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The Effects of Role Plays on EFL Students' Grammar Learning.

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Resumen

Ser capaz de utilizar construcciones gramaticales correctas en la comunicación hace que los alumnos se sientan motivados al aprender una lengua extranjera. Cuando se aprenden las reglas gramaticales, los lingüistas afirman que los estudiantes deben estar expuestos a diferentes contextos para garantizar la competencia comunicativa. La presente síntesis de investigación revisa la eficacia global de los *Role Plays* como herramienta académica para la enseñanza de la gramática a los estudiantes de inglés como lengua extranjera. Esta síntesis comprende estudios experimentales y cuasi-experimentales desarrollados en contextos de enseñanza del inglés como lengua extranjera (EFL) con estudiantes desde los once años hasta la edad adulta. Para desarrollar la presente investigación se seleccionaron 20 estudios, que cumplieran con los criterios de inclusión de ser publicados desde el año 2000 en adelante, que evaluaron a un total de 979 estudiantes. Esta síntesis tuvo como objetivo investigar los efectos en el aprendizaje gramatical de los estudiantes mientras se utilizan *Role Plays*. También, se analizó cómo se los utilizan en las aulas, así como las actitudes de los estudiantes hacia su implementación en el aula. Los resultados sugieren que (a) los *Role Plays* mejoran la competencia gramatical de los estudiantes; (b) siguen dos prácticas pedagógicas: Presentación, Práctica, Producción y Retroalimentación, así como un Modelo Instruccional; y (c) los estudiantes desarrollan actitudes positivas y negativas hacia los *Role Plays*. Al final de este estudio se discuten los resultados, las conclusiones y las posibles sugerencias.

Palabras clave: Aprendizaje de la gramática en el contexto EFL, *role plays*, eficacia de *role plays*, práctica pedagógica PPP, actitudes de los estudiantes.



Abstract

Being able to use correct grammatical constructions in speech enables learners to feel motivated when learning a target language. When learning grammar rules, linguists state that students should be exposed to different contexts for ensuring communicative competence. The present research synthesis revises the overall effectiveness of role plays as an academic tool for teaching grammar to EFL students. The study comprises experimental and quasi-experimental studies developed in EFL contexts with students from eleven years old to adulthood. Twenty studies were selected for developing this research synthesis that met the inclusion criteria of being published from 2000 onwards, which tested a total of 979 students. This research synthesis aims to investigate the effects on students' grammatical learning while using role plays. It also investigates how role plays are used in classrooms as well as students' attitudes towards the implementation of role plays. Findings acknowledge that (a) role plays improve students' grammatical competence; (b) they follow two pedagogical practices known as Presentation, Practice, Production, and Feedback and Instructional Modeling; and (c) students develop positive and negative attitudes towards role plays. The results, conclusions, and possible suggestions are discussed at the end of this study.

Keywords: Grammar learning in the EFL context, *role plays*, effectiveness of *role plays*, PPP pedagogical practice, students' attitudes.

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Introduction

Students, undoubtedly, dedicate a great deal of time to study grammatical constructions for mastering the English language; however, learning grammar structures tends to be a difficult task for the majority of EFL learners. In fact, most of them will not be able to use the language for communicative purposes in different contexts. The principal cause is that instructors rely on non-communicative methods such as the grammar-translation method, in which the grammatical constructions are memorized, making students grasp the rules in isolation (Abu, 2015). To encourage students to learn grammar significantly, role plays (henceforth RP) must be considered as an interactive technique that can contribute to this purpose. Campoverde (2011), for example, states that role plays are useful techniques that stimulate learners to practice grammatical constructions in context and enable them to develop their creativity and communicative competence. Hence, to understand how role plays can contribute to the learning of grammar, this synthesis aims to answer three research questions: a) What are the effects of role plays on students' grammar learning?; b) How are role plays used to teach grammar?; and c) What are students' attitudes toward the use of role plays for grammar learning? Posing these three research questions, role plays can be an effective technique that students can apply to their grammar learning in order to acquire the grammatical structures in context and develop oral communication effectively. Hence, the information collected in this research synthesis about the effectiveness of role plays on students' grammar learning encompasses six chapters. The first chapter includes the background, problem statement, justification, research questions, and objectives. The second chapter, the theoretical framework, discusses key terminology related to grammar learning and role plays as well as a discussion of the traditional methods along



with a discussion of innovative methodologies with a communicative approach for teaching grammar. The third chapter analyzes the literature available on the effects of role plays in the EFL classroom, including a discussion of the data drawn from 20 studies. The fourth chapter, the methodology, comprises the inclusion and exclusion criteria that were used for analyzing the studies selected for this synthesis while in the fifth chapter, the data processed illustrates the findings of the studies analyzed to answer the three research questions regarding the influence of role plays on grammar learning. Finally, the last chapter covers the conclusions and recommendations.



CHAPTER I

Description of the Research

1.1 Background

The concept of grammar refers to the internalized rules that human beings use to develop their language competence (Koll & Funk, 2006). In this context, the teaching of grammar has become a controversial issue because of the use of traditional methods that might be detrimental to the essence of grammar learning.

According to Widodo (2006), “in the context of EFL, teaching grammar has traditionally been dominated by a grammar-translation method where the use of the mother tongue is clearly important” (p. 123). This assumption, whether suitable or not to grammar learning, has an impact on teaching practices as teachers have been mechanically explaining grammatical rules and using isolated items as examples (Zhou, 2018). Besides, the use of authentic materials in the classroom has been scarce and teachers’ focus has been placed only on form rather than on meaning; as a result, students cannot apply what they have learned into the real world (Özkan, 2015).

Furthermore, EFL classes are teacher-centered, and students are passive learners who cannot use the grammatical structures for communication (Davis & Wilcock, 2005). As an alternative to overcome the traditional ways of teaching English grammar, the use of role plays (RP) to enhance authentic communication has become a new technique that researchers consider worth mentioning to improve EFL students’ grammar learning.

The impact of role plays on students’ grammar learning is debatable depending on how grammar is used. According to Alzboun, Smadi, and Baniabdelrahman (2017), the main reason for applying role plays is to teach students to be fluent when they are



conveying a message orally, as their purpose is to communicate rather than consciously take into account the correct use of grammatical structures. Concerning communicative purposes, Rojas and Villafuerte (2018) claim that “RP is a communication technique that improves fluency by enabling students to interact in class and increase their motivation to learn” (p.730). Likewise, Criollo (2018) states that the use of role plays as a motivational activity helps students to be fluent and confident when speaking. Thus, researchers have focused on the use of role plays as a technique to enhance students’ fluency rather than grammatical knowledge.

Because the relationship between role plays and grammar has not been studied previously, it is important to analyze the effects of role plays on EFL students’ grammar learning. In the words of Islam and Islam (2013), the “role play technique has [a] positive impact in improving learners’ speaking skills (. . .) and enables them to speak accurately and confidently in that situation in the target language” (p. 229). Furthermore, Andrade (2017) argues that “role-play activities appear to have positively influenced on the development of grammar” (p. 95). By applying role plays with a focus on grammar, students can feel more confident when they are speaking.



1.2 Problem Statement

In Latin America and worldwide, teaching grammar, especially English grammatical rules, has become a difficult task; as a result, most instructors face great challenges in teaching English due to the lack of knowledge, training, and strategies (Copland, Garton & Burns, 2014). Accordingly, a major emphasis has been put on the traditional grammar-translation method, focusing on vocabulary and grammar constructions that are taught through memorization while listening and speaking skills are neglected (All-Mijan, 2018). This method encourages students to concentrate on accomplishing their tasks to get good marks in their lessons rather than processing their understanding of what is being taught (Rahman, 2012). This makes the grammar-translation method ineffective since students neither explore their creativity nor engage to participate in the class to produce their speaking abilities so that teachers are required to apply other methods and techniques to accompany students' process (Ölçer, 2014).

Therefore, the teaching of grammar has become an issue in the EFL classroom since instructors think that grammar rules will help students to develop their communicative competence successfully. However, the truth is that teachers face a hard situation because learners feel demotivated and regard grammar only as a difficult skill. Even though they learn the rules well, students have problems when using them in their oral communication (Mohammed & Perur, 2011). Accordingly, the majority of students are reluctant to learn grammar inside the classroom because teachers do not use dynamic techniques and do not focus on students' abilities (Iqbal, Akbar & Ahmad, 2017).



Moreover, grammar has been taught in isolation by memorizing rules, thus preventing students from clearly understanding grammar constructions (Campoverde, 2011). Therefore, teaching grammar has been associated with a lack of appropriate methods, in which instructors have to take into consideration students' needs for successful learning because if learners do not develop grammar in the target language, they cannot develop the other language skills when learning English (Yusob, 2018).

Based on everything that has been discussed regarding the weaknesses of teaching grammar, there is a need to carry out a research synthesis that analyses the effects of different types of pedagogical practices on EFL students' grammar learning. Thus, this research synthesis focuses on the contributions of the use of role plays on students' grammar learning and aims to examine the effects on students' learning through role plays, to analyze how this technique is used in EFL classrooms and to discuss students' attitudes towards the implementation of role plays.



1.3 Rationale

Role plays have commonly been used to teach the English language and have been utilized primarily to practice speaking. This strategy can help students to increase their fluency and develop effective communication as their speaking skills promote their creativity by performing real-life situations (Priyono, 2014). Moreover, role plays have been widely applied to develop students' fluency, as teachers can encourage learners to use the English language by interacting with their partners in a dynamic way (Trivedi, 2017).

