the total frequency distribution per item concerning the people who can generally help participants correct grammar and technical vocabulary in their thesis or research article in English.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | A Friend | A Relative | An English Teacher | My Thesis director | A Classmate | A Research collaborator | None cited |
|  | Frequency and % | Frequency and % | Frequency and % | Frequency and % | Frequency and % | Frequency and % | Frequency and % |
| Professors (n=4) | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 2 |
| Professorss % | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 50 | 50 |
| Graduate students (n=9) | 2 | 0 | 0 | 7 | 5 | 4 | 0 |
| Graduate students % | 22 | 0 | 0 | 78 | 56 | 44 | 0 |
| Current students (n=8) | 2 | 0 | 4 | 6 | 3 | 1 | 0 |
| Current students % | 25 | 0 | 50 | 75 | 38 | 13 | 0 |

Gráfico, Gráfico de barras

Descripción generada automáticamente

The following Table Question12 presents the total frequency distribution per item concerning the main practices participants engage in to achieve the thesis or research article contents and can publish the text.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | I meet with a Proofreader | I meet with a Writing advisor | I meet with a English native speaker | I meet with a Language editor | I meet with a Professor/thesis director | I meet with a Research collaborator | None cited |
|  | Frequency and % | Frequency and % | Frequency and % | Frequency and % | Frequency and % | Frequency and % | Frequency and % |
| Professors (n=4) | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 1 |
| Professorss % | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 75 | 25 |
| Graduate students (n=9) | 3 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 7 | 5 | 0 |
| Graduate students % | 33 | 11 | 11 | 11 | 78 | 56 | 0 |
| Current students (n=8) | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 4 | 2 | 3 |
| Current students % | 13 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 50 | 25 | 38 |

Gráfico, Gráfico de barras

Descripción generada automáticamente

The following Table Question14 presents the total frequency distribution per item concerning the main and sufficiently useful resources that cover participants’ academic writing needs when writing a thesis or research article in English.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Online translator | Grammarly | Writing books | Writing tutorials | Writing courses | Thesis director | English teacher | Translator(people) | None cited |
|  | Frequency and % | Frequency and % | Frequency and % | Frequency and % | Frequency and % | Frequency and % | Frequency and % | Frequency and % | Frequency and % |
| Professors (n=4) | 0 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Professorss % | 0 | 0 | 50 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 25 |
| Graduates (n=9) | 4 | 6 | 3 | 1 | 1 | 4 | 2 | 0 | 1 |
| Graduate s % | 44 | 67 | 33 | 11 | 11 | 44 | 22 | 0 | 11 |
| Current students (n=8) | 6 | 8 | 2 | 2 | 0 | 6 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Current students % | 75 | 100 | 25 | 25 | 0 | 75 | 0 | 0 | 0 |

Gráfico, Gráfico de barras

Descripción generada automáticamente

The following Table Question15 presents the total frequency distribution per item concerning the people from whom participants mainly receive support when writing a thesis or research article in English.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | My Professor | My Classmates | My Friends | My family Relatives | My Research collaborator | None cited |
|  | Frequency and % | Frequency and % | Frequency and % | Frequency and % | Frequency and % | Frequency and % |
| Professors (n=4) | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 1 |
| Professorss % | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 75 | 25 |
| Graduate students (n=9) | 2 | 5 | 3 | 0 | 4 | 2 |
| Graduate students % | 22 | 56 | 33 | 0 | 44 | 22 |
| Current students (n=8) | 6 | 2 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 3 |
| Current students % | 75 | 25 | 38 | 0 | 0 | 38 |

Gráfico, Gráfico de barras

Descripción generada automáticamente

Summarizing questions Q8, Q11, Q12, Q14, Q15 results, current students and MLAEI graduates met and received support from their thesis directors or professors as opposed to professors who generally meet with their research article collaborators or consult writing books. Writing books are useful for a few current students and MLAEI graduates. Current students and MLAEI graduates find their professors’ support useful, but also received support from friends and classmates. The support received is generally by email, by in-person, or by video conferencing meetings. Apart from thesis directors and professors, most current students and MLAEI graduates find Grammarly useful, followed by online translators. Editors, native speakers, writing advisors, relatives, translation people, teachers of English, writing tutorials, and writing courses are not generally used by most of the participants in the three groups. It is important to remark that although participants met with people, most of the communication is via email, making us infer that feedback is written rather than discussed in a more collaborative way between the writer and thesis director.

**Survey results about technological resources participants used to support their writing**

In the following section, the frequency distribution per each of the Q9 and Q13 are presented, followed by a summary of the results of these two questions together with Q14 about technological resources participants used to support their writing.

