



Key challenges in teaching Spanish as a Foreign Language to Russian speaking students¹

Desafíos clave en la enseñanza de Español como Lengua Extranjera y E/L2 para estudiantes rusohablantes

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ABSTRACT: This study investigates the relevance of contrastive grammar as a tool in the teaching of Spanish as a foreign language (ELE) and as a second language (E/L2) for Russian-speaking students, based on the premise that structural differences between languages can create significant obstacles in the acquisition process. The study seeks to understand the main challenges faced by these learners, highlighting the absence, presence, and divergence of grammatical categories between Russian and Spanish. The contrastive analysis of the two languages enables the identification of recurring difficulty patterns and the proposal of specific pedagogical strategies. The methodology consisted of a comparative analysis of grammatical structures in Russian and Spanish, focusing on verb conjugation, verb tenses, and the use of prepositions. The investigation was based on a critical review of previous studies, complemented by practical examples of common errors made by Russian-speaking learners, from which didactic approaches based on contrastive grammar were suggested. The results show that the main difficulties are concentrated in the verbal system of Spanish—particularly in the use of the indicative and subjunctive moods, compound tenses—and in prepositions, whose equivalents are not always direct between the two languages. It was found that the systematic application of contrastive grammar in the classroom allows for the anticipation and correction of these errors, supporting the development of more solid linguistic competence. It is concluded that contrastive grammar is not only an effective tool for teaching Spanish to Russian speakers but also a valuable methodological resource for ELE/E/L2 teachers, contributing to more conscious and student-centred pedagogical practices.

KEYWORDS: Contrastive grammar. ELE. Spanish as a second language. Russian speakers. Teaching-learning.

RESUMEN: Este estudio investiga la relevancia de la gramática contrastiva como herramienta en la enseñanza del español como lengua extranjera (ELE) y como segunda lengua (E/L2) para estudiantes rusohablantes, partiendo de la premisa de que las diferencias estructurales entre lenguas pueden generar obstáculos significativos en el proceso de adquisición. El estudio busca comprender los principales desafíos que enfrentan estos aprendientes, destacando la

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ausencia, presencia y divergencia de categorías gramaticales entre el ruso y el español. El análisis contrastivo de ambas lenguas permite identificar patrones recurrentes de dificultad y proponer estrategias pedagógicas específicas. La metodología consistió en un análisis comparativo de estructuras gramaticales en ruso y español, con énfasis en la conjugación verbal, los tiempos verbales y el uso de preposiciones. La investigación se basó en una revisión crítica de estudios previos, complementada con ejemplos prácticos de errores comunes cometidos por estudiantes rusohablantes, a partir de los cuales se sugirieron enfoques didácticos basados en la gramática contrastiva. Los resultados muestran que las principales dificultades se concentran en el sistema verbal del español—particularmente en el uso de los modos indicativo y subjuntivo, los tiempos compuestos—y en las preposiciones, cuyos equivalentes no siempre son directos entre ambas lenguas. Se constató que la aplicación sistemática de la gramática contrastiva en el aula permite anticipar y corregir estos errores, favoreciendo el desarrollo de una competencia lingüística más sólida. Se concluye que la gramática contrastiva no solo es una herramienta eficaz para la enseñanza del español a hablantes de ruso, sino también un valioso recurso metodológico para docentes de ELE/E/L2, al contribuir a prácticas pedagógicas más conscientes y centradas en el estudiante

PALABRAS-CLAVE: Gramática contrastiva. ELE. Español como segunda lengua. Rusohablantes. Enseñanza-aprendizaje.

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1 Introduction

Considering the growing interest in Spanish with Russian-speaking countries—according to the latest data from the Cervantes² Institute (2024)—the challenges posed by marked grammatical and phonetic differences between Russian and Spanish in ELE and L2 contexts become evident. In this regard and considering the renewed interest in contrastive grammar applied specifically to Slavic languages (Engiels; Defrancq; Jansegers, 2020, p. 2), this study is proposed as a key tool to identify recurring interferences and guide the design of more effective didactic strategies tailored to the linguistic profile of Russian-speaking students.

Gak (1977, p. 5), in comparing different languages, identifies three main types of difficulties: absence, presence, and divergence of linguistic categories. Although this framework can be applied to many language combinations, it is particularly relevant

² The Instituto Cervantes (2024, Table 5) notes that Russia recorded the highest growth in ELE students, with an increase of 319%: from 32 067 students in 2019 (p. 24) to 134 430 in 2024.

in the contrast between Russian and Spanish, given that they belong to different linguistic branches (Slavic and Romance, respectively) and exhibit profound typological differences.

1. **Absence of a linguistic category in L1 that is present in L2.** This phenomenon occurs when an essential grammatical category in L2 does not exist in L1. An example is the use of definite and indefinite articles, absent in Russian, which can hinder Russian-speaking students from interpreting the difference between “un libro” and “el libro”, as this distinction is not encoded in their L1 (see section “The article” for more details).
2. **Presence of a linguistic category in L1 that lacks a direct equivalent in L2.** Students encounter structures from their L1 without correspondence in L2, such as the Russian verbal aspect system. In Russian, verbs are organized into perfective/imperfective pairs as *писать* (“to write” imperfective) and *написать* (“to write” perfective), a distinction that lacks morphological equivalence in Spanish, potentially leading to interferences in verb tense learning (see section “The verb” for more details).
3. **Divergence in the functioning of categories present in both languages.** This problem arises when both L1 and L2 share grammatical categories, but these do not function in the same way in both languages. Despite superficial similarities, grammatical rules or contextual applications may differ enough to cause confusion or errors. An example is the grammatical gender category; in Spanish, nouns have two genders (masculine and feminine), whereas in Russian, there is a third gender (neuter).

These three obstacles generate errors derived from the transfer of grammatical and phonetic patterns from L1 to L2, as well as from an insufficient understanding of Spanish rules and limited exposure to the real use of the language. This is especially

common among students who lack sufficient opportunities to interact with native speakers or who do not devote enough time to language practice.

Although contrastive grammar has been widely applied in language pairs such as Spanish-English or Spanish-Portuguese, the Spanish-Russian contrast remains underexplored in ELE. This approach, which originated in the structuralist studies of the mid-twentieth century such as Lado (1957), Krzeszowski (1978), König (1996) y Hawkins (1986) has been expanded in recent years by authors such as Baicchi, Broccias (2024) and Enghels, Defranq, Jansegers (2024) through the incorporation of error analysis and interlanguage, guiding studies toward pedagogical and cognitive dimensions. Research in ELE on other language pairs has demonstrated its usefulness in curricular adaptation and the creation of specific materials (Fernández Ramírez, 2010; Vázquez, 2007). However, the Spanish-Russian contrast remains scarcely systematized, despite its relevance for modern contrastive analysis, which prioritizes languages from different typological families. Its study makes it possible to identify recurring interferences and provides key elements for teacher training and the development of didactic materials tailored to Russian-speaking ELE students.

