

Adjectives and confusion

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Be careful with adjectives. They are important to provide useful information. However, some mortals, even educated Englishmen, make thoughtless (desconsiderado) mistakes with adjectives and cause confusion.

Consider these:

- The fire in the village was a dreadful disaster.

A “disaster” is by definition “dreadful” so this sentence is a mess (un lio).

- The British Labour Party is facing a serious crisis as a consequence of its anti-Semitic policies.

A “crisis” is serious in nature, so “serious” adds nothing but confusion, and reveals that the writer is unthinking (irreflexivo).

- Tax increases are under active consideration by Mr. Sanchez.

If something “is under consideration”, it is being considered. Obvious, yes. So “active” is useless in this sentence.

Got the message? Be careful with adjectives. Tautologies will get you no marks in the Cambridge Advanced exam - you will lose marks.

Think of what the nouns (disaster, crisis, consideration) mean before contemplating an adjective.