The following Table Question9 presents the total frequency distribution per item concerning the main means to share thesis or research article files for receiving feedback.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Through Apps in Cloud | Through Email | Personally and printed | Through Videoconference Apps | None cited |
|  | Frequency and % | Frequency and % | Frequency and % | Frequency and % | Frequency and % |
| Profesores (n=4) | 2 | 2 | 0 | 1 | 2 |
| Profesores % | 50 | 50 | 0 | 25 | 50 |
| Graduate students (n=9) | 5 | 8 | 3 | 3 | 0 |
| Graduate students % | 56 | 89 | 33 | 33 | 0 |
| Current students (n=8) | 2 | 7 | 2 | 0 | 0 |
| Current students % | 25 | 88 | 25 | 0 | 0 |

Gráfico, Gráfico de barras

Descripción generada automáticamente

The following Table Question13 presents the total frequency distribution per item concerning the main online resources that participants themselves use to support their needs in writing academically thesis or research articles in English.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | I study writing websites | I consult strategies on virtual WC | I consult online dictionaries | I learn through Tutorials | None cited |
|  | Frequency and % | Frequency and % | Frequency and % | Frequency and % | Frequency and % |
| Professors (n=4) | 0 | 0 | 3 | 0 | 0 |
| Professorss % | 0 | 0 | 75 | 0 | 0 |
| Graduate students (n=9) | 1 | 2 | 7 | 2 | 1 |
| Graduate students % | 11 | 22 | 78 | 22 | 11 |
| Current students (n=8) | 2 | 3 | 4 | 3 | 1 |
| Current students % | 25 | 38 | 50 | 38 | 13 |

Gráfico, Gráfico de barras

Descripción generada automáticamente

Summarizing Q9, Q13, Q14 results, the emails to share the text and receive feedback were a common resource used by professors, MLAEI graduates, and current students, who also used online dictionaries. Grammarly and online translators were also useful resources to cover writing needs, but only for MLAEI graduates and current students. Writing websites, virtual writing centers, and writing tutorials were used to support writing needs just for a few current students and MLAEI graduates.

**Survey results about strategies and recommendations participants applied in writing**

In the following section, the frequency distribution of the Q17 and Q18 is presented, followed by a summary of these results related to strategies and recommendations participants applied in writing.

The following Table Question17 presents the total frequency distribution per item concerning the main strategies participants use when writing thesis or research articles in English.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Write Spa Tran to E -myself | Write Spa Tran to E -Google | | Write Spa Tran to E -someone else | Think Spa-Write English | Think and Write English | Write English with expert guidance |
|  | Frequency and % | Frequency and % | Frequency and % | Frequency and % | Frequency and % | Frequency and % | Frequency and % |
| Professors (n=4) | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 4 | 0 | 0 |
| Professors % | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 100 | 0 | 0 |
| Graduate students (n=9) | 0 | 0 | 0 | 4 | 5 | 1 | 0 |
| Graduate students % | 0 | 0 | 0 | 44 | 56 | 11 | 0 |
| Current students (n=8) | 0 | 0 | 0 | 5 | 5 | 1 | 0 |
| Current students % | 0 | 0 | 0 | 63 | 63 | 13 | 0 |

Gráfico

Descripción generada automáticamente

The following Table Question18 presents the total frequency distribution per item concerning the main suggestions from classmates that participants apply when writing the thesis or research article in English.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Imitate language | Imitate IMRAD | Use common sense | Write order P-S, C-E, Process | Discuss Writing Someone else | None cited |
|  | Frequency and % | Frequency and % | Frequency and % | Frequency and % | Frequency and % | Frequency and % |
| Professors (n=4) | 1 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 1 |
| Professorss % | 25 | 50 | 25 | 25 | 50 | 25 |
| Graduate students (n=9) | 5 | 5 | 2 | 4 | 2 | 1 |
| Graduate students % | 56 | 56 | 22 | 44 | 22 | 11 |
| Current students (n=8) | 7 | 5 | 4 | 5 | 3 | 1 |
| Current students % | 88 | 63 | 50 | 63 | 38 | 13 |

Gráfico, Gráfico de barras

Descripción generada automáticamente

Summarizing Q17 and Q18 results, all professors think in Spanish and write directly in English. Some MLAEI graduates and current students think in Spanish and write directly in English. A few MLAEI graduates and current students write in Spanish and then somebody else that is dominant in English translates the text into English for them. All three groups of participants considered recommendations such as imitating the IMRAD organization, imitating the language, writing in a logical order (problem-solution, cause-effect, process) and using common sense, or discussing the writing with someone else. The discussion with someone else is more addressed by professors. MLAEI graduates and current students reported to have received recommendations from classmates more than professors in imitation of IMRAD, imitation of language, and imitation of problem-solution, cause-effect.

**Results about the places where the participants wrote**

The following Table Question16 presents the total frequency distribution per item concerning the main places participants go to write the thesis or research article in English.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Classroom | Professor's office | Classmate's house | Cafeteria | Computer Lab | Green common areas | My office | None cited |
|  | Frequency and % | Frequency and % | Frequency and % | Frequency and % | Frequency and % | Frequency and % | Frequency and % | Frequency and % |
| Professors (n=4) | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 4 | 0 |
| Professors % | 0 | 0 | 0 | 25 | 0 | 0 | 100 | 0 |
| Graduate students (n=9) | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 1 | 5 | 1 |
| Graduate students % | 0 | 0 | 0 | 22 | 0 | 11 | 56 | 11 |
| Current students (n=8) | 1 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 1 | 3 | 2 |
| Current students % | 13 | 0 | 0 | 25 | 0 | 13 | 38 | 25 |

Gráfico, Gráfico de barras

Descripción generada automáticamente

Summarizing Q16 results, the place to write for professors is their office, whereas for a few students is their own office and a public coffee shop. None of them write in the computer lab, or the classmates house, or the professor’s office.

The frequency distribution and corresponding percentages allowed us toreveal the people, or resources with which the professors of the MLAEI, MLAEI graduates, and current MLAEI students at a public Mexican university engaged when writing thesis and articles in English and report their most common practices. Thus, the social practices found include the people, technological resources, the text sections, strategies and suggestions/recommendations, and the places where the participants generally engage when writing their thesis and research articles in English at the MLAEI in the languages department of a public university in Guanajuato.

The survey was useful to identify the most common social practices based on frequency distribution and percentages. However, survey quantitative data does not allow us to describe the social practices, participants’ perceptions on the way their practices influenced themselves as writers, and the reasons behind their social practices, which qualitative data from interviews does.

**Interview Findings on social practices based on content analysis**

**People advising on writing**

When asked about the people they have received support most of the participants cited a thesis director, class professor, or research collaborator. Collaboration with a thesis director is for the development of discussion, arguments, and clarity of thesis or articles at a post writing stage. Another finding is that MLAEI graduates and current students generally sought for more alternative people as opposed to professors, who generally work themselves or with similar experience professors, i.e., professors who have publications achieved in English. Besides, some professors when seeking for support they talk with other experts in congresses, or by contacting them through Research Gate forums. When participants receive support from friends, classmates, job colleagues, or external people, it is generally to read the paper and check clarity and/or linguistic aspects. Moreover, friends and family members and classmates offer emotional support by listening to the participants who talk about their writing. The professors played diverse roles such as proofreaders or readers of the final thesis, thesis directors alongside the research in the MLAEI program, advisors on any theme emerging during the thesis writing process, and reviewers of the thesis advances and final text.

In the next Table XX, we can observe the people addressed per each of the three groups of participants.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **MLAEI students** | **MLAEI graduates** | **MLAEI professors** | **Total** |
| Human resources | 44 | 88 | 8 | 140 |
| ResearchGate researchers app | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| Research collaborator | 0 | 0 | 5 | 5 |
| Native speakers of English | 0 | 2 | 0 | 2 |
| Reviewers | 0 | 5 | 2 | 7 |
| Well known researchers in conferences | 0 | 5 | 0 | 5 |
| Professors readers | 5 | 1 | 0 | 6 |
| External people to MLAEI | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Job colleagues | 4 | 5 | 0 | 9 |
| Friends | 2 | 8 | 2 | 12 |
| Family members | 9 | 9 | 0 | 18 |
| Classmates | 24 | 34 | 0 | 58 |
| Professors | 31 | 46 | 0 | 77 |
|  |  |  |  |  |
| SUMA | 121 | 203 | 18 | 342 |
| N = Documentos/participantes | 8 | 9 | 4 | 21 |

In Table above about people, it is evident that the MLAEI graduates addressed more diverse people than current students and current professors. The participant-professors seemed not to consult other people. When professors do so, they consulted with research collaborators, reviewers, or friends who were generally at the same level they were. MLAEI graduates consulted more people possibly because they have already finished the thesis, whereas the current-MLAEI students are still writing the thesis. What is evident in the two groups of current- and MLAEI graduates, is that their consults are mostly with some classmates and professors, who are in the same MLAEI field.

**Feedback received**

Feedback is generally provided in prose in the participants’ thesis drafts in Word. Feedback received can be on diverse linguistic issues such as on repetition of words, redundant or repeated information, use of synonyms, run-on sentences, and paraphrasis. Feedback can be direct or indirect. Most feedback is varied as it can also address aspects of text content, text structure, theme focus, citation source, text clarity, text coherence, or either to expand or reduce information. Besides, for some participants, receiving feedback is challenging as sometimes is not clear for them, and in other instances it is difficult for them to manage the diverse types of feedback received from diverse people.

Table XX below shows aspects addressed on feedback received in the three groups of participants.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **MLAEI students** | **MLAEI Graduates** | **Professors MLAEI** | **Total** |
| Feedback received | 29 | 30 | 5 | 64 |
| Feedback from various people is a problem | 0 | 3 | 0 | 3 |
| Expand ideas | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| Conclusions | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| Run-on sentences | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| Redundance and repetition | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| Unclear feedback | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| Synonyms | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| Indirect feedback | 0 | 2 | 0 | 2 |
| Calco interference from Spanish | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| Feedback from various people is difficult | 0 | 4 | 0 | 4 |
| Relevant information | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| Write in first person | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| Cite | 1 | 1 | 0 | 2 |
| Paraphrase | 3 | 0 | 0 | 3 |
| Reduce information | 2 | 0 | 0 | 2 |
| Focus on topic | 1 | 2 | 0 | 3 |
| Coherence | 1 | 1 | 0 | 2 |
| Feedback very direct | 3 | 1 | 0 | 4 |
| References | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Critic on comment | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Sincere among Friends | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Discussion | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Tenses per section | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Methodology | 4 | 1 | 1 | 6 |
| Description | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Narration | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Clarity of language | 6 | 5 | 3 | 14 |
| Language and ortography | 6 | 3 | 0 | 9 |
| Data análisis | 3 | 0 | 0 | 3 |
| Literature review | 1 | 1 | 1 | 3 |
| Grammar | 3 | 2 | 0 | 5 |
| Feedback general group | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Thesis structure | 4 | 1 | 0 | 5 |
| Text content | 1 | 1 | 0 | 2 |
| Word repetition | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Comments on text | 6 | 12 | 0 | 18 |
|  |  |  |  |  |
| SUMA | 83 | 77 | 12 | 172 |
| N = Documentos/participantes | 8 | 9 | 4 | 21 |

