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**News & Tips**  
from

**English support**

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No. 35 – September 2007

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Dear friends

This month sees two quite different language events all our readers may be interested in. The first is the **Copenhagen Language Festival** organised by the Copenhagen Esperanto Association and Kalaallit Illuutaat at the Greenland House on Saturday, 15<sup>th</sup> September, and the second is the **Communication and Language Forum 2007** organised by the Union of Communication and Language Professionals, at Copenhagen Business School on Wednesday, 26<sup>th</sup> September.

### **A Festival of Languages!**

The theme of this 2<sup>nd</sup> Copenhagen Language Festival is: *Mother tongues in a globalised world*. It will be a festival celebrating the abundance of different languages in the world and how this is a *resource* not a problem.

Languages are the main bearers of human culture and when a language disappears, we all lose access to a part of our common culture. And your mother tongue is also an important part of your personal identity.

At the festival you can hear native speakers of a great many languages, take a crash course in some of them, and learn surprising facts about all of them. There will also be music and song as well as a lot of talks you can go to on various languages and cultures.

**11 AM – 5 PM, Saturday, 15<sup>th</sup> September, Det Grønlandske Hus, Løvstræde 6, Copenhagen**

### **The Communication and Language Profession gets together!**

The Communication and Language Forum 2007 is for professionals engaged in the field. In its own way, it too is a celebration, but the focus is on communication and language in business and politics and society at large.

This year's general theme will be: *The importance of communication for the competitiveness of companies in a globalised world*, with speakers from Copenhagen University, Carlsberg, Aarhus School of Business, Copenhagen Business School, Copenhagen Zoo, Denmark's Radio, one of Denmark's new Regions, and a consultancy in web communication.

The range of subjects is also impressive: from how good communication impacts on company's bottom line, stimulates innovation, and helps meet marketing targets, to the tremendous challenges of multilingual communication and how our social networks are going seriously on-line.

Information and booking at: [www.kommunikationogsprog.dk/Forum](http://www.kommunikationogsprog.dk/Forum).

**8.30 AM – 4.30 PM, Wednesday, 26<sup>th</sup> September, "Ovnhallen", Porcelænshaven, CBS**

*English support will have a stand at both events and we look forward to seeing you there!*

*Please turn over!*

# From the workshop...

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## Ignore and neglect

The verb *ignore* is connected with the noun *ignorance* and the adjective *ignorant*, but the verb implies a kind of *wilful* “ignorance” or *choosing* to be “ignorant” of something, e.g. choosing not to notice someone at a party: “*She came to his party, but he ignored her all evening*”. Similarly we might say of a (poor) scientist, “*He ignored the results that did not fit his theory*”.

Someone else might think these actions deplorable. In which case they might say, “*He neglected her all evening*”, or, “*He neglected to take into account the results that did not fit his theory*.”

Note that the verb *neglect* implies moral failure in some way. So while you *can* neglect a person, an animal, or even a house and garden, the fundamental idea is always that (in the speaker’s view) there is something you *ought* to have done, but did not. And the noun, *neglect*, contains the same idea – “*His children showed signs of neglect*”.

The verb *ignore*, on the other hand, always applies to a noun or a pronoun – a person, a thing or a fact – and it does not necessarily contain a moral dimension. So the typical situation is that we ignore *facts* and neglect *to do* things. ☺

## Choices and decisions

You *make* choices: e.g. “*He was forced to make a choice between his mistress and his wife*”. You can also *make* decisions. But when a *group* of people decide something, we normally say they *take* a decision. The implication here is of some kind of consensus or even a vote. Note how in English, people who get to decide things *on their own* are called *decision-makers*.

You can also *come to* or *reach* a decision, but none of these options is available with choices ...

## Contrary to and in contrast with/to

Something can be *contrasted* with something else in many ways, but one thing is only *contrary to* another thing if it is logically incompatible with it. So an action might be *contrary to* the law, or a statement might be *contrary to* popular belief. In both cases, acceptance of the one excludes the other.

But we would say the red door was *in contrast to* the blue of the door frame. The contrast might be thought to show poor taste, but there is no logical conflict involved.

So the phrase, “*on the contrary*” is used to introduce a statement strongly incompatible with a previously mentioned idea, e.g. “*She did not help; on the contrary, she did everything she could to wreck the project*”. The latter statement is incompatible with the idea of her *helping*.

But then we might go on to say, “*Her behaviour was in contrast to that of other club members, who helped a lot*”. There is no logical incompatibility in different people doing different things.

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.

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# From the workshop...

## Talking about the future (Part II)

Last month, we looked at the three basic ways of talking about the future in English (see *News & Tips* No.34). This time we take a look at a few more sophisticated aspects.

