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"Approaches and methods to teach grammar: An analysis of the last 10 years"

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Resumen

La presente síntesis de estudios buscó determinar si existía un enfoque metodológico ideal para la enseñanza de gramática y cuáles fueron las percepciones de los estudiantes hacia ellos. Diez y siete estudios que utilizaron diferentes enfoques y métodos, los cuales ocurrieron en diferentes entornos y niveles, fueron recolectados. Algunos de los estudios analizados compararon y contrastaron distintos enfoques y métodos. Por lo tanto, brindaron una idea más precisa sobre cuál obtuvo mejores resultados y el por qué cierto enfoque fue más efectivo que otro. Un criterio de selección de estos estudios fue que debían ser empíricos para tener una idea más clara del impacto de los enfoques metodológicos en los estudiantes. Estos estudios fueron analizados para determinar qué enfoques y métodos obtuvieron los mejores resultados, y para tener una perspectiva de las percepciones de los estudiantes hacia los enfoques metodológicos. Aparentemente, no hubo un enfoque o método que podría ser considerado el mejor relacionado a la enseñanza de gramática, así que la combinación de varios enfoques y métodos podría ser una posible solución a esto. Futura investigación fue sugerida acerca del uso del enfoque ecléctico para enseñar gramática ya que combina varios enfoques y métodos.

Palabras clave: Enfoque metodológico. Enseñanza de gramática. Percepciones. Métodos.

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Abstract

The present synthesis aimed to discover whether there was an ideal methodological approach to teach grammar and what were the students' perceptions towards it. Seventeen studies, which used different approaches and methods and occurred at different settings and levels, were gathered. Some of the analyzed studies compared and contrasted different approaches and methods. Thus, they provided a more precise idea about which one obtained the best outcome and the reasons why certain approach was more effective than the other. A criterion to select the studies was that they needed to be empirical in order to have a clearer idea of the impact of the approaches on the students. These studies were analyzed to determine which approaches and methods obtained the best results and to have a glance on the students' views towards the methodological approaches. Apparently, there was not an approach or method that could be considered the best regarding grammar teaching, so the combination of various approaches and methods could be a possible solution to this. Further research was suggested on the use of the eclectic approach to teach grammar since it combines several approaches and methods.

Keywords: Approaches. Grammar teaching. Perceptions. Methods.

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Cuenca, 18 de febrero del 2020

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Dedication

This project is dedicated to my parents, Franco and Ximena and my siblings Erika, Ricardo, and Abraham, who have supported me from the beginning to the end of the major. This research synthesis is also dedicated to the friends I made in Cuenca as well as to my friends from Piñas, who helped me whenever I needed them.

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Introduction

Learning English has become a crucial part in everyone's life either for professional development or for traveling opportunities. However, people need to learn not only how to speak it but also how to form utterances with full meaning and grammatical accuracy. This is the reason why the approaches or methods chosen by the teacher play an important role in the students' success or failure in learning English. In addition, since technology is part of students and teachers' lives, it is necessary to include technological resources as part of the lesson in order to obtain the best possible results from students. In the next section, there is an analysis of some studies that illustrates the effect that some approaches and methods can have on the students' performance regarding grammar learning as well as on their perceptions towards them. Nonetheless, only those studies that used approaches that could be applied in our context were considered because the purpose of the present synthesis is to shed some light on which approach or method can obtain the best results. Thus, the same approaches can be applied within our context to enhance language learning, more specifically grammar. Approaches and methods in this synthesis will refer to any form of teaching that lecturers adopt to carry out their grammar lesson. For the purpose of this paper, only those studies that used a certain approach to teach grammar were considered.

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Chapter I

Description of the Research

1.1 Background

The Oxford dictionary defines grammar as "the whole system and structure of a language or of languages in general, usually taken as consisting of syntax and morphology (including inflections) and sometimes also phonology and semantics" (Oxford, 2018).   .

Throughout history, several approaches, methods, and strategies to teach this particular component of the English language have emerged as the result of research and discussion in the educational field (Richards & Rodgers, 2001). Among these methods and approaches, we can find the Grammar Translation Method (GTM), the Direct Method (DM), Inductive Approach, Deductive Approach, Communicative Language Teaching, etc. On the one hand, Aminova (2016) states that grammar acquisition is viewed as crucial to language acquisition; however, it is often perceived as a boring and tedious process. On the other hand, Ismail (2010) affirms that grammatical structures are learned and used effectively when they are presented in contexts to serve communicative purposes. In other words, when referring to teaching a complex subject such as grammar, teachers should consider that they must enable students to be communicatively competent rather than make them learn the rules by heart. Since English is becoming more relevant year after year, due to the fact that most of the research papers are published in English nowadays, it is vital that students learn it appropriately.

Currently, we are living in a technological era, and most of the curricula include ICT tools as part of the teaching methods. There are plenty of multimedia materials such as movies, documentaries, sitcoms, music videos, etc, that either teachers or students can use to carry out

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language learning tasks (Saeedi & Biri, 2016). These technological resources are particularly useful for the endeavor of learning a language, in this case English, because they provide authentic language materials. Grammar, when taught through the most suitable approach or method, can result in truly positive effects on students (Ishihara & Chi, 2004).

