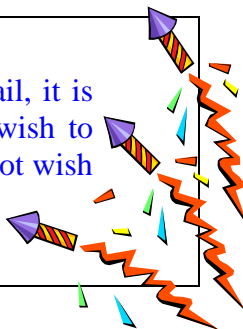


NB: If you received this newsletter by e-mail, it is (hopefully) because you have expressed a wish to do so. If this is not the case, and/or you do not wish to receive it in future – *please let us know!*



No. 57 – January 2010

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**Happy New Year
to all our readers!**

Dear friends

When you've received a hard punch and are down on the canvass, the only way forward is *up*. The year 2009 was a tough one for many of us. But the problems that hit this company in the second half of the year were not due to the financial crisis. On the contrary, they were entirely of my own making. I got blown off course by what seemed (and not only to me!) like a good idea, but proved to be a financial disaster. So this year, the main task ahead is recovery and renewed growth.

Back to basics

Last year, *News & Tips* no. 50 summed up our progress in 2008 with the headline: **Good, but could do better!** We had experienced only rather modest growth in turnover (17%).

Perhaps a fitting summary for 2009 might be: **Bad, but could've been worse!** We lost the modest gains of 2008 (see right),

but this loss was similarly modest. Our turnover represents our impact in the world, and the decrease is a natural result of the two months when I was unable to work. We lost some market share, because we were unable to deliver our normal service, but we lost no customers.

We did lose all our start-up capital for the *Stændertorvet* project, but that loss had no effect on our turnover or impact. What it did affect was our financial situation. We were unable to pay some of our key freelancers, which is enough to shake anybody's confidence! But they were kind enough to accept a delay in payment to help out. (For more on what went wrong, see last month's issue).

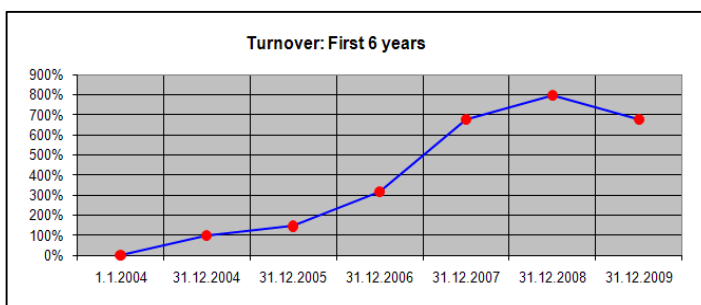
Vision for 2010

So the first thing to be done is to get out of immediate debt. This is already well under way and we expect to be able to pay our remaining creditors in the course of this month. The first instalment on our start-up loan is not due until the end of June, and no problem is anticipated there either.

The collapse of the *Stændertorvet* project should not obscure the fundamental solidity of the core business of the company, which is the supply of high-quality language services. Last year I wrote, "*this business is as solidly based as any company our size could hope to be in the current economic climate*". That is still true, thanks to the loyalty of our customers and freelance partners.

But we have to get back on course – the course set in January last year (see *News & Tips* no. 50), including the reworking of our web pages to more fully reflect the range of our activities and services. We also want to take the *Language Support Centre* concept forward, but with *Version 2.0* being built in cyberspace. I now have a nice, but quite small (and rather packed) office in Business House. Future expansion will mostly take place on the Internet.

Your ideas for that expansion are very welcome. If you would like to help in any way or want to become one of our freelancers, please get in touch! Further information at: www.englishsupport.dk.



Discussion

If you received this newsletter in the post, you will need to subscribe if you want it again. See web site for how.

What might LSC Version 2.0 look like?

One of the big problems with the *Language Support Centre* as conceived and tried out last year was the obvious financial one that the rent for the premises was high (due to the location and quality). And while the rent for freelancers was set as low as possible, it still introduced a financial criterion for selection for participation in the project: *ability to pay*.

The second problem was that of time. A lot of people wanted to see how the project would work out before committing themselves – but this actually meant that it did *not* work out. ☺

Thirdly, large as they were, the premises could only ever house a small fraction of our range of more than 250 freelance partners. Inevitably some would feel left out of what might appear an “inner circle” of those who *a)* lived within range of Roskilde, and *b)* felt able and willing to pay.

These three problems will disappear with an LSC on the Internet. Costs and “rents” can be much lower; people will be able to see the project unfold before committing themselves; and even our overseas freelance partners will be able to take part just as easily as anyone else. The only criterion for participation would be *proven competence*.

