


SIDE BY SIDE
Spanish
English
GRAMMAR

Third Edition

Edith R. Farrell and C. Frederick Farrell Jr., PhD



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Preface

Side by Side Spanish & English Grammar presents the essential elements of Spanish grammar—usually covered in a high school program or in the first year of college Spanish—“side by side” with their English counterparts. This comparative/contrastive approach allows students to build on what they already know, as they see the ways in which English and Spanish are similar, and to avoid potential trouble spots.

Side by Side Spanish & English Grammar has been used in both high school and college Spanish classes, and even in some English classes for a few students who were having trouble in understanding their English grammar text. Its vocabulary is, for the most part, limited to the most frequently used Spanish words.

It has been used as

1. a reference book for beginning students, for whom the standard works are too complex to be useful. This allows students a means for independent inquiry.
2. a means of quick review of material forgotten over the summer or material missed because of illness.
3. a means of helping a student in a new school catch up with the class.
4. a means of organizing or summarizing material presented in the primary text, especially for students whose learning style favors an “organized approach.”
5. a means of providing a common background for talking about language with students who have studied English in different ways, so that their study of Spanish will show them something about how language works, one of the expectations of many college language requirements.
6. an alternative method of explaining grammatical points in both English and Spanish to relieve the classroom teacher of the task.

Special features of the book that students will find useful include

1. a standard format that introduces each part of speech and answers the most common questions about it.
2. Quick Check charts that allow students to express themselves with more confidence, since they can independently check their sentences against a model.
3. appendices that identify and summarize trouble spots, such as the differences between interrogative pronouns and adjectives, and the uses of *ser* and *estar*, *por* and *para*.
4. an exercise section that tests understanding of the main grammatical areas covered in the book, plus Using your Spanish, a section new to this edition, that prepares students for communication in Spanish.

We hope that this text will provide ways for students to increase their independent work and to adapt material to their own learning styles and situations.

Acknowledgments

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Preliminary studies on which *Side by Side French & English Grammar*, the companion volume of this book, was based were supported in part by a grant from the Educational Development Program of the University of Minnesota.

Introduction

This book grew out of a series of supplements to a Spanish grammar text. Its purpose is to help you learn Spanish more easily.

Many students have had trouble with foreign languages because they have not looked carefully enough, or critically enough, at their own. Struggles with your own language took place at such an early age that you have forgotten the times when it seemed difficult. Now it seems perfectly natural to you, and it is hard to adapt to different ways of expressing ideas.

The material in this book has been classified and arranged to show you English and your new language “side by side.” You may be surprised at how many grammatical elements are similar in the two languages.

Information that is the same for both English and Spanish is usually not repeated on facing pages. If you find that a section is omitted under the Spanish, look to your left and find it on the English page. The English meaning of a Spanish example is usually on the left-hand page, too.

Why grammar?

People can speak, read, or write their native language, at least to a reasonable degree, without studying formal grammar (the rules governing how we say, change, and arrange words to express our ideas). Just by being around other speakers, we hear millions of examples, and the patterns we hear become a part of us. Even babies start with correct basic patterns (subject-verb-object), even though words may be missing or incorrect: “Me wants cookie!”

Knowledge of grammar helps a great deal, though, in testing new and more complex words or patterns and in analyzing one’s writing to discover where a sentence went wrong or how it could be more effective. Sometimes, “It sounds right (or wrong)” won’t help.

All of the explanations in this book reflect standard English or Spanish. You may sometimes think, “don’t say that!” The important word here is “say.” We often ignore some rules in conversation, or even in informal writing such as friendly letters. When you are writing an important paper or giving a speech, however, you may want to use the standard form in order to make the best possible impression. You will also find that knowing grammar will help you in your study of language.

In learning a foreign language, grammar is necessary because it tells you how to choose the right word—or the right form of a word that you are using for the first time. It is not the way that you acquired your native language as a child, but it is an efficient way for adults who want to express more complex ideas and do not want to make any more mistakes than absolutely necessary.

Grammar saves you time and prevents many mistakes by guiding you in your choices.