From the table above on feedback received, professors received more general feedback such as on expanding their ideas in the methodology, literature review, conclusions, and to clarify language. In the current students there is more specific feedback, which in some respects (language, clarity, coherence, structure, text content, topic focus, methodology, literature) converge with the feedback received by graduate MLAEI. However, MLAEI graduates addressed the fact that receiving feedback from diverse people is challenging and difficult as it might vary from person to person.

**Suggestions/Recommendations received**

Table below shows the people who provide suggestions/recommendations to the three groups of participants.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **MLAEI students** | **MLAEI graduates** | **Professors MLAEI** | **Total** |
| Recommendations received | 5 | 18 | 1 | 24 |
| Recommendations received from other people | 0 | 2 | 0 | 2 |
| Recommendations received from Friends | 0 | 2 | 0 | 2 |
| Recommendations recevied from classmates | 2 | 3 | 0 | 5 |
| Recommendtions recevied from professors | 1 | 9 | 1 | 11 |
| Recommendation on PhraseBankManchester | 2 | 1 | 0 | 3 |
|  |  |  |  |  |
| SUMA | 8 | 34 | 2 | 44 |
| N = Documentos/participantes | 8 | 9 | 4 | 21 |

Table above shows that the suggestions/recommendations to write mainly come from professors. But also, they come from classmates, friends, or other external people they are in communication with. The MLAEI graduates were the group which expressed to have received more suggestions/recommendations from all these people.

**Places often used to write**

Diverse places are identified by participants to write their papers. However, one main difference involved in the diverse places addressed is that to construct knowledge or write with much more cognitive load, the participants need to be alone, in a ‘quiet’ ‘calm’ ‘silence’ ‘isolated’ ‘peaceful’ or non-crowded environment. Some of these featured places included their room at home, their provisional or more equipped office, or in an outdoor area far from people, noise, and external distractions. When the participants travel, which is mostly professors, they write while being at the airport, while being at the pool, but using an ipad or laptop. These places are crowded and noisy but as they do not know the people, they do not interfere with their concentration. In contrast, when they are in places with people or things they are familiar with, they are non-productive as they wish. Besides, most of them tend to write in isolated or quiet places such as their own room at home for students, or their own office at the university for professors.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **MLAEI students** | **MLAEI graduates** | **MLAEI professors** | **Total** |
| Places to write | 16 | 22 | 6 | 44 |
| Pool when in congresses | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| Airport when traveling | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| Ipad when traveling | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| Office of profesor or thesis director | 2 | 1 | 10 | 13 |
| Classmates’ house | 1 | 4 | 0 | 5 |
| Office at home | 1 | 1 | 1 | 3 |
| Room at home | 4 | 8 | 1 | 13 |
| Public coffee shop | 8 | 4 | 0 | 12 |
| Classroom | 7 | 3 | 0 | 10 |
| Library | 2 | 8 | 0 | 10 |
| House or apartment | 11 | 15 | 8 | 34 |
| Places of casual talks among classmates | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
|  |  |  |  |  |
| SUMA | 53 | 66 | 29 | 148 |
| N = Documentos/participantes | 8 | 9 | 4 | 21 |

As Table above shows the places where the participants write were formal (classroom, library) and informal (house) contexts by the three groups of participants. The public coffee shop, classroom, library, and classmates’ house were places where only current and MLAEI graduates might write.

**Technology used to support writing**

When asked about the technological resources used to support their writing, most of the participants used online dictionaries, exchanged papers by email, received written feedback from teachers or thesis directors or collaborators on research, but not much face-to-face discussions. The use of online dictionaries is to look for single words, phrases, and functional words such as connectors to avoid repetition, repetition seems to be quite common. Results showed that some activities were done individually such as using online dictionaries and others in collaboration such as writing coherently, clearly, succinctly.

