

Move the table just a fraction

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Have you heard or seen such a phrase? Do you understand it? What does it mean?

It is incomprehensible (*incomprensible*), utterly meaningless (*totalmente sin sentido*). Devoid of sense (*desprovisto de sentido*).

9/10 is a fraction, as is 1/10, 1/100 and 1/1000. So how far do I move the table? 9/10 of what? 1/10 (one tenth) of a metre, or 1/10 of four metres? Who knows (¿quien sabe?)?

Examine this sentence:

- Government cars are a fraction of the Canarian government's spending plans.

Here we have the same lack of meaning. Is the Canarian government's spending on cars 7/10 of the budget or 1/10?

Presumably (*se imagina*) that the table must only be moved a little, and that the government spending on cars is low or negligible in the context (*insignificante en el contexto*). However, it is not the job of the listener to guess what you mean. **So why not say** "move the table by 1cm".

It is the same old story (es la historia de siempre). **Think before you speak, say what you mean and keep it simple.**