

Attitudes and Agents in the Transmission of Russian as a Heritage Language in Spain

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Отношения и агенты при передаче русского как унаследованного языка в Испании

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Slavic Language Education

Ausgabe: 4/2024

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.18452/28704>

Herausgegeben an der
Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin
Institut für Slawistik und Hungarologie

ISSN: 2748-5226

Abstract:

This paper identifies factors that Russian speakers in Spain consider favoring or hindering in the transmission of Russian to their children. There are both parents willing to transmit Russian and those who do not. The availability of means and the perceived proficiency in Russian play a very important role. While child agency does not exert a positive effect on Russian language maintenance, grandparent agency does.

Аннотация:

В статье определяются благоприятствующие и препятствующие факторы передачи русского языка детям с точки зрения русскоговорящих в Испании. Среди родителей есть и те, кто готов передавать русский язык, и те, кто не желает этого. Доступность средств трансмиссии и оценка уровня владения русским языком играют очень важную роль. Агентность ребенка не оказывает положительного влияния на сохранение русского языка, а агентность бабушек и дедушек оказывает.

Keywords: Russian as a heritage language, Spain, attitudes, family agency, factors of transmission

Ключевые слова: унаследованный русский, Испания, установки, семейная агентность, факторы передачи языка

Zitieren des Artikels: Ivanova, Olga (2024): Attitudes and agents in the transmission of Russian as a heritage language in Spain, *Slavic Language Education* 4/2024, S. 202-224, DOI: <https://doi.org/10.18452/28704>.

ATTITUDES AND AGENTS IN THE TRANSMISSION OF RUSSIAN AS A HERITAGE LANGUAGE IN SPAIN

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Abstract

Russian is one of the most rapidly expanding heritage languages worldwide. In recent years, new Russian-speaking diasporas have emerged, and Spain is among the countries with young but also large Russian-speaking communities. Considering its recent nature, data on the attitudes of Russian speakers in Spain towards its maintenance as a heritage language are still limited. The objective of this paper is to identify factors that Russian speakers in Spain consider favoring or hindering in the transmission of Russian to their children. Based on a qualitative analysis of five discussion threads in a public group of Russian speakers on Facebook, this paper focuses on four questions: (i.) external factors guiding the transmission of Russian; (ii.) attitudinal factors guiding the transmission of Russian; (iii.) attitudes towards the level of proficiency in Russian, and (iv.) relevance of different agents in the decision-making and transmission of Russian. The results of the study show that there are both speakers willing to transmit Russian and those who do not, and in the decision to do so the availability of means and the perceived proficiency in Russian play a very important role. Importantly, the study also shows that while child agency does not exert a positive effect on Russian language maintenance, grandparent agency does. For many parents, the figure of the grandparents is key to ensuring not only the transmission of the language but also to assuring a native-like Russian, which many Russian speakers consider essential. At this stage, a contrastive study of Russian speakers living in different countries would be necessary to trace common attitudinal and functional patterns that condition the family transmission of Russian as a heritage language.

Keywords: *Russian as a heritage language, Spain, attitudes, family agency, factors of transmission*

1. Introduction

Sociolinguistics has made it clear that the transmission of a language is directly related to the attitudes speakers develop and maintain toward its social and functional value. In the case of heritage languages (HL), this relationship is posited as one of the primary factors in intergenerational transmission (cf. Kutlu and Kircher 2021, Schüpbach 2009, Schwartz 2010). HL are defined as those not socially dominant languages that are learned by children at home (Kelleher 2010, Rothman 2009). These are usually the languages of immigrants (cf. Benmamoun et al. 2013), who decide to maintain their original language in the home setting. When this happens -not all immigrants would, of course, do it-, their children become *heritage speakers*: they ‘inherit’ the language of their parents, but their

use of it is socially limited. It is common, therefore, for heritage speakers to be defined as speakers who learn and use a home language in addition to the dominant language of the society they live in. As a result, heritage speakers are often considered bilinguals (Kutlu and Kircher 2021), although their bilingualism is frequently imbalanced, usually in favor of the socially dominant language (Scontas et al. 2015), and shows up with considerable individual variation (Polinsky and Kagan 2007).

The Russian language is one of the most rapidly expanding heritage languages worldwide (Zabrodskaia and Ivanova 2021, Ivanova and Kressova Iordanishvili 2024). Many studies have described in detail how strong waves of migration from the post-Soviet countries since the last decades of the 20th century have contributed to the formation of enclaves of Russian as a heritage language (RHL) in countries like the United States (cf. Kagan 2010, Laleko 2013), Israel (cf. Schwartz 2008), or Germany (cf. Brehmer 2021, Mitrofanova et al. 2021, Olfert and Schmitz 2018). In addition to these more traditional destinies, many new Russian-speaking immigrant environments have formed in countries like Finland (Protassova 2008), Canada (Makarova et al. 2019), or Brazil (Smirnova Henriques et al. 2021). Importantly, the formation of new environments for Russian speakers has enabled significant progress in our understanding of the factors that guide the transmission of RHL from a comparative perspective. Studies comparing tendencies in RHL transmission in Cyprus, Ireland, Israel, and Sweden (Otwindowska et al. 2021) or Israel, Germany, Norway, Latvia, and the UK (Rodina et al. 2020) are good examples of such a perspective.

At the same time, the expansion of the Russian-speaking diaspora has created new geographical enclaves yet to be explored. Among such, South European countries like Spain stand out for both the novelty of the diaspora, on the one hand, and its significant size, on the other. Though it is difficult to estimate how many Russian speakers live in Spain (Ivanova, Zabrodskaia (2021) and Ivanova, Kressova Iordanishvili (2024) discuss the reasons for such difficulty), recent estimates suggest that the Russian-speaking diaspora in this country is mainly female and is characterized by a significant intrinsic variability. Russian speakers in Spain are different in their socioeconomic status, civil position (some are married to other Russian speakers, that is, they form endogamous couples; but many are in intermarriages, that is, they form exogamous families), educational level (the diaspora is made up of people with very different levels of education, from the lowest to the highest), geographical location (some live in towns concentrating a significant number of Russian speakers, but many others live in cities with very low presence of them), and -importantly- opportunities to practice Russian (Ivanova and Kressova Iordanishvili 2024).

Such social and sociolinguistic differences notwithstanding, Russian speakers in Spain can be driven by several factors in their decision to transmit RHL to the second generation. On the one hand, it is their area of residence. Several Spanish communities are officially bilingual, so the need to learn two local languages, rather than only Spanish, can be a detracting factor for HL maintenance. A recent study on the maintenance of HL in Spain suggests that immigrants living in monolingual Spanish territories are more prone to maintain their HL than if they lived in bilingual areas (Medvedeva and Portes 2018). Another decisive factor is the socioeconomic status of the Russian speakers or their families. Speakers with higher socioeconomic possibilities are more prone to maintain RHL with their

children (Ivanova and Zabrodskaia 2021). In a way, socioeconomic status is related to the opportunity to access means for supporting RHL transmission, including Russian language classes, cultural and audio-visual material, or trips to the homeland. Furthermore, such socio-cognitive factors as personal self-esteem, language consciousness, and proficiency in Spanish in first-generation Russian speakers can be predictive of RHL transmission family policy. First-generation speakers with higher self-esteem as bilinguals are more prone to transmit RHL to their children, and, furthermore, they usually report their children to have better proficiency in Russian (Ivanova 2019).

Against this background, insights on language attitudes and factors conditioning the transmission of RHL in the Russian-speaking community in Spain are still limited. On the one hand, there is no common perspective on the factors that Russian speakers consider relevant for transmitting Russian to their children. In a way, there are still not enough data to establish whether the dominant tendency among Russian speakers in Spain is to transmit the language to their children or not. Moreover, there is no global view of Russian speakers' attitudes toward the maintenance of the language in their families and, specifically, with their children. We, thus, lack perspectives on the value (or values) that the Russian-speaking diaspora assigns to its language. Finally, we know almost nothing about the agency in the transmission of RHL, that is: who is most involved, and why and how, in the process of RHL maintenance and transmission. While overt language transmission usually falls on the first-generation speakers, the sociolinguistic theory has also highlighted the great relevance of other agents in HL maintenance (cf. Spolsky 2009). Studies on HL transmission have highlighted the role of both the child agency and the grandparents' agency (cf. Shen and Jiang 2023, Stavans and Ashkenazi 2022). Data on the agency distribution and organization in the maintenance of Russian in Spain are, to date, practically non-existent.

The communicative and social position of HL often places them in an unfavorable context of transmission (input is limited) and frequently makes them undesired (speakers do not 'see' the communicative and social usefulness of learning and using a HL). In such circumstances, the motivation to transmit HL depends on several affective and sociolinguistic factors. The objective of this paper is to provide empirical data allowing to better identify those factors that guide the generational transmission of Russian in Spain. In such a way, the paper aims to fill in the gaps in what we know about the factors, attitudes, and agency in the transmission of RHL in the Spanish milieu. Based on qualitative research, this study tries to determine and describe the dominant position of Russian speakers in Spain towards the opportunities and reasons for RHL maintenance and transmission. Attitudes towards RHL maintenance and transmission are also considered. In a novel way, the study analyses the role that different agents -parents, children, and grandparents- play in the decision-making process regarding the transmission and maintenance of Russian in the Spanish milieu.

Methodology

A qualitative sociolinguistic study was carried out to find out which factors guide Russian speakers living in Spain to the transmission of their language. Special attention was paid to their explicit

attitudes and to the participation of other agents, mainly children themselves and their grandparents, in the process.

The study is based on a corpus of comments, both initiatory and reactive, collected in an open group on the social network *Facebook*. This Facebook group, which name is omitted for research ethics, aims to be a platform for the exchange of opinions, advice, and help for Russian-speaking residents of Spain. Participants are free to propose topics for discussion. Frequently, they address such themes as social integration in Spain, trips to the homeland, Spanish language acquisition, and child education in intermarriages. Importantly, since the policy of the group forbids addressing political or religious issues, the group is followed by many Russian speakers from countries other than Russia.

Some of the initiatory comments, posted as collective questions or requests to the entire group (which has more than 4000 followers), can generate very extensive discussions. It is particularly relevant for *opinion questions*, when one participant explicitly asks about the opinion or attitude of other participants towards a particular issue. While it is true that not all members of the group are equally active in the discussion, some of them -the vast majority of whom are women- can be very active in some of the threads. In such cases, they frequently enroll in question-to-answer and reply-to-answer trains of discussion, offering interesting debates on some burning topics.

The question of language transmission is one of such topics of great interest but, at the same time, it is a sensitive theme to comment on. On the one hand, being Russian speakers, all the participants in the group could hypothetically contribute their opinions and attitudes on the transmission of Russian in the Spanish milieu. However, on the other hand, some reluctance is in place for participating in discussions on this issue, with the range of causes varying from personal to social to professional.

This considered, five threads on the transmission of Russian as a heritage language to children living or born in Spain in either exogamous (Russian-Spanish) or endogamous (Russian immigrant) families were identified and collected from the group. The threads cover the period from 2016 to 2021 and involve an overall number of 329 participants, who participated with a total of 1.168 comments, reaching a total number of 37.693 words. Specific data for each thread is given in Table 1.

Thread number	Date	Total participants	Total number of comments	Total words
1	March 2016	18	45	1,761
2	May 2016	19	56	1,556
3	April 2017	114	620	20,926
4	January 2018	57	163	7,251
5	September 2021	121	284	6,199
Overall data		329	1,168	37,693

Table 1: Quantitative data of the sample

The initiatory comments of the five threads concerned either one or both of the following two issues: the language policy of Russian-speaking parents within their family contexts, on the one hand, and the strategies for maintaining the heritage language, on the other. In both cases, the sociolinguistic context was determined by the presence of Spanish as the dominant social language, or by the presence of two local languages in the case of families living in bilingual communities in Spain, such as Catalonia. Table 2 shows the excerpts of the initiatory comments of the five threads.

Thread number	Date	Comment excerpt*
1	March 2016	I have a question for those of you who live with kids in Catalonia. When they [kids – O.I.] start nursery or school, they start learning Catalan. Do you also start learning it then? And what language do your kids speak at home? What if he/she starts using Catalan with us, and we only speak Spanish, and still at a very basic level?
2	May 2016	Girls and mummies, could you share with me your experience of how you preserved and developed the native [Russian – O.I.] language in kids? She goes to a Russian nursery, watches cartoons in Russian and I read to her in Russian, I speak with her in <i>my</i> language, we go to the homeland once a year, we maintain contact with the grandparents, and have Russian-speaking friends. What else can I do? What were the obstacles you met?
3	April 2017	Girls with kids, I have a question for you. Who of you has been able to bring up a child speaking Russian in intermarriage (mummy speaking Russian, and having a local daddy)? I don't mean the child to be able to understand but to be able to speak. How have you done it?
4	January 2018	Could you please share your experience? Those of you whose kids were born here, are your children interested in learning Russian? [...] How could I motivate my child? I try to teach him/her on my own. But there is not much progress.
5	September 2021	I have a question: who has the same situation as mine [the mother writes in Russian and the daughter answers in Spanish – O.I.]? I speak with them in Russian from their birth, they can read and write [in Russian – O.I.], but [they answer me in Spanish – O.I.]