Online dictionaries were used for linguistic issues such as looking for synonyms to avoid repetition, phrases to connect ideas or paragraphs. Online editors such as Grammarly were used to fix the participants’ English grammatical issues. Google drive/Docs collaborative writing platform is not a common practice while writing thesis and articles, as it was reported little. When making a comparison of the three groups concerning technological resources, we can observe in the next Table X, that current MLAEI students addressed more technological resources, followed by MLAEI graduates, and finally professors who just in a few occasions addressed some.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **MLAEI students** | **MLAEI graduates** | **MLAEI professors** | **Total** |
| Recursos tecnológicos | 47 | 49 | 12 | 108 |
| Research Gate | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| VPN digital library | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| Corpus linguistics | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| Electronic books | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| Ipad’s apps | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| WhatsApp | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| YouTube | 0 | 2 | 0 | 2 |
| Apps to paraphrase online | 3 | 0 | 0 | 3 |
| Messenger | 2 | 1 | 0 | 3 |
| Apps for not distractions | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| No online courses | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Online courses | 2 | 0 | 0 | 2 |
| Cell or mobile pone | 4 | 0 | 0 | 4 |
| Synonymos online | 4 | 4 | 3 | 11 |
| Online tools to cite | 4 | 3 | 0 | 7 |
| PDFs transition words | 10 | 4 | 3 | 17 |
| Chat GTP | 13 | 2 | 1 | 16 |
| Online dictionaries | 7 | 4 | 4 | 15 |
| Email | 3 | 1 | 0 | 4 |
| Word file | 4 | 2 | 1 | 7 |
| Pages to download literatura | 3 | 1 | 0 | 4 |
| Other websites | 3 | 2 | 0 | 5 |
| Digital platforms | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| Electronic editors | 17 | 9 | 1 | 27 |
| Computer and digital files | 0 | 2 | 2 | 4 |
| Apps in the cloud | 4 | 5 | 0 | 9 |
| Apps of videoconference | 6 | 5 | 0 | 11 |
| Online translator | 8 | 9 | 0 | 17 |
|  |  |  |  |  |
| SUMA | 146 | 109 | 32 | 287 |
| N = Documentos/participantes | 8 | 9 | 4 | 21 |

Current students use more technology as they enrolled in the MLAEI during or after the pandemic time, when virtual education became more common. Professors perhaps did not report much use of technological resources due to their expertise as they have published various papers in English and have worked for various years in the MLAEI.

The technological resources were online resources participants used to support linguistic aspects (online translators, editors, dictionaries, online citations, Chat GTP). 2. Online apps and other social communication means used to send text and receive feedback on text (videoconference, apps in the cloud such as drive, MS teams, email, messenger, WhatsApp). Laptop and ipad to write in Word at home or out of home. Resources (pdfs, websites, webpages to download literature, mobile phone, online courses, courses in person, YouTube, online books, research Gate) to be informed on diverse research and writing topics. And online apps as resources used to stop being distracted or manage distraction when writing.

**Strategies used to write the thesis**

The next table shows a comparison among the three groups concerning the actions, or strategies to write the thesis. These results showed that more actions or strategies were found in current and MLAEI graduates than in the professors.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **MLAEI students** | **MLAEI graduates** | **MLAEI professors** | **Total** |
| Acciones, estrategias tesis | 51 | 59 | 3 | 113 |
| Listen to music while writing | 2 | 0 | 0 | 2 |
| Read and interact with read text | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Write topic sentences | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| Write alone without any distraction | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| Ask for support to write | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| No plagiarism | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| Revise paragraph by pargraph | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| Reread to revise or correct | 0 | 2 | 0 | 2 |
| Write for every parts of the thesis | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| Explain literally | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| Do mind maps | 0 | 2 | 0 | 2 |
| Question no done due to be afraid | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| Talk aloud alone | 0 | 2 | 0 | 2 |
| Use apps in ipad | 0 | 8 | 1 | 9 |
| Use synonyms | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| One takes for granted the text is clear | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| Send draft via email | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| Read and link ideas | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| Write what comes to mind whenever it comes | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| Imitate and process cites and quotes | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| Color codes of specific codes | 0 | 2 | 0 | 2 |
| Make index cards | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| Anotations on texts related to topic | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| Search the original sources cited in other papers | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| Underline on texts | 0 | 7 | 1 | 8 |
| Rewrite ideas | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| Read on research methodology | 2 | 0 | 0 | 2 |
| Document on topic | 1 | 2 | 0 | 3 |
| Visit a researcher to talk | 2 | 0 | 0 | 2 |
| Talk about topic with family | 3 | 0 | 0 | 3 |
| Share documents in the cloud | 2 | 1 | 0 | 3 |
| Talk with tutor online | 1 | 1 | 0 | 2 |
| Recall or repeat aloud ideas | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Peer review | 3 | 0 | 0 | 3 |
| Implement feedback from professor | 2 | 4 | 0 | 6 |
| Cut and visualize draft and revision | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Pacing writing by parts | 2 | 0 | 0 | 2 |
| Written brainstorm | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Follow up students | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Use examples | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Pomodoro technique | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Read only in English | 3 | 0 | 0 | 3 |
| Read aloud | 1 | 1 | 0 | 2 |
| Talk informally about the topic | 2 | 0 | 0 | 2 |
| Translate | 9 | 10 | 0 | 19 |
| Write key words | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Free writing | 2 | 1 | 0 | 3 |
| Message the text trhough apps | 5 | 4 | 0 | 9 |
| Imitate writing from read articles | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Contact other people | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Use transition words | 3 | 7 | 0 | 10 |
| Write directly in English | 2 | 0 | 0 | 2 |
| Send draft to professors | 2 | 2 | 0 | 4 |
| Questions anticipatedly | 2 | 1 | 0 | 3 |
| APA write | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Listen to podcasts | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Observe in class | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Use AI | 2 | 0 | 0 | 2 |
| Meet through digital platforms | 3 | 5 | 0 | 8 |
| Report to thesis director | 2 | 0 | 0 | 2 |
| Read sources of information | 2 | 1 | 0 | 3 |
| Organize information | 5 | 7 | 0 | 12 |
| Use tables | 5 | 0 | 0 | 5 |
| Consider feedback | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Define terms | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Write form general to specific | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Take notes | 3 | 12 | 0 | 15 |
| Paraphrase | 7 | 7 | 0 | 14 |
| Reread to understand | 3 | 1 | 0 | 4 |
| Help among classmates | 6 | 3 | 0 | 9 |
| Edit the text | 2 | 0 | 0 | 2 |
| Imitate vocabulary read | 4 | 15 | 0 | 19 |
| Reread for clarity | 2 | 0 | 0 | 2 |
| Link ideas and literature | 3 | 0 | 0 | 3 |
| Classify with colors the themes | 1 | 1 | 0 | 2 |
| Cites and quotes | 3 | 4 | 0 | 7 |
| Outline to do the thesis | 3 | 5 | 0 | 8 |
| Writing is different in other writers | 2 | 0 | 0 | 2 |
| Writer’s voice in the thesis | 2 | 0 | 0 | 2 |
| Classes of writing in English | 2 | 1 | 0 | 3 |
| Imitate other thesis structure | 2 | 3 | 0 | 5 |
| Revise clarity of writing | 4 | 0 | 0 | 4 |
| Write thesis’ chapters | 7 | 0 | 0 | 7 |
| Revise others’ thesis | 3 | 5 | 0 | 8 |
| Research proposal | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Collect data | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Plan | 4 | 0 | 0 | 4 |
|  |  |  |  |  |
| SUMA | 202 | 204 | 7 | 413 |
| N = Documentos/participantes | 8 | 9 | 4 | 21 |