Introducing languages

A short history of English

What we now know as England was settled in the fifth and sixth centuries A.D. by Germanic tribes like the Angles, the Saxons, and the Jutes—all speaking related, but distinct, dialects. Later, in the ninth century, Scandinavian invaders came, bringing their languages, which also contributed to English. Political power determined the centers of learning, which contained the literature of continental Europe, written in Latin, as well as contributions of the inhabitants of Britain. By the ninth century, the primary center was in Wessex, due to the Viking invasions in the north, and so the West Saxon dialect became standard as Old English. It was heavily inflected, with endings on nouns to show many cases and on verbs to show time and person.

This was the language current in 1066, when William the Conqueror, from the province of Normandy in what is now France, won the battle of Hastings and became ruler of England. The natives knew no French; William and his followers did not speak Old English. For a long time, each group continued to speak its own language, but gradually they merged. Since the governing group spoke French, we often find that words for work, home, and ordinary things come from Old English, while words for leisure or artistic goods come from French.

Wamba, the jester in Sir Walter Scott's *Ivanhoe*, made a joke about this, saying that cows and pigs were Anglo-Saxon while the peasants took care of them, but became French (beef and pork) when they were ready to be eaten. In the same way, "house" looks and sounds like the German word *Haus*, but "mansion" looks like the French word for "house," *maison*.

English often uses several words with a similar meaning, with the more elegant word frequently being of French origin. For example, instead of "give," we may say "donate," which is like the French *donner*; instead of "mean," we may say "signify," from French *signifier*.

Latin, the language of the church and therefore of learning in general throughout all Europe, also had an influence on English. Around 1500, English absorbed about 25 percent of known Latin vocabulary. English, therefore, is basically a Germanic language, but one to which large portions of French and Latin were added.

Latin gave rise to both French and Spanish, and it continued to influence both languages for many centuries. Therefore, some English words with French or Latin roots have Spanish cognates. Compare the following.

GERMANIC ROOT (COMMON)	FRENCH ROOT (ELEGANT)	LATIN ROOT (LEARNED)	SPANISH COGNATE
<i>ask</i>	<i>question</i>	<i>interrogate</i>	<i>interrogar</i>
<i>goodness</i>	<i>virtue</i>	<i>probity</i>	<i>virtud</i>
<i>better</i>	<i>improve</i>	<i>ameliorate</i>	—
<i>rider</i>	<i>cavalier</i>	<i>equestrian</i>	<i>caballero</i>

Today English is recognized as an international language and has a significant impact on other cultures. The proximity of Latin America to the United States and the growing number of Hispanics in this country have also given an increasingly important place to the Spanish language here. A number of Spanish words have come into everyday use in the United States, for example, *tango*, *taco*, *hacienda*, and *barrio*. Their meaning in everyday English contexts, however, may be more limited or even entirely different from the original Spanish meaning.

A short history of Spanish

Spanish is one of the Romance languages, like French, Italian, and others, that have developed from Latin. Although there are differences in vocabulary and pronunciation of Spanish as it is spoken in Spain, Latin America, and other parts of the world, what we call Spanish is essentially derived from Castilian, the dialect of the historic Spanish region of Castile. As a result, many Spanish speakers refer to the Spanish language as *el castellano*.

When the Romans invaded the Iberian Peninsula in the second and first centuries B.C., they encountered different peoples with different languages. When these peoples learned Latin from the Roman soldiers, they pronounced the words a little differently, because they continued to use the familiar sounds of their own languages. They retained other important elements of their original languages, especially vocabulary. Other peoples, like those in northern Italy and Gaul (now France), did the same thing.

This continued until the “Latin” of different countries evolved into different, though related, languages. Now, while you can guess at words and even forms and rules in a Romance language, based on your knowledge of one of them, a speaker of Spanish cannot be understood by a speaker of French, and vice versa. As in English, Latin words were added to Spanish in the sixteenth century to form a “learned” language.

After the time of the Romans, the Visigoths and other Germanic tribes entered the Peninsula. They were followed by the Arabic-speaking Moors, who invaded Spain in 711 and inhabited most of it until the Reconquest of Spain was complete in 1492, when the Catholic monarchs Ferdinand and Isabella reclaimed the land. In that same year, Jews and Muslims were expelled from Spanish soil, and Columbus arrived in what would become the Americas. The Moors left a lasting influence on many aspects of Spanish culture, including its architecture, music, and dance; the influence of Arabic on the Spanish language can be seen in words such as *algebra*, *alfombra*, and *ojalá*.