Regarding the theory presented in this section, this research synthesis proposes to analyze the contribution of role plays on students' grammar learning. It can be interesting and useful for EFL teachers and students to know the effects of role plays when they are embedded in pedagogical practices to improve the learning of grammar structures in the EFL classroom. By doing this analysis, teachers, students, and anyone else can have a deeper understanding of how role plays can be used to teach grammar, how students can benefit from this technique, and how instructors can motivate them to practice the English language by using new teaching and learning practices appropriately.



1.4 Research Questions

This research synthesis aims to investigate the effects of role plays on EFL students' grammar learning. To investigate the overall effectiveness of role plays, the present study poses the following research questions as well as its general and specific objectives:

1. What are the effects of role plays on students' grammar learning?
2. How are role plays used to teach grammar?
3. What are students' attitudes toward the use of role plays for grammar learning?

1.5 Objectives

General Objective

- To analyze the contributions of role plays on EFL students' grammar learning.

Specific Objectives

- To determine the effects of role plays on students' grammar learning.
- To identify how role plays are used to teach grammar to EFL students.
- To discuss EFL students' attitudes on the use of role plays in the EFL classroom.



CHAPTER II

Theoretical Framework

2.1 Introduction

Teaching grammar in EFL classrooms has been a great challenge for many teachers since students' outcomes show that grammar is not developed effectively for oral communication (Al-Mekhlafi & Nagaratnam, 2011). Thus, this section discusses the principles and components of grammar, the methods that have traditionally been used without communicative purposes as well as the different methodologies for teaching and learning grammar effectively.

2.2 Definition of Grammar

Defining grammar represents a difficult task for many researchers since the concept of grammar can be addressed in different ways. For instance, Harmer (2001) estimates that grammar is an explanation of the different forms that words have, and the combinations that take place inside the syntactic structures inherent in any language. In Chuan's words (2011), grammar is the frame for describing any language; hence, the researcher highlights the importance of grammar by making an analogy between grammar and a building. Then, "the language is the building, words are the bricks and the grammar is the architect's plan" (Chuan, 2011, p.14). In sum, grammar is the outcome of the linguistic process that takes place in the mind of its speakers and that allows them to successfully communicate with the members of their social and cultural environment, as no communication is possible without the development of grammar.

2.3 Principles of Grammar Teaching

Grammar teaching is predominant to understand a foreign language; hence,



students have to learn to master grammar correctly, to use the language properly, and to do what they consider necessary to start a conversation (Wang, 2010). To teach grammar in EFL classrooms, some insights must be considered for effective learning.

In this light, Thornbury (2001) illustrates some rules of thumb to keep in mind. First, the researcher points out that grammar must be taught along with its meaning, i.e., the speaker or writer can use one grammatical structure over another depending on the message that he or she wants to convey. Batstone and Ellis (2009) state that during the learning of grammar, teachers should encourage students to directly link form to its social and cultural meanings. Second, regarding teaching, instructors should engage students in a process to connect the meaning they already know with the new grammatical point and the sense it attains, as the main purpose of teaching grammar is to provide students with an opportunity to recognize how the language is used in real life. Campoverde (2011) agrees with Thornbury (2001) by saying that grammar must be presented in different real-life situations rather than explaining it in isolation. Third, the practice time must be prioritized while the explanation of the grammatical points must be reduced. Therefore, to increase students' grammatical awareness, teachers should provide students with meaningful activities that present grammar in context and ask them to focus on its meaning for conveying a message. Campoverde (2011) claims that by presenting grammar through songs, dialogues, or contextualized activities, students can understand grammatical structures better. Accordingly, teachers can explain the grammatical constructions inductively and then verify through observations if students infer the correct grammatical points to make the learning process effective (Zang & Li, 2014). Fourth, teachers must know their students' grammar levels so that they can focus their attention on teaching the grammar structures that are difficult for their students.



Fifth, the creation of meaningful conditions such as a) enough input, that is, different activities that encourage students to learn; b) correct output which is related to the quality and quantity of activities that ensure students can produce grammar correctly; c) enough feedback so that students' attention focus on form; and d) interesting activities that motivate learners to produce optimal output and lead them to significant learning (Ramadhan, Fatmawati, Nur & Nurman, 2014). Finally, all these principles of grammar must be related to the students' interests, learning styles, and needs (Thornbury, 2001).

2.4 Components of Grammar

The study of grammar is divided into two main subcategories: morphology and syntax. Morphology analyzes the internal structure of the words of a language and how they are formed (Lieber, 2009). To illustrate this internal structure, the noun "teacher"; for example, is formed by two morphemes: the verb stem "teach" and the suffix -er. Morphemes are divided into "Bound morphemes (e.g., {-s}, {-en}, {-ed}, {-ing} {-er})", and Free Morphemes which can stand by themselves "(e.g., {act} in {re}-{en}-act-{ment})" (Galasso, 2002, p. 31). Conversely, syntax analyzes "the external economy of words, including word order, agreement; like the sentence "For me to call her sister would be a bad idea" and its syntactic transformation "It would be a bad idea for me to call her sister" (p. 47); hence, syntax is a system to know how the languages are structured and to understand how words and phrases are arranged to construct correct utterances in a language (Mariani, Mu'in & Arief, 2019). Syntax is also divided into lexical and functional grammar. The lexical component refers to nouns, verbs, adjectives, and adverbs, whereas the functional part includes determiners, modals, pronouns, complementizers, and qualifiers (Galasso, 2002).



2.5 A Description of the Different Methodologies for Teaching Grammar

2.5.1 Non-Communicative Methods

Historically, the teaching of grammar has been related to traditional methods that do not follow a communicative approach; thus, their use is not emphasized nowadays. A short description of these methods is provided to give a general overview of their application for teaching grammar.

The first Classical Method or Grammar Translation Method enables learners to read in a foreign language by studying its grammatical rules and by using a dictionary to interpret different texts. This method emphasizes the explicit description of grammatical rules and word lists so that learners can achieve high reading proficiency in a foreign language as well as learn the foreign language by translating written texts into their mother tongue. This method is no longer suitable for teaching grammar communicatively since students translate each word to their first language. Thus, they neither develop their communicative competence nor participate actively in their classroom, as they just take notes or listen to the teacher's explanation of the target grammar (Chuan, 2011).

To use grammar communicatively, the Direct Method encourages students to learn grammar inductively, without translating from the target language into their mother tongue. In this context, the Direct Method presents some disadvantages: (1) this method disregards reading and writing; (2) teachers lack professional instruction (Useng, 2017); (3) not all instructors adapt new teaching strategies into the classroom; and (4) classes are sometimes boring since students do not participate due to the strict basis of this methodology (Indriani, 2015). Another method for teaching grammar in a different way is the Audio-Lingual Method, which emphasizes that through repetition,



students can learn the grammatical structures in the target language. The Audio-Lingual Method considers that grammar might be presented in simple situations, and later students can learn through more complex ones; nevertheless, this method do not present real language to students, and consequently their learning process is limited to repeat phrases (Harmer, 2007). Afterward, as a way to foster students to acquire the grammatical rules inductively in the target language, the Total Physical Response (TPR) enhances the learning of the target language through physical movement and the performance of different commands (Ilwana, 2010). However, TPR is often used for beginners, and in most cases, when adults are asked to perform commands, they do not feel comfortable because of their cultural differences. Hence, learners are only passive members while the main role is occupied by the teacher (Bui, 2018). Conversely, the Suggestopedia Method highlights the importance of a relaxing environment with background music as an attempt to minimize the negative concepts regarding grammar learning; thus, students' subconsciousness retains the taught material since the right hemisphere of the brain reduces tiredness and increases productivity (Albán, 2011). Nevertheless, Apriana and Islamiyah (2011) note that some students do not like to be treated like children; as a result, they are not prompt to learn.

Currently, all these different methodologies are not quietly recommendable in the classrooms since traditionally, they only focus on teaching grammar without developing oral communication. As a way to solve the gap between grammar learning and communicative competence, the following methods present meaningful information to help learners to use grammar as a path for communication.



2.5.2 Communicative Methods

Communicative Language Teaching Method (CLT) for Teaching Grammar

The Communicative Language Method emerges from Noam Chomsky's idea of focusing on the difficulties that learners face when learning a new language. Since 1970, people have pointed out that grammatical utterances and language itself must not be taught in isolation. Canale and Swain (1980) suggest that learning a language must be the result of an intrinsic relationship between grammatical competence, which refers to the domain of grammatical and lexical capacity, and sociolinguistic competence, which refers to the ability to appropriately use the language in different contexts while emphasizing the intended meaning. Thus, the grammatical and sociolinguistic competence is a fundamental pillar for meaningful communication among speakers.

The structural syllabus of CLT consists in a) using different contexts to emphasize meaning; b) utilizing the language as a path for communication; and c) practicing communicative tasks to achieve good performance (Finocchiaro & Brumfit, 1983). The main purpose of this method is to teach learners how to use the language for communicative purposes rather than to know everything about it. As Andrade (2017) asserts, "The term communicative approach encompasses a series of methods and approaches by which language is viewed as a tool for communication instead of as a subject for academic study" (p. 26). This method is considered a qualified approach for learning grammar since it provides learners with authentic real-life situations, and meaningful activities that encourage students to see how the language is used for communicative purposes. Along with the description provided, CLT spotlights the importance of students' centeredness in which they act as active members of their learning process rather than as passive members who only listen and follow instructions



(Chung, 2006). In this matter, learners can use grammatical structures with “language functions such as inviting, agreeing and disagreeing, [and] suggesting” (Harmer, 2007, p. 50). Following the communicative principles of the CLT, role plays appear as a technique that helps students not only to communicate with other people but also to improve their grammatical competence while performing their roles (Andrade, 2017).