**Strategies to write articles**

Table below shows the actions done to write research articles in English.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **MLAEI students** | **MLAEI graduates** | **MLAEI professors** | **Total** |
| Actions on articles | 1 | 7 | 19 | 27 |
| Read and reread | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| Cites and quotes annotated | 0 | 0 | 2 | 2 |
| Use of post its in read text | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| Read to write well | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| Organize time to write | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| Use books or writing manuals | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| Use forum from online dictionaries | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| Use synonyms | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| Imitate language | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| Anottations | 0 | 0 | 2 | 2 |
| Underline | 0 | 0 | 2 | 2 |
| Organize the writing | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| Polish the writing | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| Write using code switching | 0 | 0 | 3 | 3 |
| Write directly in English | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| Deconstruct to construct paragraphs | 0 | 0 | 2 | 2 |
| Write paragraph by paragraph | 0 | 0 | 2 | 2 |
| Revise writing | 0 | 0 | 3 | 3 |
| Use English dictionaries | 0 | 0 | 5 | 5 |
| Delegate the language to natives of English | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| Join Meet to write | 0 | 0 | 3 | 3 |
| Write by hand vs in PC | 0 | 0 | 2 | 2 |
| Use magazine guidelines | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 |
|  |  |  |  |  |
| SUMA | 1 | 8 | 57 | 66 |
| N = Documentos/participantes | 8 | 9 | 4 | 21 |

Table above on actions while writing articles were mainly from the MLAEI professors who write articles as part of their commitments. Some actions identified were similar (reread, annotate, imitate, use of synonyms,) to the actions reported by the other two groups of current and graduate-MLAEI students who wrote, or were writing a thesis.

**Resources considered effective**

Table below on resources considered effective shows the resources addressed by the three groups of participants.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Estudiantes MLAEI** | **Graduate-estudiantes MLAEI** | **Profesores MLAEI** | **Total** |
| Resources considered effective | 12 | 18 | 3 | 33 |
| Defining ‘effective’ | 0 | 0 | 2 | 2 |
| Manchester phrasebank | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| Cards and color codes | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| Courses | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Books | 2 | 1 | 0 | 3 |
| Technology | 7 | 2 | 1 | 10 |
| Persons | 8 | 15 | 2 | 25 |
|  |  |  |  |  |
| SUMA | 30 | 38 | 8 | 76 |
| N = Documentos/participantes | 8 | 9 | 4 | 21 |

Table on resources considered effective shows that people is the most effective resource according to the three groups of participants, followed by technology, and that people was more addressed by the MLAEI graduates who finished their thesis.

**Experiences in writing a thesis in English**

Table on experience on writing/research shows the three groups experience results.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **MLAEI students** | **MLAEI graduates** | **MLAEI professors** | **Total** |
| Experiencia en escritura/investigación | 12 | 13 | 6 | 31 |
| Alone on themselves | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Writing isolated | 2 | 1 | 0 | 3 |
| With others | 2 | 0 | 0 | 2 |
|  |  |  |  |  |
| SUMA | 17 | 14 | 6 | 37 |
| N = Documentos/participantes | 8 | 9 | 4 | 21 |

Table on experience on writing/research shows that for some writing is done alone in isolated places, but also for some writing is done with others. Several graduates and current students of the MLAEI indicated this was the first time they wrote a thesis and in English. Besides, they experienced anxiety, stress, and lack of confidence. Some felt quite lonely as they were responsible for their writing regardless, they had a thesis director, who was key to guide them throughout the whole process. Just in a few cases, specifically the MLAEI professors had written thesis in English for their master studies and for their doctoral ones in overseas institutions, which had a thesis supervisor and additional online resources for them to consult on writing the academic texts they were required.

