

A stupid fool?

22 de abril de 2015



You may have heard this expression before. It is used by English mortals (*mortales*) in Spain, Tenerife, or England and shows a person whose capacity for logic is deficient (*cuya capacidad de lógica es deficiente*).

Think about the word **“fool”**. It is absolute (*absoluto*). A fool is by definition “stupid”. Is there such a thing as a clever fool? No. The grammatical term for such errors is “tautology” (*tautología*), and the mistake is committed because of a failure to think about what words mean.

Other common examples of these tautological errors are “ugly monster” (*all monsters are ugly*), and “he shouted loudly” (*shouts are by definition loud*). People often say “could you repeat that again”, failing to think that “repeat” means again. The simple correct form should be “could you repeat that please?”

Even the BBC reporters, who should have impeccable English, have been heard to say that “the suspect continues to remain in custody” (*detención*). This is simply wrong. If you are in custody then that is where you are, so using “remain” only confuses and is wrong. Why not simply say “the suspect is in custody”. Life is a lot simpler with this shorter sentence and you avoid being labeled as “unthinking” (*irreflexivo*).

Another clanger (*otra metedura*) is “the door was completely closed”. “Closed” is an absolute. If a door is not shut, it is then open, whether it be slightly open or wide open. With “open” we can use adverbs because the open position of a door or window has variations, whereas shut means shut.

So don't be a fool and say "stupid fool!"