It is worth mentioning, however, that teachers may have problems creating enough material to encourage students to communicate if they do not have enough training in this method (Kalanzadeh & Bakhtiarvand, 2011). This may be detrimental to the learning process as students could be reluctant to participate in class discussions when they possess low levels of English proficiency in oral communication; as a result, it is important to recognize that not all students master the language skills necessary to use CLT (Kalanzadeh, Mirchenari & Bakhtiarvand, 2013). Accordingly, CLT may not work appropriately for EFL students because they practice the language only in class, and they do not feel the necessity of using the language for communication since they share the same mother tongue in class (Hiep, 2007). In sum, the Communicative Language Teaching Method encourages students to practice grammatical constructions in different contexts while using the language as a path for communication.

Task-Based Language Teaching Method (TBLT) for Teaching Grammar

The Task-Based Method is strongly associated with CLT due to their belief that communication is the most essential part when learning a foreign language (Campoverde, 2011). This method was created by N.S. Prabhu (1987) and includes a series of tasks to discover the most appropriate activities that help students to use the language communicatively. Prabhu discusses the importance of the implementation of



tasks that enable students to be part of their learning process. This method aims to practice grammatical structures of a target language through communicative activities settled in real-life situations. Thus, grammar learning focuses on meaning rather than form. As Harmer (1991) establishes, “teaching grammar in context is motivating, interesting and provides the students with an opportunity to be creative and use their imagination while acquiring a new grammar structure, rather than teaching them dry, boring and artificial sentences” (p. 71). Teaching grammar through tasks enables students to take risks and to use the language for communicative purposes as well as to use their creativity and to be motivated when learning. This is congruent with the use of role plays since they encourage students to focus on one task at a time and to practice grammatical structures in different contexts while using the language for communication (Campoverde, 2011). However, some disadvantages must be highlighted concerning the Task-Based Method. Students who do not have exposure to the target language outside of the classroom cannot learn the language meaningfully (Buyukkarci, 2009). In this regard, students may not learn the language successfully because of the lack of time for developing their communicative skills; thus, students use other strategies such as paraphrasing or repetition when communicating (Skehan, 1996).

In sum, TBLT is recommended to be applied in the classroom since it is a method that helps students to learn grammatical constructions and encourages them to use the language communicatively by developing meaningful tasks that allow learners to use the language in real-life situations.



2.6 Relationship among Role Plays, Drama and Simulation

Before discussing role plays as a strategy to enhance the learning of grammar, it is necessary to describe the similarities that simulation and drama share with role plays, as well as their differences.

First of all, role plays, simulation, and drama are activities that engage learners in being part of a performance by acting a specific role. Their main goal is to encourage students to learn while socializing; however, certain differences are found among them. In role plays, improvisation is allowed while in drama the script must be followed strictly (Methods, 2013). In simulation, Fanous (2020) demonstrates that, as far as possible, the context has to be realistic; thus, if the simulation of events in an office, for example, is the aim, teachers have to rearrange the desks and use visual aids related to an office such as laptops or phones to create a realistic scenario.

When talking about drama, the main difference with simulations is that thoughts and emotions are highly emphasized or exaggerated on performance (Özgür, 2017). Taking into account these differences and similarities, the term role play is emphasized in this research synthesis.

2.7 Role Plays

2.7.1 Definition

To have a clear understanding of the definition of role play, it is important to consider its origins. The Greeks were the first people who used role plays and promoted teaching by taking different roles, so teachers were able to provide students with feedback after their performance. Role plays were therefore created by taking into



consideration the different settings to teach and help students in their learning process (Donoso, 2014). Lo (2001) considers that role plays are communicative techniques in which learners create the dialogue of a scene and then perform a role play without reading the script, while Piedrahita (2017) indicates that role plays are conversational techniques that provide prompts and useful expressions for learners so that they can use them in different and new situations. In sum, role plays can be considered as a technique that helps students to communicate by performing a specific role.

2.7.2 Role Plays and their Impact on Anxiety, Self-Confidence and Motivation

Besides helping learners to enhance their communicative skills, role plays have some other effects on students' performance. Humayun (2016) claims that role plays are an appropriate strategy that helps students to enhance emotional intelligence and to get good marks as they socialize with other people and help them to reduce their anxiety. In most cases, students are reluctant to speak English since they face problems regarding their pronunciation and grammar, and they feel insecure to produce the target language; therefore, applying role plays helps students reduce their anxiety during their performance because they have a lot of fun and feel motivated to improve their oral communication naturally. In the words of Laksono (2015), role play is a useful technique to help students develop their social skills appropriately so that they can apply the language they are learning in a real-life situation. Laksono agrees that role plays are useful to stimulate the acquisition of new experiences so that learners can develop their ability to think and analyze different situations. By working in this context, students can become natural risk-takers since they understand that making mistakes is part of learning.



As a result, their self-confidence increases, and they feel secure when talking (Escobar & Sonza, 2016). Liu (2010) notes that this technique changes students' perspectives when learning; they feel motivated since they are part of the task by writing the dialogues, performing, or expressing their ideas and feelings.

2.8 The Input and the Output Hypothesis

The use of role plays and the Input and Output hypothesis match together since students can learn the target language inductively. The input hypothesis, claimed by Krashen in 1985, confirms that learners can acquire language with a comprehensible input that presents structures a bit beyond their current level of competence; this cognitive challenge boosts students to learn grammar implicitly based on contextual clues. In this way, the use of role plays becomes an effective technique to introduce complex grammatical structures that expand students' levels of knowledge without realizing that they are learning.

The comprehensible output, developed by Swain in 1985, explains that learners do not produce the language accurately and that comprehensive input is not enough to acquire grammatical structures. Since students still struggle to develop communicative competence, although they speak the language fluently, Swain proposes the output hypothesis to expand grammatical knowledge. Taking into account the researcher's statements, role plays may be helpful for learners to develop their grammatical competence by allowing them to create their utterances. Swain states that for the development of comprehensible output, that is, students' written or oral production of the language or the creation of correct, precise, and appropriate utterances for conveying a message, it is important to apply collaborative tasks to engage students in cooperative



work and promote the learning of the target language and the development of new knowledge. Consequently, “learners working in a pair can produce comprehensible output beyond their competence level and learn something new” (p. 259) In this context, Benati (2017) suggests that collaborative activities are useful to help students in their grammar learning through different settings, as they develop comprehensible output to produce correct utterances. Learning grammar through output activities helps pupils to pay attention to its form as they improve their abilities when practicing the language.

When students focus only on listening and reading activities, they do not develop their output language because they are not creating or producing anything. Therefore, the input language should have a connection with the output language for students to elaborate correct sentence structures in the target language. Benati considers that activities that present not only grammatical structures in the input language but also encourage students to produce the language are fundamental pillars for developing students’ communicative competence.

Hence, role plays are a technique that motivates learners to acquire and produce the language by socializing with their peers, so that they help each other in their performance and produce the language correctly. Finally, Xiuzhen and Yuqin (2013) verify that comprehensible output tasks have significant benefits in learning the target language. For example, they have noticed that role plays are a useful technique that motivates and helps students construct their dialogues by using correct grammar structures as they develop their creativity and communicative competence when acting their roles; through this, students are able “to internalize new input language forms” (p. 260).



2.9 Conclusion

This chapter has presented the theoretical framework that guides this research synthesis and a series of key terms related to role plays and grammar learning. It has discussed the concept of grammar, as it is important to clarify that grammar does not represent a boring activity of memorization, rather it must be regarded as a path that enables students to communicate.

It has analyzed the principles of grammar that are important to consider for developing students' communicative competence. The components of grammar are also analyzed, which are morphology and syntax. The description of different methodologies with no communicative purposes for teaching grammar is also mentioned to highlight the fact that some of their characteristics make them detrimental and thus not currently recommendable, as they present grammatical constructions in isolation. Likewise, this chapter has briefly analyzed other communicative methods that can help students to use correct grammatical structures in oral communication. It has emphasized the relationship between role plays and techniques such as simulation and drama, which have been discussed along with the definition of role plays and their positive impact on decreasing students' anxiety while raising their self-confidence and motivation.



CHAPTER III

Literature Review

3.1 Introduction

The use of role plays in the educational field is mainly focused on the development of speaking skills. Regardless of its focus on the development of students' fluency, role plays can help learners develop their accuracy or the ability to use correct and precise grammatical structures in different contexts (Brand & Götz, 2011).

Therefore, this literature review focuses on grammar learning through the use of role plays, and it is divided into four sections according to the research questions of this synthesis. One section discusses the advantages and disadvantages of role plays focused on grammar, and the others discuss the three research questions related to role plays and grammar. Before analyzing the research questions, the advantages and disadvantages of role plays on grammar learning are discussed. Then, (1) studies concerning the effects of role plays on grammar learning are analyzed as the first research question; (2) how role plays are used to teach grammar are identified to answer the second research question; and (3) studies about students' attitudes when learning grammar through role plays are discussed as the third research question.

3.2 Advantages of using Role Plays on Students' Grammar Learning

Role play is a technique applied in different fields but mainly in teaching as students are required to perform a certain role in the classroom (Martínez, 2009).

Accordingly, Siska (2017) indicates that role plays are dynamic activities to motivate students to be the center of learning, as they perform several realistic roles in different contexts.



Conforme and Torres (2013) define role plays as educational and interactive activities that foster students' development of their sensory and psychomotor skills and help them acquire knowledge of their social and cultural environment and contribute to develop their thinking skills by creating meaningful learning. Thus, learners can internalize knowledge and participate in situations that allow them to be creative and intellectual while performing their roles. Besides, role plays are collective techniques that help learners to be aware of the correct use of grammar as they study sentence structures in a communicative way (Siska, 2017).

Being able to use grammar with a communicative aim represents a big challenge for most students in an EFL context (Priyono, 2014). When teachers have as their main purpose teaching grammar, they must introduce learners into a meaningful context; thus, students can recognize the use of grammatical structures in the same way as native speakers do (Campoverde, 2011). Accordingly, role plays are meaningful activities to teach grammar, as they contribute to lessen instructors' difficulties when having to cope with grammatical rules in the classroom because it is not an easy task, and students get bored in many cases. Role plays make learners feel more motivated in their learning process; thus, teachers can present grammar in real contexts so that students engage in inferential processes to understand the grammatical constructions and learn them successfully (Seminario & Sotamba, 2010). This process, in which students learn by inferring without realizing that they are incorporating new information into their knowledge, is known as implicit learning. This concept is deeply analyzed as part of the cognitive process that all learners undergo, which refers to all mental processes involved in the reception and response of a given stimulus (Ortiz, 2009). According to Frensch and Runger (2003), implicit learning is the ability to learn in an environment in



which the individual needs to adapt to the constraints of the context. Examples of implicit learning involve children learning their mother tongue without being explicitly taught the grammatical structures of the target language, as they are able to walk without the capacity of explaining the rules of physical movement (Frensch & Runger, 2003).

In educational settings, implicit teaching focuses on using communication as a path for learning grammar; thus, learners are more conscious of working in communication than following grammatical rules (Ellis, 2015). Thus, students acquire grammar implicitly, and they can remember it as much as they practice the language. In accordance, Ellis (2009) estimates that the main focus of inductive teaching is to provide learners with input so that they can infer the grammatical rules that are hidden in the language. That is, learners acquire grammar without being explicitly taught. This is compatible with the use of authentic materials, as this type of material is not adapted for academic purposes (Kilickaya, 2004). As Graaff and Housen (2009) claim, grammatical learning is the result of meaningful exposure to authentic activities and material in their language class. The use of role plays develops students' grammatical awareness when applying them in class because this technique involves face-to-face communication, so students can help each other in the process of learning (Escobar & Sonza, 2016). Hence, Ribeiro (2002) agrees that role plays not only help learners to improve their linguistic abilities but also to learn from each other, allowing learners to enhance their roles after analyzing their partners' errors on the stage. By doing this, students who are not part of the performance and remain as observers can have the chance to examine their partners' use of language on stage and afterward help them to correct certain mistakes and errors in their syntactic and semantic constructions. This, in



addition, contributes to developing learners' awareness of their mistakes, allowing students to become consciously aware of the grammatical rules they commonly use incorrectly for communicative purposes, that is, reflecting on incorrect utterances constructed on students' lack of grammatical knowledge (Astghik, 2019). For instance, when students are performing their roles, some of their classmates decide to watch and listen to them carefully to learn from their mistakes.

After students act out their role plays, their classmates, who are observing them, keep in mind what the other students said during their performance. As a result, all the students truly learn something new since some learners dare to correct their classmates' mistakes after the performance. In the end, students repeat the correct utterances in front of the class, so that all the students can listen to the correct sentence constructions.

Moreover, self-correction can also occur by helping students to recognize their grammatical mistakes at the preparation stage or even when they perform their roles at the production stage (Escobar & Sonza, 2016). Thus, role plays are an effective technique that promotes learners' oral communication and improves their grammar learning significantly with other areas of the English language. According to Campoverde (2011), "Language is not only a system of rules; it is seen as a resource for the creation of meaning and communication" (p. 11). In this line of thought, role plays allow students to use grammatical structures in a significant way while communicating. By considering Campoverde's ideas, role plays not only foster genuine communication but also allow students to practice the language in different contexts and use the correct grammatical structures according to the circumstances provided; as a result, role plays give students a wide range of situations in which they can practice their speaking and produce accurate utterances.



Campoverde (2011) emphasizes that “role plays are useful tools to practice grammar structures in context.” (p. 40). Since students become familiar with contextualized grammar rules, as they develop their imagination by paying more attention to the creation of events, learners become more relaxed and write their scripts accurately; thus, students can expand their knowledge on grammar while performing dialogues and interacting with each other in the classroom (Haruyama, 2010).

3.3 Disadvantages of Role Plays on Students’ Grammar Learning.

Besides the advantages of role plays on grammar learning, it is worth mentioning some disadvantages that affect students' grammar learning. For example, Escobar and Sonza’s study (2016), which analyzes the use of role plays to improve students’ grammatical awareness, notices that students “who found easy to correct themselves” (p. 83) are more likely to improve their grammatical knowledge when speaking while those who do not apply self-correction may not develop the same level of accuracy. This is congruent with metacognitive strategies as learners develop a connection between their prior and new knowledge (Anderson, 2002). When learning English, metacognitive strategies are considered outstanding schemes that enable learners to track down their learning process by controlling, regulating, monitoring, and evaluating their performance effectively (Oxford, 2003). In Liu and Feng’s study (2011), the researchers discuss that high proficiency learners are more likely to apply metacognitive strategies according to their learning needs. Douglas (2000) agrees with Liu and Feng (2011) since learners who assess themselves and control their learning process can plan and execute linguistic features appropriately.

Another disadvantage related to the use of role plays is that it is not suitable for groups of students with low English levels (González, 2014). It is better to use role



plays with learners who already have a high proficiency in the language and organize group work according to their levels of language proficiency. For example, learners who have problems with sentence structure cannot work properly with students who have advanced grammar knowledge; thus, learners who struggle with grammatical rules are not helped by their partners, who have an advanced English level; hence, lower proficient learners get nervous and refuse to share their thoughts.

Benabadji (2006) and Gonzales (2014) agree that this technique requires a lot of oral communication which would be more appropriate for students with an advanced English level. In the same line of thought, Sato's research study (2001), which focuses on the effectiveness of role plays, recognizes that the opportunity of participation is not the same for all students. Some learners participate in role plays while others just watch their classmates without paying attention to their performance. Finally, Sato (2001) foregrounds that some students concentrate excessively on their assigned roles, and they do not pay enough attention to their application of grammatical rules as they perform their dialogues. Thus, students focus on how their character should behave in a given situation, and thus they tend to limit their grammatical competence.

3.4 Effects of Role Plays on Students' Grammar Learning

When analyzing the first research question about the effects of role plays on students' grammar learning, the use of role plays to teach grammar shows positive effects on students' grammatical learning since they become aware of their own grammatical mistakes while speaking. In Escobar and Sonza's research (2016), which analyzes the use of role plays to improve students' grammatical awareness, the researchers show that students internalize certain grammatical errors that are evidenced



in the first performances of role plays, but they start to correct themselves over time. The most common errors during the production of role plays are (1) the omission of the subject in sentences like “is better to prepare a Salmon” (p. 70); (2) the omission of the auxiliary verb in “yes/no” questions in the simple present tense as in “You know a good Centro commercial?” (p. 71); and (3) wrong word order in sentences including a) wrong placements for subjects and auxiliary verbs; b) adjectives; c) present simple tense in affirmative and negative sentences; and d) adverbs of frequency. The implementation of role plays shows that students gradually improve their grammatical performance since the errors mentioned above occur less frequently.

In Siska’s study (2017), the researcher uses role cards to facilitate students’ grammar learning regarding three tenses: present, past, and future. In addition, the study describes that students recognize the use of grammar more easily and construct appropriate utterances by interacting with each other. For example, based on role cards, students can form “wh” and “yes/no” questions by using the correct tense in specific situations. Students can use correct tenses since they have the opportunity to ask for their teacher’s and classmates’ help while developing their role plays. As they can interact with their peers, they feel more motivated for learning. Siska (2017) mentions that when a pair of students performs a role play with the correct use of grammar, they become an example to follow for other students.

Abu’s research (2015), which focuses on teaching grammar through role plays, is congruent with Siska’s study (2017). Abu (2015) states that teachers must present grammatical structures according to the three dimensions of a communicative syllabus, which are form, meaning, and use; thus, learners gain knowledge of the use of one



structure or the other according to the context. In the same vein, the researcher explains that role plays “help students to practice English grammar in context and real-life situations and enable them to fully and properly understand grammatical rules to apply them in written and spoken English” (p. 15). Abu (2015) highlights the fact that the more familiar the topic is for the students, the easier it is that they participate and learn during the role plays. Situations such as “shopping, interacting at school, talking on the telephone, asking for directions, making appointments, and attending business meetings” (p. 56) are examples of interesting scenarios that inspire learners to use grammatical structures in different contexts.

Lin’s research (2009) on role plays and teaching grammar points out that students can improve their grammatical competence by performing interesting topics or solving problem scenarios. During her research, the author noticed that students could grasp the passive voice, gerund, present, and past tense when they were asked to perform a role play about slavery. Students engage in their roles and use grammatical sentences such as “we live in very bad conditions and are treated very badly” (p. 149). According to Lin, the use of role plays enhances learners’ correct use of structures such as the subjunctive mood when they are asked to perform hypothetical situations. In this study, the researcher also uses information about some superstitions that some cultures around the world have and asks students to perform a role play. For instance, students talk about the superstition of black cats in Egypt and European countries and demonstrate good control of the present and past tense. According to Kodotchigova (2001), this activity allows students to develop not only their grammatical competence but also cultural awareness to reflect on the differences of each country.



Accordingly, Ahmed (2011) examines that role play is an effective technique to introduce and learn a particular grammatical structure according to the context in which a specific situation is developed. For example, in this case, students are asked to elaborate a conversation through a role play regarding the irregular past tense (p. 44):

“A: What did you do last night?

B: We went to a movie.

A: What did you see?”

As a result, students practice grammar and increase their speaking skills by promoting situations in a real setting. In a similar manner, Afana’s research (2012), based on the use of role plays for promoting students’ speaking skills, shows that learning the grammatical structures of any language must be developed in contextualized settings; thus, students develop grammatical awareness along with their communicative competence. In Afana’s study, students are asked to perform many role plays based on different functions according to different settings. One of the role plays is based on requesting preferable food in a shopping tour by using grammatical structures such as *“Could you, please?”*, *“Would you like to have some?”*, and *“How much does it cost?”* (p. 264). At the end of the study, students were able to use the correct grammar according to the different settings assigned by the researcher.

