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TEMA

16

The Expression of Possession

Expresión de la posesión.

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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.

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Fuentes

1. INTRODUCTION

One of the first words a small child learns to say with real conviction is "Mine!". It is a revealing detail, because it shows that possession is not a marginal corner of grammar but a basic human idea: we think of ourselves, our families, our belongings and our places as things that are linked to us, and every language needs ways of saying so. English has an unusually rich set of them. In a single sentence we can say "my book", "the book is mine", "a friend of mine", "John's book", "the book of the year", "I have a book" or "the book belongs to John", and each form works in a slightly different way.

This topic is about those resources. I will begin by looking at the notion of possession itself, because the grammar of English shows that "possession" is much wider than ownership. Secondly, I will describe possessive determiners and possessive pronouns. Thirdly, I will examine the genitive, both the 's form and the of-construction, with its special cases and the factors that govern the choice between them. Fourthly, I will deal with verbs and other devices that express possession, and I will briefly trace the history of the genitive. Fifthly, I will compare English with Spanish, paying attention to the typical errors of Spanish-speaking learners. Finally, I will consider the pedagogical and didactic implications for the Secondary classroom.

Before moving on, I would like to mention the sources consulted. For the descriptive grammar I have used Randolph Quirk, Sidney Greenbaum, Geoffrey Leech and Jan Svartvik's A Comprehensive Grammar of the English Language (Longman, 1985); Rodney Huddleston and Geoffrey K. Pullum's The Cambridge Grammar of the English Language (Cambridge University Press, 2002); Douglas Biber, Stig Johansson, Geoffrey Leech, Susan Conrad and Edward Finegan's Longman Grammar of Spoken and Written English (Longman, 1999); and Michael Swan's Practical English Usage (Oxford University Press, fourth edition, 2016). I have also consulted the British Council's LearnEnglish, Cambridge's English Grammar Today, the Council of Europe's Common European Framework of Reference for Languages and, for the legal framework, Organic Law 3/2020 (LOMLOE), Royal Decrees 217/2022 and 243/2022 and Extremaduran Decrees 110/2022 and 109/2022.