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Cues for the use of relators after the verb *soñar**

The native speaker is often unaware of the cues that guide him in the selection of lexical items.

The cues for the use of relators after the verb *soñar* include:

1. whether or not the dreamer plans to fulfill or takes steps toward fulfilling the dream,
2. whether or not the realization of the dream is a possibility,
3. whether or not the action of the dreaming was completed, and
4. the set to which the word following the verb belongs.

SOÑAR CON

The relator most frequently used with *soñar* is *con*.

The idea of an event (or of an action, a state, an entity or an abstraction) occurs to the dreamer who has the means and/or ability to make it come about. He yearns vaguely for it, but has no serious intentions of doing anything about it, and takes no steps to bring it about.

Sueña con viajar por Europa.

Sueña con hacerse rico.

Soñar con is also used when the dreamer has neither the ability nor the means to bring the event, etc. into realization, but yearns desperately for it to happen and may take steps or make plans which are doomed to fail.

Los que están muriendo de hambre sueñan con comer.

El viejo sueña con ser joven.

El calvo sueña con cabello abundante.

If the event is an unreal fantasy which is created in the mind of the dreamer, it may be expressed by a noun or an infinitive after *con* or by a finite verb in a *que* clause.

Cada noche sueña con grandes incendios.

Sueña con caerse de alturas fantásticas.

Soñó que se ahogaba en un tanque de cerveza.

The use of *con* is blocked when the acquisition of the entity that follows the relator is a certainty, not possibly impossible. For instance, given the universe of discourse of a hungry chef in a kitchen cooking, one would say:

Sueña en la comida.

Sueña en comer.

rather than:

Sueña con la comida.

Sueña con comer.

On the other hand, the relator after *soñar*, when followed by a noun or pronoun referring to a person is *con*, rarely *en*.

Anoche soñé con mi tío.

Anoche soñé con él.

SOÑAR EN

The clues for the use of *en* after *soñar* are related to planning and possibility. The relator *en* comes from the Latin *in*, and at times denotes an end or goal. The *en* following *soñar* is historically linked to this denotation, and implies planning or possibility. In most all examples of *soñar en*, the subject is either planning to, or has already taken some action towards the realization of the dream.

When the event is anticipated by the dreamer, he has the ability and means to bring it about, he yearns to do it and is planning to do it, the event may be labeled by a noun or an infinitive and the relator is usually *en*. The meaning is very close to *pensar en*.

Ella piensa en viajar por Europa.

Ella sueña en viajar por Europa.

El ambicioso sueña en ganarse mucho dinero.

Los gorditos sueñan en comer.

When the subject does not or cannot control the realization of the event but he can take steps which may bring it about or make it possible, *soñar en* is used.

He buys a lottery ticket: Sueña en sacarse el premio gordo.

He courts a young lady: Sueña en casarse con ella.

He buys stock in a growing company: Sueña en hacerse rico.

SOÑAR DE

De is often used after *soñar* when the event is being recalled. Thus *de* is used when the action involved has been completed.

Soñaba de comprarme el coche que ahora tengo.

Sueño del fuego que destruyó mi casa.

When a subject is planning a trip abroad, he may say "Sueño en viajar por Europa." Later, after the trip and a dream he had about it, he says "Soñé de viajar por Europa," or "Soñé de mi viaje por Europa."

In addition to infinitives and possessive adjectives plus nouns, many other sets of lexical items may follow *soñar de*: nouns, pronouns, adverbs and adjectives.

Soñó de fuegos

Soñó de ellos.

Soñó de cuando perdí su casa.

Soñó de grandes incendios.

Soñar en and *soñar de* carry special information. The former suggests incompleting planned action, the latter completed past action. In contrast, *soñar con*, as in "Soñé con viajar por Europa," does not tell the listener whether the subject was dreaming of a past trip, a possible future trip, or pure fantasy.

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