Finally, Piedrahita’s study (2017), focused on the impact of role plays in students’ fluency, emphasizes that this technique allows students to retain information about grammar structures and formulaic expressions like idioms and multi-word units through memorization. The researcher states that students do not memorize the



dialogues by heart, but rather they understand how grammar structures work according to different contexts. This supports Rubiano's (2013) idea that students learn grammatical rules faster since their memorization' ability increases as they practice the language. Concerning the effectiveness of role plays in students' speaking skills, Rubiano shows that students can use the past and future tense as well as the modal "would" and general vocabulary correctly when performing role plays about (1) shopping; (2) going to a party; (3) visiting a restaurant; (4) meeting people; (5) demanding an apology; and (6) making a phone call or leaving a message. Because they create their dialogues in class, students can grasp grammatical structures faster than in other activities; thus, their creativity, memorization, and communication skills are developed while performing role plays.

3.5 How Role Plays are Used to Teach Grammar

Concerning the second research question which addresses the use of role plays to teach grammar, it is clear that role plays are part of the process of Presentation, Practice, and Production, being used mainly in the last stage. In Andrade's research (2017), which focuses on the use of role plays to improve students' speaking skills, the researcher starts the class with a warm-up activity followed by the explanation of the target grammar. That is, the researcher concentrates on syntactic structures for asking and answering questions about tourist places in the students' city as well as on the use of (a) modals such as "can and could"; (b) the coordinating conjunction "and"; (c) the subordinating conjunctions "but, however and though"; (d) adjectives for describing places; and (e) adverbs such as "very, really, pretty, fairly, somewhat, and too". In the Practice stage, students fill the grammatical points in some worksheets, do exercises in their textbooks, and carry out listening activities with teachers monitoring this process.



In the Production stage, the researcher encourages students to perform a role play using the grammatical structures previously learned. First, students are asked to work autonomously and to prepare a PowerPoint presentation, so they can visualize all the tourist places. Then, the researcher asks students to work in pairs and choose either the role of the travel agent or the client. Finally, students perform the role plays in front of the class while their classmates take some notes. Escobar and Sonza (2016) also follow the same procedure considering different topics and grammatical structures. The researchers taught grammar in context by using the present simple to talk about daily routines. After the Presentation and the Practice stage, students performed a role play in which they could be either an interviewer or an American student who came to school. In the interview, they compared each other's daily routines.

Krisdiana, Irawati and Kadarisman (2018), who highlight the effectiveness of role plays in students' speaking skills, spotlight the importance of the inclusion of an additional step, that is "discussing, evaluating and following-up" students' performance (p. 79). After learners perform their role plays, teachers should ask their students to evaluate themselves and their classmates, and then share their experiences as a path for analyzing together what they have learned. Abu (2015) agrees with Krisdiana, et. al (2018) by stating that the final performance of a role play should not be considered as the end of the class but rather as an advantage to keep learners working on the comprehension of grammatical rules. For example, teachers can ask their students to analyze the scripts of the role plays at home and recall information from their performance in class; also, teachers can develop worksheets with questions or gap-filling exercises about the role plays performed by the students as activities for the next class.



Piedrahita (2017) suggests a different implementation of role plays for teaching grammar. In her study, role plays are used to improve oral fluency; however, results show that grammar is enhanced instead. The researcher does not follow the traditional process of the PPP, rather she explains the grammatical structures followed by an instructional model. The topic “Going to the movies”, for example, starts with a brainstorming of movie types, the presentation of new vocabulary, and the use of the modal verb “would like” to make offers and requests, and “can” to ask for what is needed in casual contexts. Finally, the researcher provides students with an instructional model of a dialogue between friends in a cinema by using all the aspects learned during her class. Students create their role plays following the researcher’s model.

Piedrahita (2017) and Criollo (2018) both agree that providing an instructional model helps students to better understand the grammatical aspects of the lesson. Criollo’s research (2018), which spotlights the use of role plays to develop the English-speaking skill, provides the students a “role play clue” in which friends are talking about their family using the auxiliaries “have” and “has” in affirmative and negative forms and the present form of the verb “to be” in affirmative and negative statements. Then, learners are asked to perform a role play following the model, so they have to pick up the role of the student, the student’s father, the student’s brother, or the friend who asks the questions about the student’s family.

3.6 Students’ Attitudes toward Role Plays on Grammar Learning

3.6.1. Positive Attitudes

Concerning the third research question about students’ attitudes toward the use of role plays for grammar learning, Andrade (2017) reports that students perceive that



role plays help master the English language; therefore, learners like this technique and notice that they develop correct grammatical constructions while their vocabulary and fluency increase when they use the language. In the words of the same author, role plays impact positively on students' performance after several practices, as they mention that due to the final performance, they can still keep in mind grammar constructions and vocabulary when speaking because learners have practiced their dialogues previously (Andrade, 2017). Accordingly, through role plays, students enjoy working in groups and consider that this technique is effective for improving their vocabulary and oral communication, showing accuracy in their use of language. Since learners play their roles cooperatively, they can easily identify their errors, correct them and learn from each other; as a result, after acting out their dialogues, students can speak more freely in English by learning more grammatical structures (Campoverde, 2011). Nhi and Huan's research (2017), based on the use of role plays to enhance students' speaking performance, aligns with Campoverde's study (2011) since students develop a positive attitude when working in groups. Nhi and Huan (2017) explain that by working cooperatively, students can correct and learn from their classmates' performances by listening to them or switching their roles. Since they perform in a comfortable environment, their anxiety tends to be minimized while their self-confidence increases (Dodson, 2002).

Concerning the effectiveness of different activities and strategies to enhance students' speaking skills, Khaoula (2015) points out that students develop positive attitudes when participating in role plays since they increase not only their grammatical competence but also their communication skills. In the author's words, this is the result of participating in a fun and challenging environment. In addition, Khaoula mentions



that role plays are activities that involve contemporary issues that motivate students to learn and develop “the interactive skills of arguing, informing, persuading, complaining, discussing [and] compromising” (p. 18); therefore, students interact with their classmates and together develop their grammatical competence. This is congruent with Cho’s research (2015), based on the effectiveness of non-scripted role plays, in which students prefer to learn without the help of any script and allow themselves to (1) practice the language; (2) use different grammatical structures according to different contexts; (3) work cooperatively; and (4) focus on fluency and accuracy. In this context, students demonstrate that because they switch their roles, they are able not only to correct their errors but also those of their classmates. This is compatible with the fact that by switching their roles during their performance, students can practice the language many times; as a result, they are aware of their grammatical errors and they can learn together. In some situations, students can even perform the same scenario five times in a row which enhances their use of the target language. In a group of five students, for example, all of them have to carry out the role of the employee and the role of clients. In Cho’s words, “After A has dealt with B, C, D and E, it is B’s turn to become an employee and serves A, C, D and E, and so forth” (p. 42).

Indrat’s study (2009) suggests that students develop a positive attitude towards role plays as they engage in their constant use. In her study, a comparison was made before and after learners’ use of role plays, noticing that students enhance their oral communication and grammar by speaking English more fluently. In the same line of thought, Rojas (2017) also points out that students feel that through role plays, they have a clear understanding of grammar and can practice previous knowledge. Besides, the author foregrounds that when students practice all the areas of the language,



especially grammar and speaking, role plays help them to develop good pronunciation and vocabulary.

3.6.2. Negative Attitudes

As stated before, role plays are an effective technique to develop learners' positive attitudes on grammar learning. However, it is worth mentioning that role plays also produce a negative influence on students' grammar learning. As Khaoula (2013) reports, role plays have a negative impact on students, as they face difficulties mainly in constructing syntactic structures in English to speak fluently, which may be due to the lack of vocabulary, lack of self-confidence, and a deficient pronunciation since the main requirement to develop the speaking skill is to master effective grammar and vocabulary to be able to use the language in various settings. When applying role plays in English classes, students consider that constructing a dialogue is difficult because of grammar; as a result, students oppose participating in role plays since they may feel uncomfortable if they commit grammatical errors when they speak with others (Ahmad, Abdul & Abdul, 2017).

Halápi and Saunders' research study (2002), which analyzes language teaching through role plays in Hungarian schools, emphasizes that the majority of classes in Hungary are developed by following the Grammar Translation Method, including gap-filling activities or just reading out loud; consequently, students do not have opportunities to develop their communicative competence in group activities. This leads students, who are not confident in speaking, to develop a negative attitude toward role plays. Halápi and Saunders point out that students prefer to act as passive members or observers during the role play, as they will avoid making grammatical mistakes in the



future. Piedrahita (2017) agrees with Halápi and Saunders (2002) because students do not want to participate since they are not able to handle pressure to keep the same grammatical level as their classmates. Because they do not want to be left behind, they prefer to remain silent by not taking any grammatical risk. Consequently, role plays have a negative impact on students with a low English proficiency level since they do not have enough communicative competence in the classroom to perform a role play.

In other cases, students do not like role plays since they struggle with pronunciation because grammatical structures are not pronounced the same way they are written; thus, learners are confused and reluctant to speak English because they feel that their partners will make fun of them. Consequently, students do not want to learn grammar through role plays, rather they want to learn pronunciation to communicate directly with other people because they consider that the most important part to perform a role play is mastering the speaking skill (Rojas, 2017).