2 Objectives and hypotheses

This research focuses on identifying linguistic factors that hinder the learning of Spanish as a Foreign language (ELE) by Russian-speaking students. Specifically, it aims to detect the main points of linguistic interference resulting from the contrast between the grammatical systems of Russian and Spanish, with the purpose of providing practical tools that enhance the effectiveness of ELE instruction in Russian-speaking contexts.

It is expected that the results of this study will contribute to a better understanding of the specific features of the Spanish acquisition process among Russian speakers and will promote reflection on the perception of foreign languages

in those countries. The information obtained may prove highly valuable for teachers, material designers, and specialists in ELE didactics.

3 Methodology

This study adopts a qualitative and descriptive approach based on the contrastive analysis of grammatical structures in Spanish and Russian. A selection of linguistic phenomena that tend to present recurrent difficulties in the learning of Spanish by Russian-speaking students has been examined, along with teaching experience in ELE contexts at Russian universities. The examples used in the analysis come from didactic corpora and instructional materials commonly used in the ELE classroom, as well as from observations collected during classes taught at levels A1-B2 (CEFR) in Russian universities.

Based on the premise that the contrastive approach makes it possible to anticipate and explain many of the frequent errors in the acquisition of Spanish and its cultural component, this research also acknowledges that such an approach, by itself, is not sufficient to fully understand all the phenomena involved.

This study draws upon and is complemented by previous Works addressing both the specific difficulties faced by Russian-speaking students in learning Spanish —such as Maliavina (2005), “Dificultades de los estudiantes rusos durante el proceso de aprendizaje de E/L2”, and Guzmán Tirado (2018), “Sobre las particularidades de la enseñanza del español a estudiantes rusohablantes”— and recent research in contrastive linguistics, notably Baicchi and Broccias (2024), and Enghels, Defranq and Jansegers (2020).

4 Reading and writing in Spanish and Russian

The most notable difference in the field of reading and writing between the two languages lies in their use of distinct writing systems: Spanish employs the Latin alphabet, whereas Russian uses a variant of Cyrillic. The Russian alphabet consists of

33 letters, while Spanish has 27 letters, to which two diagraphs (ch, ll) are added, though currently no longer considered independent letters according to the 2010 *Ortografía*.

These structural differences may create difficulties in learning Spanish for Russian-speaking students, particularly regarding automatic reading and grapheme-phoneme association. One of the main sources of confusion arises from the visual similarity between Latin and Cyrillic characters that do not share the same phonetic value. This type of interference is especially relevant in the early stages of literacy in ELE, as it can cause blockages in the acquisition of sound-letter correspondence and hinder the automatization of Reading and writing in Spanish.

Table 1 – Approximate equivalences between the Latin and Cyrillic alphabets³.

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U	V	W	X	Y	Z
А	Б	-	Д	Э	Ф	Г	-	И	Х	К	Л	М	Н	О	П	-	Р	С	Т	У	В	-	-	Й	З

Source: made by the author.

Table 2 – Cyrillic letters without direct equivalence in Latin alphabet.

Letter	Approximate Phoneme	Observations
Ё	/jo/	Word-initial or stressed syllable
Е	/je/	Often confused with Spanish "E"
Я	/ja/	Visually similar to an inverted "R"
Ю	/ju/	Diphthong not present in Spanish
Ж	/ʒ/ o /ʒ/	Does not exist in Spanish
Ц	/ts/	Often confused with "Z" or "S"
Ч	/tʃ/	Similar to Spanish "Ch"
Ш	/ʃ/	Stronger than English "Sh"
Щ	/ɕ:/	Does not exist in Spanish
Ъ	(hard sign)	Does not exist in Spanish

³ Note: Letters without close correspondence or without graphical similarity are omitted.

И	/i/	Vowel with no equivalent in Spanish
Ь	(soft sign)	Indicates palatalization

Source: made by the author.

This contrast reveals that, although some Cyrillic letters graphically resemble Latin ones, many do not have a direct phonetic correspondence. This may lead to pronunciation and reading comprehension error in Spanish:

For example, a Russian-speaking student may pronounce the Spanish *c* as /s/, *g* as /d/, *m* as /t/, and *y* as /u/, or *e* as /ie/, etc., due to confusion with Cyrillic letters in which these symbols represent different phonemes (Guzmán Tirado, 2018, p. 228).

These errors are not solely due to a lack of knowledge of the Spanish phonological system but also to visual interference caused by graphic similarities between alphabets. For instance, the Latin letter *H* resembles the Cyrillic *Н* (/n/), and the Latin *P* resembles the Cyrillic *Р* (/r/), which may lead to pronunciation mistakes.

The inclusion of visual and auditory discrimination exercises, and of grapheme-phoneme contrast between L1 and L2, promotes more accurate phonographic awareness, without replacing individual diagnosis or teacher correction.

On the other hand, there are some significant differences between punctuation in Russian and in Spanish. In Spanish, the comma is used, among other purposes, to mark appositions (“El novio de mi hermana, Manuel, vino a la cena”), to separate items in a list (“Ayer compré verduras, frutas, legumbres y un poco de carne”) or to distinguish possible meaning within a sentence (“Me maquillé como me sugirieron” o “Me maquillé, como me sugirieron”). Whereas in Russian, the comma is placed before subordinate clauses:

(i) Она сказала, что я молодец;

She said, that I was a good boy

(ii) Я думаю, что президенты смогут договориться

I think, that the presidents can come to an agreement

(iii) Он подумал, что уже поздно идти в кино.

He thought, that it was too late to go to the cinema

This difference may affect the syntactic clarity of learner's written texts. Another noteworthy aspect is the use of question and exclamation marks, since Spanish uses two and Russian only one:

(i) Какой прекрасный день!

**¡Qué hermoso día!*

Moreover, the hyphen in Spanish is used to indicate syllable division within a Word, whereas in Russian it is often placed between the subject and the predicate when the verb is omitted, for example, with *ser/estar*:

(i) Москва – столица России

Moscú es la capital de Rusia

(ii) Он – мой брат

Él es mi hermano

(iii) Она – врач

Ella es doctora

Differences in the use of punctuation and the hyphen between Russian and Spanish may interfere with written production. Their explicit treatment through metalinguistic explanations and classroom correction promotes conformity with Spanish norms and prevents pragmatic or stylistic ambiguities.

5 Vowels and consonants

Both languages under analysis share a triangular vowel system and the same number of stressed vowels in relation to the degree of openness. Both languages labialize only the velar vowels and maintain the quality of stressed vowels regardless of the context. In both, the lips are rounded for velar vowels, and the sound of stressed vowels is preserved irrespective of their environment. This similarity may create a false equivalence, which is why it is essential for the teacher to address the reduction and neutralization of unstressed vowels in Russian.

Table 3 – Degree of vowel openness in Spanish and Russian.

Degree of vowel openness in Spanish		Degree of vowel openness in Russian	
Closed	I U	Minimum	И Ы У
Half-open	E O	Medium	Э Ъ О
Open	A	Maximum	А

Source: made by the author.

Some vowel differences involve the way stressed and unstressed vowels are produced, the stability of stressed vowels, and the reduction of the set of sounds in the unstressed vowels of the Russian language. Russian-speaking learners tend to phonetically reduce unstressed vowels in Spanish, which affects both prosody and intelligibility. In addition to the vowels mentioned above, Russian has 4 vowels that undergo a process of iotation:

- (i) Я /ja/; Е /je/; Ё /jo/ y Ю /ju/.

This process of iotation can be observed with the vowel *e*:

- (i) Неёо /nyebó/

- (ii) Ветер /vyétyer/

For a Spanish-speaking student, this phenomenon may cause confusion when learning Russian, whereas in teaching Spanish to Russian speakers, the tendency to iotation can interfere with the production of vowels in diphthongs. Therefore, it may be key to work on the articulation of diphthongs through minimal pairs.

Maliavina (2004) emphasizes that unstressed vowels in Spanish can relax without changing their quality, whereas in Russian they undergo significant qualitative changes. For example, this occurs with the vowel *o* when it is reduced to the phoneme /a/:

- (i) Во́да /vadá/

This reduction may lead the learner to apply the same strategy in Spanish, resulting in errors in words such as “comida”, “sombrero” o “noche”, which are often perceived as /kamída/, /sambréro/ o /nácha/. This type of error must be anticipated and explicitly addressed in the classroom. An effective technique involves recording and analysing the student’s own voice, comparing their production with native models. On the other hand, Russian does not have diphthongs, whereas Spanish has 14. These, in turn, can be:

- (i) Rising: ua, ue, uo, ia, ie, io
- (ii) Falling: ai, ei, oi, au, eu, ou
- (iii) Homogeneous: iu, ui.

The absence of diphthongs in Russian leads to the pronunciation of Spanish vowel sequences as hiatus, affecting fluency. To correct this interference from the initial stages, it is recommended to use repetition exercises, prosodic reading, and auditory perception, supported by visual resources that reinforce their graphic representation.

6 Place of articulation

The differences in the consonantal inventory between Spanish and Russian pose phonological challenges, as certain Spanish phonemes do not exist in Russian, leading to substitutions, simplifications, or hypercorrections.

One of the most frequent cases is the difficulty in producing the multiple vibrant phoneme /r/. The Russian phonological system does not include this phoneme, so learners tend to replace it with its closest equivalent, the single tap /ɾ/. Thus, words like *perro* or *rojo* are often pronounced as *pero* or *rojo* with a single vibration, which may lead to semantic ambiguities.

Regarding points of articulation, there are partial parallels. For instance, the Spanish consonants /ɲ/ and /ʎ/, both mid-dorsal palatals, share some acoustic similarity with the Russian palatalized predorsal consonants /ɲ'/ and /ʎ'/ . However, as Guzmán Tirado (2018, p. 230) notes, these coincidences are only apparent, since they are produced with a different articulatory mechanism and within a more pervasive palatalization system in Russian than in Spanish.

In Russian, palatalization plays a fundamentally distinctive role: each consonant can have a “hard” (non-palatalized) and a “soft” (palatalized) variant, generating phonologically contrastive minimal pairs. As Sánchez Puig (1987, p. 232) states, “palatalization is a key element in the phonological system of Russian and forms the basis of the distinction between velar and palatal consonants”.

In Spanish, palatalization is phonologically restricted to a limited number of phonemes —mainly /ɲ/ and /ʎ/— and does not serve a generalized distinctive function. This disparity in the functional relevance of palatalization may lead learners to over-palatalize certain sounds in Spanish or, conversely, to de-palatalize those that do require it. Thus, they may produce /nino/ instead of /niɲo/, or confuse /ʎ/ with /j/, especially in yeísta varieties of Spanish.

The teacher can use visual and kinesthetics resources — such as articulatory diagrams, basic spectrograms, or tongue positioning techniques— to represent and facilitate the differentiation of manners and points of articulation.

It is worth noting that Russian presents a greater variety of consonant in its phonological inventory, which, according to Maliavina (2004, p. 427), may facilitate certain Spanish acquisition processes by providing a broader articulatory base. However, this potential advantage is only realized when phonological correspondences are correctly identified and the overapplication of Russian-specific patterns is avoided.

7 Morphosyntax

An aspect that requires special attention from students is the use of prepositions in Spanish. Since in the Russian language the function they fulfil is carried out by grammatical cases, it becomes necessary for students to acquire a solid understanding of the role prepositions play in Spanish and to learn to identify their meaning in different contexts. For example, in Russian a preposition is not always needed to express spatial or temporal relations that in Spanish do require one, as seen in "после обеда" ('después del almuerzo').

The distinction of gender in Spanish, both in nouns and in adjectives and numerals, can also present difficulties. It is important to consider that Russian has three genders —masculine, feminine and neuter—, whereas Spanish has only two— masculine and feminine—. The lack of correspondence between neuter Russian nouns and Spanish genders leads to agreement errors, which can be addressed through semantic categorizations that link grammatical gender to concrete referents.

It is also essential for learners to distinguish the types of pronouns in Spanish and to understand the characteristics of their use and agreement. Furthermore, it should be mentioned that the distinctions of address (*tú/usted/ustedes* and *vosotros/vosotras*) do not have a direct counterpart in the Slavic language, since only the

personal pronoun *ты* is used for the second person singular and *вы* for *usted*, *ustedes*, *vosotros y vosotras*. A significant aspect of Spanish morphosyntax is the use of definite and indefinite articles, since both their specific morphology and their uses and omissions do not exist in Russian:

Mastering the use of the Spanish article constitutes one of the most difficult tasks for a Russian-speaking student in the process of learning Spanish grammar, due to the absence of this category in their native language (Guzman Tirado, 2018, p. 231).