Some ideas

The key to success in the language field is *quality*. A poor translation remains a poor translation, no matter *how much* or *how little* it cost. And a teacher who can't teach is no use to anyone, no matter how many degrees he or she may have.

And from the language professional's point of view, a customer who respects you for the quality of your work is worth more than any number that don't – and rewarding to work for in more ways than one. Most of us want to *make a difference*, not just *earn a living*.

So how do we achieve quality our customers can trust? Our approach is to use only native speakers and check their work with other native speakers. Over the years, we have built up confidence in both customers and freelance partners.

A portal to quality

So the fundamental idea for a web-based *Language Support Centre* would be for it to become a kind of portal to selected top-quality native-speaker language professionals committed to common standards and quality assurance. It would create both a marketing platform to attract customers and an internal network of mutual support and assistance for language professionals.

We want to create the best virtual environment we can to generate the best quality we can, both for the customer and for our freelance partners.

This means that right now we need some feedback from our readers. Some of you will have ideas on *what* you think the LSC Version 2.0 should offer (i.e. in terms of *benefits* to customers and freelancers) and others will have ideas on *how* it might be done (i.e. in terms *technical solutions*).

Further information at this link: www.englishsupport.dk.

How to write a scientific paper

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“How to write a scientific paper” is an excellent guide – even for the experienced author of scientific articles and reports. It is easy to read and gives good advice about the structure of such papers, the writing process, and a number of the many linguistic traps that authors who do not have English as their mother tongue tend to fall into.

Kurt Lauridsen, MSc, PhD
Danish Decommissioning, Risø

(2)

**How to write
a scientific paper**

Lawrence White

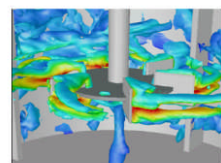


Figure 1: Idealisation of a molecule for the purpose of writing a paper.

A free preview of guide to writing scientific papers in English,
written for people who do not have English as their mother tongue.

Proofreading • Copy editing • Translation • Teaching

From the workshop...

Accomplish

Extreme caution should be exercised before using the verb *accomplish*. In modern English, its general meaning is to *manage to do* or *achieve* or *finish doing* something, but it is rarely used.

The first thing to note is that *accomplish* cannot be followed by the *to*-infinitive. You cannot say “He *accomplished to read* the book”. Instead, say: “He *managed to read* the book”.

The gerund (*ING*-form) is just about possible after *accomplish* (“He *accomplished reading the book*”), but this would sound odd in most contexts, so it is better to replace it with “He *finished reading the book*”.

And while you can *achieve* fame, popularity, success, wealth, etc. (see *News & Tips* no. 46), very few native speakers would use *accomplish* here. In short, the verb *accomplish* is almost archaic. Here is an example, however, where it can still be used:

He worked very hard all day, but he didn't accomplish anything!

Note the vagueness of the object (*anything*) and the fact that *achieve* could have been used with no change in meaning at all. So the clear recommendation for non-native speakers is to avoid using *accomplish* altogether. Yes, I know many of you are really fond of using this word, but my advice is: *Don't!* ☺

Accomplished and accomplishment

On the other hand, the adjective *accomplished*, as in “She is an *accomplished musician*”, is an excellent word to know how to use. It means *expert* or *skilful*.

And the noun *accomplishment* is also quite common, meaning either *achievement* or *skill*.

Advocate

The verb to *advocate* means to *recommend* or *argue for* a course of action of some kind, as in “He does not *advocate the use of violence*”. The object can also be a gerund (“He does not *advocate using violence*”) or a *that*-clause (“He does not *advocate that violence should be used*”).

Note that the verb to *advocate* cannot be followed by a preposition or a *to*-infinitive. So it is *not* correct to write “*advocate for*” (use “*argue for*” instead) or “*advocate someone to do*” (use “*recommend someone to do*” instead).

We've gone over to Foxit!

Regular users of our website may have noticed that we have switched to *Foxit* as our standard pdf-software. We have done so because it is much smaller and faster than Adobe! The pdf-reader is free, and you can download it at the link below:

<http://www.englishsupport.dk/EN/backindex.htm>



Career and carrier

These two words have quite different meanings, but it is common for non-native speakers to write the second when they mean the first.

A *carrier* is (literally) *someone who carries*, e.g. a company that supplies transport services, i.e. carries goods or passengers from one place to another. An *aircraft carrier* is another example of the same fundamental idea, and the word can also be used as an adjective, as in a *carrier bag*.

A *career*, on the other hand, is a series of jobs you might have, perhaps in a particular area of work. So we might speak of a *career in the army* or *in journalism*.

The common confusion between the two words arises from the fact that *career* comes from a French word *carrière*, which has come more recently into a number of other European languages (e.g. German and Danish) with the spelling almost unchanged.

Both *carry* and *career* are etymologically connected with *carts* and *chariot racing*. A *career* is a *course through life*, and the verb to *career* means to *move very fast* or *hurtle out of control*.

From the workshop...

Almost and nearly

These two words mean *exactly* the same, but there are some important *usage* differences to note.

One thing they have in common is that they are usually described as adverbs, but both are used adjectivally on occasion:

e.g. “*They lost almost/nearly everything*”

This adjectival use is quite common, especially with *almost*, as in “*almost a woman*” or “*almost progress*”, and with some nouns with a definite article too, as in “*It was almost the truth*”.

Note the word order with the articles.

One important difference is that we do not use *nearly* in front of *like*, negative words, or adverbs ending in *-ly*:

e.g. “*It was almost like a dream*”

“*He almost never went there*”

“*She played almost perfectly*”.

On the other hand, you cannot modify *almost* (e.g. with *very*). So if we want to use *very*, we must also use *nearly*, as in “*very nearly a woman*”, “*very nearly perfectly*”, etc.

Special, specially, especially and in particular

If something is *special*, it has features that make it unusual in some way (usually positive), as in “*a special day*” or “*special tools*”, which might have been “*specially designed*” for the purpose for which they are used. So the adverbial form *specially* means *for a specific purpose*.

The word *especially* is different. It is used as an intensifier, as in “*an especially grey day*”, or as a particulariser, as in “*It was a wonderful experience, especially for the children*”. Another word that plays exactly the same role is *particularly*. So *especially* = *particularly*.

The adverbial phrase, *in particular*, means the same as *especially* and *particularly*, but because it consists of more than one word, the word order is different (see also *News & Tips* no. 7):

e.g. “*I would especially like to thank the Chairman ...*”

“*I would particularly like to thank the Chairman ...*”

“*In particular, I would like to thank the Chairman ...*”

“*I would like to thank the Chairman in particular ...*”



The adjective *particular* means *specific* rather than *special*, so a “*particular tool*” is not a special tool, but a specific one. In negative statements, these two meanings amount to the same: “*There was nothing special/particular about his appearance*”.

Finally, there is another (special) meaning of the adjective *particular*. If someone is described as “*particular about his appearance*”, it means he takes care about it.

Live, stay and remain

Where you *live* is your permanent address, whereas where you *stay* is only temporary (for the night, while on holiday, etc.). So I *live* in Denmark, and *stay* with friends when I am in England.

The verb *stay* can also mean to *remain in one place*. So there is clearly some overlap in meaning between *stay* and *remain*: “*He stayed where he was*” = “*He remained where he was*”. However, when the focus is not on *place*, but on the *continued existence* of something, you must use *remain*, as in “*When I have drunk half my beer, the other half remains*”. The verb to *stay* is also more active: contrast “*He remained silent*” and “*He stayed awake*”.

So that’s it for this month!

Best wishes

Lawrence White

LW@englishsupport.dk

www. **English support** .dk
Your natural language partner

NB: If you received this newsletter by e-mail, it is (hopefully) because you have expressed a wish to do so. If this is not the case, and/or you do not wish to receive it in future – *please let us know!*

Dear friends

After reading *News & Tips* no. 56, one reader wrote: “*I have a mental image of a cat falling, twisting in mid-air and landing on its feet, shaken but not too badly damaged.*” Well, I’m very fond of cats, so naturally I purred a lot at that! But cats don’t have banks and taxes to pay with money they no longer have, so now it’s back to the business of reconstruction. We have now paid all our debts to our freelance partners, and planning for the future is gathering pace ...



The LANGUAGE SUPPORT CENTRE (version 2.0) begins to take shape!

Quite a few readers have already come with ideas on the kind of content they would like to see in a virtual version of the LANGUAGE SUPPORT CENTRE, and a software supplier for the platform has been found. Among the ideas that have emerged so far are a strong focus on internal networking and mutual support, common standards for peer-reviewed, native-speaker translation, editing and

proofreading, inclusion of native-speaker freelancers with other language-related skills such as teaching, technical writing, copy writing and interpreting.

Progress on Vision 2010

Every year of our existence, we have set out a vision for the coming year (see January issue), but in last three years, the vision has only been partially fulfilled. And last year, we got completely blown off course.

We want to create a powerhouse of top-quality skills in all aspects of language communication.