Table 2: Excerpts of the initiatory comments of the threads analyzed in the study

* All comments are given in my translation from Russian into English. Highlights are also mine. When necessary, I reconstruct missing words or phrases for a better understanding of the statements. In these cases, I use them in square brackets.

All responses to the initiatory comments of the five threads were collected and organized in their order of appearance after the question. No sociolinguistic data on the participants were collected because of only partial availability of such information (for example, *Facebook* allows for anonymous participation and many participants of the group do not have a public profile for checking). All

comments were further classified according to the specific aspect they addressed. These aspects include: (i.) factors in the maintenance and transmission of RHL in Spain (what do Russian speakers consider to be important factors favoring or hindering RHL transmission); (ii.) factors in the maintenance of RHL in the second-generation speakers (why Russian speakers decide to transmit Russian to their children or not); (iii.) attitudes towards the level of proficiency in RHL and its use (what Russian speakers expect from their children to be able to do in Russian and when); and (iv.) agency in the maintenance and transmission of RHL in Spain (whom Russian speakers consider being crucial agents of RHL transmission).

Results

Compared to other immigrant languages in the Spanish milieu, the intergenerational transmission of Russian as a heritage language is based on several affective factors within a specific socio-cognitive context. Speakers seem to have a firm grasp that they want to pass on Russian to their children, but they find difficulties or limitations in this process. The analysis of the threads showed that Russian speakers identify several common axes, which make problematic both the transmission of RHL and the maintenance of its proficiency. These are the social setting, the communicative power of Russian as a language, the practical inability to achieve native-like proficiency in RHL, and the absence of agents favoring its transmission and learning. The results also show a general worry about the level of proficiency in RHL, and the actual use Russian has among second-generation speakers, which first-generation speakers qualify as insufficient, rudimentary, or simply absent.

Factors hindering/favoring the maintenance of RHL in Spain

Russian speakers in Spain do not tend to form dense social networks (only a few Spanish towns, like Marbella, bring together cohesive, narrow-grid communities), nor do they frequently live in communities with a high presence of other Russian speakers. This significantly reduces the options for exposure to Russian among different generations. In fact, Russian speakers themselves recognize that their form of socialization -the one *not relying* on other Russian speakers- is at the root of the main difficulties in transmitting RHL to their children. Interestingly enough, in some cases, the difficulty of transmitting RHL, as opposed to other heritage languages -such as Chinese or Arabic- is directly linked to the dominant typology of the family settings. While Chinese or Arabic speakers live in extended families or large communities, Russian speakers rarely gather in similar groups (indeed, a Russian speaker is often a *rara avis* within large Spanish family networks). As a result, Russian speakers often do not have a social network and/or community support to use Russian (1), although they consider it essential to assure RHL transmission (2):

(1) Chinese, Arabs are not unique in their families, usually both parents are of the same nationality, and they have relatives or compatriots nearby, **hence they communicate in their language**. It is not the same [китайцы, арабы живут не по одному в семье, в основном оба родителя этой

национальности, рядом еще куча родственников или компатриотов, общение идет на их языке. Это не тоже самое]¹ [Sample 3].

(2) Yes, **contact with other Russian-speaking children is very important**. I have always tried to link our leisure time with being with other Russian-speaking mothers and children. [Да, очень важно еще русское общение вокруг ребенка с другими русскими детками. Я всегда искала окружала [sic] наш досуг с ребенком русскоговорящими мамами и детьми] [Sample 3].

In addition to considering family settings, or the very social circumstances of their own integration, Russian speakers highlight other factors which would hinder RHL transmission. First, this is the language setting itself. The lack of contact with Russian and a too extensive contact with Spanish are two factors explaining not only the difficulty to transmit RHL but also to maintain it once it is developed in children. Not surprisingly, RHL transmission is qualified as ‘very hard work’ when a child grows up in intermarriage and has a Spanish-speaking parent (3):

(3) Oh, it’s much more complex [when the partner is Spanish-speaking – O.I.]. So, it all depends on you. **It’s very hard work when the family is mixed**. I have friends like that, and the results are different. Patience and luck. [Оооо....это сложнее....тут все только от вас зависит тогда....это большой труд в смешаной семье... есть у меня и такие знакомые....по-разному бывает в таких семьях....терпения вам и удачи] [Sample 2].

The lack of social cohesion and contact with other Russian speakers in the Spanish milieu is also the factor explaining the low proficiency in RHL in the second generation. Some speakers relate the poor maintenance and the low level of proficiency in RLH in their children to the absence of contact with Russian in everyday activities and to the absolute predominance of Spanish (4).

(4) I’m saying that if the child is only exposed to Spanish, **it’s normal for him to switch to Spanish**. My son is with Spanish speakers from 9 a.m. to 7.30 p.m., **that’s why he is losing Russian so quickly**. [Я писала о том, что если у ребенка все общение на испанском, то это естественно, что он переключается на испанский. Мой сын с 9 утра до 19.30 с испанцами, поэтому так стремительно теряется русский язык] [Sample 4].

In fact, some speakers stress (even jokingly) the need to expose children to Russian-speaking communities to regain their proficiency in RHL (5):

(5) But is it possible to change it [that the children speak only Spanish – O.I.] or must we just take them to deep Russia and tell them: until you write a letter in Russian, we don’t go home? [Это реально вообще исправить или только путём поселения в российской глубинке с заданием - пока письмо не напишешь на русском домой не поедем?] [Sample 5].

¹ All examples are originally in Russian and are given in this paper in their original version, including spelling and grammar preferences. They are given in my translation into English and highlights within them are also mine.

Expectedly, Russian speakers recognize that transmitting Russian to the second generation is a tough, even difficult task. Importantly, some of them admit that being able to speak and understand Russian is enough for heritage speakers (6):

(6) The main thing is that **children should know and understand Russian**. (...) Everything depends on you, let them communicate in any language, but with their mother only in Russian, at least out of respect. **It's hard work**, I agree as a teacher. [Главное, чтобы дети знали и понимали русский язык. (...) Все зависит от вас, пусть они общаются на любом языке, но с мамой только на русском, хотя бы из уважения. Это труд, согласна как педагог] [Sample 3].