3.7 Conclusion

The primary goal of this literature review was to analyze research studies that discuss the effectiveness of role plays on students' grammar learning. For this purpose, 20 studies were included that explained the positive and negative aspects of role plays as tools for the development of grammar on EFL learners. This section has delved into the understanding of how the application of role plays on students' grammar learning has been explored worldwide. This analysis of the literature available on the topic aimed to respond to three research questions: 1) What are the effects of role plays on students' grammar learning?; 2) How are role plays used to teach grammar?; and 3) What are students' attitudes toward the use of role plays for grammar learning? In sum,



concerning the first research question, the literature review suggests that through role plays, learners can use correct tenses and word order when performing their dialogues. Regarding the second question on how role plays are used to teach grammar, researchers foreground that role plays typically follow a Presentation, Practice and Production pedagogical sequence, which, in addition, includes feedback and follow-up activities. Besides, this review evidences that Instructional Modeling is applied to guide students in their performances. Finally, the third question highlights the fact that students develop positive attitudes as they increase their grammatical knowledge; however, negative attitudes are undeniable in learners with a low English proficiency level, as they do not feel confident enough to use the language, regardless of the strategy or technique the teacher uses in the EFL classroom.



CHAPTER IV

Methodology

4.1 Introduction

An exploratory bibliographic research synthesis was carried out with the purpose to analyze the effectiveness of role plays on EFL students' grammar learning by answering three specific research questions: 1) What are the effects of role plays on students' grammar learning?; 2) How are role plays used to teach grammar?; and 3) What are students' attitudes toward the use of role plays for grammar learning?

Twenty relevant research studies focusing on role plays for teaching grammar in EFL classrooms were examined. The inclusion criteria for this synthesis were: (1) studies analyzing the effects of role plays on grammar learning; (2) research studies with a focus on the use of role plays for teaching grammar in the EFL classroom; (3) studies examining students' attitudes toward the use of role plays on grammar learning; and (4) studies with either quantitative or qualitative approaches. The exclusion criteria were (1) research studies published before 2000; and (2) secondary sources of information.

The search terms that were utilized to carry out this research synthesis about the use of role plays and their contribution to students' grammar learning in the EFL classroom included: (1) role plays as educational techniques to teach grammar; (2) the effects of role plays on grammar; (3) advantages and disadvantages of role plays; (4) EFL students' perceptions toward role plays; and (5) application of role plays in the EFL classroom.

Moreover, the studies analyzed in this research synthesis were selected from the following list of online databases: ProQuest, Educational Journals, Research Gate,



ERIC, and Google Scholar. After the selection, different criteria were considered to classify the research studies to carry out the analysis.

4.2 Inclusion Criteria

After analyzing 20 studies that met the inclusion criteria for this research synthesis, there were 15 quasi-experimental studies in which participants were selected on purpose and 5 experimental studies in which participants were chosen randomly.

4.3 Focus of the Studies Selected for this Research Synthesis.

The focus of these studies was divided into three main aspects a) grammar learning; b) students' attitudes towards role plays; and c) a combination of grammar learning and students' attitudes. The following table explores the focus of the twenty studies that were used for analyzing the effectiveness of role plays on EFL students' grammar learning.



4.4 Primary Studies selected for the Research Synthesis

Table 1

Focus of the studies analyzed in this research synthesis

Year	Focus of the Study	Author
2002	Both	Halápi & Saunders
2009	Attitudes towards Role plays	Indrat
2009	Both	Lin
2011	Grammar Learning	Ahmed
2011	Grammar Learning	Campoverde
2012	Grammar Learning	Afana
2013	Attitudes towards Role Plays	Khaoula
2013	Grammar Learning	Rubiano
2015	Grammar Learning	Abu
2015	Grammar Learning	Cho
2015	Attitudes towards Role Plays	Khaoula
2016	Grammar Learning	Escobar & Sonza
2017	Grammar Learning	Andrade
2017	Attitudes towards Role Plays	Ahmad et al.
2017	Grammar Learning	Nhi & Huan
2017	Grammar Learning	Piedrahita
2017	Attitudes towards Role Plays	Rojas
2017	Grammar Learning	Siska
2018	Grammar Learning	Criollo
2018	Grammar Learning	Krisdiana et al.

Note. N=20.

Table 1 shows that thirteen of the twenty research studies (Ahmed, 2011; Campoverde, 2011; Afana, 2012; Rubiano, 2013; Abu, 2015; Cho, 2015; Escobar & Sonza, 2016; Andrade, 2017; Nhi & Huan, 2017; Piedrahita, 2017; Siska, 2017; Criollo, 2018; Krisdiana, Irawati & Kadarisman, 2018) focused on the development of grammar.



As illustrated above, five studies (Indrat, 2009; Khaoula, 2013; Khaoula, 2015; Ahmad, Abdul & Abdul, 2017; Rojas, 2017) aimed at analyzing students' attitudes when learning grammar through role plays, while two studies (Halápi & Saunders, 2002; Lin, 2009) underscored both aims. Table 1 also indicates that only one of the twenty studies was developed in 2002; seven studies were conducted between 2009 and 2013, and twelve around 2015 and 2018. The analysis proved that researchers were interested in the development of grammar through role plays since the necessity for communicating in English is growing rapidly (Campoverde, 2011).

CHAPTER V

Analysis

5.1 Introduction

The main objective of this research synthesis was to analyze the findings of twenty studies to delve into the influence of role plays on grammar learning by taking into account the following research questions: a) What are the effects of role plays on students' grammar learning?; b) How are role plays used to teach grammar?; and c) What are students' attitudes toward the use of role plays for learning grammar?

Before approaching the three research questions, it is worth mentioning the countries where these research studies were conducted.

Figure 1. *EFL countries where the studies were developed*

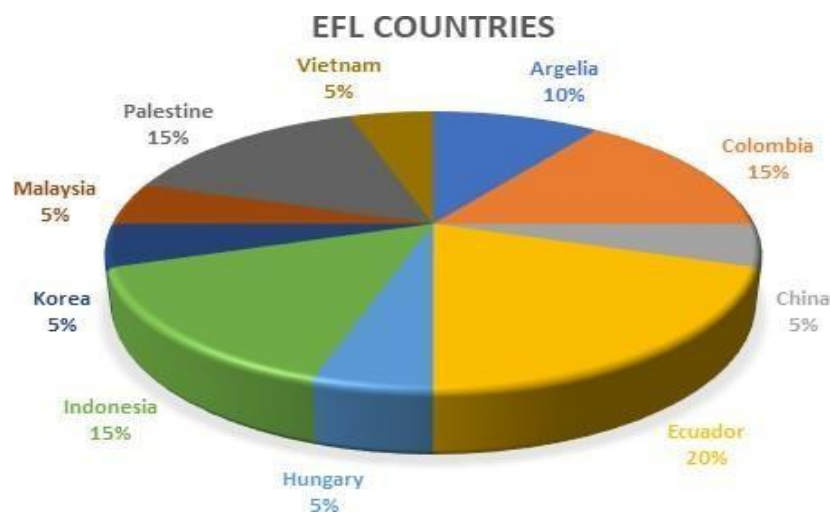


Figure 1 illustrates the particular countries where these studies were carried out regarding role plays and their impact on grammar learning. These countries constitute EFL contexts in which English is taught in the classroom as learners' native language is



not English. The studies were carried out in the following countries: Colombia (Rubiano, 2013; Escobar & Sonza, 2016; Piedrahita, 2017), Ecuador (Campoverde, 2011; Andrade, 2017; Criollo, 2018; Rojas, 2017), Indonesia (Siska, 2017; Indrat, 2009; Krisdiana, Irawati & Kadarisman, 2018), Palestine (Ahmed, 2011; Afana, 2012; Abu, 2015), Vietnam (Nhi & Huan, 2017), Algeria (Khaoula, 2013; Khaoula, 2015), Malaysia (Ahmad, Abdul & Abdul, 2017), China (Lin, 2009), Korea (Cho, 2015) and Hungary (Halápi & Saunders, 2002). Based on this analysis, it is discernible that most of the studies were developed in the Asian Continent.

5.2 Analysis of the Effects of Role Plays on EFL Students' Grammar Learning

This section provided a response to the first research question that aimed to analyze the effects of role plays on students' grammar learning. From the twenty studies analyzed for this purpose, eight primary studies were selected to answer the first research question (Lin, 2009; Ahmed, 2011; Afana, 2012; Rubiano, 2013; Abu, 2015; Escobar & Sonza, 2016; Siska, 2017; Piedrahita, 2017). The studies previously mentioned analyzed the possible effects of using role plays as a tool to teach grammar communicatively; the results suggest that students' grammatical competence developed after the implementation of role plays in the EFL classroom. Table 2 presents the topics that were used to enhance students' participation in role plays as well as the fact that such implementation had a positive effect on students' grammar learning.



5.2.1 Effects of Role Plays on Grammar Learning

Table 2

Common topics utilized for the development of Role Plays and their effects.

Study N.	Authors	Topics	Effects Positive/Negative
1.	Lin	“Going to the Doctor”	Positive
2.	Ahmed	“Visiting the Doctor”	Positive
3.	Afana	“Shopping Tour”	Positive
4.	Rubiano	“Meeting new people!”	Positive
5.	Abu	“At the Doctor”	Positive
6.	Escobar & Sonza	“An Interview”	Positive
7.	Siska	“At the Cinema”	Positive
8.	Piedrahita	“At the supermarket”	Positive

Note. N=8.

