

English support
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News & Tips
from

English support

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. 34 – August 2007

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Dear friends

Well, I came back from holiday in England and there was this mountain of work! So this month's issue has been delayed more than ever. Sorry about that. I'll try not to let it happen again – until the next time, of course. ☺ On the other hand, I do try to learn from my mistakes, so this month I have taken on extra help in the office, albeit still on a part-time basis. Hopefully this will mean that the next issue will come out somewhere near the beginning of the month ...

Claire Clausen joins English support

Best known in her former roles as radio journalist and press and PR officer for the British Embassy in Copenhagen, Claire's voice is so familiar that I immediately recognised it when she rang asking about freelance translation work.

Claire has a way with words, and I needed help, so we soon convinced each other what a good idea it would be for her to take a part-time job in the office as well. Among her other pursuits, she's an amateur actress, so she was very convincing!

I have quite a heavy load of teaching lined up this autumn, so Claire will be taking care of a lot of the day-to-day running of the office as well as doing translation and proofreading work herself. And if anyone needs a voice-over – who could be better?

The freelance network keeps growing!

We now have some 120 freelance partners. They are all people with language expertise and many of them are specialists. Some 25% are English speakers resident in Denmark, while others live elsewhere. We also have a large number of Danish partners, who translate into Danish. And more than 35% of our freelance partners have other languages as their mother tongue, from Japanese to Portuguese, so that between us we cover 22 languages – with more to come.

In all these languages, we can fulfil all your business needs, from business letters and brochures to complete websites. As long as we think they are ethically defensible. ☺

And in several languages, we can also manage technical and scientific writing. We like challenges. And we have specialists in many fields: medicine and pharmaceuticals, computing, hunting and shooting, martial arts, accounting and law. And we are always looking for more.

Would you like to join us?

So if YOU have a good command of both your own and at least one other language, and would like some freelance work in your native tongue, whether translation or proofreading, *please get in touch*. You can write to me at: LW@englishsupport.dk. Thanks!



English support needs YOU!

Please turn over!

From the workshop...

If you did not receive this newsletter by e-mail, you will need to subscribe if you want it again. It's FREE. Get on the mailing list via the website!

Daily and everyday

There is considerable overlap in meaning between these two words, but they are not entirely interchangeable. The word *daily* is used to refer to something that happens quite literally every weekday, as in *daily routines*, *daily newspapers*, etc. The word *everyday* (contrast *every day*) usually has the broader meaning of *ordinary* or *common*, as in *everyday life* or *everyday clothes*.

Principle and principal

These two words are often confused by native speakers, yet there is general agreement on a clear distinction between them.

The word *principle* is an abstract noun, meaning *a general rule or standard* of some kind, or *the basic characteristic* of something: e.g. “*it was against his principles*”, or “*the principles of flight*”.

The word *principal* is fundamentally an adjective, meaning *first* or *main*: e.g. “*the principal character in a play*”. But it can also be used as a noun, meaning roughly the *first* or *main person* or *thing*. So the headmaster in a school is sometimes called “*the Principal*”, key agents in a law case may be referred to as the “*principals*”, and in finance, the “*principal*” is the capital sum as opposed to any interest or other earnings that might accrue to it.

Dependant and dependent

Native-speakers are a lot less unanimous on these two, but there are two clear patterns in usage, which non-native speakers would be well-advised to follow. In general, British English uses *dependant* as a noun and *dependent* as an adjective, while American English tends to use *dependent* in both cases.

Note that the noun takes the preposition *of*, while the adjective takes the preposition *on*. So in British English, if you are the *dependant of* someone, it means you are *dependent on* them for financial support.

That depends!

The verb *to depend on* has a wider range of meaning. It can mean *to rely on* (and not just for financial support, but also *to trust* a source of information), and it can also have a passive sense of *to be influenced* or *determined* by something, as in “*What do you want to do this evening? – Well, that depends (on you)!*”

Dependent and depending

The prepositional expression “*depending on*” reflects this latter verbal meaning, so we might say “*Let's go by car, cycle or walk, depending on the weather*”, but would **not** say “*dependent on the weather*” here. Note that *on* (or *upon*) is the only preposition that can follow the verb *depend*.

Don't forget to register for the

KOMMUNIKATIONS- OG SPROGFORUM 2007

Wednesday, 26 September, in “Ovnhallen”, CBS Copenhagen

Information and booking: <http://www.kommunikationogsprog.dk/Forum/>

Tel. 33 91 98 00 or e-mail: forum2007@kommunikationogsprog.dk

See you there!

From the workshop...

Talking about the future (Part I)

Some languages don't really have a future, and English is one of them. By that, of course, I don't mean they won't be around for long – I expect English will go on being used for quite some time – but that English has no real future tense. Instead, we use special constructions in the present tense. But they are rather peculiar and tricky for non-native speakers. Worse still, the grammar books don't usually do a very good job of clarifying them. So here's my version!

