Circunlocución- Circumlocution

 

When you reach a certain level in Spanish it is not enough to say,”Cómo se dice \_\_\_\_\_\_\_” and you fill in an English word. If you are talking to a native Spanish speaker who does not speak English he or she is not going to know the word in English. If the speaker does know the word, maybe you would choose to speak with them in English anyway.

Circumlocution, circunlocución in Spanish, is the art of talking around a word that you do not know. This is a higher level skill and it shows that you are reaching a more advanced level of Spanish. People who are really good at circumlocution and have a good command of basic Spanish can talk to any native speaker in Spanish about pretty much any topic. It might be a slow conversation if you have to describe a lot of words, but it will be a successful conversation.

Okay, so what is circumlocution anyway? It is using a description of the word you are looking for to get someone else to give you the word you need. For example, if I can’t think of the word pillow, I could say it is that white thing that you put your head on at night when you are going to sleep. We do this in English as well. How many times have you said, “I can’t remember. What is that thing called. . . .” Games like Password and the 100,000 Pyramid are based on the concept of circumlocution.

Here are some words and expressions that you may want to use:

Identificación

1. Es una cosa- It’s a thing.
2. Es una persona- It’s a person.
3. Es un verbo.- It’s a verb.
4. Es una acción- It’s an action.
5. Es un animal-.It’s an animal.
6. Es un lugar. It’s a place.
7. Es un evento.- It’s an event.
8. Es una planta.- It’s a plant.
9. Es una comida- It’s a food.
10. Es una emoción.It’s an emotion.

Descripción

1. Es grande/mediano/ pequeño- It’s big/medium/small
2. Es blanco/rojo/amarillo etc.
3. Es hecho de papel/madera/metal/- It is made of paper/wood/metal
4. Es bonito/feo
5. Es un círculo/triángulo/rectángulo

El uso

12. Se usa para comer/escribir/dormir/leer etc. – It is used to eat/write/sleep/read etc.

13. Es para un niño/un doctor/ un maestro etc.- It is used by a child/a doctor/ a teacher etc.

14. Se encuentra en una oficina/en una clase/ en un parque- It is found in an office/a classroom/ a park

Escribe una descripción en español de las siguientes palabras. Usa frases completas, por favor (complete sentences!)

1. Book-
2. Blanket-
3. Housefly-
4. Desk-

1. Glass (for drinking)-
2. Fly (in the air)-
3. Depressed (the feeling)
4. Choose your own word to describe: