

Examen, curro y líos (*Exam, work stress, and everyday drama*)

Target Audience: Intermediate European Spanish Learners (B1-B2)

Grammar Rule Highlights:

- [Cuantificadores e Indefinidos](#)
 - [alguien](#) / [nadie](#)
 - [algo](#) / [nada](#)
 - [algún](#) / [alguna](#) / and [ninguno](#) / [ninguna](#)

Communication Focus:

- react in real time to other people's stories
- talking about other people's experiences
- express emotions like sadness, surprise, and happiness...

Intro:

Welcome to [The Spanish Intermediate Plateau Podcast](#), a European Spanish podcast with transcript.

In this dialogue, Javier and Rosita talk about the DELE exam and the process of applying for Spanish nationality, and how things didn't go the same way for everyone. They also touch on work problems, study decisions, and all the small dramas that come with trying to move forward in another country, using everyday Spanish you'll actually hear in real conversations.

Script

Rosita:

Oye, Javier, ¿Que tal? Me dijeron que ya terminaste todo lo de la nacionalidad. ¿Es verdad o es rumor? Porque últimamente se oye de todo y ya no sabes qué creer.

Hey Javier, how are you? I was told you've already finished everything with your nationality. Is that true or just a rumor? (Rosita is talking about Javier applying for Spanish nationality.)

Because lately you hear all sorts of things and you never know what to believe.

Javier:

¡Hola Rosita! Sí, por fin. Tuve que hacer el DELE A2 y, aunque iba bastante nervioso, salió mejor de lo que esperaba. Mucho mejor de lo que tenía en la cabeza.

Hi, Rosita! Yes, finally. I had to take the DELE A2, and even though I was pretty nervous, it went better than I expected. Way better than what I had imagined.

Rosita:

¿En serio? ¡Qué bien! Yo habría estado hecha un manojo de nervios.

Really? That's great! I would have been a bundle of nerves.

Javier:

Totalmente. Estaba nervioso, pero al final saqué notas altas, incluso perfecto en Speaking y

Listening, y eso que no iba nada confiado.

Totally. I was nervous, but in the end I got high scores, even a perfect score in Speaking and Listening, and that's without feeling confident at all.

Rosita:

¡No me lo puedo creer! Eso es una pasada, de verdad, no le pasa a cualquiera.

I can't believe it! That's amazing, honestly, that doesn't happen to just anyone.

Javier:

Ya ves. A veces te montas la película y luego no era para tanto, pero hasta que pasa, no te quedas tranquilo.

Yeah, you see. Sometimes you build it up in your head and then it wasn't such a big deal, but until it's over, you can't relax.

Rosita:

Pues tengo una amiga que no tuvo la misma suerte. Se presentó y suspendió el examen, y lo pasó bastante mal.

Well, I have a friend who didn't have the same luck. She took it and failed the exam, and she had a really rough time.

Javier:

Jo... qué faena. ¿Y ahora qué va a hacer? Porque eso desanima a cualquiera.

Damn... what a pain. And what's she going to do now? Because that would discourage anyone.

Rosita:

Dice que no se lo tomó muy en serio y que ahora quiere matricularse en una escuela de español, para hacerlo bien esta vez.

She says she didn't take it very seriously and now she wants to enroll in a Spanish school, to do it properly this time.

Javier:

Tiene lógica. Ese examen hay que prepararlo bien, si no, te la juegas y luego vienen los disgustos.

That makes sense. You really have to prepare for that exam properly, otherwise, you're taking a risk and then the disappointments come.

Rosita:

Tal cual. Incluso se planteó repetir el curso si hacía falta, aunque le diera un poco de rabia.

Exactly. She even considered repeating the course if necessary, even if it annoyed her a bit.

Javier:

Bueno, mejor eso que volver a suspender. ¿Y esta vez cómo le fue?

Well, that's better than failing again. And how did it go this time?

Rosita:

Pues aprobó, y encima ganó un premio en la escuela por esfuerzo.

She passed, and on top of that she won a prize at the school for effort.

Javier:

¿Ah, sí? Qué fuerte... eso no me lo esperaba para nada

Oh really? That's crazy... I didn't expect that at all.

Rosita:

Yo tampoco. Luego pidió una beca para seguir estudiando y, al final, consiguió una, lo cual le dio un poco de respiro.