So this year, I am setting out specific goals and deadlines. The plans are ambitious:

Technical aspects

Among the suggestions is a server-based platform providing network participants with shared software and private file access from any machine anywhere. It could be just a work station or a mobile phone.

Targets:	End of:	
No debt to business partners	January	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Initial design of LSCv2*	February	<input type="checkbox"/>
No debt to bank	March	<input type="checkbox"/>
Final design of LSCv2	April	<input type="checkbox"/>
New EN text for all websites**	May	<input type="checkbox"/>
Finish LSCv2 functionality	June	<input type="checkbox"/>
Website translations complete	July	<input type="checkbox"/>
LSCv2 open for business	August	<input type="checkbox"/>
> 50 partners in LSCv2	September	<input type="checkbox"/>
> 50 languages offered by Ls***	October	<input type="checkbox"/>
> 100 partners in LSCv2	November	<input type="checkbox"/>
Turnover for year up by 50%	December	<input type="checkbox"/>

This approach would offer improvements in speed, software functionality and flexibility for language professionals on the move as well as in the office.

Customer benefits

For the customer, the website would offer access to a complete range of top-quality language services, with lists of links to the websites of native-speaker freelancers categorised by language and skills.

We want to be branded as top-quality suppliers from the very beginning!

Suggestions welcome!

If you have ideas or suggestions for the new web-based LANGUAGE SUPPORT CENTRE, please let us know!

You can fill in the form on the *English support* website at this link: www.englishsupport.dk.

* Language Support Centre (version 2.0)

** English support, Language support & LSCv2

*** Language support

Dominant and dominating

These two adjectives started as synonyms, but have grown apart in meaning. They come from the verb *to dominate*, which literally means *to rule over, control, govern, etc.*, often with a negative connotation. But when it is used metaphorically, as in “*The huge waterfall dominates the valley scenery*”, or even “*Caroline Wozniacki dominates women’s tennis in Denmark today*”, it carries no negative sense at all.

The adjective *dominating* retains the literal and more negative sense of the verb. It is usually active, deliberate and generally unpleasant for those on the receiving end.

Dominant, on the other hand, has the more metaphorical and neutral sense. It refers more to influence than to will. Genes can be either *dominant* or *recessive*, for instance. And a person can be a *dominant authority* on something without being in any way *dominating*. The reverse is also true (and perhaps even more common). 😊

Demands and requirements

Since many languages (e.g. Danish) use the same word for these two English words, disentangling their usage when teaching English as a foreign language is not easy. A good starting point, however, is that *requirements* are usually made by *people* and these people are in some kind of *authority* in relation to those affected.

For instance, (in most countries, at least) it is a *requirement* that you pay income tax and that vehicles driven on the public roads have brakes that work.

On the other hand, if you feel the tax is a burden (as most of us do at some point or another), you will refer to tax *demands*, and the icy conditions in much of Europe at the moment place extra *demands* on road drivers. Moreover, trades unions and NGOs make *demands* on employers and governments.

There is, of course, some overlap in these distinctions (as in *tax demands*) depending on your point of view (so you might think your employer’s *requirements* make unreasonable *demands* on your time), but the distinction is still useful.

Demand and require

The distinction is less clear with the verbs, where both can be used with non-person subjects. We can talk about the current icy conditions on the roads *requiring* (or *demanding*) extra care when driving. But you can see the distinction at work in a sentence like this:

“*Members of a trade union may be **required** to go on strike to **demand** higher pay*”.

Demanding

Both of the above verbs have *ING*-forms, but *demanding* can also be an adjective. Perhaps you have a *demanding* job, which is a job that makes a lot of demands on your abilities.

But you might also have a *demanding* employer; he makes a lot of demands on you too, but the phrase is no longer neutral and begins to sound as if you feel his demands are excessive.

Would you like to get **Linked in**?

I am currently busy expanding my use of the “social media”, such as *LinkedIn*. If you don’t know about *LinkedIn*, you can find out more here: www.linkedin.com.

Already registered with *LinkedIn*? – Well, you may feel you know me well enough from this newsletter to invite me to join your network. 😊

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From the workshop...

Constant, continual and continuous

These three adjectives, and their corresponding adverbial forms, overlap considerably in meaning, but there are some subtle differences that are worth noting.

In the case of *constant* and *constantly*, the difference is between the adjective and the adverb. The adjective *constant* is usually used of something non-stop, while the adverb *constantly* is mostly used of actions repeated again and again: “*He was constant in his love of her*” (no “breaks”), but “*He constantly bought her presents*” (repeatedly).

