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The grammar traps that come from Spanish

This is not grammar from the beginning. These are the twelve structures that come up in nearly every session with a Spanish speaker – including people who have worked in English for years. They share one cause: in Spanish it works exactly like that, and in English it does not.

The crossed-out version is the one that feels right. Underneath is the one that is.

Articles and subjects

~~I am engineer at a pharmaceutical company.~~

I'm an engineer at a pharmaceutical company.

Spanish drops the article before a profession, English does not. Soy ingeniero becomes I'm an engineer, always with a or an.

~~Is raining, so the visit is cancelled.~~

It's raining, so the visit is cancelled.

Spanish lets the subject disappear because the verb ending carries it. English sentences need a subject even when it means nothing: it, there.

~~The life in Madrid is expensive.~~

Life in Madrid is expensive.

General concepts take no article in English: life, business, technology, money. Spanish uses la vida, English uses bare life.

~~The people is waiting for the answer.~~

The people are waiting for the answer.

People is plural in English, and so are staff and police. There is no singular a people in this sense.

Verbs that do not map

~~I have 35 years.~~

I'm 35.

Age, hunger, thirst, cold and fear all use tener in Spanish and be in English: I'm hungry, I'm cold, I'm afraid.

~~I'm agree with the proposal.~~

I agree with the proposal.

Estar de acuerdo contains a verb of being; to agree already is the verb. Adding am turns it into an adjective it is not.

~~Can you explain me the process?~~

Can you explain the process to me?

Explain, describe, suggest and recommend never take a person straight after them. Add to, or switch to tell me.

~~I work here since 2021.~~

I've worked here since 2021.

Desde hace covers what English splits three ways: since for a point in time, for for a length of time, and the present perfect for anything still going on.

The ones that sound blunt or odd

~~I didn't understand nothing in that meeting.~~

I didn't understand anything in that meeting.

Spanish stacks negatives, English cancels them. One negative per clause: not anything, or nothing on its own.

~~We need to discuss about the budget.~~

We need to discuss the budget.

Discutir sobre carries a preposition into English where none belongs. The same happens with enter, phone and answer.

~~Actually we have three offices in Europe.~~

Currently we have three offices in Europe.

Actualmente means currently. English actually signals a correction, so this sentence tells your listener they had it wrong.

Send me the report, please.

Could you send me the report?

Grammatically perfect and still abrupt. English politeness lives in the question form, not in please: the imperative that is normal in Spanish reads as an order in English.