An interesting position is that the difficulties Russian speakers perceive in their environment for relaying Russian are often compared to similar circumstances of speakers of other immigrant languages. The comparisons themselves show that Russian speakers who advocate for transmitting their language do not tend to perceive it as a less prestigious language compared to other European languages, like, for example, Swedish (7).

(7) In fact, it's a whole problem. Everyone says "*How come! You're Russian and your children don't know the Russian language*". **A Swedish woman I know has the same situation**, since her children don't speak their mother's language. She also says that it's difficult for her to teach Swedish to her yearling children, who have a Spanish father and live in Spain. [На самом деле, это целая проблема. Все кругом говорят „как же так, ты русская, а дети твои его не знают“. Та же история у знакомой шведки, ее дети не говорят на языке матери. Она тоже говорит, что ей одной сложно привить шведский язык детям погодкам, от испанского отца и живущих в Испании] [Sample 3].

Yet, as we will see below, those parents who do not support RHL transmission, do mention the prestige and the functional value of other languages (like English, French, or other languages of Spain) to justify their decision.

A final remark with respect to the factors in the maintenance of RHL in Spain is the social perception of immigrant languages. Most Russian speakers in Spain do not live in communities and, as a result, their intended integration is guided by the language question too. Furthermore, some parents can consciously choose to use Spanish instead of Russian with their children in public, socially relevant contexts (8):

(8) I have seen **Russian-speaking parents in public places communicate with their children in the local language** (most often with a monstrous accent), so as not to stand out and not to get a stare. And then the problem arises - the child loses Russian [Просто сама видела, как русскоговорящие родители в общественных местах общаются с детьми на местном языке (чаще всего с чудовищным акцентом), чтоб не выделяться и не нарваться на косой взгляд. А потом проблема - ребёнок теряет русский язык] [Sample 4].

Factors guiding parents to maintain (or not) RHL in the Spanish milieu

Not all Russian speakers in Spain look for the maintenance of RHL in their family settings. Both the speakers supporting RHL transmission and those who do not, are guided in their decisions by several reasons. This work identifies the following.

On the one hand, there is the group that seeks the preservation and development of RHL in second-generation speakers to the fullest. For many Russian speakers, especially those who grew up and were still educated in the post-Soviet educational system, native (or near-native) proficiency in Russian is one of the most important issues in children's education. Overall, this group of speakers is guided by both affective and functional reasons.

One important affective reason is the respect towards one's own roots: speakers consider that children must learn and know Russian as part of their heritage, and as their native language, despite coming from intermarriages and having been born in Spain (9):

(9) It is for the child's future, that the more languages he knows the better. In general, I think it's a cultural issue. **If the parents have Russian roots, the child must know Russian.** (Ukrainian, Moldovan, Georgian, Armenian, etc.). [Это для будущего ребёнка, чем больше языков знает тем лучше. И вообще я думаю, что это культуральная тема. Если у родителей русские корни, то ребёнок обязательно должен знать русский. (украинский, молдавский, грузинский, армянский и т. д.)] [Sample 5].

Another affective reason is the so-called *uniqueness* and *richness* of Russian as a language. This uniqueness may be in the expressiveness of the Russian language itself (10):

(10) **Russian is a rich, complex, and beautiful language.** (...) For me, other languages do not convey all that the Russian language can convey [Русский язык это богатейший язык, это сложный и красивый язык. (...) Остальные языки для меня не передадут всего, что может передать русский язык] [Sample 3].

or in its *ownness* as a language and expressive code for first-generation speakers, who would not be able otherwise to express their emotions and feelings to the fullest (11):

(11) Even though I am fluent in both English and Spanish, **I can never express all my feelings and emotions in a foreign language the way I do in my mother tongue.** [Хоть и говорю я свободно на англ. и исп. языках, но все чувства и эмоции на иностранном языке маме никогда не выразить также, как на своем родном.] [Sample 3].

Some other affective factors can be identified too. Russian is to be maintained and transmitted because it is the own language of the parents and, thus, of the second-generation children; it is the only possible language allowing for communicating with the rest of the family (usually living in the homeland), and, as a language, it offers a very rich cultural background.

At the same time, there are also purely functional factors moving parents to maintain RHL. There is no shortage of voices highlighting the value that Russian brings to future employment and work opportunities, and it is one of the most spoken languages in the World. Furthermore, it is a *'one more language'* in the personal linguistic repertoire of the children and, undoubtedly, it will facilitate the learning of other foreign languages. Statements like *'knowing a language is never too much'* are not infrequent. Some voices are even more straight-forward when speaking about the learning values that proficiency in Russian can bring to children (12):

(12) For a child to learn such a difficult language [as Russian – O.I.] from childhood **is a true gift**. It is especially important for his future and work. (...) How can you not give your child such a unique opportunity? [Для ребёнка, такой сложный язык с детства выучить - это подарок. На будущее, для работы, особенно. (...) Как можно такую уникальную возможность не дать ребёнку, мне просто в голову не укладывается] [Sample 3].

Not all parents, however, are in favor of transmitting Russian. Undoubtedly, the difficulty to maintain and support proficiency in a heritage language is one of the detracting factors.

A closer look at this question provides interesting data on what other specific factors speakers recognize as detrimental to the transmission of RHL. On the one hand, there are factors related to the practical difficulty to maintain a HL daily. Yet, they are mainly related not to one's own reluctance to do so, but to the lack of means and contextual support. In other words, Russian speakers are overcome by the sociocultural circumstances, considering that their attempts in transmitting RHL will fail given the predominance of the Spanish language and culture. Such failures, for example, can be due to the difficulty to motivate children (13), specifically if they are aware that parents can understand them in Spanish (14):

(13) **It is extremely difficult, if not impossible, to get a child interested in a language that is not spoken in the child's environment**. Sometimes you must force it. [Заинтересовать языком, на котором не говорит окружение ребенка, крайне сложно, если не сказать, что невозможно. Иногда надо заставлять] [Sample 4].

(14) Russian is very difficult. Children live in a Spanish-speaking environment. **They are not motivated to learn it. You will understand them anyway and the children know it**. To have a good level of the language, you have to study a lot and you have to use it. But in most cases, it remains at a low/medium level. [Русский очень сложный. Дети живут в испаноязычной среде. У них нет стимула его учить. Вы и так их поймёте и дети это знают. Чтобы язык был на хорошем уровне нужно очень много заниматься и нужно пользоваться ним. А так чаще всего всё остаётся на низком/среднем уровне] [Sample 5].