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Grammar, indubitably, is one of the major components of any language which alludes to correctness in language (Singh, 2011). One cannot assume that grammar is an ignored aspect because the majority of English teachers focus on it, and each teacher has his or her own approach to teach this subject. Additionally, in spite of the fact that some of their approaches are outdated, they are still used in today's classrooms. There has been controversy on whether grammar should be taught explicitly, i.e, using the traditional method of presenting grammatical rules, or implicitly by means of exposure to the target language in a meaningful use (Khan, Ali, Mustafa, & Farooqi, 2018). Generally, there are two main approaches that have been used when teaching English grammar which are the inductive approach and the deductive approach. The former provides examples and learners must infer the rules while the latter proceeds from rules to examples (Kaur & Niwas, 2016) .

After the educator has considered all the aforementioned criteria, he or she is able to select the approach that suits the best for his or her students' needs. Having researched about different approaches to teach grammar, it is crucial to know which methods from the analyzed ones are the most effective in the endeavor of teaching English grammar. This analysis is necessary because it may serve as a tool in our future profession to obtain the best possible results from our students.

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1.3 Rationale

Reading, writing, listening, and speaking are the four skills that constitute the English language. All of them are important elements that EFL or ESL students should develop in order to achieve communicative competence. Nonetheless, to properly learn a language, they need to study another component which is grammar (Akay & Tomaran, 2015). This component is often considered as difficult and boring to learn (Thamrin, Suriaman, & Maghfirah, 2019). Perhaps, this conception of grammar exists due to the approaches or methods that English teachers use in their classes. Most of the teachers use the structural and traditional approaches to teach grammar (Valipour & Aidinlu, 2015). Teachers ought to, however, consider other alternatives to teach grammar.

Plenty of research has been done in the field about approaches to teach English grammar. For instance, Valipour and Aidinlu (2015) found that students who received classes through the functional approach outperformed students who were taught traditionally using the structural approach. Likewise, Zuhriyah (2017) discovered that students benefit from the problem-based learning not only in grammar, but also in speaking and writing. In addition, technology can play an important role in today's educational approaches. In fact, Khan, Ali, Mustafa, and Farooqi (2018) learned that the deductive approach along with computer assisted language learning enhanced significantly the process of learning subject-verb agreement. They also reported that learners' attitude towards the use of CALT (Computer Assisted Language Teaching) with traditional activities became positive in overall (Khan, Ali, Mustafa, & Farooqi, 2018).

Based on what has been presented in this section, analyzing the approaches and methods that have been used to teach grammar is important in order to find possible solutions to the issues that we as teachers currently experience. Therefore, this research synthesis becomes a necessary

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means for inquiring the most relevant and suitable literature to determine the most effective approaches regarding grammar teaching.

1.4 Research Questions

After analyzing the relevant literature in the chosen field for this synthesis, the following questions have emerged.

Which approaches and methods are the most efficient to teach grammar?

What are the students' perceptions towards grammar teaching, and the approaches and methods used by the teacher?

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Chapter II

Theoretical Framework

2.1 Introduction

It is vital to establish a background about the different ways in which grammar has been taught in the past ten years. According to Richards and Rodgers (2001), an approach can be defined as the level at which hypotheses and beliefs associated with language and language learning are specified. A method, however, is "the level at which theory is put into practice and at which choices are made about the particular skills to be taught, the content to be taught, and the order in which the content will be presented" (Richards & Rodgers, 2001, p. 15). For the present synthesis, the following approaches and methods will be considered: a) Grammar Translation Method b) Deductive and Inductive Approaches c) Technology-Based Approaches and Methods d) Functional Approach e) Structural Approach f) Total Physical Response g) Humor-Based Approach h) Problem-Based Learning.

2.2 The Grammar Translation Method

Throughout the years, several approaches and methods related to teaching grammar have been proposed and used by teachers around the world (Richards & Rodgers, 2001; Asher, 1969; Canale & Swain, 2002). The Grammar Translation Method (GTM) was first established in Prussia, Germany as the main method to teach a second language. Originally, GTM was used to teach Latin and Greek due to the fact that, centuries ago, Latin was the primary language of science, education, and religion (Tetzner, 2004). The grammar translation method is also known as the classical method, and it uses translation as its main tool to teach a language. The major feature of this method is that it is focused on learning the grammatical rules that a language has (Prastyo, 2015).

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2.3 The Deductive Approach and the Inductive Approach

The deductive approach is the one in which the language is taught from general to specific so learners can understand the rules and structures of the language first (Anani, 2017). On the other hand, the inductive approach provides the students with examples, and the rules are inferred from the examples (Kaur & Niwas, 2016). These approaches, inductive and deductive, can be considered as the basis of various teaching methods. For example, the grammar translation method and the cognitive code method come from the deductive approach whereas the audio-lingual method, the silent way, and total physical response come from the inductive approach (Krashen & Seliger, 1975). In BANA (Britain, Australia, and North America) countries, the language is primarily taught by means of the inductive approach while in TESEP (Tertiary, Secondary, and Primary English language schools) countries, the main teaching approach is the deductive one (Mallia, 2014).

2.4 ICTs, CALL, CALT, and Moodle

ICTs (Information and Communication Technology) consist of technological devices that teachers can use during their classes. These can be internet-enabled, wireless networks as well as old technologies such as a radio or television broadcasts (Pratt, 2017). ICT can have a positive effect on EFL students since it reduces the level of anxiety because it makes the communication process live and efficient (Shahbaz , Khan, Khan, & Mustafa, 2016). Multimedia resources such as animated videos, slideshows, podcasts, etc., can fall into this category as well. For instance, teaching English through the use of movies or sitcoms can have several positive effects on students. First, these resources grab students' attention, and also it shows authentic language that will help students to get an idea of what they may encounter in a real-life situation (Ishihara & Chi, 2004).

