PROFESORES DE ENSEÑANZA SECUNDARIA · INGLÉS · JUNTA DE EXTREMADURA

TEMA

13

The Expression of Quantity

Expresión de la cantidad.

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Material de elaboración propia a partir de las fuentes oficiales que se citan al final del tema. No es un temario oficial ni sustituye a la normativa publicada.

Índice

1. INTRODUCTION

2. THE GRAMMATICAL BASIS OF QUANTITY

- 2.1. Count and Uncount Nouns
- 2.2. Measuring the Uncountable: Partitives and Unit Nouns
- 2.3. Grammatical Number and Agreement

3. QUANTIFIERS AND DETERMINERS

- 3.1. Quantifiers as a Class
- 3.2. Some, Any and No
- 3.3. Much, Many and a Lot of
- 3.4. Few, a Few, Little and a Little
- 3.5. Universal and Distributive Quantifiers
- 3.6. The Structure with *of*

4. EXACT QUANTITY: NUMERALS, FRACTIONS AND PERCENTAGES

- 4.1. Cardinal and Ordinal Numerals
- 4.2. Fractions, Decimals and Percentages

5. DEGREE AND COMPARISON

- 5.1. Comparison of Quantity and Degree
- 5.2. Sufficiency and Excess: Enough and Too

6. ENGLISH AND SPANISH: CONTRASTS AND TYPICAL ERRORS

7. PEDAGOGICAL AND DIDACTIC IMPLICATIONS

8. CONCLUSION

Fuentes

1. INTRODUCTION

"The word 'billion' is now used internationally to mean 1,000 million and it would be confusing if British Ministers were to use it in any other sense." With these words, on 20 December 1974, the Prime Minister, Harold Wilson, gave a written answer to a Commons question about a single word. The episode shows something that every teacher of English knows: quantity is never a neutral matter. Even a number could mean two different things on either side of the Atlantic, and a small word such as *few* can turn praise into complaint. Welcome to Topic 13: The Expression of Quantity.

In order to address it, I will divide this topic into six main sections. Firstly, I will examine the grammatical basis of quantity in English, that is, the distinction between count and uncount nouns, grammatical number and the ways of measuring what cannot be counted. Secondly, I will analyse quantifiers and determiners, from *some* and *any* to *all*, *both*, *each* and *every*. Thirdly, I will turn to exact quantity: cardinal and ordinal numerals, fractions and percentages. Fourthly, I will study comparison and degree, that is, how English expresses more, less and sufficiency. Fifthly, I will compare English with Spanish and point out the typical errors of Spanish-speaking learners. Finally, I will reflect on the pedagogical and didactic implications of this content within our current educational framework.

Before moving on, I would like to mention the sources consulted for the preparation of this topic. These include: Quirk, Greenbaum, Leech and Svartvik's A Comprehensive Grammar of the English Language, Huddleston and Pullum's The Cambridge Grammar of the English Language, Biber, Johansson, Leech, Conrad and Finegan's Longman Grammar of Spoken and Written English, Carter and McCarthy's Cambridge Grammar of English, and Swan's Practical English Usage, as well as the online grammar reference of the British Council's LearnEnglish. I have also drawn on the LOMLOE (Organic Law 3/2020), Real Decreto 217/2022 and 243/2022, and Decreto 110/2022 and 109/2022 of the Autonomous Community of Extremadura.