The adjective *continuous* and the adverb *continuously* both focus more on the non-stop nature of the thing or action described. So while we might use them of a sound that did not stop, we are less likely to use them of things repeated again and again, like banging or visits from your neighbour’s dog.

We’ve gone over to Foxit!

Regular users of our website may have noticed that we have switched to *Foxit* as our standard pdf-software. We have done so because it is much smaller and faster than Adobe! The pdf-reader is free, and you can download it at the link below:

<http://www.foxitsoftware.com/pdf/reader/>



In these latter cases, we are more likely to use *continual* or *continually*. So if someone is in *continuous* pain, the phrase definitely emphasises the non-stop nature of the pain, whereas *continual* pain is more likely to be pain that comes again and again.

A second difference is that *continual* and *continually* both tend to have a negative meaning, as in “*life is a continual struggle*” or “*he came round to my house continually*” (i.e. it was annoying).

Curiously enough, however, there is something called “continuous assessment”. While this was probably chosen precisely to avoid it sounding negative (“continual assessment”), assessment that *really* never stopped would be truly annoying! So my advice to non-native speakers is to treat this piece of educational jargon as a weird exception rather than the rule. ☺

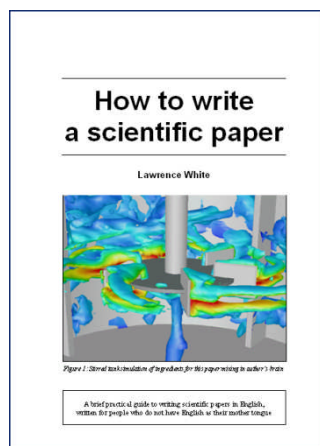
The

I dealt in some detail with that little word “*the*” in *News & Tips* no. 28, but people have problems with it even in the most unexpected places! Here is an example from an invitation to an international conference on translation, no less: “*Globalization and localization process have created tremendous scope for translation activities*”.

The problem is marked in red. Since the process is a *particular* process, the authors should have written “*the localization process*”. But there are other possible solutions without “*the*”:

“*Globalization and localization processes have created tremendous scope for translation activities*”

“*Globalization and localization have created tremendous scope for translation activities*”.



Do you need to write scientific papers?

“*How to write a scientific paper*” is an excellent guide – even for the experienced author of scientific articles and reports. It is easy to read and gives good advice about the structure of such papers, the writing process, and a number of the many linguistic traps that authors who do not have English as their mother tongue tend to fall into.

Kurt Lauridsen, MSc, PhD
Danish Decommissioning, Risø

You can order it direct from www.englishsupport.dk. Price: DKK 50.

Questions & Answers

(Edited)

If you received this newsletter in the post, you will need to subscribe if you want it again. See website for how.

Millions and billions

Dear Lawrence,
Thank you for your corrections to our website.
I have just one question: I would really like to know why you prefer “million” to “billion”, so that 4.9 billion becomes 4,900 million?

I do so because in British English (and all other European languages) a *billion* means a *million million*, but in US English it means a *thousand million*. My solution is aimed at avoiding any possible linguistic misunderstanding, which is why I recommend it.

How do you set your prices?

Dear Lawrence,
When you have a multi-language project, do you build the cost of managing the project into the per-word price or do you charge a separate hourly rate for this? And, if you charge an hourly rate, are you willing to reveal what this is?

Well, I only charge an hourly rate for teaching or when I go and help a customer negotiate in English. In both these cases, it is clear to both parties before we start what the cost will be.

Going green

So here's another advertisement. We have joined the initiative for CO₂ neutral websites. Find out more here: www.co2neutralwebsite.com.



Comment

Last month saw two terrible events: what appears to have been a religious fanatic's attempt on the life of Kurt Westergaard, and a massive earthquake whose epicentre was very close to Haiti's capital, Port-au-Prince with its 2 million inhabitants. Now here's a thought: the perpetrator of the first probably believes that his horribly immoral god was the perpetrator of the second!

The victims in both cases need our solidarity! Hardly anyone nowadays believes that the people of Port-au-Prince brought it upon themselves because of their sins. So there has been a massive response to their plight, and that's good.

But a lot of people seem to feel that somehow Kurt Westergaard “deserves” his fate. Personally, I view every tendency in that direction with horror – as a kind of throw-back to witch-burning and religious courts sitting in judgement on the rest of us. So here's another thought: in Denmark, you are much more likely to be hit by a *fatwah* than an earthquake! *We are all Kurt Westergaard!*

More news and tips (and perhaps views) next month!

Best wishes
Lawrence White
LW@englishsupport.dk

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Your natural language partner