In addition to the aforementioned, attention should be paid to the perfective (*совершенный вид*) and imperfective (*несовершенный вид*) aspects of verbs, which in Spanish are expressed through tenses and not through verbal pairs. Below is a list of aspectual pairs of verbs in Russian, along with their perfective and imperfective infinitive forms and perfective and imperfective past forms.

Table 4 – Examples of aspectual verb pairs in Russian.

Verb	Imperfective infinitive	Perfective infinitive	Perfective past	Imperfective past
To read	Читать (chitat')	Прочитать (prochitat')	Прочитал (prochital)	Читал (chital)
To write	Писать (pisat')	Написать (napisat')	Написал (napisal)	Писал (pisal)
To speak	Говорить (govorit')	Сказать (skazat')	Сказал (skazal)	Говорил (govoril)

Source: made by the author.

The verbal function of the aspectual pair in Russian is, in the case of the imperfective aspect, to express continuous, repetitive, or ongoing actions; this aligns with the Spanish tenses: *presente simple* and *pretérito imperfecto*.

In contrast, students tend to associate verbal tense with aspect, which can lead to errors when choosing between the *pretérito indefinido* and *pretérito imperfecto*.

- (i) Я танцую бачату — *Yo bailo bachata*.
- (ii) Они ели, когда пришла Валерия. — *Ellos comían cuando llegó Valeria*.

The imperfective verbal aspect also allows a future form that is used to express actions in progress, to be performed repeatedly, or that are not considered complete at a specific moment in the future. Unlike in Spanish, this form is constructed by conjugating the verb *быть* (*ser o estar*) in the future, followed by the infinitive of the verb in the imperfective aspect. The imperfective future corresponds to the Spanish simple future (without mentioning whether the action will be completed or habitual) and the progressive future:

- (i) Буду работать завтра. — *Trabajaré mañana* (it will happen, without stating whether it will be completed).
- (ii) Буду ходить в спортзал каждый день. — *Iré al gimnasio todos los días* (repeated or habitual action).
- (iii) Буду читать в 6 часов. — *Estaré leyendo a las 6*. (An action in progress at a specific moment is described).

Meanwhile, the perfective verbal aspect is the one that expresses completed actions or actions with a defined result; this use aligns with the Spanish tenses: *pretérito perfecto compuesto, pretérito indefinido, futuro simple y el futuro compuesto*.

- (i) Я уже написал письмо. — *Ya he escrito la carta*.
- (ii) Он прочитал книгу. — *Él leyó el libro*.
- (iii) Я сделаю домашнее задание. — *Haré la tarea*" (y la terminaré).
- (iv) Я напишу письмо к вечеру. — *Habré escrito la carta para la tarde*".

A didactic option to address these errors would be to design sequences that connect Russian verbal aspect with its pragmatic equivalent in Spanish, contextualizing each verb tense through clear temporal markers.

On the other hand, Russian features a wider range of participial forms and lack verbal periphrases. Russian includes present and past active and passive participles, mostly limited to the literary and written register, whereas Spanish participles fall into two categories: active and passive⁴.

This difference can be addressed through comparison of literary or academic excerpts containing Russian participles and their Spanish translation, highlighting how Spanish uses subordinate clauses, verbal periphrases, and derived adjectives to replace these structures.

Below are tables with participles in Russian and Spanish:

Table 5 – Examples of participles in Russian.

Active participles in Russian				
Gender	Present active	Examples	Past active	Examples
Masculine	-ущ-/-	Говорящий	-вш-	сказавший
Neuter	ющ-	Говорящее		сказавшее
Feminine	-ащ-/-ящ	Говорящая		сказавшая

Source: made by the author.

As we can see in the table above, participles are formed from the third person plural. The present active participle is formed by adding the suffixes -ущ-/-ющ- (masculine and neuter) and -ащ-/-ящ- (feminine) to the imperfective infinitive conjugated in the third person plural, removing the final *-t* and adding the adjectival suffix agreeing in number, gender, and grammatical case:

⁴ The translations from Russian into Spanish or English are only an approximation of the use of participles and may vary according to the context and the intention of the speaker.

- (i) Infinitive говорить → third person plural говорят → present active participle говорящий

The present active participle expresses an action occurring simultaneously with the main action:

- (i) Говорить (to speak) → говорящий (the one who speaks).
(ii) Читать (to read) → читающая (the one who reads)
(iii) Делать (to do) → делающее (that which is done)

The past active participle is formed by adding the suffix -вш- to the past stem of the verb in both perfective and imperfective verbs, and it agrees in number, gender, and grammatical case with the subject. The past participle in imperfective verbs indicates an action in progress in the past without a clear endpoint, for example:

- (i) Сидя в кресле, читавшая книгу, она казалась совершенно отрешенной от мира. – *Sentada en el sillón, leyendo* un libro, ella parecía completamente desconectada del mundo.*
(ii) Дети, гулявшие по парку, нашли потерявшегося щенка. – *Los niños, paseando* por el parque, encontraron un cachorro perdido.*
(iii) Студент, изучавший русский язык, сделал много ошибок в диктанте. – *El estudiante, estudiando* ruso, cometió muchos errores en el dictado.*

The past active participle in perfective verbs indicates punctual and completed actions in the past. It is used for past experiences that have had an impact on the present and for describing historical events:

- (i) Увидев друга, она улыбнулась, – *Tras haber visto a su amigo, ella sonrió.*

(ii) Пушкин, написавший "Евгения Онегина", считается одним из величайших русских поэтов – *Pushkin, tras haber escrito 'Eugenio Onegin', es considerado uno de los más grandes poetas rusos.*

Table 6 – Examples of Spanish participles in Spanish.

Spanish participles				
Verb ending	Active	Examples	Passive	Examples
-AR	-Ante	Causante	-Ado	Causado
-ER	-Ente	Leyente	-Ido	Leído
-IR	-Ente	Oyente	-Ido	Oído

Source: made by the author.

The active participle in contemporary Spanish has become lexicalized and functions as a noun or adjective, but it is not used as a verbal form. For example:

- (i) *El hablante* (someone who speaks);
- (ii) *El caminante* (someone who walks);
- (iii) *El viajante* (someone who travels).

Meanwhile, the passive participle in Spanish, in addition to being a non-finite verb form, is mainly used to form compound tenses, adjectives, and in passive voice constructions; in the last two cases, it agrees in gender and number. For example:

- (i) Compound tenses: (i) *He comido*; (ii) *Había estudiado*; (iii) *Habré acabado*.
- (ii) Passive voice: (i) *La carta fue escrita por Juan*; (ii) *El libro será leído por los estudiantes*; (iii) *Las puertas cerradas impedían el acceso*.