The sound system of Spanish continued to evolve in significant ways. Italianisms were introduced during the Renaissance, as they were throughout much of Europe. Spain was strongly influenced by the French monarchy in the eighteenth century, resulting in overly refined speech that mimicked French. As the Industrial Revolution took hold in the nineteenth century, Spanish vocabulary adapted to accommodate the changing world.

All languages change, and the trend is toward less inflection. Distinctions that seem to be too hard or unnecessary die out. Over the centuries, different languages have eliminated different linguistic elements. For example, in Latin and other older languages, every noun had gender, number, and case (which indicated its function in a sentence). In fact, modern German still uses all three grammatical distinctions.

In English, we pay little attention to grammatical gender, but nouns still have number (singular and plural) and an additional case (the possessive), while pronouns also have an objective case; the functions of other cases are expressed by word order and prepositions. Spanish has no cases for nouns referring to things, but when referring to persons, the subject is distinguished from the object not only by word order but also by the preposition *a*, which normally precedes the object noun. Spanish has grammatical gender and number for all nouns. You will notice other instances in which Spanish and English differ. Comparing languages is interesting, because it points out the important elements in each language. Let’s examine the forms of a common masculine noun in Germanic languages.

	MODERN GERMAN		OLD ENGLISH		MODERN ENGLISH
	SINGULAR	PLURAL	SINGULAR	PLURAL	SINGULAR/PLURAL
SUBJECT	<i>der König</i>	<i>die Könige</i>	<i>se cyning</i>	<i>tha cyningas</i>	<i>the king/kings</i>
GENITIVE	<i>des Königs</i>	<i>der Könige</i>	<i>thoes cyning</i>	<i>thara cyninga</i>	<i>the king's/kings'</i>
DATIVE	<i>dem König</i>	<i>den Königen</i>	<i>thaem cyninge</i>	<i>thaem cyningum</i>	<i>to the king/kings</i>
OBJECTIVE	<i>den König</i>	<i>die Könige</i>	<i>thone cyning</i>	<i>tha cyningas</i>	<i>the king/kings</i>

Declension (listing all the case forms of a noun) in German is further complicated by having feminine and neuter nouns whose definite articles and endings are different from the example above, as well as irregular nouns, which have different forms altogether. Adjectives in modern German also have different endings for each gender and case.

Now, let's compare Latin, Spanish, and English forms in the present-tense conjugation of the verb "to have."

LATIN		MODERN SPANISH		MODERN ENGLISH	
<i>habeo</i>	<i>habemus</i>	<i>he</i>	<i>hemos</i>	<i>I have</i>	<i>we have</i>
<i>habes</i>	<i>habetis</i>	<i>has</i>	<i>habéis</i>	<i>you have</i>	<i>you have</i>
<i>habet</i>	<i>habent</i>	<i>ha</i>	<i>han</i>	<i>he has</i>	<i>they have</i>

The endings in Latin and Spanish are so distinctive that it is not necessary to indicate the subject. The *h* is often not pronounced in many European languages, and never in standard Spanish. *V* and *b* are very similar sounds, and in Spanish they are almost identical. Modern English is the least inflected of the modern languages referenced here, French is next, then Italian, Spanish, and German.

Parts of speech

Introducing the parts of speech

Both English and Spanish words are categorized by parts of speech. You may have learned these in elementary school without understanding their usefulness. They are important, because different rules apply to the different categories. In your own language, you do this naturally, unless the word is new to you. You know to say *one horse, two horses*, adding an *-s* to make the noun *horse* plural. You do not try to apply a noun's rule to a verb and say *I am, we ams*; instead, you say *we are*. People learning a foreign language sometimes use the wrong set of rules, however, because all of the forms are new, so nothing "sounds wrong." To avoid this kind of mistake, learn the part of speech when you learn a new vocabulary word.

Parts of speech help you identify words, so that even if a word is used in several ways (and this happens in both English and Spanish), you can determine the Spanish equivalent. For instance, *that* can be

1. a conjunction.

I know **that** Mary is coming.

*Yo sé **que** María viene.*

2. a demonstrative adjective.

That person is impossible.

***Esa** persona es imposible.*

3. a pronoun.

I didn't know **that**.

*Yo no sabía **eso**.*

When you know the parts of speech, the fact that a word is used several ways in English won't cause you to choose the wrong one in Spanish.