**Mode of meeting with people**

Table below shows the modes of meeting with others based on data from the three groups of participants.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **MLAEI students** | **MLAEI graduates** | **MLAEI professors** | **Total** |
| Mode to meet with others | 10 | 13 | 4 | 27 |
| Via email | 3 | 2 | 2 | 7 |
| Online | 10 | 10 | 3 | 23 |
| Personally and in live | 6 | 6 | 1 | 13 |
|  |  |  |  |  |
| SUMA | 29 | 31 | 10 | 70 |
| N = Documentos/participantes | 8 | 9 | 4 | 21 |

The Table above on mode to meet with others shows three main modes to meet in the three groups of participants. Meetings can be in-person physically, or in-person online, or just maintain communication via email in written form. Participants meet with classmates in-person to check linguistic aspects generally, whereas with professors it is more to check content and methodology. When the meeting is in-person, they might print the paper and work on it, but also they can meet in-person but work on the electronic document. Meetings with professors can be via videoconference and check the paper in electronic version. Depending who they met with, they might check language or content. Depending who they met and when they met, they might meet in the classroom, and in classmates houses when deadlines. When meetings with classmates were online it was because the classmates lived in other cities, because it was difficult to travel due to budget, or because the professors had limited time to check so they could work according to their time and own responsibility and commitment. Meetings online were also due to pandemic time and social distancing restrictions. Online meetings could be in-person and have the electronic paper too. Online meetings with thesis directors was to discuss feedback and content already constructed; whereas with classmates, it was to build the messages in the thesis, to clarify, and to receive classmate support. Meetings in-person were common before pandemic time vs after pandemic time. Only professors during the pandemic time met in-person in the meetings room in the languages department, when the students were not at school.

**Other diverse themes involving people or collaboration**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **MLAEI students** | **MLAEI graduates** | **MLAEI professors** | **Total** |
| Empathy of thesis with thesis director | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| Writing and moral support or implicit emotions | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Lack of a supporting network in writing | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Professors’ practices shared with their students | 0 | 0 | 2 | 2 |
| Perception taken from a speaker | 3 | 0 | 0 | 3 |
| Problems to write with others | 2 | 1 | 0 | 3 |
| Writing as a social activity | 4 | 2 | 3 | 9 |
| Collaboration in writing | 1 | 3 | 6 | 10 |
| Characteristics of people that supports writers | 7 | 2 | 5 | 14 |
| Sections of more support needed | 8 | 8 | 2 | 18 |
| Mode of meeting with others | 10 | 13 | 4 | 27 |
| SUMA | 157 | 140 | 82 | 379 |
| N = Documentos/participantes | 8 | 9 | 4 | 21 |

**Discussion**

Similar to Gosden (1996), our study showed that some participants practiced translation. Most of them try to think and write directly in English. However, they seemed not sure whether their written ideas in English are accurately saying what they want to say in English. Thus, some of them generally translate from their written English to Spanish by using a translator machine (e.g., Deepl) to check in Spanish if what they wrote in their English conveys clearly what they want to say.

Most students reported to receive feedback by email, or use the email to exchange drafts with their thesis director or professors. Then, they read the comments and fix the paper. However, in agreement with Can and Walker (2014, p. 315), provision of electronic feedback deprives students of in-person negotiation with the provider of major issues (p. 315).

Some students reported in the interviews that they shared their documents with classmates, read classmates' text sections, and gave each other some suggestions. However, sometimes the classmates’ suggestions were not at all correct. This finding indicates that feedback from classmates who are also in their path to become academic writers and researchers is not always effective or useful. Thus, in this context the point made by Tyndall, D. E. (In book of Madson, 2022, pp. 92-103, Ch. 7) says that “*writing is a social and rhetorical activity (i.e., writing-related threshold concept). Students need to respond to the needs of an audience and write for the reader, 2022, p. 94.*” This is *“students learn from experienced peers who are already in the “zone” of becoming a scholarly writer and when they receive feedback from multiple readers.”* is not at all true in this MLAEI context. MLAEI students receive feedback generally from similar classmates who struggle, or from thesis directors who often have limited time for the MLAEI students. So, more is needed. Feedback is often about linguistic aspects, which students fix by using electronic resources such as Grammarly. Using Grammarly might inhibit becoming into experienced writers, who can learn from other writers in the same community. The use of online resources are useful but reduce the revision processes they need to experience in order to become more experienced. Students receive some feedback from other people different from their thesis directors, people with English knowledge but unfamiliar with the research topics, academic writing conventions in the field, or other themes that Green (2016) argues student writing requires such as knowledge of disciplinary concepts, familiarity with the relevant genres, mastery of register,... (Green, 2016, p.99). So, most of the time, the external people’s feedback is on language and clarity of ideas rather than on content and argumentation to cite a few examples. Writing is indeed social, but students need to have the right and knowledgeable people of diverse topics not limited to language, organization, content, style, publishing. The people with most of these qualities are their thesis directors, however limited time and meetings to support them were an issue.