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Due to the use of modern technology in the ESL and EFL classroom, the concepts of CALL (Computer Assisted Language Learning) and CALT (Computer Assisted Language Teaching) have emerged (Khan, Ali, Mustafa, & Farooqi, 2018). Davies (2016) defines CALL as "an approach to language teaching and learning in which the computer is used as an aid to the presentation, reinforcement and assessment of material to be learned, usually including a substantial interactive element (para.1)." Khan et al. (2018) define CALT as "a methodology that uses computer and its associated resources such as internet, websites, computer software, learning programs, Microsoft PowerPoint Presentation, audio and videos, learning tools, etc, to teach and learn a foreign language" (p.145).

Another technological resource is Moodle which stands for "Modular Object-Oriented Dynamic Learning Environment." According to Christensson (2018), "Moodle is an online educational platform that provides custom learning environment for students" (para.1). It is a very versatile tool for teachers to use because they can create forums, online courses, apply tests, among others. In addition, teachers can use this platform to communicate with the students at any time of the day by posting a message for everyone to read when they access their accounts (Christensson, 2018).

2.5 Functional and Structural Approaches

Crystal (2008) defines functional grammar as a linguistic theory which was created in the 1970s as an alternative to the abstract. This theory concentrates on the rules that govern verbal interaction, which is seen as a cooperative activity, and it also concentrates on the rules of syntax, semantics, and phonology. The structural approach is the one that offers a model to foreign language teaching that highlights the relevance of mastering the structures of the target language (Genc, 2018).

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2.6 Problem-Based Learning and Total Physical Response

Problem Based Learning (PBL) has been used as a pedagogical method in several fields around the globe, and it has been recognized as an efficient teaching-learning method (Dastgeer & Afzal, 2015). This method is a student-centered one, and it involves students in effective learning by means of discussing and finding ways to solve actual problems among themselves.

Another method that differs from PBL in the sense of means of teaching is Total Physical Response (TPR). TPR is a language teaching method developed by James Asher in 1977, whose purpose is to teach via physical activity. Richards and Rodgers (2001) stated that it is associated to the "trace theory" of memory, "which holds that the more often or the more intensively a memory connection is traced, the stronger the memory association will be and the more likely it will be recalled" (p. 87). This retracing process can be performed in two ways: orally by means of repetition and through association with movement (Richards & Rodgers, 2001).

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Chapter III

Literature Review

In the following section, we can find a review of the existing literature that will be useful in the present research synthesis. The studies have been classified according to the approaches or methods used in them. The classification is as follows: the use of native language, the inductive approach against the deductive approach, technology-based approaches and methods, students' perceptions, and others.

3.1 The Use of the Native Language

The use of the native language in an EFL or ESL classroom could be either beneficial or harmful for students who attempt to learn an L2, in this case, English. Spahiu (2013), in his study about using native language in the ESL classroom, found that students as well as teachers thought that using their L1 could save time, prevented misunderstandings, and provided a sense of confidence. The author used different questionnaires to discover what opinions students and teachers held about using their L1 in the classroom. However, he also stated that its overuse could lead to a dependence, causing them to feel that they were not able to understand something until it was translated in their L1.

In addition, in a contrastive analysis between the GTM (Grammar Translation Method) and the communicative approach performed by Chang (2011) at the Cheng Shiu University in Taiwan. A total of 86 students were divided into an experimental group and a control group. The participants in the experimental group were taught using GTM while those in the control one were taught through the communicative approach. At the end, it was found that the students who were in the treatment group became more interested in grammar lessons and outperformed the

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reference group. Nonetheless, several limitations were also stated in the aforementioned study. First, the sample was not large enough and all the participants were at the same level, so the results might not be applicable to students of different levels. Another limitation is that the duration was not long enough. Thus, it may be possible that results vary in a long-time study.

3.2 The Inductive Approach against the Deductive Approach

These approaches are two of the most recognizable ones within the educational field. Although several studies have been carried out in order to determine which of these approaches was the most effective one, various studies have not shown remarkable differences (Kaur & Niwas, 2016). Therefore, Kaur and Niwas established the hypothesis that there was not a significant difference in the effectiveness of any of these approaches in teaching grammar to elementary school students. The research took place in a public school in India and it had 70 participants who were divided into two groups of 35 students each. The researchers administered a pre-test to each group, then one group was taught via inductive approach while the other was taught via deductive approach during 15 days. Afterwards, a post-test was administered and by means of a t-test, the results were analyzed. The result was that the inductive approach had an important and higher impact on students' performance, but the difference was not a significant one.

Another study performed by Kubra (2015), in which 190 adult learners from a public university in Turkey and 10 English instructors participated, obtained different results. For this project, Kubra (2015) divided the students into a control group and an experimental group. The former was taught deductively whereas the latter was taught inductively. Then, a pre-test and a post-test were used as a data collection tool for this research. In addition, the researcher used a Likert Scale questionnaire to gain understanding of the learners' feelings as well as the teachers'

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feelings regarding deductive and inductive grammar learning/teaching. At the end of the study, it was found that the deductive approach was slightly more effective than the inductive approach.