8 Grammatical cases

Russian combines synthetic and analytic features, unlike Spanish, which is only analytic. Its broad system of grammatical cases encompasses nouns, adjectives, pronouns, numerals, and participles, while in Spanish their functions are expressed

through prepositions. Thus, the nominative marks the subject, the genitive indicates possession, the accusative signals the direct object, the dative the recipient, the instrumental the means, and the prepositional the circumstances of place.

Regarding verbs of thought and speech in both Russian and Spanish, the preposition “sobre” is used, for example:

(i) *Estoy hablando con ella sobre tus estudios*

(ii) Я говорю с ней о твоих учебках.

Whereas to indicate location, the preposition “en” or also “sobre” is used (Maliavina, 2004, p. 432-433).

These parallels facilitate a more conscious teaching of Spanish prepositions through explicit comparison with Russian cases. Thus, working on communication verbs may reinforce acquisition by showing their functional equivalence with the prepositional case. It is important to note that Russian numerals modify the elements they accompany according to the genitive case; in addition, depending on the number, it will be genitive singular (from 1 to 4) or genitive plural (from 5 onwards). Likewise, the ending will differ, for example:

(i) два студента (ending in -а) /*dos estudiantes* /

(ii) много студентов (ending in -ов) /*muchos estudiantes* /

Therefore, the plural genitive in the noun highlights the number of students. This aspect is essential, as it allows anticipating common errors, such as the omission of the plural article or confusion with endings in Spanish, where nouns do not change based on number in the same way as in Russian. A teaching strategy to address this error can be the analysis of statements with quantifiers in both languages.

On the other hand, Russian interrogative pronouns are invariable and indicate the case they accompany, whereas in Spanish there is no fixed preposition for each of them.

Below, we present a table with Russian-Spanish equivalences:

Table 7 – Russian pronouns and their equivalents in Spanish.

Что?	Как?	Когда?	Где?	Откуда?	Куда?	За чем?	Почему?	Чем?
¿Qué?	¿Cómo?	¿Cuándo?	¿Dónde?	¿De dónde?	¿A dónde?	¿Para qué?	¿Por qué?	¿Con qué?

Source: made by the author.

This table can serve as an initial didactic resource to identify the syntactic function of interrogative elements. In production, it is useful to prevent interferences, such as the tendency to omit prepositions in Spanish or to use incorrect ones.

9 The noun

Grammatical gender is a shared feature in Russian and Spanish; however, the most notable divergence is that Russian has one more gender than Spanish: masculine, feminine, and neuter. For example, words such as *облако* (cloud), *озеро* (lake), *ухо* (ear), *колесо* (wheel), *ведро* (bucket), *имя* (name), *знамя* (flag), *здание* (building), *чувство* (feeling), belong to the neuter gender.

In Spanish, nouns denoting professions show greater morphological precision regarding gender, which may cause some difficulty for Russian learners; for example: *abogado/a*: адвокат (*advokat*), *doctor/a*: доктор (*doktor*), *ingeniero/a*: инженер (*inzhener*) would be translated into Russian with a single form.

This phenomenon can be addressed through activities such as lexical classification, oral and written production, and reverse translation, which support the understanding of gender markers in Spanish.

On the other hand, this student profile may confuse gender in Spanish, as Maliavina (2004) points out, especially in:

- (i) words ending in -e
- (ii) ambiguous words –*el calor, la calor* –
- (iii) homonyms – *el corte, la corte*–
- (iv) epicenes –*víctima, persona, cría*–
- (v) nouns with “false” morphological indicators –*la radio*–

10 The adjective

On the one hand, adjectives in Russian can vary in gender, number, and case, whereas in Spanish only the two-form adjectives—*bueno/buena*—are variable. On the other hand, in Russian, the construction “Noun + attributive-function preposition” is more frequently used to express relationships between the adjective and the noun. Moreover, the syntactic position of the adjective may shift in both languages, depending on the emphasis intended. In this regard, some adjectives in Spanish may convey different meanings depending on whether they precede or follow the noun (Maliavina, 2004, p. 434).

Guzmán (2018, p. 233) adds “that one of the greatest difficulties lies in the fact that numerous adjectives and nouns share the same form, which is mainly due to the substantivization of adjectives accompanied by an article”. This grammatical peculiarity, as mentioned earlier, does not exist in the Russian language. Some possible examples of adjectival substantivization might be: *viejo / lo viejo, aburrido / lo aburrido, caro / lo caro*.

Russian-speaking learners tend to interpret the adjective as a mere quality, failing to identify its substantive function when preceded by the neuter article “lo”. Therefore, it is advisable to design activities that allow students to distinguish contextual uses such as “lo bueno de la película” versus “una película buena”. In

addition, contrastive analysis of adjective position may prevent semantic misunderstandings (Baicchi; Broccias, 2024), as in “una gran mujer” and “una mujer grande”.

11 The numerals

In Russian, there are collective numerals that indicate the quantity of people or animals of masculine grammatical gender (for example, *двое детей* – “dos niños”). Additionally, it presents an extensive paradigm of numeral declension, which is absent in Spanish.

In Spanish, some cardinal numbers exhibit gender variation (*uno/una, doscientos/doscientas*) and agree with the noun they accompany (*doscientos libros/doscientas páginas*). In contrast, in Russian, only four numerals show gender inflection (*один/одна/одно*; *uno/una/uno* [neuter]) *два/две*: dos (masculine, neuter) and dos (feminine); *оба/обе*: ambos (masculine, neuter) and ambas, *полтора/полторы*: *uno y medio* (masculine and neuter) /*una y media*, and the relationship between the numeral and the noun is mediated by grammatical case.

In Russian, nouns that accompany numerals follow these general rules:

- (i) Numeral ending in 1 (except 11) require nominative singular: *один студент* (“un estudiante”), *21 студент* (“veintiún estudiantes”).
- (ii) Numeral ending 2, 3 and 4 (except from 12 to 14) require genitive singular: *два студента* (“dos estudiantes”), *34 актёра* (“treinta y cuatro actores”).
- (iii) Numerals from 5 to 9, and compound numerals ending in these digits (as well as from 11 to 1), require genitive plural: *пять учителей* (“cinco profesores”), *19 солдат* (“diecinueve soldados”).

In contrast, in Spanish, nouns following any numeral, except *uno*, appear in the plural: *21 estudiantes, 34 actores, 5 profesores, 19 soldados*.

