

How many words?

26 de diciembre de 2016



Is it better to be loquacious (locuaz), or to keep your English short and simple?

A golden rule in English is to “keep it simple” so that it is easier for your listener or reader to understand you. This also makes life easier for “every man and his dog” (un dicho = todo el mundo). Why make life difficult?

Consider the following:

- Mr. Corbyn lives in a very dilapidated (desmantelada) house. 8 words. But why not write 6 words? Mr. Corbyn lives in a hovel (casucha).

6 words are better than 8. This shorter sentence also includes another important rule - a “rich noun” (for example, a hovel) is better than adjectives and a noun.

Let’s look at some other examples:

- He is a very silly man (6 words). This is better: he is an imbecile (imbécil). 4 words. Here we have a shorter sentence using a rich noun (imbecile).
- He wrote the script (guión) using ordinary everyday language (8 words). The better option: he wrote a demotic (demótico) script (5 words).
- The Greek economy is facing many difficulties (7 words). This is better: The Greek economy is struggling (5 words).
- Mr. Hollande is in a state of confusion (8 words). This is better: Mr. Hollande is flummoxed (desconcertado). 4 words versus 8. No contest (sin disputa).

Enough said? (¿Entendido?)