Crucially, even in Russian-speaking families, where both parents use Russian in a daily manner, there may be critical views on the development of proficiency in RHL (15):

(15) My husband and I are both Russian. We have two children. The eldest is 7 years old and the youngest is 2. Both were born in Spain. My daughter speaks two languages, and her Russian is much worse than her Spanish. **And believe me, even in a Russian-speaking family it is very difficult for children to adapt to two languages.** (...) And then it's up to you. How you deal with your child. If you put enough effort into it, she'll talk, if not, she won't. Believe me, it cost me a lot to get a child born here to speak Russian. I still have to go through the same thing with the second one. Good luck [Мы с мужем оба русские. У нас двое детей. Старшей 7 лет, младшему 2 года. Оба рождены в Испании. Дочь разговаривает на двух языках, на русском намного хуже, чем на испанском. И поверьте, даже в русскоговорящей семье детям очень сложно адаптироваться к двум языкам. (...) А там уже будет всё зависеть от вас. Как вы с ребёнком будете заниматься. Если будете прилагать достаточно усилий, заговорит, если нет, то нет. Поверьте, мне очень много стоило, чтобы рождённый здесь ребёнок заговорил по русски. Мне ещё со вторым нужно будет пройти то же самое. Удачи] [Sample 3].

Some other reasons for not transmitting RHL refer to its subjective value as *a language* and as *a means of communication*. It is not uncommon that, as a language, Russian is perceived as a *difficult language* to learn and master. As a means of communication, Russian is sometimes considered to lack economic or employment benefits. What's more, some speakers stress that Russian is less important and less valuable as a means of communication than local (for example, Valencian or Basque) or other European languages (for example, English or French). According to these speakers, Russian has no affective association for the second generation, and will never be a well-mastered language in the absence of a community or a social group to practice it. It is also striking that for some first-generation speakers knowing Russian would result in social and educational limitations. Some would state that speaking and using Russian would only make the second-generation speakers visible as non-natives, preventing proper social integration and adding further difficulties to the already complex process of learning Spanish and, in some cases, Spanish and Catalan/Valencian/Basque (16). It is common, thus, among speakers with this opinion to prefer their children to spend time learning other languages, such as English, or the local languages (17 and 18):

(16) It is my opinion, and it may be wrong. **Why do you torture your children with the Russian language?** I would understand it if your children had a possibility to open a business in Russia one day. (...) But they are already being taught Valencian and English. **Why would they need Russian, which they will never use while living in Spain?** We moved here 2 years ago. I'd rather support [my children – O.I.] learning English than Russian. Russian is as Estonian: they are both difficult languages and nobody wants to use them for anything at all. [Лично мое мнение, оно может быть неверным. Зачем вы мучаете своих детей русским языком? Я бы поняла, если бы с РФ был бизнес какой в перспективе ваших детей. (...) Детей и так грузят валенсиано, английским. Зачем им русский, которым они никогда в жизни не воспользуются, живя в Испании? Мы

переехали сюда 2 года назад, я лучше буду делать упор на английский чем на русский. Русский как эстонский - трудный и никому не нужный язык. ни для чего вообще] [Sample 3].

(17) **It's better to support them learning English**, rather than to soar them with meaningless Russian. They will NEVER need it. [Лучше делайте упор на инглес, чем парить головы детям бессмысленным русским языком. Он им не пригодится НИКОГДА] [Sample 3].

(18) My husband decided to do the same and **switched to Spanish with them** [our children – O.I.]. I am the only one to still speak to them in Russian. **But I also think that Valencian and English are more important to them.** [Мой муж тоже так решил и перешел с ними на испанский. Одна я пока разговариваю с ними по русски. Но я считаю что валенсиано и английский конечно им важнее] [Sample 3].

These two positions -the one advocating for the transmission of RHL and the one downplaying its value in favor of other languages- are not watertight but generate a dynamic discussion among Russian-speaking parents. It is precisely the parents defending RHL transmission who mainly build such threads of arguments (19):

(19) It's like when you ask why to learn history if you don't plan to be a historian, or why you have to learn a multiplication table if you have a calculator. Come on... [Это из серии - зачем учить историю, если не планируешь быть историком, зачем таблица умножения, если есть калькулятор. Извините...] [Sample 3].

It is salient that the arguments of the group in favor of the transmission of Russian are always stronger, pointing to the fact that the maintenance position is stronger, at least attitudinally.

Attitudes towards proficiency in RHL and language switching in the Spanish milieu

Proficiency in RHL is a major concern for many Russian speakers living in Spain. Most speakers are openly aware of the difficulty for their children to achieve native proficiency in Russian. “*It is hard work*”, most would agree, and there are two issues this expression refers to: the very development of language proficiency in RHL and its systematic use with other Russian speakers, mainly family members.

For many Russian speakers, only constant dedication, with continuous exposure to Russian speech and Russian-based stimuli (such as cartoons or movies, books, and even Russian language lessons), can ensure adequate language development. Curiously enough, many parents consider possible Russian language lessons -which, it must be said, are beyond the reach of the vast majority of Russian-speaking migrants due to their geographical location (cf. Ivanova and Kressova Iordanishvili 2024), as a key factor in ensuring the development of Russian. In any case, maximum exposure to Russian and the so-called ‘daily work’ in not only transmitting but also teaching the language, is recognized as a basic practice for families that want to maintain their heritage language (20):

(20) My child is 7 years old, she speaks Russian very well, and now she can read and write. **I have been speaking only Russian to her since she was born. And yes, it's a lot of work:** reading books in Russian every day, watching cartoons and films, discussing them. I don't give in to provocation when she switches to Spanish or Catalan with me, I explain to her why it is important to strain and still speak to me in Russian [У меня ребёнку 7 лет, по-русски говорит очень хорошо, сейчас уже и читает, и пишет. Я с ней с самого рождения говорю только на русском. Плюс, да, это большой труд, ежедневное чтение книг на русском, просмотр мультимедиа-фильмов, обсуждение. На провокации не поддаюсь, когда она переходит со мной на испанский или каталанский, я ей объясняю, почему важно напрягаться и все-таки говорить со мной по-русски] [Sample 3].