One of the most common errors among Russian-speaking learners is using the singular after compound numerals ending in 1, such as in the case of: 101 *dálmata* instead of 101 *dálmatas*. This interference is since, in Russian, the numeral not only affects the declension of the noun but can also be influenced by prepositions or other elements within the phrase.

Additionally, Russian cardinal numbers exhibit two other tendencies that do not exist in Spanish. First, the position of the cardinal in the sentence determines a particular meaning, for example:

(i) Пять человека – *Cinco personas*

(ii) Человека пять – *Unas cinco personas*

In the first case (i), it refers to five people. However, if the numeral is placed after the noun (ii), it means that the number of people is not exact, which could be translated as “about five people” or “more or less five people”.

A common error among Russian learners would occur with the conjunction “y” that joins Spanish numerals, since in their language no connector is needed between digits, for example:

(i) The number 56 in Russian is пятьдесят шесть, *cincuenta seis, while in Spanish it is cincuenta y seis.

12 The pronouns

There are numerous differences between Spanish and Russian pronouns. Spanish personal pronouns in the plural vary by gender, whereas Russian ones do not. Second-person personal pronouns, both singular and plural, can be complex depending on the form of address chosen. It is worth noting that the lack of agreement in Spanish pronouns can lead to error in the classroom (Maliavina, 2004, p. 437).

- *¡Qué simpática es Laura!*
- *Sí, sí, la es.*
- *¿Laura y Clara también son amables?*
- *Sí, las son.*

A recurring problem for Russian-speaking students is the incorrect use of the neuter pronoun *lo* in Spanish, due to the absence of an equivalent pronoun in Russian. Learners tend to seek gender and number agreement, which results in errors such as *la es* or *las son* instead of the correct forms *lo es* or *lo son*. This type of interference occurs because, in Russian, short answers often omit pronouns or use adjectives agreeing with the subject's gender, as in *она такая* (ella lo es).

About possessive pronouns, in Spanish there are two types—adjectival and nominal— whereas in Russian there is only one type. Some syntactic peculiarities, such as the position of the pronoun before or after the noun and the agreement in number and gender with possessed object or the possessor, can make the use of pronouns difficult. For example, the statement: “su teléfono” can be translated into Russian in four different ways:

- (i) его телефон
- (ii) её телефон;
- (iii) ваш телефон
- (iv) их телефон.

To address this difficulty in the classroom, it is suggested to use activities focused on resolving ambiguities through context reconstruction. Presenting sentences such as “su libro está en la mesa” without explicit references allow for a problematization of the possessive in Spanish and promotes metalinguistic reflection on the structural differences between the two languages.

Regarding demonstrative pronouns, Spanish is based on three points of spatial reference grouped into two categories, whereas Russian only considers two reference points though a single category. Russian students tend to omit the second group and use only the forms *este*, *ese*, *aquel*, which is exacerbated by the formal similarities between Russian and Spanish demonstratives. Furthermore, Russian demonstratives may take case endings, but, as with nouns, they do not distinguish gender in the plural (Maliavina, 2004, p. 439).

Guzmán Tirado recommends:

To consider this imbalance between the two languages, which at an early stage hinders the correct use of Spanish demonstratives by Russian-speaking learners and pay attention to the correct use of the appropriate demonstrative reflecting the appropriate (spatial or temporal) situation (Guzmán Tirado, 2018, p. 233).

Therefore, for the student to discriminate between the three levels of deixis, one can work with spatial simulations in which the correct use of the demonstrative is essential for successful communication.

As for interrogative pronouns, one of the most significant differences is that the pronoun “quién” in Spanish varies in number, whereas in Russian *кто* is an invariable form. Similarly, the pronoun “cuánto” varies in gender and number, while *сколько* is also invariable. It should be noted that the pronoun “qué” can function as a noun or adjective, while its Russian equivalent only fulfils the role of a noun; the adjectival role is performed by the pronoun *какой*, which varies in both gender and number (Maliavina, 2004, p. 440).

Russian grammar requires negation to be placed before the predicate, regardless of whether a negative-value pronoun is used. This may confuse Russian students, as they may not understand the omission of the second negation in Spanish when the predicate is preceded by a negative pronoun. Thus, anomalies such as **Nadie*

no me gusta or **Ningún aparato no funciona* may occur. The same applies to the adverbs “también” and “tampoco”, as the latter has no direct equivalent in Russian.

To prevent these errors, it is useful to propose exercises involving the detection and correction of double negations, as well as controlled translations that allow for observation of the negative structure in Spanish, which may also help to automatize syntactic logic.

13 The article

The article holds great relevance in Spanish grammar, but Russian students do not have this category in their native language, and this accounts for many of their most common errors. The numeral *один* (uno), which changes in gender and number, contributes to the Russian learner’s understanding of the indefinite articles, while in some cases they may rely on the demonstrative pronoun *этот эта это ему* (*este, esta, estas, estos*) to grasp the use of the definite article. Similarly, in Spanish the form *lo* may refer either to a neuter article or to a pronoun functioning as a direct object. This type of construction finds its Russian counterpart in certain subordinate clauses. To overcome these difficulties, it is necessary to present the article as an innovative grammatical operator. Practices such as reformulating statements and exercises distinguishing between uses like “un libro” and “el libro”, or highlighting shifts in meaning (“Busco profesor” versus “Busco un profesor”), support a meaning-focused rather than a purely form-centred approach.

14 The verb

Verbal aspect is a fundamental feature of the Russian system. It reflects how the development of an action is conceptualized (whether it is complete, ongoing, repeated, etc.), and organizes verbs into perfective/imperfective pairs. This grammatical category, which forms part of the verb’s lexical base, lack a direct morphological

equivalent in Spanish, frequently causing transfer errors among Russian-speaking learner of Spanish. In Russian:

- (i) The imperfective aspect is used for habitual, ongoing or repeated actions.

Example: *писать* ("to write" habitually or in progress).

- (ii) The perfective aspect expresses completed or punctual actions.

Example: *написать* ("to have written", indicating that the action is completed).

Both forms are considered different verbs and are often formed using prefixes. For example, the prefix *по-* can be added to the imperfective to generate the perfective: → *говорить* (to speak, imperfective) → *поговорить* (to speak for a while, perfective).