### A. The future continuous

Two of the future constructions that we looked at last month have continuous versions too. They can both be used to talk about actions which will be in the process of taking place at a particular point of time in the future, e.g. “*At this time tomorrow, I’ll be lying on a beach in Tunisia*” or “*At this time tomorrow, I’m going to be lying on a beach in Tunisia*”. They can also both be used for actions which will take place within a limited time period in the future, e.g. “*I will be teaching all day tomorrow*”.

There is no sense of intention or likelihood in the continuous form after *to be going to*, but it does express strong emotion of one kind or another, so “*I am going to be teaching all day tomorrow*” might, for example, express enthusiasm (*I bet you’re all jealous!*) or despair (*Why me!*).

The continuous form after *will* can also express mere *expectations* about the future, e.g. “*We’ll all be going down the pub later on*” and “*I’ll be seeing you!*”, or even about the present, e.g. “*Mary will be watching television*” (meaning *right now*).

### B. The future in the past

All the various ways of talking about future are based on constructions in the present tense. So in English, they can all be moved into the past tense, with *would* instead of *will*, *was* instead of *am* or *is*, and *were* instead of *are*, e.g. “*I would be teaching all day (the next day)*” and “*I was flying to Tokyo next month*”.

At first sight, the idea of the future in the past sounds bizarre, but it is actually quite logical. It is a future that belongs to the past – either in the sense that it is no longer going to happen or that it already has. The various meanings of the future forms in the past are the same as in the present.

So if a historian writes, “*Caesar would cross the Rubicon the next day*”, he means that that was the future at that time. And if I say “*I was flying to Tokyo next month*”, it means that a decision about the future had been made, but has now been changed, so that I am no longer going.

### C. The simple timeless

There is one fly in the ointment of all this beautiful consistency, and that is what we might call the *simple timeless*. This is where the *simple present* (or *past*) of the verb is used in subordinate clauses in a sentence in which the main clause uses a future form, e.g. “*I will tell you as soon as I know*” or “*The first person who opens that door will get a shock*”.

In these cases, the subordinate clause is just as much about the future as the main clause, yet the timeless simple form of the verb is used in the subordinate clauses. And this rule applies even in sentences in which the future is not explicit in the main clause, e.g. “*When he comes, tell him I’m not in!*” or “*I have brought an umbrella in case it rains*”.

But like all good rules, there is also a clear exception. ☺ The rule does not apply to subordinate clauses about the future when the clause itself is the *object* of a verb. In these cases, we must have one of the future forms, just as we would in a main clause, e.g. “*I think it is going to rain*” or “*We’ll write and let you know when we are coming*”.

Note that the *simple timeless* is what we also use in main clauses that state general facts – i.e. that are not about the future, present or past, but are timeless in character, e.g. “*The sun always rises in the East*”, “*I live in Denmark*”, “*Do you like ice cream?*” and “*The shop opens at 9.30*”.

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*Please turn over!*

# Questions & Answers

(Edited)

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## How does it work?

In recent issues, we have been inviting people who have a good command of both their own and at least one other language, and who would like some freelance work in their native tongue, *to get in touch*. We are always looking for people who might be able to help.

Here are some of the questions we received:

*How does the payment system work? What do you take for sending jobs to me?*

Well, I don't take a commission or anything, if that's what you mean. On the contrary, I pay you for doing the work. First I send you a text and ask for a quote. You look at the text and tell me how much you want and when you can deliver. I go back to the customer and give a price and say when I can deliver – adding on time and money for my part. Nothing goes to the customer that I haven't checked through. If the customer agrees to the price and delivery time, we get the job.

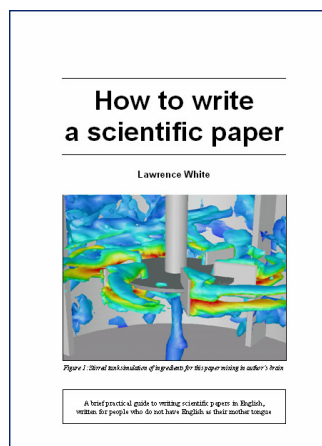
*Do you pay extra at weekends or for rush jobs?*

Well, no – I agree every job individually. My price to the customer also varies according a wide range of factors, including time and difficulty, so I expect your price may do the same.

*What is the usual time frame given for the translation of, let us say, a twenty-page academic paper? I realize the author will have a deadline, but what time frame would you consider reasonable for such a task?*

There is no “usual time frame”. You decide yourself how long you need for a job. After all, you may well have other things to do! But customers often want things by yesterday at the latest, so it pays to be as realistic as you can. 😊

*All these questions assumed that I would be passing on work. But the agreement I ask people to sign is completely mutual. If you have too much work, become ill, or go on holiday, you can send work to us and keep your customer, too.*



## And here are some answers for science researchers!

*“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

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For an independent review (in Danish), see [Kommunikation og Sprog](#), under *Boganmeldelser*.

More next month!

Best wishes  
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