Me neither. Then she applied for a scholarship to keep studying and in the end she got one, which gave her a bit of breathing room.

Javier:

Mira, dentro de lo malo, pues al final algo bueno salió de todo eso, aunque al principio pintara fatal.

Look, after all the bad stuff, something good came out of it in the end, even though at first it looked awful.

Rosita:

Sí, pero mientras tanto estaba trabajando y discutía con alguien casi cada semana. Un ambiente bastante tenso.

Yeah, but in the meantime, she was working and arguing with someone almost every week. A pretty tense environment.

Javier:

Uf... eso ya suena mal. ¿Problemas en el trabajo, de los que te quitan las ganas de todo?

Ugh... that already sounds bad. Problems at work, the kind that drain you completely?

Rosita:

Sí. Además, algunos se metían con ella por el idioma y lo llevaba fatal.

Yes. On top of that, some people were picking on her because of her language level, and she took it really badly.

Javier:

Eso es muy desagradable. Nadie debería meterse con nadie por eso, y menos en el trabajo.

That's really unpleasant. No one should mess with someone over that, especially at work.

Rosita:

Exactamente. Al final la despidieron, o sea, la echaron del trabajo así, sin más, sin previo aviso.

Exactly. In the end they fired her, basically kicked her out of the job just like that, without any warning.

Javier:

Es que da mucha rabia oír historias así: primero se meten con ella y luego acaba despedida. Menudo follón.

It's really infuriating to hear stories like that: first they pick on her, and then she ends up fired. What a mess.

Rosita:

Claro. Estuvo un tiempo sin cobrar sueldo y no encontraba nada, ni una oportunidad decente.

Of course. She spent some time without earning a salary and couldn't find anything, not a single decent opportunity.

Javier:

¿Y no hizo prácticas ni algún intercambio para mejorar el currículum, por probar algo distinto?

And didn't she do internships or some kind of exchange to improve her CV, just to try something different?

Rosita:

Sí, hizo prácticas, presentó el currículum en mil sitios, pero no salía ninguna oportunidad, ni una llamada.

Yes, she did internships, sent her CV to tons of places, but there wasn't any opportunity, not even a call.

Javier:

Ya... mandas currículums y nadie contesta, es bastante frustrante, te quita la moral.

Yeah... you send out CVs and nobody replies, it's pretty frustrating, it really kills your motivation.

Rosita:

Al final dejó el trabajo, pero siguió estudiando español pensando en tener más oportunidades cuando mejorara.

In the end, she left the job, but she kept studying Spanish, thinking about having more opportunities once she improved.

Javier:

Madre mía... menudo lío. Al menos no tiró la toalla con el español, ni siquiera cuando otros se metían con ella por el idioma.

Oh my God... what a mess. At least she didn't give up on learning Spanish, not even when others were making fun of her because of the language.

Rosita:

Ahora quiere centrarse en mejorar el español, seguir formándose. Ojalá mejore hablando, porque con todo el esfuerzo que ha hecho se merece un trabajo mejor.

Now she wants to focus on improving her Spanish and keep training. Hopefully she gets better at speaking, because with all the effort she's put in, she deserves a better job.

Javier:

Sé lo duro que es pasar por algo así. Que siga, que no se rinda, al final todo acaba llegando.
I know how hard it is to go through something like that. She should keep going, not give up, in the end, everything works out.

Important Note (from one learner to another):

Just a quick reminder before we jump in — everything you'll see in the grammar rules and vocabulary list comes from my own learning process. These explanations are short on purpose because I'm not trying to teach Spanish formally. I'm simply highlighting the structures I'm practicing myself and the phrases I'm trying to get familiar with.

So please read them with that in mind: if something isn't fully clear or you need more detail, feel free to look it up and go deeper. I leave these notes here so you can see what I'm focusing on as an intermediate learner, and maybe they'll help you notice the same things.

Also, keep in mind that many of the words and expressions I include—especially the slang and colloquialisms—can change depending on the context. I pick them up from real conversations with locals here in Madrid, not from textbooks or apps, because those usually stay very formal to sound “academic” or “professional.”

This whole project is just my way of learning and a way to share the process with anyone who feels stuck in the intermediate plateau, as I do. Hope this helps.

Grammar Rules

[Cuantificadores e Indefinidos](#) always trip me up when I'm speaking. They look very similar, and I often pause trying to pick the right one. So in this script, I'm highlighting them on purpose to get used to using them naturally and force myself to use them more.