Another study about the inductive and deductive approaches to teach English grammar, whose aims were to examine the perceptions of adult learners towards the previously mentioned approaches for English grammar teaching, was conducted in a TESEP scenario, specifically in South Sudan (Mallia, 2014). Likewise, it also searched to evaluate their written performance through the same teaching approaches to determine which one was the most suitable for the grammar teaching endeavor. The participants were 50 police personnel who received a three-month English course. Data was collected by means of gap-fill answers and closed questions in a questionnaire. The results regarding their perception towards the approaches showed that the majority of them, namely 78%, preferred the deductive approach. Nevertheless, regarding their written performance, there was not a significant difference between the two groups of participants (Mallia, 2014).

3.3 Technology-based Approaches and Methods

Khan et al. (2018) conducted a research at the Al-Majma'ah University in Saudi Arabia about the use of CALT-D2L software to see if there was an improvement on students' subject-verb agreement as well as their attitudes towards the educational software. In this research, the participants were 69 male university students, and they were divided into two groups. One of these groups was given the rules through the educational software as well as the exercises while the other group was taught in a more traditional way using the board and worksheets to practice. Additionally, a Likert Scale questionnaire was used to measure their attitudes about the use of ICTs in the classroom. The results of the study were that a combination of the deductive approach with computer technology worked better for Saudi learners than the inductive one since

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the Arabic syntactic structure is different from the English one. Moreover, the participants showed, in overall, a positive attitude towards the use of CALT along with traditional activities.

Abdo and Al-Awabdeh (2017) carried out a mixed methods study at the Great Arab Revolt primary school in Jordan. The participants were nine students who were taught the traditional grammar drills with no technology at all, and the same participants were also taught grammar by means of animated videos. The researchers aimed to investigate if the use of animation videos to teach grammar was beneficial in teaching English as a foreign language. At the end of the study, the students showed an enhancement in their performance in the English classroom as well as an increase in their confidence (Abdo & Al-Awabdeh, 2017). Thus, this study proved that videos could have a positive effect on students because after the treatment their shyness and nervousness declined. As a result, they became more confident, and the number of grammatical mistakes decreased as well as the use of their mother tongue instead of the target language.

Macwan (2015) stated that visual media was the greatest means to teach a language, particularly movies could result very useful in this task. Mushtaq and Zehra (2016) conducted a research in which they used the animated movie *Tangled* to teach gerunds to students, especially how to differentiate a gerund from a present participle. The participants were a group of eight graders from Pakistan whose number was unspecified in the research. They watched several movie clips which contained gerunds in the dialogues. Afterwards, they were provided worksheets with exercises about the use of gerunds in sentences. The results were quite positive since all of them obtained 85% and higher marks which indicates that all the participants understood what a gerund was. The researchers concluded that animated movies were a very effective means to teach English grammar due to the fact that they added entertainment as well

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as a sense of pleasure to the learning process. Additionally, students would learn consciously and unconsciously when taught through these types of methods.

Saeedi and Biri (2016) performed a similar study in which, through the use of animated sitcoms, they aimed to make grammar instruction more communicative and interesting for learners. In addition, their research tried to determine the learners' attitudes about the use of this resource in an EFL grammar class. There were 34 participants who were chosen from "Gheshm language institute in Ardebil and Sharif language center in Tehran" (p.23). Half of them were allocated to a control group, and the other half to an experimental group. The former was taught deductively without the use of audiovisual material while the latter was taught using episodes of a sitcom named 'The Looney Tunes Show' with English subtitles. The researchers used a pre-test and a post-test as well as an interview session to collect data for the study. The participants in the experimental group obtained a better outcome than those in the control group. Thus, it was demonstrated that animated sitcoms could be really useful to teach grammar, in this case conditional sentences. Also, it was found that the students' attitudes regarding the use of sitcoms in their English classes were positive altogether.

3.4 Students' Perceptions on Grammar Teaching, Methods, and Approaches

The students' perceptions towards grammar teaching and interests are very important aspects that teachers need to consider in order to design their lesson plans (Ismail, 2010). Rahimi and Hosseini (2011) carried out a study regarding the students' attitude towards CALL in an Iranian high school context. They selected 42 female students to participate in the study via convenience sampling. To evaluate the participants' perspective towards CALL, a questionnaire that had twenty items was used. The participants' attitudes regarding the integration of CALL together with traditional teaching were positive in the sense that this method provided a stress-

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free atmosphere. Nevertheless, this group of learners indicated that computers could not replace teachers.

Ismail (2010) performed another research in which he attempted to determine how students perceived the grammar model CCCC (Confrontation, Clarification, Confirmation, Consolidation) as well as the students' perceptions about grammar learning. The participants were 40 female university students from the United Arab Emirates, who were preparing to become elementary school teachers. In order to collect information, Ismail used observation, semi-structured interviews, and a questionnaire. It is worth mentioning that the researcher waited for a month to start using the CCCC model in order to gain rapport. Thus, making the study reliable. At the end, it was found that many students believed that learning grammar explicitly was vital for understanding the codes and rules of the syntactic structures and speech. However, the author indicated that this was not remarkable because most of these students came from high schools where explicit instruction was the main teaching method. Also, the students stated that grammar teaching was crucial, but it was not a mandatory aspect to communicate a message. In addition, students also explained that learning grammar was important to avoid being scared of talking to the teacher (Ismail, 2010).