In Spanish, by contrast, there is no morphological aspect category. The speaker conveys the idea of duration or completion through verb forms:

- (i) Habitual action: *Yo escribía todos los días.*

- (ii) Punctual action: *Ayer escribí una carta.*

- (iii) Ongoing action: *Estoy escribiendo una carta.*

Moreover, Russian has a broader range of impersonal forms and participles, which creates a significant gap in comparison to the Spanish verbal system. These differences demand a gradual didactic approach that not only compares grammatical structures but also integrates the concept of verbal aspect in sequences that connect the temporal axis to its discursive function. In this sense, the use of visual narratives, linear temporal diagrams and textual reformulation activities enables the learner to conceptualize time not as an exclusively morphological category, but as a dimension in discourse organization.

As mentioned in the introduction, this phenomenon stems from a situation of structural asymmetry between L1 and L2, in which a grammatical category lacks a direct correspondence, hindering its acquisition without explicit mediation.

Russian lacks the variety of verbal tenses characteristic of Spanish. This deficit, when compared to those of the Romance language, is compensated by the consideration of aspect.

On the other hand, the use of modal forms can pose a challenge insofar as they differ from the expressions used in Russian. Spanish presents four modal possibilities, although there is no consensus on the matter (Kratochvílová, 2022; Romero, 2025): indicative, subjunctive, imperative, and conditional, while Russian lacks the latter. One of the most frequent errors learners make is the substitution of subjunctive forms with conditional ones, and vice versa.

Another difficulty lies in the fact that the subjunctive form in Spanish is not limited to a single verb tense, but rather its use depends on context; a single subjunctive verb form in Russian may be translated in four different ways into Spanish.

An approach is proposed that focuses on communicative functions – such as expressing wishes, doubts, hypotheses, or emotions – through task involving textual analysis, guided reformulation, and recognition of speaker intention in oral or written excerpts. These strategies link the verb form with its pragmatic function in real contexts, through contrasts like “Vive en Madrid” / “Ojalá viviera en Madrid” or reformulations prompted by discourse markers such as “aunque” o “para que”.

Among the challenges faced by Russian-speaking students, one may mention the use of the verbs: *ser*, *estar*, *haber* and *tener*, since they correspond to a single verb *быть*. Moreover, this verb is expressed through different syntactic and grammatical forms, which may lead to confusion. The meaning of “ser” and “estar”, for instance, can be addressed through physical vs. emotional descriptions, or permanent vs. temporary states.

Furthermore, in Russian the verbs “ser” and “estar” are omitted in the present tense:

- (i) Я в клубе, /Yo* en el club/

Finally, another significant source of error lies in verbs indicating direction: *ir*, *venir*, *llevar* and *traer*. Russian verbs describe a single movement in a specific direction and may be repeated or multidirectional. However, Spanish considers the location of the speaker rather than the repetition or multidirectionality of the act.

15 Non personal verb forms

The non-personal verb forms in Spanish may generate grammatical structures that are not possible in Russian. In Spanish, there are two form that reflect the temporal relation of the action—simple infinitive and compound infinitive⁵—, whereas in Russian only the simple infinitive exists. Moreover, grammatical constructions such as the infinitive accompanying perception verbs —*Escuché a Paqui llegar*— are not part of the Russian linguistic system. In contrast, Russian resorts to structures with the gerund or subordinate circumstantial clauses instead of the independent infinitive constructions found in Spanish.

Another non-personal verb form is the participle. In Spanish, there is only the past participle, while in Russian there are both present and past participles. Furthermore, Russian participles are declined and can be apocopated. The participle in Spanish serves more morphological functions than in Russian and contributes to the formation of verb tenses (for example, the *pretérito perfecto compuesto*, *Hemos comido una*

⁵ The simple infinitive is constructed with the subject vowel (-a-, -e-, -i-) followed by the -r ending. For example: *bailar*, *beber*, *mentir*. While the compound infinitive is constructed with the auxiliary verb *haber* and the participle of the main verb: *haber bailado*, *haber bebido*, *haber mentido*.

pizza). In turn, it can form absolute clauses with its own subject (*Acabada la pizza, fuimos a dar una vuelta*), a function not present in the Russian language.

As previously noted, the periphrastic constructions with the participle in Spanish also lack an analogous construction in Russian, so their meaning may be expressed through other syntactic categories. For example, the construction "estar + participio", which denotes a state resulting from a completed action, can be conveyed in Russian through short forms of past participles from perfective verbs. Other participial constructions may be translated into Russian using short and full participles, infinitives, verbs, and adjectives (Maliavina, 2004, p. 449).

In Spanish, the construction "verbo ser + participio pasado" —El edificio fue construido en el siglo XIX— is used, or the reflexive passive clause with "personal verb forms" + "reflexive pronoun se" (Se construyó en el siglo XIX). However, in Russian, the construction verb быть + short form of the participle —Дом был построен в XIX века— is used, or the personal verb forms with the particle -ся (сь) —Дом строился в XIX века—.

Likewise, the choice between the two depends on verbal aspect, as perfective verbs select the participle and imperfective verbs the particle -ся (сь). Moreover, "Russian resorts to the passive voice more frequently than Spanish, which leads students to overuse it due to the influence of their native language" (Maliavina, 2004, p. 451). In Spanish, all verbs can form two types of gerunds⁶ —*comer, comiendo; beber, habiendo bebido*—, whereas in Russian, imperfective verbs are used for the present gerund and perfective verbs for the past gerund. Gerund periphrases, common in Spanish, do not exist in Russian. Therefore, their meaning must be conveyed through other verbal modalities, such as personal verb forms in the imperfective aspect. For example:

⁶ The simple appears without any accompaniment, for example: *escuchando, analizando* or *extrayendo*. The compound is formed with the gerund of the verb *haber* accompanied by another verb in the participle.

- (i) *Jorge estaba hablando.*
- (ii) *Хорхе говорил is the imperfective of the aspectual pair of the Spanish equivalent hablar говорить/сказать.*

Reconstructing periphrastic sentences and comparing translations that highlight differences in aspect and passive voice foster greater grammatical awareness. The explicit treatment of infinitive, participle, and gerund constructions facilitates both their formal and pragmatic assimilation. For instance, contrasting “fue visto corriendo” with “lo vieron correr” enables exploration of the relationship between form, aspect, and register.

16 Indicative and subjunctive moods in subordinate clauses

The main difficulty in the use of the subjunctive mood in subordinate clauses arises in temporal and manner complement clauses. In temporal clauses referring to the future, Spanish uses the subjunctive, whereas Russian opts for the indicative. For example:

- (i) *Cuando llegue Pedro, le contaremos la verdad.*
- (ii) *Когда Петр придет, мы расскажем ему правду.*

The literal translation from Russian into Spanish –*Cuando Pedro llegará, le contaremos la verdad*– reveals a typical interference from the Russian verbal system, which does not distinguish between the subjunctive and indicative moods to express a future action in a subordinate clause.