Positive attitudes to RHL are essential in this context. Yet, developing not only positive attitudes towards Russian but also metalinguistic and sociolinguistic consciousness is seen as another relevant factor in the education of second-generation speakers. It is Russian, and not any other language, that children should identify with their ability to communicate with people important to them, such as their family or friends (21):

(21) The most important argument is that if she wants to communicate with her grandparents and other relatives and friends in Russia, **she should be able to speak Russian well, not in gibberish** [Самый важный аргумент, если она хочет общаться с бабушкой и дедушкой, с остальными родственниками и друзьями-подружками в России, то надо уметь хорошо разговаривать на русском, а не на тарабарском] [Sample 3].

Some parents even suggest educating children with such metalinguistic competence, that is, making them explicitly conscious of how important knowing Russian could be for them, both affectively and functionally (22):

(22) She has been several times in a situation when she was asked to help Russian-speaking children at the sports school. I explained to her that, *you see, how important and good it is that you know Russian, you can help. All explanations are based on obviousness and logic.* In my opinion, **the child should understand that it is important and necessary** [to know Russian – O.I.] [Потом она уже несколько раз побывала в ситуации, когда в спортивной школе ее просили помогать русскоговорящим деткам, я ей поясняла, что, видишь, как важно и хорошо, что ты знаешь русский, ты можешь помочь. Все объяснения основываются на очевидности и логике, ребёнок должен, на мой взгляд, понимать, что это важно и нужно] [Sample 3].

Despite all the stated, speakers are aware of the difficulty of getting their children to reach a native or near-native level in RHL in the Spanish environment.

The constant contact with Spanish speakers is seen as the main factor determining both the development of language competence in Russian and its actual use, especially as children grow up

and become more involved in social practices. According to some speakers, under these circumstances, Russian would never be the native language of second-generation speakers (23):

(23) These are all theories, a young child communicates very closely with his mother, then this bond disappears. They [second-generation children – O.I.] will communicate more with their peers at school, in the yard, and in their interests, and these will be mostly local children. **Even if they were Russian children who grew up in Spain, their first language will be Spanish** [Это все теории, маленький ребенок общается с матерью очень тесно, потом эта связь пропадает. Будут больше общаться со сверстниками в школе, во дворе, по интересам, и это будут в основном местные дети. Даже будь они дети русских, но выросшие в Испании, их родным языком будет испанский] [Sample 3].

Truly indeed, speakers often find that child socialization, linked to schooling and extracurricular activities, not only slows down the development of RHL but can also makes children regress in their proficiency (24):

(24) My son is almost 10 years old. We are living here for the fourth year. He's at school until 4.30 p.m., then he trains until 7. 30 p.m. At 9 p.m. he goes to bed. What is the result? **In 3 years, he has almost lost his Russian. He's already thinking in Spanish.** (...) I do not know what to do. We have a Russian-speaking network, but all his Russian friends speak Spanish among themselves. Yet, there are no problems at school. His teachers say he's like a Spaniard. [Моему сыну почти 10 лет. Живем тут четвертый год. Он до 16.30 в школе, потом тренировки до 19. 30. В 21 час ложится спать. Итог. За 3 года ребенок почти потерял русский язык. Думает уже на испанском. (...) Не знаю, что делать. Общение русское, но все его друзья-русские дети говорят на испанском между собой. Зато в школе нет проблем. Учителя говорят, что он, как испанец] [Sample 4].

Be that as it may, parents do not coincide in their expectations and experiences about the possibilities for native development of RHL. While some argue that their children are definitely native-like despite never having traveled to Russia and having no one but their parent/s to use Russian with, others insist that it is impossible to achieve native proficiency in a heritage language considering all social and personal circumstances. The former argue that their children have a 'very good, native Russian' (although with a slight accent at times), a fully developed proficiency in different skills (reading and writing), and a perfect ability to switch languages when necessary. The latter refer to 'badly spoken Russian', which includes a strong accent, spelling and grammar mistakes, rough translations of Spanish structures into Russian, and low vocabulary. Intermediate positions are also possible when parents openly admit that proficiency in a HL will never be '100 percent', while 'a decent knowledge' of HL is quite enough. These results are in line with previous work (cf. Benmamoun et al. 2013, Ivanova 2019, Polinsky and Kagan 2007), which already suggested an enormous individual variability of the outcomes in the development of proficiency in HL.

Agency in the maintenance of RHL in the Spanish milieu

One of the least explored questions in the study of the factors guiding the transmission of a heritage language is that of the agency. The notion of ‘agency’ refers to the process of decision-making with respect to the maintenance and transmission of a HL. It is not surprising that it is usually the parents who assume the role of agents in making decisions with respect to heritage languages, and furthermore shape children’s language practices and attitudes towards them (Curdt-Christiansen and Wang 2018).

Yet, individual differences are also in place, and parents are not necessarily the only agents making decisions on HL transmission. Children, or heritage speakers themselves, can also act as agents of their own language development. Therefore, the notion of ‘agency’ is now part of the definition of ‘heritage language learners’, who can act as agents in deciding whether to develop and maintain their HL or not (Hornberger and Wang 2008, Musha Doerr and Lee 2013). Importantly, parents and children can run their agency in interaction, generating a so-called interactive agency (Romanowski 2022). In addition, the agency can be exercised by another key family group, made by grandparents. Parents, siblings, and grandparents make up primary nuclear family interlocutors, as opposed to secondary family members and socialization circles (cf. Stavans and Ashkenazi 2022).

In this study, parents undoubtedly have an important position as agents. Parents openly recognize themselves as key agents of RHL transmission (25). In fact, some of them suggest that the quality of RHL transmission is proportional to the intensity with which such agency is exercised (26):

(25) I tell you that your child does not want to be considered Russian, so he speaks Spanish, and **it is only in your hands to teach him to respect his mother tongue!** [Я вам и говорю что ваш ребенок не хочет чтобы его считали русским, вот и говорит на испанском, только в ваших руках научить его чтить родной язык!] [Sample 4].

(26) You got it right, but **it depends on us as parents too**. My children are 26, 19, and 10. And all speak English, Spanish, French, and Russian. Apart from that, they also speak other languages. But no one has forgotten Russian. **It seems to me that the main thing, after all, is their desire and our own motivation.** [Правильно все сформулировали. Но от нас как от родителей тоже кое-что зависит. Моим 26, 19 и 10. И все владеют английским, испанским, французским и русским. Кроме этого есть ещё знания по другим языкам. Но русский никто не забыл. Мне кажется, все-таки основное-это их желание и наша мотивация] [Sample 4].