Another study performed by Male (2011) at the Christian University of Indonesia aimed to investigate about the students' perceptions on grammar teaching. The participants were 54 students of the English Teaching Study Program. At the end, Male found out that the vast majority of the participants (70%) strongly agreed that grammar learning was highly relevant, but they also said that grammar was not so important in the use of English for oral communication. Additionally, it was found that the participants preferred explicit teaching over implicit teaching, which could also be called the deductive approach. All these results were

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collected by means of a Likert scale questionnaire and an interview session to gather information for the research.

Thamrin, Suriaman, and Maghfirah (2019) carried out a study whose purpose was twofold. First, to examine the students' views on the implementation of Moodle web-based to learn grammar, and to discover their perceptions about studying grammar before and after the use of Moodle during the instruction. The study took place in a state university in Indonesia, and it involved 34 participants who have had previous experience in the use of Moodle to either teach or learn grammar. Afterwards, the data were compiled by means of a questionnaire provided to students through the internet to learn about their perceptions towards the use of Moodle in the teaching-learning process. At the end, the researcher found that most of the participants 94.12% gave a favorable opinion towards this method, and less than 3% of the total number of participants declared that learning grammar through this method was uninteresting.

3.5 Others

Having stablished a background for the functional approach and the structural approach, Valipour and Aidinlu (2015) formulated the hypothesis that the application of the functional approach in language teaching had a better effect on the acquisition of grammatical accuracy than the structural approach. Therefore, they carried out a mixed methods research at the Islamic Azad University in Iran. The study had 70 participants, randomly chosen, whose age ranged from 20 to 24 years old. They were divided into two groups of 35 participants each. The control group was taught through the structural approach whereas the experimental group was taught by means of the functional approach. The results were inferred from statistical measurements and these showed that, in fact, the functional approach was more efficient than the structural one

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regarding to the acquisition of grammatical accuracy. However, the authors indicated that the limitation was the participants' gender and the use of only one context to carry out the study.

Zuhriyah (2017) carried out a study at the Hasym Asy'ari University in Indonesia with nine participants. The purpose of this project was to determine if PBL could enhance students' grammar competence. The students were organized in groups of three and they were requested to answer questions about the noun clause and coordinating conjunctions. They used the internet, books, and discussion to provide answers to the questions given by the teacher. The researcher used observation as well as a post-test to gather information. At the end of the study, the author found that PBL improved not only students' grammar competence, but also students' speaking and writing skill.

Abdulmajeed and Hameed (2017) used a linguistic theory of humor to teach English grammar in a research they conducted at the University of Baghdad in Iraq. There were 38 participants who were divided into two groups, namely the treatment group and the reference group. The treatment group was taught by means of metaphors, puns, and ambiguity while the reference group was taught through a more traditional and conventional method of teaching. The results of the study demonstrated that those students who received treatment outperformed who did not. Thus, the present results showed that providing an atmosphere of familiarity and fun had positive outcomes.

Another form to teach grammar that has been applied was the use of physical games to teach grammar. Using physical games in the learning process was a popular technique that could be used with all students not only with kids. This type of activity belonged to the Total Physical Response method which came from the inductive approach (Krashen & Seliger, 1975). Prihhartini (2018) performed a study in which 20 university students from Indonesia were taught

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the second conditional by playing an adaptation of Hopscotch. The students threw a marker in a square where they would find a card with a question and then hopping in one leg, they reached that square, read the question, and answered it using the grammatical point. At the end, it was found that the use of physical games, in this case hopscotch, could really enhance the students' learning because it enabled the students to notice their errors, and reformulated their sentences. Likewise, this particular game kept them interested in the lesson as well as motivated.

3.6 Conclusion

Although there has been plenty of research in the grammar teaching area through the application of several approaches and methods, it has not been stated which one is the most effective. Some studies are in favor of the deductive approach, others in favor of the inductive one, among others. Therefore, the purpose of this synthesis is to find out which one from the analyzed approaches and methods is the most effective, as well as the students' perceptions towards them.

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Chapter IV

Methodology

4.1 Introduction

To collect the literature for the present exploratory bibliographical research synthesis, which is, according to Norris and Ortega "the systematic secondary review of accumulated primary research studies" (2006, p. 4), a thorough search was performed in several online databases such as ResearchGate, ERIC, and Scholar Google, among others. Research synthesis is particularly important for those in the language learning and language teaching field. According to Norris and Ortega (2006), "rigorous syntheses enable the research community to compare and combine findings across individual studies, to authoritatively answer particular research questions, and to identify gaps in research methodologies" (p. 4).

4.2 Inclusion Criteria

The inclusion criteria for the articles were as follows. First, the articles needed to be empirical studies, so a clearer view on the effects of a particular approach or method could be obtained. Second, these studies needed to be published, although Norris and Ortega (2006) state that researchers have to consider the "fugitive literature" (p.96), which means unpublished studies. Nonetheless, for this analysis, only published studies were considered. The reason to consider only published studies is that this indicates that the studies were peer reviewed. Finally, the articles were required to be published since 2009 with the purpose of getting an idea of how grammar has been being taught in the last 10 years.

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4.3 Key words

The key words that were used to look for these articles were the following: (a) approach, (b) teaching, (c) grammar, (d) methodology, (e) effectiveness, (f) empirical, (g) results, (h) literature review. There was not any restriction related to the design of the studies. Hence, qualitative, quantitative, or mixed methods were considered for the present study. Additionally, the sources remained digital due to the difficulty to find physical studies in the area within our context.