This error, common among Russian speakers, can be addressed through contrastive activities based on incorrect translations. The parallel comparison of sentences in both languages and the formulation of rules by the student promote the

understanding of the use of the subjunctive in temporal contexts. For example, contrasting “Когда он придёт, мы поедем” with “*Cuando venga, iremos*” illustrates one of its uses in Spanish.

In the case of manner adverbial clauses, frequent mistakes are also observed, especially in the incorrect use of the connector “*como si*” followed by the indicative. In Spanish, this construction requires the subjunctive, both in the *pasado imperfecto* and *pluscuamperfecto*.

- (i) *Habla como si lo supiese todo.*
- (ii) Он говорит так, как будто знает всё.

The literal translation of the Russian sentence into Spanish — *Él habla como si lo sabe todo* — reveals the student’s lack of modal awareness.

The comparative analysis of real scenes in which the connector “*como si*” is used in natural contexts (such as interviews, films or literature) may facilitate the internalization of the connotative nuance of this structure.

As we have confirmed in the examples above, analogous Russian constructions use all tenses of the indicative, while in complement subordinate clauses, both in Russian and in Spanish, the subjunctive is chosen after verbs of desire or command (Maliavina, 2004, p. 453). For example:

- (i) *Quiero que él venga.*
- (ii) Я хочу, чтобы он пришёл.

17 Conditional sentences

Spanish distinguishes three types of conditional sentences: real, potential and unreal. The real conditional presents a hypothetical situation and its possible consequence if it were true. This type of sentence is formed with the verb in the present

tense in the conditional clause and the verb in the future tense in the main clause; for example: *Si estudio mucho, sacaré buenas notas*.

In Russian, however, the equivalent structure uses the future tense in both clauses: *Если я буду много учиться, я получу хорошие оценки*. This difference causes negative transfer, as in “Si iré a España, lo pasaré bien” or even “Si haya buen vino, compraremos dos botellas”. The first reflects a direct influence of the Russian structure; the second, an overcorrection by analogy with the unreal conditional in Spanish.

For its part, both the potential and the unreal conditional in Spanish correspond to a single type of unreal conditional in Russian. The first expresses a hypothetical action that could have occurred in the past and its possible consequences, as in: *Si hubiera estudiado más, habría sacado mejores notas*; the second refers to a hypothetical or unreal situation in the present or future and is formed with the present subjunctive in the conditional clause and the simple conditional in the main clause, for example: *Si fuese rico, compraría una casa más grande*. Maliavina (2004, p. 455) points out that “to distinguish these two types of Spanish sentences, Russian requires the use of adverbials indicating the temporal level”.

To address errors in the use of conditional structures, it is suggested to work with fictionalized narratives that invite students to reconstruct hypothetical consequences. For instance, starting from “María no fue al médico cuando empezó a sentirse mal”, students may be asked to complete “Si María...”, encouraging the activation of the compound conditional. Using timelines that integrate the three Spanish conditional structures also reinforces understanding of their temporal and aspectual differences.

18 Probability

Whereas Spanish combines lexical and grammatical resources to express probability, Russian relies almost exclusively on lexical mechanisms. This asymmetry

poses a challenge for learners, who tend to restrict themselves to lexical formulas and avoid structures such as the modal future or mood shifts.

For example, in Spanish the same idea may be expressed with an adverb of doubt or by using the future with a modal value:

- (i) *Quizás se siente un poco perdida y por eso no sabe qué estudiar.*
- (ii) *Se sentirá un poco perdida y por eso no sabe qué estudiar.*

In both cases, the degree of certainty is low: the first uses an adverb of doubt and the second, the simple future with an epistemic value. This second form, more subtle and characteristic of Spanish, has no direct equivalent in Russian, which complicates its acquisition.

While in Russian, the same sentence could only be rendered in one form:

- (i) Наверное она чувствует себя немного потерянной и поэтому не знает, что изучать. Probablemente se sienta un poco perdida y por eso no sepa qué estudiar.

Or its variations would change only the adverbial element to express different degrees of probability. Below are some examples of the previous sentence:

- (i) Скорее всего, она чувствует себя немного потерянной и поэтому не знает, что изучать. (greater probability): *Lo más probable es que ella se sienta un poco perdida y por eso no sepa qué estudiar*
- (ii) Возможно, она чувствует себя немного потерянной и поэтому не знает, что Изучать. (moderate probability): *Es posible que ella se sienta un poco perdida y por eso no sepa qué estudiar*
- (iii) Не исключено, что она чувствует себя немного потерянной и поэтому не знает, что изучать. (lower probability): *No se descarta que ella se sienta un poco perdida y por eso no sepa qué estudiar.*

Russian maintains the indicative mood and nuances certainty with adverbs or introductory phrases, without altering the verb form. This difference causes interference, as learners tend to omit the future of probability or modal conditional in Spanish. It is crucial to show that these verb tenses also express modal nuances:

- (i) *No estará en casa* (supposition).
- (ii) *Sería buena idea dejarlo para mañana* (softened suggestion).

19 Final considerations

The contrastive analysis between Spanish and Russian reveals the difficulties faced by Russian-speaking ELE learners, stemming from the structural disparities between both languages. The teacher's role as a cultural and linguistic mediator is essential to adapt methodologies, select resources, and assess progress, taking into account the specific needs of these learners, especially given the lack of support in their L1.

Significant differences are observed at the morphosyntactic, semantic, and pragmatic levels: the use of verbal mood (indicative vs. subjunctive), the construction of conditionals, the representation of probability, modal modulation, and the syntax influenced by the Russian case system. At the orthographic levels, divergences in the alphabet and punctuation affect reading comprehension and written production. These differences impact communicative competence and metalinguistic reflection, allowing for the anticipation of errors and the design of more effective pedagogical strategies.

Contrastive work in areas of interference such as the subjunctive or modal markers enhances grammatical and pragmatic awareness, prevents fossilization of errors, and fosters metacognition in the target language.

The divergence of alphabets involves phonetic and orthographic discrepancies, visible in the use of marks such as the comma or the exclamation and question marks. At the morphosyntactic level, Russian case-based grammar complicates the acquisition of Spanish structures. All of this confirms that knowing the L1 is crucial to

mastering the L2. This, the teaching of Spanish to Russian speakers requires functional knowledge of Russian or, at the very least, contrastive analysis strategies that help overcome the main learning difficulties.

Translated by Jorge Torrellas and Angela Carou

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