Following is a list of the parts of speech. The parts are described (1) in traditional definitions, (2) by the forms that identify them, and (3) by their functions (as structural linguists think of them).

Nouns

1. Names or words standing for persons, places, things, or abstract concepts

John

man

Madrid

city

table

justice

2. Words that become plural by adding *-s* or *-es* (in addition to a few other ways)

book ~ books

fox ~ foxes

~~*child ~ children*~~

3. Words that function as subjects, objects, or complements

***John** is here.*

*She read the **book**.*

*There is **Mary**.*

Pronouns

1. Words that substitute for nouns

*John is already here. Have you seen **him**?*

2. Words that are used when no noun is identified

***It** is raining.*

***They** say ...*

***You** never know.*

3. Words that serve the same function as nouns

***He** is here.*

***He** loves **her**.*

*There **it** is.*

Adjectives

1. Words that modify, limit, or qualify a noun or pronoun

dumb

red

serious

happy

2. Words that may be inflected (may change form) or may be preceded by *more* or *most* to make comparisons

*dumb ~ **dumber** ~ **dumbest***

*serious ~ **more serious** ~ **most serious***

Verbs

1. Words that express action, existence, or state of being

speak

learn

run

be

have

feel

2. Words that may be inflected to show person (*I **am** ~ he **is***), time (*I **sing** ~ I **sang***), voice (*I **write** ~*

it is written), and mood (*if I am here ~ if I were you*)

Adverbs

1. Words that modify verbs, adjectives, or other adverbs by telling how, when, where, or how much

*We'll come **soon**.*

*It's **really** big.*

*They do it **very** well.*

2. Words that can show comparison between verbs (as adjectives do for nouns)

*soon ~ **sooner** ~ **soonest***

*rapidl ~ **more** rapidl ~ **most** rapidly*

Prepositions

1. Words that express place, time, and other circumstances and show the relationship between two elements in a sentence

at

for

in

of

on

to

2. Words that are not inflected (never change form)

3. Words that have a noun or pronoun as their object

***in** a minute*

***of** a sort*

***on** it*

These groups are called prepositional phrases.

Conjunctions

1. Coordinating conjunctions (for example, *and*, *but*, and *so*) connect words, phrases, or clauses that are grammatically equivalent.

*John **and** Mary*

*on the table, **but** under a napkin*

*I had no money, **so** I stayed at home.*

2. Subordinating conjunctions (for example, *if*, *because*, and *when*) connect subordinate clauses to the main clause of a sentence.

***When** you see it, you will believe me.*

Interjections

1. Exclamations

Hey !

~~**Wow!**~~

2. Words that can be used alone or in sentences

Darn!

Oh, Mary, is it true?

Nouns

Definition

See [page 6](#).

Forms

English nouns are considered to have gender, number, and case.

GENDER Masculine or feminine gender is used only for someone or something that is male or female.

- man*
- woman*
- bull*
- tigress*

All other nouns are neuter. Gender makes no difference in English except when there are two forms for one noun (for example, *actor* and *actress*) or when the nouns are replaced by pronouns (for example, *he*, *she*, *it*).

NUMBER Most nouns add -s or -es to the singular form to form the plural.

- train ~ trains*
- box ~ boxes*

Some nouns have irregular plural forms.

- mouse ~ mice*
- man ~ men*
- child ~ children*

CASE There is only one extra case in English: the possessive, or genitive. It is formed by adding -' to a singular noun or -' to a plural noun ending in -s.

- Mary's book*
- the book's cover*
- the books' covers*

The possessive case can often be ignored, and *of* used instead, although this form is less common when a person is involved.

- Kant's theories* → *the theories of Kant*
- the book's pages* → *the pages of the book*

Nouns are often preceded by determiners (see [page 16](#)).

- a book*, *the book*, *my book*, *two books*

Uses

The three most common uses of nouns are as subjects, objects, and complements (see [page 14](#)).

SUBJECT	<i>Mrs. Gómez is Spanish.</i>
APPOSITIVE	<i>Mrs. Gómez, a Spanish woman, is visiting us.</i>
DIRECT OBJECT OF A VERB	<i>He has a pencil.</i>
INDIRECT OBJECT OF A VERB	<i>She gave the hat to John.</i>
OBJECT OF A PREPOSITION	<i>We are in the room.</i>
COMPLEMENT	<i>It is a valuable book.</i>
ADJECTIVE	<i>I have my history textbook.</i>



Introducing nouns

Definition

See [page 6](#).