4.4 Journals

Some journals that were revised are the following *International Review of Basic and Applied Sciences, Arab World English Journal, International Journal of Advanced Research, GEMA Online™ Journal of Language Studies,* among others. At the end, 17 studies were gathered to perform the synthesis. Then a coding process took place with the purpose of classifying the articles according to different criteria that emerged through the analysis. The purpose of performing such a thorough research was to find a research gap that may serve as a future research topic.

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Chapter V

Analysis

5.1 Introduction

For the present synthesis, 17 studies were gathered from different sources, and they were classified according to the approach or method used during the experiment. Also, the year of publication was considered to show that the studies fulfill the requirement that they must have been published since 2009 until today.

5.2 Publication Year of the Studies

Table 1

Publication Year of the Studies

Year of Publication	Number of Studies
2009 - 2014	6
2015 - 2019	11

Note. N= 17

Table 1 shows the number of studies according to their year of publication. They were divided into two periods of time to demonstrate that 11 (64%) of them were published within the last five years while the rest of them 6 (36%) were published at an earlier period of time. Nevertheless, all of them were published during the last ten years, so they are suitable for the present synthesis. This may be considered a sign that, although grammar teaching has been a crucial topic in the area of language teaching, researchers are still trying to find alternative methods to meet this particular need.

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5.3 Number of Studies per Category

Table 2

Number of Studies per Category

Category	Number of Studies
Use of the L1	2
Inductive and Deductive Approaches[a]	3
Technology-Based Approaches and Methods	4
Students' Perceptions	4
Others	4

Note. N= 17

[a]The studies in the second category are grouped as one because they focus on both approaches, and not only on one of them.

Table 2 indicates the number of studies per category that were collected for this research synthesis. All of these studies fulfilled the inclusion criteria stated in the methodology section. First, they were all empirical studies that took place at different settings, and at different levels. Second, all of them were published studies, so they are reliable because they were peer reviewed. Finally, the studies were published since 2009 until nowadays. This last criterion was related to the title of the study because the purpose of the synthesis was to review the ways in which grammar has been being taught in recent years. Out of the total number of studies (N=17), two belong to the use of the native language, and three to the inductive and deductive approaches. For the remaining categories, which were technology-based approaches and methods, students' perceptions, and others, there were four studies for each one of them. One can infer from these available articles that even though we are living in a technological era, we can still witness the use of more traditional ways of teaching. e.g., GTM.

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5.4 The setting

Table 3

Setting

Setting	No. of studies	(%)
School	2	12
High school	2	12
University	11	64
Language Institute	1	6
Others[a]	1	6

Note. N=17

[a]One study, Mallia (2014), had 50 police officers as its participants, and it did not mention a specific setting. Thus, it was placed in the "others" category.

Table 3 presents a classification according to the setting in which the studies were carried out as well as the percentage that they represent for the total number of studies. As it can be seen, the majority of them 11 (64%) were performed in a university setting while the rest took place in different educational environments. The eleven studies that took place at the university can be compared to find out the effectiveness of a particular approach or method, and/or the students' views towards them at a university level. However, the rest of the studies could be compared to those 11 in other aspects such as the materials used or the participants' perceptions towards the approaches and methods.

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5.5 Analyzing the Effectiveness of the Approaches and Methods

Table 4

Effectiveness of the Approaches and Methods

Approaches & Methods	Studies
	Kaur & Niwas (2016)
Deductive vs Inductive	Mallia (2014)
	Kubra (2015)
	Abdo & Al-Awabdeh (2017)
	Khan et al. (2018)
Technology-Based Approaches	Mushtaq & Zehra (2016)
	Saeedi & Biri (2016)
	Spahiu (2013)
Use of L1	Chang (2011)

Note. N=9

At first, there were 17 studies in total, but for the present table which intends to respond the first question, 'Which approaches and methods are the most efficient to teach grammar?', only nine studies were considered. There were two reasons to exclude the remaining eight studies. First, four of them were only focused on the students' perceptions towards the approach or method, and not on how effective the method could be to teach grammar. The other four were those studies belonging to the 'others' category because they were about the use of approaches and methods that are rarely used in real-life situations. These methods are as follows: functional approach, structural approach, problem-based learning, linguistic theory of humor, and total-physical response. Particularly, the humor-based approach poses a challenge for teachers since it

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requires the teacher to be very creative, and that the students be able to understand these

linguistic devices such as figures of speech (Abdulmajeed & Hameed, 2017). After analyzing the

studies, it was not possible to answer the question with the 'most effective method, and/or

approach.' Therefore, the best way to answer the question is to analyze the conditions that make

an approach and method effective. The ideal path to follow was to first analyze the two general

approaches found among the studies which are the deductive approach and the inductive

approach. It was better to start like this because from these approaches, as stated before, some

methods are derived.

On the one hand, there is the deductive approach which is sometimes referred to as the

traditional way of teaching. Usually, in the majority of scenarios, learning depends on deductive

teaching, as in the case of GTM in English teaching. Based on the analyzed articles, there are

various circumstances in which the deductive approach was effective. For instance, two studies

about the use of the native language (GTM) in language teaching found that it was effective,

although it is considered an obsolete method nowadays (Spahiu, 2013; Chang, 2011). Both

authors presented arguments in favor of this method for grammar teaching, especially in the

sense that it added a sense of security on students. In addition, Chang (2011) stated that the best

solution was to combine the GTM and CLT because one focuses on accuracy while the latter

focuses on fluency. Based on what has been described, one cannot discard GTM as a suitable

option when teaching grammar just because it is considered traditional. Instead, this method

should be combined with others during class, but being careful with the overuse of the L1 to

avoid developing dependency by students. After all, there is no rationale to leave out L1 from the

English classroom (Spahiu, 2013). It is worth mentioning that the aforementioned studies took

place at universities, and that may have had an impact on the results, for the participants were

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adults. If GTM had been used at elementary level, perhaps the outcome would have been different due to the fact that the method implies studying rules and children could consider that as boring and difficult. The use of GTM to teach at elementary level should be considered as a further research area due to the nature of the method.