Table 2 foregrounds that the use of role plays positively affected students' grammar learning. Researchers (Lin, 2009; Ahmed, 2011; Afana, 2012; Rubiano, 2013; Abu, 2015; Escobar & Sonza, 2016; Siska, 2017; Piedrahita, 2017) argued that to grasp grammatical structures, students should be exposed to communicative activities that enable them to produce the language accurately. In this line of thought, the activities shown above presented positive results on students' grammar learning since they were able to write their dialogues based on the scenarios given by the researchers. To ensure that learners produced accurate constructions, the researchers supported their students' learning by answering their questions or giving feedback. Consequently, students were



allowed to practice the grammar structures before performing their dialogues for the role play. In the Practice Stage, students could rely on grammar activities such as the use of videos for completing dialogues and activities on a textbook that served as a path for enabling students to use correct grammar structures before they had to work autonomously in the creation of role plays. The topics mentioned in table two enabled learners to produce the language in communicative activities. For example, situations such as “Visiting the Doctor” helped students use the grammatical structures taught in class along with their creativity and imagination. Thus, learners felt engaged and motivated when working in their dialogues; as a result, they were prompted to use correct grammatical constructions according to different contexts. Some researchers (Lin, 2009; Afana, 2012; Rubiano, 2013) argue that students can work efficiently when they feel that they are learning through fun activities and relaxing environments, since they do not present the three main factors that affect the majority of students when learning a foreign language: anxiety, nervousness, and pressure. Accordingly, learners were also able to judge their classmates’ participation when using grammatical structures since researchers asked them to take some notes about their classmates’ performance in the role plays, so that they could share their opinions and experiences at the end of the class. The effectiveness of the activities shown above was related to the fact that role plays present interesting scenarios that students are familiar with. Topics such as “Shopping Tour” or “At the Supermarket” were situations that all the students had experienced, so they became interested in knowing how to use the language in settings that were common for them. The use of non-scripted role plays, in which learners had to create their role plays, allowed students to act as active members of their learning process; hence, they could be aware of how the language works in real-life



situations and be able to use grammatical constructions appropriately. Therefore, grammar learning occurs when role plays are based on familiar topics that encourage learners to use the target language communicatively, allowing a more successful transmission of the intended message.

5.2.2 The Impact of Role Plays on Students' Grammar Improvement

To provide a more specific perspective concerning the first research question about the effects of role plays on students' grammar learning, the following table specifies those grammatical aspects in which students showed improvement after the application of role plays in the EFL classroom.

Table 3

Grammatical aspects developed through the use of role plays

Study N.	Authors	Grammatical Improvement
1.	Lin	Present and Past tense
2.	Ahmed	Irregular Past tense
3.	Afana	Word Order in Questions
4.	Rubiano	Past and Future Tense
5.	Abu	Present Simple
6.	Escobar & Sonza	Word Order in Sentences
7.	Siska	Present, past, and Future Tense
8.	Piedrahita	Present and Past Tense

Note. N=8.



Table 3 demonstrates that six (Lin, 2009; Ahmed, 2011; Rubiano, 2013; Abu, 2015; Siska, 2017; Piedrahita, 2017) of the eight studies presented students' grammatical improvement when using the Present, Past, and Future tense in their dialogues. This was the result of working in groups since students had the opportunity to correct each other while performing the role play. In two research studies (Afana, 2012; Escobar & Sonza, 2016), students were able to use correct word order in sentences and questions while performing the dialogues. Since role plays allowed learners to retain information about grammatical rules, students were able to use new grammar structures according to different contexts. During the development of role plays, students were able to use a) adjectives; b) adverbs; c) coordinate and subordinate conjunctions; d) idioms and multi-word units; and e) general vocabulary correctly in context.

5.2.3 Impact of the Duration of Role Play Activities

The effectiveness of role plays for grammar learning was tailored to the length of its application in the EFL classroom. Therefore, as additional information for the first research question, table 4 presents the time role plays were applied for teaching grammar.



Table 4

Length of time regarding the application of role plays focused on grammar

Study N.	Authors	Length of the studies
1.	Ahmed	a school year
2.	Afana	six weeks
3.	Escobar and Sonza	ten sessions
4.	Abu	six months
5.	Lin	six weeks
6.	Piedrahita	two months
7.	Rubiano	six months
8.	Siska	six months

Note. N=8.

The results show that in one research study (Ahmed, 2011), the researcher applied role plays for one academic year so that students could develop their grammatical competence by having more time to practice. Some researchers (Abu, 2015; Rubiano, 2013; Escobar & Sonza, 2016) argued that to develop successful role plays, teachers should give students enough time to get used to working in communicative activities such as role plays so that learners can communicate a message effectively. Three research studies (Rubiano, 2013; Abu, 2015; Siska, 2017) required six months for applying role plays with the purpose of helping learners to develop their grammatical competence. Teachers also gave students enough time to organize their ideas, prepare their dialogues, and provide corrective and peer feedback with their



classmates to ensure students' learning.

It can be observed that four studies (Lin, 2009; Afana, 2012; Escobar & Sonza, 2016; Piedrahita, 2017) were developed between six weeks and two months long. In this regard, researchers agreed on the idea that the effects of role plays may not be noticed at the beginning of the implementation but rather can be perceived over time (Escobar & Sonza, 2016). For instance, Campoverde (2011) stated that the more the students practiced the language, the easier it was to apply the grammatical structures. This was congruent with the use of role plays since students could practice many times in class as well as learned to work in groups; as a result, learners developed not only their grammatical competence but also their speaking skills.

5.3 Analysis of the Use of Role Plays to Teach Grammar

This section aims to provide a deeper understanding of the second research question on how role plays were used to teach grammar to EFL students. Five primary studies (Abu, 2015; Andrade, 2017; Piedrahita, 2017; Criollo, 2018; Krisdiana, Irawat, & Kadarisma, 2018) were selected to answer the second research question of this research synthesis. Table 5 explains the different types of pedagogical practices that were implemented in the EFL classroom when teaching grammar.



Table 5

Pedagogical practices applied in EFL classrooms when teaching grammar

Study N.	Author	Pedagogical practices
1.	Andrade	Present, Practice, and Production
2.	Criollo	Instructional Modeling
3.	Abu	Present, Practice, Production, and Feedback
4.	Krisdiana et. al	Present, Practice, Production, and Feedback
5.	Piedrahita	Instructional Modeling

Note. N=5.

Table 5 reports that researchers used two types of pedagogical practices when teaching grammar in EFL classrooms. First, two studies (Piedrahita, 2017; Criollo, 2018) applied instructional modeling in which the instructor provided learners with assistance to develop a new and difficult task; then, students followed teachers' cognitive processes, and they were prepared to perform the task on their own. Vygotsky (1978) called this pedagogical assistance the zone of proximal development, which is known as scaffolding among instructors, as they become the mediators between students' actual knowledge and students' potentials or zones of proximal development (ZPD), which are significantly expanded with the instructor's help. Vygotsky's sociocultural theory was present in this instructional modeling since social interaction plays an important role in individual cognitive development. Vygotsky (1978) claimed that pupils learn a language when they interact with their peers or someone more knowledgeable, and then they can integrate that knowledge into their mental structure.



Piedrahita (2017) and Criollo (2018) provided learners an example of a dialogue based on a particular scenario that contained specific grammatical constructions, encouraging students to follow the researcher's structure of the role play when creating their dialogues.

Second, a combination of the Presentation, Practice, Production practice (PPP) and feedback was developed. It is worth mentioning that only one of the five studies examined the Presentation, Practice, Production (PPP) pedagogical approach (Andrade, 2017) without the integration of feedback. When teaching through this pedagogical practice (PPP), the assistance provided by the teachers, known as scaffolding, became an important factor that conducted students to successful learning. The class started with a warm-up activity to call students' attention, followed by the presentation of the target grammatical structures. Then, students practiced control activities such as filling worksheets and completing exercises on their textbooks while teachers monitored and provided assistance; finally, learners were asked to perform a role play based on a specific context provided by the teacher, and students were expected to use the grammatical structures presented in class. In two studies (Abu, 2015; Krisdiana, Irawat & Kadarisma, 2018), researchers added a useful step to complement the PPP which concentrated on giving students feedback and reinforcement at the end of the class by sharing their experiences and assigning useful activities related to the grammar developed through role plays.

5.4 Students' Attitudes toward Role Plays in Relation to Grammar Learning

This section analyzes the third research question focused on students' attitudes toward role plays in relation to grammar learning. Eleven primary studies (Halápi &

Saunders, 2002; Indrat, 2009; Campoverde, 2011; Khaoula, 2013; Khaoula, 2015; Cho, 2015; Ahmad, Abdul & Abdul, 2017; Andrade, 2017; Nhi & Huan, 2017; Rojas, 2017; Piedrahita, 2017) were selected for the analysis of the last research question.

Table 6

Students' attitudes toward role plays

Study N.	Authors	Students' Attitudes
1.	Andrade	Positive
2.	Campoverde	Positive
3.	Nhi & Huan	Positive
4.	Khaoula, (2015)	Positive
5.	Cho	Positive
6.	Indrat	Positive
7.	Rojas	Positive / Negative*
8.	Khaoula, (2013)	Negative
9.	Ahmad et al.	Negative
10.	Piedrahita	Negative
11.	Halápi & Saunders	Negative

Note. N=11.

* Rojas (2017) reports positive and negative attitudes when learning grammar through role plays.

5.4.1 Students' Positive Attitudes

Table 6 shows that in seven (Indrat, 2009; Campoverde, 2011; Khaoula, 2015; Cho, 2015; Andrade, 2017; Nhi & Huan, 2017; Rojas, 2017) of the eleven studies,



learners developed positive attitudes toward role plays when learning grammar since they were able to work in fun and challenging activities as well as to work with their classmates while creating the dialogues. Accordingly, students pointed out that their anxiety decreased because they were working in a comfortable environment, and consequently, their grammatical competence developed by practicing, using authentic language and receiving constant peer feedback; as a result, learners were able to speak confidently. The implementation of role plays motivated students to learn, practice, and enjoy communicative activities by learning grammatical constructions inductively in real-life situations in the classroom.