Forms

Spanish nouns are considered to have gender and number, but not case.

GENDER All nouns in Spanish are either masculine or feminine; there are no neuter nouns. When you learn a Spanish noun, you must also learn whether it is masculine or feminine.

The gender of nouns is very important in Spanish, since their determiners and the adjectives accompanying them must be of the same gender. If a noun is preceded by *el*, it is almost always masculine; *la* designates a feminine noun. For pronunciation reasons, there is an exception for feminine nouns that begin with a stressed *a*, and *el* is used before these nouns. For example, we say *el agua*, even though *agua* is a feminine noun.

NUMBER Spanish nouns that end in a vowel add *-s* to form the plural; nouns that end in a consonant add *-es* to form the plural. A plural noun also has a plural article. *Los* is the plural article for masculine nouns, and *las* is the plural feminine article.

el centavo ~ los centavos

la casa ~ las casas

el color ~ los colores

la ciudad ~ las ciudades

Family names do not have a regular plural form. If they end in *-s* or *-z*, the name remains unchanged. However, if a family name ends in an unaccented vowel, it is sometimes made plural, but usually not.

los Rodríguez

los Castro OR *los Castros*

CASE Spanish nouns do not have different cases. Possession is indicated by the preposition *de*, plus an article if one is needed.

*las teorías **de** Kant*

*las páginas **del** libro*

Spanish nouns are often preceded by determiners (see [pages 17–18](#)).

***un** libro, **el** libro, **mi** libro, **dos** libros*

Uses

Nouns are used in the same way in Spanish and English. Compare the following sentences with th

English sentences on the opposite page.

La señora Gómez es española.

*La señora Gómez, una **mujer** española, nos visita.*

*Él tiene un **lápiz**.*

*Ella le dio el sombrero a **Juan**.*

*Estamos en el **cuarto**.*

*Es un **libro** valioso.*

*Tengo mi texto **de historia**.*

Rarely is a Spanish noun used alone as an adjective; a phrase, usually with *de*, is used.

english

Introducing nouns (continued)

Types

There are several ways to classify nouns. Following are two important ones.

1. Common vs. proper

Common nouns are applied to a class of individuals. They begin with a lowercase letter.

student

country

cat

language

Proper nouns name a specific individual within a class. They begin with a capital letter.

Miss Jones

Mexico

Kitty

English

2. Countable vs. mass

Countable nouns can be counted.

one pencil

two sharks

three engineers

Mass nouns cannot be separated into individuals—they cannot be counted.

salt

weather

sadness

spanish

Introducing nouns (continued)

Types Spanish nouns may be classified as follows.

1. Common vs. proper

For the most part, Spanish is the same as English in this classification, but there are a few important differences. Nouns for languages, days of the week, and months are common nouns in Spanish and do not require a capital letter.

English	<i>el inglés</i>
Monday	<i>lunes</i>
October	<i>octubre</i>

2. Countable vs. mass

This classification follows the same principle in Spanish as in English. However, mass nouns such as *la gente* and *el pueblo* are always treated as singular.

Introducing subjects and objects

Subjects

Subjects are most frequently nouns or pronouns. The subject of a verb is the person or thing that *is* something or *is doing* something.

Mary and I are here.

John speaks Spanish.

Are **they** (the textbooks) arriving today?



QUICK CHECK

Ask yourself: *Who* is here? *Who* speaks Spanish? *What* is arriving?

Answer: the subject

In normal word order, the subject comes before the verb. The subject is often, but not always, the first word in a sentence or clause.

Subject complements

Subject complements are words or phrases that define, or complete an idea about, the subject.

*Mr. White is a **professor**.*

*Jeanne and Alice are **Americans**.*

Direct objects

Some systems of grammar refer to direct objects as “object complements.” The name matters less than the ability to recognize their important function. Direct objects are usually nouns or pronouns that directly receive the verb’s action. In normal word order, the direct object comes after the verb.

*Mary likes **John**. She likes **him**.*

*The professor is giving a **test**. He is giving **it**.*



QUICK CHECK

Ask yourself: *Who* is liked? *What* is being given?

Answer: the direct object

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