Mallia (2014), Kubra (2015), Kaur and Niwas (2016), and Saeedi and Biri (2016) conducted studies to determine which approach was the most effective. Two out of these four studies, Mallia, and Kubra respectively, concluded that the deductive approach worked better for the participants. Nonetheless, they both indicated that this difference was a slight one. Therefore, here arose the difficulty to answer which approach was the most efficient towards grammar teaching. In these cases, the participants were adult learners who grew up in countries where the pedagogical culture relied on the deductive approach for language teaching (i.e. TESEP countries). However, Mallia (2014) suggested that teachers in this particular environment could obtain acceptable outcomes by selecting any of these approaches. As a result, it could be stated that the effectiveness of an approach depends entirely on the way in which the teacher employs it for the lesson. Kaur and Niwas' study, which favors the inductive approach, took place at a high school, and this could be the reason why in this case the results were different. Since teenagers are more curious than adults, the inductive approach provided a great opportunity for learning by making them discover the rules.

The final study, which contrasted the two approaches added the element of multimedia resources, in this case animated sitcoms. In this study, the participants who were taught through the inductive approach along with the sitcom obtained the best results (Saeedi & Biri, 2016). However, the control group, taught deductively, did not have the videos as part of the class, and that, of course, affected the outcome. Therefore, it could be assumed that if the control group had

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been taught deductively, but adding videos, the results would have been different. As stated

before, the effectiveness of a certain approach depends on how the lecturer uses it (i.e. his or her

creativity). Two other studies Abdo and Al-Awabdeh (2017), and Mushtaq and Zehra (2016)

incorporated videos as part of the teaching approach, but in this case, the classes were conducted

deductively. The first, used animated videos that can be easily found on YouTube, while the

latter used a popular animated movie called *Tangled*. Both of these studies aided to improve

students' learning. This proves that choosing either the deductive or inductive approach can have

positive results when they are combined with additional elements, in this case videos. Another

finding that is consistent in the studies that used videos is that they had young learners as their

participants. Hence, the age of the participants might have an effect on how effective a particular

approach can be. Moreover, it can be said that both approaches benefit all students regardless of

their learning style and the environment, when used correctly.

The use of videos with the inductive approach is very helpful for students since it

provides them with authentic language input, and they learn both consciously, and

unconsciously. Also, it can result very useful for teaching children because these types of

resources grab their attention and focus. Furthermore, through these activities, learners are

"exposed to language that is comprehensible, and contains $i + 1$" (Lightbown & Spada, 2013, p.

106). The $i + 1$ comes from Krashen's comprehensible input hypothesis in which the 'i' means

the current level of language that the student has, and the '1' represents language that is slightly

above the student's level. The final study conducted by Khan et al. (2018) combined the

deductive approach with an educational software called 'desire2learn.' The authors concluded

that teaching deductively along with the use of this software could help students to become

interested in studying grammar. This can extend to other educational programs, so the

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effectiveness of the approach in this case again depends on the teacher's creativity to perform the class.

Consequently, it cannot be affirmed that one approach is better than the other due to the fact that there are several studies which support either the deductive approach or the inductive approach. The attempt to establish which approach is the most effective has been discussed for decades, but it has not been possible to determine whether one approach is more suitable than the other. Therefore, this dichotomy persists as we can evidence in the analysis done by Hammerly (1975) who stated that there were grammatical points that could be acquired without an explanation, but there were others which could be hardly mastered with no explanation at all.

Given these facts, with a good judgement one can say that from the aforementioned approaches and methods, there is not an ideal one that stands out from the others. As a result, the most suitable solution could be to combine both of them along with other resources such as technology and to select which one is more appropriate depending on the grammatical point being covered in the lesson. Therefore, an eclectic approach seems to be the most suitable, but everything will depend on several factors such as the availability of ICTs, the age of students, and the pedagogical culture of the country where learning occurs.

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5.6 Students' Views on the Methodological Approaches

Table 5

Students' Perceptions

Perceptions	Studies
Positive	Thamrin, Suriaman, & Maghfirah (2019)
	Khan et al. (2018)
	Mallia (2014)
Negative	None[a]
Both	Ismail (2010)
	Male (2011)
	Rahimi & Hosseini (2011)
	Kubra (2015)
	Saeedi & Biri (2016)

Note. N= 8; Some studies were used more than once

[a]There are no studies in the negative category because none reported only negative views. Thus, those which had negative views as well as positive ones were placed in the "both" category

For table 5, it was necessary to first eliminate those studies that did not examine the students' perceptions towards the approaches and methods used during the study. Although table 2 indicates that there are four studies in the students' perceptions category, some studies from the other categories had as a secondary objective to determine which the students' views towards the application of that particular approach or method were. As a result, there were eight studies to include in table 5 which were divided into positive, negative, and both. The present table aims at

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responding the overarching research question: What are the students' perceptions towards

grammar teaching and the approaches, and methods used by the teacher?