1. Indefinidos (pronombres): [alguien](#) / [nadie](#)

Grammar Objective: Use *alguien* to refer to an unspecified person, and *nadie* to refer to the absence of any person.

Translation:

- *alguien* → someone
- *nadie* → no one

Example from script:

discutía con alguien casi cada semana

→ “she was arguing with someone almost every week”

nadie debería meterse con nadie por eso

→ “no one should mess with someone over that”

2. Indefinidos (pronombres): algo / nada

Grammar Objective: Use *algo* to refer to an unspecified thing, and *nada* to refer to the absence of anything.

Translation:

- *algo* → something
- *nada* → nothing

Example from script:

al final algo bueno salió de todo eso

→ “in the end, something good came out of all that”

pero no salía nada

→ “but nothing came up”

3. Cuantificadores indefinidos (determinantes): algún / alguna / and ninguno / ninguna

Grammar Objective: Use *algún* / *alguna* to refer to an unspecified quantity of a noun, and *ningún* / *ninguna* to express the absence of that noun.

Translation:

- *algún* / *alguna* → some or any
- *ningún* / *ninguna* → no / none

Example from script:

y no hizo prácticas ni algún intercambio para mejorar el currículum

→ “and didn’t she do internships or some kind of exchange to improve her CV”

pero no salía ninguna oportunidad

→ “but there wasn’t any opportunity”

Vocabulary Highlights

Useful European Spanish colloquialisms and expressions you’ll hear every day.

1. *Meterse con (alguien)*

Translation: “To mess with someone” / “To pick on someone”

Explanation: Used when someone criticizes, mocks, or treats another person unfairly, often repeatedly. Literally, “to get into someone” — as if you’re invading their space or attacking them verbally.

Example:

— *Se metían con ella por su nivel de español.*

→ “They were picking on her because of her Spanish level.”

2. Meterse a + actividad

Translation: “To get into (an activity)” / “To start doing something”

Explanation: Used to express a personal decision to start or take up an activity, often implying effort, commitment, or change, with or without formal enrollment. Literally, “to get oneself into” something — like stepping into a new situation.

Example:

— *Al final se metió a estudiar en una academia.*

→ “In the end, she started studying at an academy.”

3. Estar hecha un manojo de nervios

Translation: “To be a bundle of nerves”

Explanation: Used to describe someone who is extremely nervous, anxious, or stressed.

Example:

— *Antes del examen estaba hecha un manojo de nervios.*

→ “Before the exam, she was a bundle of nerves.”

4. Una pasada

Translation: “Amazing” / “Incredible”

Explanation: Used to express strong positive surprise or admiration. Literally, “a passing” — something that goes beyond what you expected.

Example:

— *Sacar esa nota fue una pasada.*

→ “Getting that grade was amazing.”

5. Te montas la película

Translation: “You’re making it up in your head” / “You’re overthinking it”

Explanation: Used when someone imagines problems or scenarios that aren’t actually happening. Literally, “you make a movie for yourself”.

Example:

— *Pensaba que iba a suspender, pero me estaba montando la película.*

→ “I thought I was going to fail, but I was just overthinking it.”

6. ***Te la juegas***

Translation: “You’re taking a risk” / “You’re gambling on it”

Explanation: Used when someone does something risky without proper preparation or certainty.

Example:

— *Si no estudias, te la juegas en el examen.*

→ “If you don’t study, you’re taking a risk in the exam.”

7. ***Tal cual***

Translation: “Exactly” / “Just like that”

Explanation: Used to show strong agreement or to confirm that something is exactly as described.

Example:

— *Fue muy duro al principio.*

→ “It was really hard at first.”

— *Tal cual.*

→ “Exactly.”

8. ***Qué fuerte***

Translation: “That’s crazy” / “That’s intense”

Explanation: Used to react to surprising, shocking, or unexpected news.

Example:

— *Le dieron el premio sin esperarlo.*

→ “They gave her the prize unexpectedly.”

— *Qué fuerte.*

→ “That’s crazy.”

9. ***Menudo lío***

Translation: “What a mess” / “Such a mess”

Explanation: Used to describe a complicated, chaotic, or stressful situation.

Example:

— *Entre el trabajo y los estudios, fue menudo lío.*

→ “Between work and studies, it was such a mess.”