1. Already decided

When we are talking about something in the future which has already been decided by someone (not necessarily the speaker), we normally use the *present continuous* form: e.g. “*What are you doing tomorrow? – I am flying to Tokyo*”.

Note that the decision to go had *already been made before* the speaker started speaking.

The *present continuous* is made up of the verb *to be* + the *ING*-form. Another, more formal way of expressing this kind of future is the verb *to be* + the infinitive: e.g. “*The Queen is to visit New York tomorrow*”. [This is the form shortened by headline writers to: “*Queen to visit New York*”].

Most grammar books seem to think these forms are about the *near* future, but this is not so; they are about things which have already been decided before the speaker started speaking: e.g. “*NASA is sending a manned mission to Mars at some time in the next two or three decades*”.

2. Intention and what is likely

When we are talking about something in the future which we *intend* or which we *consider likely* to happen, we use *to be going to*: e.g. “*I am going to sell my car*” or “*It is going to rain*”.

Note that the intention/belief about what is likely existed *before* the speaker started speaking.

3. Pure future

When we are just talking about the future (i.e. without focus on things already decided, intended or thought likely), we use *will*: e.g. “*I will be late home tonight*” or “*Do you think we will catch the train?*”

Note that it is also possible, but not very common nowadays, to use *shall* instead of *will* in these sentences when the subject is in the 1st person. The danger is, of course, that you may sound as though you have just stepped out of a time machine from the first half of the last century. ☺ In modern English, *shall* is normally only used to ask for advice or offer to do something, as in, “*Shall I answer the phone?*” or “*What shall we have to eat?*” and these are not future forms at all.

Important: There can be a certain amount of overlap in meaning between these three forms, but they are well worth keeping conceptually separate for the many occasions when only one will do.

More than four hundred topics have been tackled so far in the pages of

News & Tips

You can look them up on the website at: <http://www.englishsupport.dk/EN/backindex.htm>, and back issues can also be downloaded at: <http://www.englishsupport.dk/EN/backissues.htm>, where you can also download a whole year at a time (if you wish) by clicking on the year heading.

Please turn over!

Questions & Answers

(Edited)

If you did not receive this newsletter by e-mail, you will need to subscribe if you want it again. It's FREE. Get on the mailing list via the website!

Another fine mess ...

Thank you for sending me the Newsletter; I read it with interest every time!

In News and Tips No. 33, I think there is a mistake. You write that the word "språkvask" is Swedish. I think it must be Norwegian ...

How nicely put! Yes, I have no idea how I came to write that it was "Swedish", but you are quite right: the wonderful word "språkvask" is, of course, Norwegian.

A "bridge" too far ...

I have spotted what might have been an unintentional slip on your part, i.e. the hyphen in "We now have two freelance partners who are well-qualified" (should be "well qualified"). I recently had to explain this to an author of Basque mother tongue and to do this I quoted from the entry for "well" (1st sense) on www.askoxford.com:

— USAGE When **well** is used with a past participle, such as 'built', and the resulting compound precedes the noun, it is advisable to use a hyphen, as in a tall, well-built man; usually a hyphen is not used when the compound stands alone, as in her remarks were well intentioned.

You are quite right, it was a slip. I explain the basic rule in No.28 – see point 1 under **Compound words**: "Adjectives that are made up of more than one word should be hyphenated". This applies to past participles used as adjectives, too: e.g. **market-driven**, **well-spoken**, and so on.

In the sentence where I went wrong, the past participle is not an adjective, but part of a passive form (*to be qualified*), in which case the word "well" here is playing the normal role of an adverb and no hyphen should be present. As you say, it should have been "well qualified".

This explanation differs from that of the very useful www.askoxford.com, but it has the merit of helping us get other cases right, too. For instance, if a man has a *well-paid job*, he is *well paid* (no hyphen). This is clearly a passive form. But a *well-read* man is a man who is *well-read* (hyphen). This is not a passive form, but an adjective – even though it does not "precede the noun".

The same applies to *well-spoken*, meaning a person *speaks* well. Less clear, perhaps, is *market-driven* in "*Production is market-driven*". Here the word is a substitute for "*driven by the market*", which is passive in meaning, but *market* is a noun, so the combination must be hyphenated.

Did you know?

English support can offer **native-speaker** help with not only *English*, but also *Chinese, Czech, Danish, Dutch, Finnish, French, German, Hungarian, Icelandic, Italian, Japanese, Norwegian, Polish, Portuguese, Rumanian, Russian, Serbo-Croat, Spanish, Swedish, Turkish and Ukrainian*.

More next month!

Best wishes
Lawrence White
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www.Englishsupport.dk
Your natural language partner

Copenhagen Language Festival 2007: "Native languages in a globalised world"
15th September, Det Grønlandske Hus, Løvstræde 6, 1007 Copenhagen
Contact: Betty Chatterjee on tel. 38 89 10 13 or e-mail chatterjeebetty@hotmail.com

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