5.4.2 Students' Negative Attitudes

Five studies (Halápi & Saunders, 2002; Khaoula, 2013; Ahmad, Abdul, & Abdul, 2017; Piedrahita, 2017; Rojas, 2017) indicated that students developed negative attitudes towards role plays as they were learning grammar. This was likely to be connected to students' engagement in traditional activities with no communicative purposes. Students felt that they had not developed high English proficiency so that they preferred to remain silent and avoid taking grammatical risks because their classmates could make fun of their grammatical errors. Since they did not want to be embarrassed or left behind by their classmates, they preferred not to participate. Other factors such as lack of vocabulary, bad pronunciation, and shyness limited students to learn grammatical rules; thus, they were more likely to develop negative attitudes towards role plays.



CHAPTER VI

Conclusions and Recommendations

6.1 General Discussion

The purpose of this research synthesis was to (1) examine the effectiveness of role plays for EFL grammar learning; (2) understand how role plays are used when teaching grammar; and (3) analyze students' attitudes toward the implementation of role plays.

When analyzing the first research question, concerning the effectiveness of role plays on students' grammar learning, researchers argue that role plays can positively influence learners' use of the present, past, and future tenses as well as word order in sentences and questions to create appropriate dialogues (Lin, 2009; Ahmed, 2011; Afana, 2012; Rubiano, 2013; Abu, 2015; Escobar & Sonza, 2016; Siska, 2017; Piedrahita, 2017). This finding is congruent with the views of the linguists Harmer (1991) and Nunan (1998) who highlighted the importance of teaching grammar in context for successful learning. Harmer claims that students need to know how the language is used in a real scenario, and the only way to achieve this purpose is by presenting grammatical structures in different contexts. Likewise, Andrade (2017) states that role plays are useful to teach grammar since this technique involves the principles of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) to present grammatical constructions in context and help students to be active members, in which they can analyze how the language is used while performing real-life situations in class. Role plays, as comprehensible output activities, help students produce their dialogues in a variety of settings; thus, learners interact with each other and feel motivated to practice and use



correct grammatical structures by acquiring input language forms (Xiuzhen & Yuqin, 2013). Role plays encompass communicative activities; as a result, students achieve positive results since they are familiarized with the topics. In this context, students practice tenses like the present perfect, past continuous, past tense, and modal verbs such as “should, could and would” (Ahmed, 2011; Afana, 2012). Escobar and Souza (2016) noticed that students were enthusiastic when conducting interviews about their classmates’ daily routines, as part of role plays, because they refer to activities that learners do daily, and thus they had the opportunity to practice the simple present and improve word order in sentences. In this regard, role plays made students learn grammar in context and develop their oral communication.

Furthermore, students practiced grammar through several activities by learning several tenses such as the present simple, past, and future tense in a variety of situations in their textbooks under the teacher’s guidance before performing the final role play; then teachers provided learners with several situations based on their context to know if students continued to use the previous grammatical constructions correctly; as a result, students improved their speaking skills, but they more effectively developed the grammatical aspects of the language (Abu, 2015; Siska, 2017; Piedrahita, 2017). Role plays were useful to teach grammar because they helped students learn from each other, since they could observe and correct their partners’ errors and mistakes in the performance; afterward, learners increased their grammatical awareness by using the correct structures (Rubiano, 2013). Consequently, by practicing and correcting the grammatical structures in class with the use of role plays, students were prepared to use the language in real contexts since they were aware of a grammatical form, its meaning, function, and use (Siska, 2017).



Concerning the second research question on how role plays are used for teaching grammar, different research studies (Abu, 2015; Andrade, 2017; Piedrahita, 2017; Criollo, 2018; Krisdiana, Irawat & Kadarisma, 2018) pointed out that role plays were connected to two specific pedagogical practices: (1) Instructional Modeling and (2) Presentation, Practice, Production or PPP practice and feedback. In Instructional Modeling, teachers became facilitators who showed learners how to perform a task and encouraged students to observe their thinking processes and imitate their behaviors; thus, learners knew what was expected from them when participating in a new assignment; as a result, they felt engaged to participate and learn (Salisu & Ransom, 2014). As stated before, instructional modeling was strongly associated with Vygotsky's sociocultural theory which claims that an individual's interaction with his or her social environment plays an important role in the individual's cognitive development when learning a language. Hence, the instructor becomes a mediator who helps learners to accomplish a new and difficult task. Therefore, students are provided with assistance at an early stage, and then they can work independently (Maybin, Mercer & Stierer, 1992).

This pedagogical assistance known as scaffolding affects learners positively since it awakens cognitive processes that are developed only when learners work together with a knowledgeable mentor to develop a task that students cannot develop independently yet (Salisu & Ransom, 2014). This is also congruent with the use of PPP since in this pedagogical practice, researchers explain grammar structures as the first point; then, learners are allowed to practice in controlled activities such as filling the blanks or choosing the correct option according to specific sentences. In this stage, scaffolding occurs when instructors assist their students by answering their questions or monitoring what learners do before they are encouraged to work independently. Thus,



teachers consider students' zone of proximal development (ZPD) and help them become independent learners while decreasing scaffolding (Wei, 1999). Accordingly, Vygotsky (1978) states that learners experience a stimulus for learning when they are assisted by a capable peer such as a teacher since they foster cognitive and affective engagements when developing a task. In the production stage, learners are encouraged to produce correct grammar constructions by creating dialogues for performing a role play in front of their classmates; therefore, students' cognitive development allows them to work independently. This analysis reflected that role plays were effective when teaching grammar because there was a process of scaffolding along with the instructional modeling that connected properly with role plays. Hence, the instructor started to teach, perform, and model how students should develop the dialogues for the role plays; as a result, students knew exactly what to do and it led them to successful learning. In Addition, the implementation of feedback as the last stage in the PPP practice enabled learners to check their understanding of grammar.

The third research question explored students' attitudes toward the use of role plays when teaching grammar. In this sense, the analysis foregrounds that learners can develop either positive or negative attitudes toward the use of this technique. In this research synthesis, it can be stated that by practicing the dialogues multiple times through role plays, students can develop a positive attitude when communicating, since they can confidently apply grammar constructions after their last performance; thus, they enjoy learning English and gradually realize that their communicative competence is enhanced (Andrade, 2017). Accordingly, learners are more likely to enjoy role plays because they can interact and learn from each other and improve their communication accurately; consequently, they can produce the language more freely and construct their



grammatical sentences correctly by working cooperatively (Campoverde, 2011; Nhi & Huan, 2017). In this regard, learners can practice grammar in various contexts by switching their roles and noticing their grammatical errors during the performance to correct them afterward. In this way, students develop positive attitudes since role plays are effective techniques to practice the language and develop oral communication (Cho, 2015).

Khaoula (2015) also suggests that role plays can help students learn grammar and construct utterances because learners like to experience different situations for a short period through interactive and interesting activities as if they were in a real-life context. This is congruent with Prabhu's research (1987) that implements the Task-Based Language Teaching Method to teach grammar in real-life contexts. Because this method enables interactive tasks (e.g. role plays), students can explode their creativity by using the language communicatively and developing their grammatical competence. In this matter, students are more likely to gain more confidence by working in a positive atmosphere (Dodson, 2002); thus, they practice the language and can perceive role plays in a positive way. Besides, this technique helps them to learn grammar and speak English more fluently while students develop a good pronunciation (Indrat, 2009; Rojas, 2017).

On other hand, some studies (Khaoula, 2013; Ahmad, Abdul & Abdul, 2017, Rojas, 2017) confirm that students can develop a negative attitude toward role plays because they may feel insecure about their grammar knowledge when constructing their dialogues, so they are afraid of committing grammar mistakes in their oral production. Learners prefer to remain silent since they do not feel confident enough for taking



grammatical risks, as they do not have the same level as other high proficiency classmates (Halápi & Saunders, 2002). Students can also feel that their pronunciation and vocabulary are not good enough for communication; as a result, they may refuse the use of role plays. Another factor identified as preventing students from developing a positive attitude toward role plays is the lack of communicative activities in which students can produce the language; therefore, some learners can be passive members in the EFL classroom, and thus remain silent by only taking notes and listening to the teacher; consequently, they are not encouraged to work in activities with a communicative purpose (Davis & Wilcock, 2005). This finding aligns with the use of metacognitive strategies in which learners connect their prior with their new knowledge by evaluating their own academic performance (Anderson, 2002). Since students do not regulate their learning process, they are not able to increase their grammatical knowledge either. Accordingly, learners, who have a low proficiency level, are less likely to apply self-correction; consequently, they are not able to develop their grammatical and communicative competence. In this context, they develop a negative perception and negative attitudes toward role plays since they represent a challenging activity for their language proficiency. In sum, role plays may be perceived positively or negatively depending on the pedagogical environment where they are applied. For instance, role plays that align with familiar topics and which learners feel more confident about, are perceived in a positive manner. Consequently, a good implementation of role plays can lead to learners' development of the grammar of the target language and their communicative competence.



6.2 Recommendations

After the analysis of the literature available on this topic, the following recommendations emerged.

- ✓ Schools should adopt curriculums that include activities that inspire students to use the language for communicative purposes rather than to see the language as a set of rules.
- ✓ Schools should promote cooperative learning or group work through role plays to help students in their learning process.
- ✓ Teachers should take into consideration interesting topics within students' context when teaching grammar to draw their attention and keep them motivated to learn.
- ✓ The use of role plays for teaching grammar in EFL contexts deserves more attention in Latin America, mainly in countries like Ecuador since we need to carry out more research on this topic.
- ✓ Role plays should be implemented at early ages to benefit students in their grammar learning in order for them to develop their communicative competence.



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Appendix 1

List of Primary Studies for the Analysis

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