**Conclusions**

**Implications, Limitations, and suggestions**

**Further research**

To investigate different journal reviewers’ feedback on the MLAEI Mexican professors’ articles. To go into more detail about what these MLAEI professors do. Develop recommendations about how professors can help MLAEI students.

Similarly to Can and Walker (2014), our study findings can inform research on feedback practices, which can be useful to guide supervisors, feedback providers, doctoral students (p. 303) and master ones in similar non-English speaking contexts.

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**1. Institutional Description**

This study takes place in the Masters of Applied Linguistics in English Teaching (MLAEI) postgraduate program in the languages department of a Mexican public university in the State of Guanajuato. To graduate, students must attend classes, do research to publish a single research article apart from writing and defending a thesis based on that research. Students receive guidance from professors and take a class called ‘Elaboration of degree work’ to write-up the thesis in the 4th or final semester. However, despite the support and class, MLAEI students experience difficulties while writing up because generally, this is the first time they get engaged in writing a thesis in academic English as well as doing empirical research. Eventually, students generally achieve their thesis, but which activities (social practices) they engage in to create the thesis or article is less known. The findings from this study could shed light on the social practices of academic writing, a theme Zotzmann and Sheldrake, (2021), Lillis and Curry (2010) also claim to explore.

**2. Key Theories**

**Sociocultural perspective**

From a sociocultural perspective and regulation, writing is learned and regulated through discursive practices of writers and social interactions with members of the scientific community (Castelló et al., 2010). However, writing can involve diverse types of regulation (Zotzmann & Sheldrake, 2021). For example, ‘co-regulation’ (Castelló, et al., 2010, p. 1265) involves interactions of writers with other members of higher level to negotiate meaning through dialogue (Englert, Mariage & Dunsmore, 2006).

Social regulation implies a series of activities in which writers regulate their individual writing activity together with their collective writing activity in which these writers are participating (Hadwin, et al., 2010). The social regulation can be influenced by student professors in the academic field and their target genres, and by additional interlocutors beyond the academic context. However, Castelló et al. (2010) indicates the existence of insufficient knowledge of the types of ‘scaffolding’ that facilitate the acquisition of the regulation processes of writing, and how professors and students use these processes (p. 1270).

**Literate activity**

The sociocultural view conceives writing (literate activity) as a social practice, a situated activity rather than just writing texts full of sentences and paragraphs. Writing from a social practice perspective or as a situated activity takes place at different moments and using different materials (paper, pencils, computers), semiotic tools (language systems, images, numbers), and flows of activity (reading, speaking, observing, acting, processing, thinking, and feeling) (Narvaez-Cardona & Chois-Lenis, in Madson, 2022, pp. 25-37, Ch. 2). So, writing involves many social practices, which some are still less known. With the “literate activity” concept, we can see writing in the MLAEI as an interactive social process that weaves not always harmoniously through minds, actions, times and spaces (Narvaez-Cardona & Chois-Lenis, Madson, 2022, pp. 25-37, Ch. 2). Thus, from a sociocultural approach, students learn to write by participating in literacy events to achieve social goals, which are meaningful for them. So, we want to unveil the activities that the MLAEI current students, graduates, and professors engage in this Mexican context.

**Social practices**

Lillis and Curry (2010) conceptualized academic writing (AW) and publishing as social practices, where academic writers themselves set their practices based on the chances and limitations that exist in their national or international context (Lillis & Curry, 2010, in Zotzmann, 2013, p. 2). Social practices (SPs) connect what writers do with the language to what writers do in the social context involving also conventionalized practice(s), interpersonal relation(s), and professional networks (Zotzmann, 2013, p. 2) of social and institutional interactions with readers, reviewers, editors, and publishers (Aitchison & Lee, 2006, p. 271). However, Zotzmann and Sheldrake (2021) claim more research to listen to the accounts of the students about their writing from a social perspective.

**3. Glossary**

**Literacy activity:** In this study, literacy activity refers to the situated activities participants engage in to learn writing and create the thesis or article. So, literacy activities can involve the places where the participants engage to write, the materials (printed, technological) they used or consulted to write, the ways they tend to write either alone, interacting with people, or both, the actions, strategies, or processes (e.g., reading, searching, translating, paraphrasing, citing, annotating) the participants engage in to create the thesis or article.

**Social practices:** the diverse situated activities participants engage in the Mexican context to write in English a thesis and research article.

**Co-regulation:** interactions of writers with other members of higher level (professors, thesis directors, reviewers) to negotiate meaning through dialogue.

**Thesis:** a research text written in English to demonstrate the students do systematic research to construct knowledge.

**Articles:** a research paper written in English to be published in a peer-review journal.

**Academic writing in English:** The use of English in which writers stick to academic writing conventions (e.g., organization, academic language, style) required in the thesis for the MLAEI program in a public university in Guanajuato, Mexico.

**MLAEI:** a four-semester master study program in Applied Linguistics to English Teaching.