However, the agency exercised by the Russian children themselves cannot be overlooked either. As elsewhere in this study, there are both favoring and hindering agencies from children.

On the one hand, there is no shortage of children with non-favoring attitudes to Russian. According to some parents, children find Russian ‘of no need’: they do not consider it valuable as a language for their further professional or personal development and, importantly, refuse to learn it as they enter an age requiring socialization (mainly, adolescence). Parents are quite conscious of that their children do not use Russian because they do not want to stand out among their peers. Such

situations occur even at the expense of a large investment, both personal and financial, in family language maintenance (27 and 28):

(27) I don't even talk about my children... how much money I've spent (and still do) on Russian tutors and schools... **And my children do not need it...** *Why would we need Russian?* (they are 11 and 9 years old) They want Chinese or Japanese... or none at all. [Я про своих детей вообще молчу... сколько я денег вбухала (и все ещё продолжаю) на русских репетиторов и школы.... А моим детям этого не надо... Зачем нам русский? (11-ть и 9 лет)... Они хотят китайский или японский... ну или вообще никакого.] [Sample 4].

(28) If only one parent speaks Russian in the family and the rest of the environment does not know it, it is the only way possible [to maintain Russian with the children – O.I.]. When the child starts school, makes friends, goes to extracurricular activities or sports clubs, etc., all of them will be in the local language, and **the child will not want to communicate** [in Russian – O.I.]. **He/she will not even try to do it in the language of just one family member**, and who also knows the local language. [Если в семье на русском говорит только один из родителей, а все остальное окружение его не знает, то только так и будет. Потом начнется школа, друзья, дополнительные занятия, спортивные секции и т. д., что будут на местном языке, ребенок просто не захочет общаться, даже стараться это сделать на языке только одного члена семьи, который к тому же знает местный язык] [Sample 3].

At the same time, parents report positive, active agency from children towards the maintenance of RHL. From a perceptual point of view, it seems that these are more often girls, rather than boys, who show more active agency in RHL development; however, this aspect needs to be specifically researched further. Factors underlining such positive attitudes include, first and foremost, the parent's interest in the culture of origin. This interest is further replicated in the child's motivation to learn more and better (29):

(29) Because from birth she feels my love for our country, traditions, and language, and unwittingly she takes over this love too! **I never force her, she wants to learn letters, rhymes in Russian on her own...** [Потому что с рождения она чувствует мою любовь к нашей стране, традициями и языку и невольно и она перенемает эту любовь! Я никогда не заставляю, она сама хочет учить буквы, стишки на русском...] [Sample 3].

One of the most interesting aspects of the agency, however, is the inclusion of additional agents in the transmission of RHL in Spain. Overall, parents are aware of the need to involve additional agents if they want to assure RHL maintenance and transmission. There are two additional agents that Russian parents in Spain consider as key: the grandparents and the Russian-speaking friends/peers.

Regarding grandparents, Russian speakers in Spain recognize them as having several roles in the maintenance and transmission of RHL to second-generation speakers.

First, grandparents motivate children to learn and use Russian, since frequently there is no other shared language means between the two generations. Since most grandparents live in the homeland, the possibility of them knowing Spanish is close to zero. Therefore, communication between grandparents and grandchildren is to be ensured by Russian-speaking grandchildren. This way, grandparents are the practical reason for learning and maintaining Russian (30 and 31):

(30) Our grandmother writes messages in Russian, and the children have to answer in Russian and write in Cyrillic. **They panted at first, but got used to it.** [Наша бабушка пишет сообщения по-русски, и детям приходится отвечать на русском и писать кириллицей. Сначала пыхтели, но привыкли] [Sample 5].

(31) My daughter is 8 and she also messages with her Russian grandmother in Russian, since **she knows her grandmother won't even understand Latin letters** [Моей 8 и тоже переписывается с бабушкой русской на русском, потому что знает, что бабушка даже латинскими буквами не поймёт] [Sample 5].

Further, grandparents are an important factor in fostering proficiency in RHL. Parents report their children asking them for new words and grammar structures when messaging their grandparents. Contact with grandparents is key for second-generation speakers to achieve fluency in Russian, develop native-like pronunciation, and, in general, acquire all those language elements that significantly benefit from natural exposure. The most striking case is probably that of formulaic units and colloquial expressions (32):

(32) When my children were six years old, after a month at my grandmother's dacha [a countryside house – O.I.] they wondered what *blyaha-muha* [a strong expletive – O.I.] was [Когда моим было по 6 лет - после месяца у бабушки на даче детей мучал вопрос - что такое Бляха - Муха] [Sample 5].

For many parents, the possibility for children to spend their holidays in Russia (or in the country of origin, where Russian is spoken) is a unique measure that strengthens ties with grandparents and, importantly, compensates for the absence of a Russian-speaking environment. It is thanks to this unique measure that children gain or rebuild their proficiency in Russian (33):

(33) My eldest daughter, who is now 4,5, was silent until she was 3 years old... I only spoke to her in Russian since she was born (...) At 3 she went to school and started speaking ... in Spanish. So, we lived in that way: I spoke to her in Russian, and she answered to me in Spanish... **until we went to her grandmother in Russia! She spent 2 months there and now she speaks a perfect Russian** (...). All children are different, but I think if you want them to speak Russian, you have to immerse them in a purely Russian-speaking environment...take them to their grandmother! [Моя старшая дочь, ей сейчас 4,5 молчала до 3-х лет... я с ней с рождения только на русском (...) В 3 пошли в школу и заговорила... на испанском. Так и жили я ей по-русски, отвечает по-испански... пока не съездили к бабушке в Россию! Там 2 месяца и мы чисто говорим по-русски (...). Все дети

разные, но я думаю, если хотите чтоб говорили по русски, нужно окунуть в чисто русскоговорящую среду... везите к бабушке!!!] [Sample 3].

The presence of grandparents in the Spanish environment itself is also of great importance. Russian-speaking grandparents living in Spain form that necessary language setting, which absence is the main reason for the poor maintenance and transmission of RHL for many speakers.

In addition to grandparents, the existence of Russian-speaking friends is another important factor. Some speakers would define Russian-speaking friends as a true source of motivation to speak Russian – remember that, for many parents, their children’s refusal to speak Russian is precisely due to their need to fit in with friends. It cannot be overlooked, moreover, that the combination of *these two agents* makes, according to some speakers, the perfect formula for transmitting Russian (34):

(34) A good Russian nanny, a Russian mother, and socializing with grandmothers and friends. **That’s it, the motivation is assured.** [Чудесная русская няня, русская мама и общение в России с бабушками и друзьями. Все, мотивация обеспечена] [Sample 4].