Even though some of the studies have found that students held both positive and negative

perceptions, they were separated into positive and negative for the analysis. Regarding positive

views, in five out of the eight studies about perceptions, it was found that students preferred

explicit teaching which is strictly related to the deductive approach (Ismail, 2010; Male, 2011;

Mallia, 2014; Kubra, 2015; Khan et al. 2018). Perhaps, the participants in the aforementioned

studies preferred explicit teaching because these were carried out in TESEP scenarios where the

main pedagogical approach is the deductive one. Consequently, they have become accustomed to

that approach. The countries where these studies took place were as follows: United Arab

Emirates, Indonesia, South Sudan, Turkey, and Saudi Arabia. Male (2011) and Kubra (2015)

reported about the students' perceptions towards grammar learning itself in addition to the

participants' views about the approaches and methods. They both found that students considered

grammar as an essential part of a language. Finally, the students' opinion towards the use of

CALL as part of the teaching-learning process was, overall, positive for various reasons. First,

language taught via computer provided a stress-free atmosphere which enhanced students'

confidence. Their confidence improved because when participating in forums or group

discussions, they were able to take as much time as they needed before stating their opinion on a

particular topic. Moreover, in case they did not know how to write their ideas appropriately, they

could look for information on the internet, and as a result, they would learn on their own.

Multimedia resources such as videos, sitcoms, movies, etc, were also helpful in the grammar

teaching endeavor, and students really enjoyed to learn by this means as Saeedi and Biri (2016)

found in their study. On the other hand, there were few negative perceptions regarding grammar

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learning and the methodology used to teach it, but they were worth mentioning. First, the students' opinion about grammar learning was that it was boring and tedious. Some of them even considered it as a waste of time stating that it was not vital for oral communication. Nevertheless, they admitted that it was crucial for writing properly and for creating meaningful sentences (Male, 2011).

There were only two studies that reported negative views to parts of the methodology used. First, Ismail (2010) reported that some students considered that working cooperatively was not pertinent to their learning style. The second negative view that students had was related to the use of animated sitcoms to teach grammar (Saeedi & Biri, 2016). Their opinions were that the characters in the sitcom spoke swiftly, the episodes were short, and unnecessary information was received as part of the input. However, as stated before, they liked the use of these shows in class, and they would like to have more lessons like this in the future.

Based on what the studies have presented, it can be said that the deductive approach is the preferred methodological approach because the students presented the most favorable opinions. In spite of the fact that it might be considered as the traditional method, it has been proved that most students can benefit from this method. Referring to the use of ICTs, and technology in general, even though the sample was short, there was a general acceptance on this methodology to teach grammar (Khan, et al., 2018; Saeedi & Biri, 2016; Thamrin, Suriaman, & Maghfirah, 2019; Rahimi & Hosseini, 2011). Thus, CALL should be implemented in every country's curricula if the resources to do so are available (Appendix B).

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Chapter VI

Conclusion

      English grammar teaching has been a controversial topic in language education for a vast period of time. Due to the increase in the demand of professionals who speak English, it is imperative to establish an approach that meets the students' needs. This approach cannot satisfy all of their necessities due to their different learning styles, multiple intelligence, among others. Therefore, regarding the research question about which approach is the best, it was not possible to answer it with a specific approach because of the several aspects already mentioned. Thus, the answer was that teachers have to decide which approach is the best for the students according to their level, learning style, age, pedagogical culture of the country, etc. Another key finding was that most students preferred to be taught deductively, so using the deductive approach and the methods that derived from it could be beneficial for most students. In addition, technology should be included as part of the class because students presented, overall, a positive view towards the use of ICTs as part of the class. Given these facts, the best possible solution could be to use the eclectic approach in the EFL/ESL classroom. Further research on the use of the eclectic approach to teach grammar should be conducted.

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APPENDIXES

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Appendix A: Studies Analyzed

Abdo, I. B., & Al-Awabdeh, A. (2017). Animated Videos Prove to be Beneficial in Teaching

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Appendix B: Perceptions Analysis

Study	Positive Perceptions	Negative Perceptions
Ismail (2010)	• Explicit instruction is essential • The new model allowed them to work together	• Working cooperatively was not relevant to their learning style
Male (2011)	• Grammar allows you to create meaningful sentences • It is essential for writing • Explicit teaching is preferred when studying grammar	• In conversation, it will affect fluency • Grammar is not important to communicate (orally)
Rahimi & Hosseini (2011)	• CALL is as valuable as traditional language learning • Learning a language through computer creates a stress-free atmosphere	• Computers cannot replace the teacher

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Thamrin, Suriaman, & Maghfirah (2019)	• Teaching-learning through Moodle is effective because students can learn anywhere and at any time. • It strengthens their understanding of the topic being discussed • Group discussion in Moodle makes them confident to share their thoughts • All students preferred the online learning process	• Learning grammar is boring and difficult
Mallia (2014)	• Students preferred the deductive approach	
Kubra (2015)	• Grammar is a principal part of a language • Preference for the deductive approach	• 59% of the participants stated that grammar is seen as difficult

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		• 9% said that learning grammar is a waste of time
Khan et al. (2018)	• The deductive approach is effective. • Students feel comfortable when using the D2L software	
Saeedi & Biri (2016)	• Students liked the use of animated sitcoms in class • New way of teaching grammar • Exposure to animated sitcoms was useful and effective • They would like to have animated sitcoms or authentic videos in future classes	• The characters speak very fast • The episodes were short. • They do not want to receive unnecessary information in the input

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