Ultimately, the Russian language is the mark of family unity. Not knowing Russian will break the family ties. For some speakers, getting their children to speak Russian is also a way of honoring their own parents, the children’s grandparents. Thus, some recognize that a grandchild who does not speak Russian would not be a grandchild to the fullest. The Russian language is a mark of belonging to the family (35), even though the family is spread all over the World:

(35) How will the child communicate with his/her relatives? With the grandparents who don’t speak English at all? Don’t you mind your child losing any contact with the family? **My mother cries with emotion when my daughter chats to her in Russian** and calls her to visit and says that she loves and misses her. [Как ребенок будет с родней общаться? Дедушки там, бабушки, которые в англ не бум бум. Вы за то, чтобы ребенок потерял связь с родственниками??? У меня мама прям плачет от умиления, когда ей дочка на русском болтает и зовет ее в гости, и говорит что любит и скучает.] [Sample 3].

Conclusions

Just as it is difficult to estimate how many Russian speakers live in Spain, it is practically impossible to draw a clear dividing line and determine how many of these speakers are in favor of the maintenance and transmission of Russian as a heritage language. The diaspora is diverse, and so are speakers’ positions on the value, necessities, and expectations around the Russian language.

There are different voices. An important part of Russian speakers explicitly advocate for the maintenance of Russian and show their concern about the difficulties to do so in a desired way. The absence of a Russian-speaking community or a close Russian-speaking social network is one of the main hindering factors. Many speakers consider that the maintenance of Russian is practically impossible -or is, at least, very difficult- in such a low-contact, diffuse community. Interestingly, this

subjective observation from Russian speakers is consistent with Ivanova and Kressova Iordanishvili's (2024) description of the availability of educational establishments offering Russian language classes to heritage speakers in Spain. The lack of contact with other Russian speakers and their networks, as well as few available means for supporting language development, frequently leave first-generation speakers on their own in both the decision-making and the RHL maintenance itself.

Despite this, prevailing attitudes seem to be in favor of maintaining RHL. Yet, considering the nature of this study, it is difficult to estimate whether positive attitudes towards the maintenance of Russian are *actually* dominant in the diaspora in Spain. This is one of the limitations of this work, as it is not possible to determine whether such positive attitudes -much more visible- are truly representative of the majority or appear dominant due to participant bias. It may be that counter-speakers simply participate less in network interactions. Among further limitations, also highlighted by other studies of HL transmission based on social-media corpora (e.g. Kutlu, Kircher 2021, who studied attitudes to Spanish in the US based on a corpus collected in Twitter), we cannot disregard the under-representation of those speakers belonging to socially disadvantaged population or simply lacking access to the internet or electronic devices.

Be that as it may, this study also shows that many Russian speakers in Spain do not want to transmit it as HL. In such cases, it is, above all, the functional value of Russian that stands out as a reason against its maintenance. Remoteness from the homeland, a frequent need to master two local languages (remember that 40% of immigrants in Spain live in bilingual areas), and the prestige of other languages like English, are all relevant factors for parents' decision not to invest time and efforts in maintaining Russian.

The peculiarity of Russian speakers willing to transmit RHL is their standards with respect to the desired language proficiency in Russian. It is a prominent feature of Russian speakers in the Spanish milieu: most of them want their children to be native-like in RHL. It is possible that this same reason is contributing to the negative stance of parents who choose not to transmit Russian. Since they are aware of the practical difficulty to make their children Russian natives, they may prefer to opt for the development of other language skills or knowledge.

In this respect, the endeavor to ensure native proficiency in the second generation leads many Russian speakers to create an interesting *agency profile*. Within this profile, grandparents -and, specifically, grandmothers- stand out as agents with two central functions. On the one hand, grandparents are the reason to motivate children in learning Russian. Many parents coincide in that if children do not speak Russian, links with the family will be lost. When children have no means of communicating with their grandparents, parents describe the situation as *catastrophic* and *root-disconnecting* (sample 3). On the other hand, grandparents play a key role in promoting native-like proficiency in Russian. Speakers report that it is only after being in touch with their grandparents that second-generation children begin *to master* the language. In this regard, the results of the present study are in line with previous research defining grandparents as essential agents in heritage language (and culture) development in *a natural way* (cf. Melo-Pfeifer 2015).

Overall, the conclusions of the present study suggest that the transmission of Russian as a heritage language in the Spanish milieu is defined by some common patterns of language transmission in the diaspora. The first pattern is the internal diversity in attitudes and practices in RHL. Diaspora is extremely heterogeneous in their attitudes, willingness, and efforts in transmitting the language to the second generation. Numerous studies have stated the heterogeneity of diasporas in language transmission (cf. Gharibi, Seals 2020, Ivanova 2019, Laleko 2013), even when such diasporas are very small (cf. Schüpbach 2009). This heterogeneity cannot be explained by one factor, but rather by a constellation of sociolinguistic (education, sex, age), economic (profession, economic status), sociocultural (community, social networking), and intrinsic (strictly individual) factors. Hence, there are many parents willing to transmit RHL to their children, but there are also many parents who do not. There are also parents who would like to do it, but only attitudinally.

At the same time, the Russian-speaking diaspora in Spain also differs in some affective respects governing the processes of decision-making. In general terms, many Russian speakers in Spain are in favor of RHL maintenance and transmission, but they find it difficult considering the lack of strong social networks and the possibility to foster native-like proficiency. The dominant profile combines positive attitudes to transmit RHL with the recognition of the practical difficulties of the task. Interestingly, this profile is dominant even in exogamous couples (that is, with one non-Russian-speaking parent). This makes the Russian-speaking diaspora stand out from some other diasporas, where similar condition usually leads to language shift already in the first generation (cf. Schüpbach 2009 for Swiss Germans in Australia). Many parents start with great motivation, but the lack of means for supporting language transmission (schools, community, media, etc.) and the awareness of the difficulty to assure a native proficiency in Russian often leads to a gradual family demotivation.

At this point, a comparative study of Russian-speaking diasporas in different countries of the world would be necessary. In Spain, Russian ranks high as a language with strong support from the community. It would be important to determine whether the favoring/hindering factors identified in the Spanish context are the same as those that condition the transmission of Russian in other countries.

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