

English support  
Business House (PO Box 618)  
Jernbanegade 23 B  
4000 Roskilde

# News & Tips

from

English support

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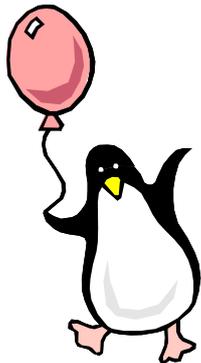
**Including an open letter to the members of DT and TF (page 4)**

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

So we're in our new office and it feels grand. At least, it feels it *will* be grand when we've finished unpacking all our stuff and the new furniture. ☺ Still, the future is what we're all living for, and, of course, we'll get there in the end! In the meantime, the office is a bit of a mess, so we hope our customers will bear with us, insofar as we don't respond quite so fast as usual. We still hope to be ready on 14<sup>th</sup> March, when all well-wishers are invited to join us for a drink to celebrate.

An Invitation



www. **English support** .dk

invites you to an

## INFORMAL RECEPTION

Friday 14<sup>th</sup> March, from 3–5 PM

Come and meet us in our new office  
– *we'd really like to see you!*



English support, Business House (PO Box 618), Jernbanegade 23 B, 4000 Roskilde

### ***“Boost your sales with English and other foreign languages!”***

That is the message *English support* will be taking to local companies and other organisations on 8<sup>th</sup> April at Zealand's *Store Erhvervsdag* – an annual get-together for local business organised by Roskilde Business Forum and Zealand Business Development. Entrance is free – all you pay for is food and drink. Find out more here: [www.storeerhvervsdag.dk](http://www.storeerhvervsdag.dk) (website in Danish).

This year, *English support* will not only have our usual stand, but we will also be holding a 45-minute workshop on how companies can boost their market visibility by using English and other foreign languages effectively.

We will explain some of the pitfalls to be avoided and the considerable advantages to be gained by making good use of translators and other language experts – *even if you are only interested in the Danish market.*

The importance of language is currently much underestimated and undervalued, as companies pour large sums into expensive graphics and layout, but forget that the *words in the message* matter too. So come and hear what we have to say!

Sign up for the workshop here: <http://www.englishsupport.dk/EN/workshop.htm>.

*Please turn over!*

## More on the prepositions *in*, *on* and *at*

Last month, we looked at *in* and *on* in relation to school/university subjects and in connection with various means of transport. But there is a lot more to say, especially if we include *at*, so I promised more on these prepositions this month.

### At a “point” ...

The focus with *at* is on a point. It might be a point on a “scale” of some kind: *at 3 o'clock* (time), *at 50 mph* (speed), *at 60°C* (temperature), *at £60* (price), *at Waterloo* (a point on a map). By analogy we also speak of *at intervals of 5 seconds* (a series of points in time), *at a level* (out of a range of levels), *at the top*, *at the bottom* (e.g. of a page or a mountain), *at the beginning*, *at the end* (e.g. of a book or a course). So if we refer to the days at the end of the (working) week, we say *at the weekend*. And we say *at Easter*, *at Whitsun*, *at Christmas* when we refer to them as the days we have free at those times of year.

We also use *at* when speaking of one place as opposed to another: *at home*, *at work*, *at the office*, *at the laboratory*, *at a hotel*, *at a restaurant*, etc.

### In a “container” ...

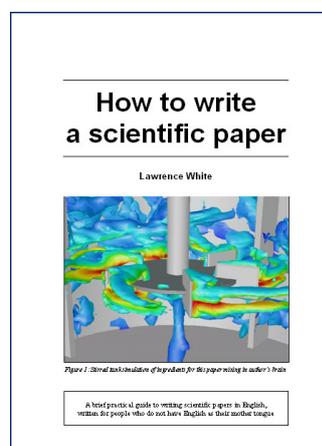
The focus with *in* is on being “inside” something. So if we say *in the office*, *in a restaurant* or *in a field*, we are thinking of being “inside” these “containers”, as it were. Some places are so big you cannot be *at* them under any circumstances: e.g. London, Mexico City and Beijing are simply too *big* to be thought of as points on a map. Even on quite small scale maps they appear more as splodges than points! But you can be *in* even a tiny hamlet if the focus is on being “inside” it – e.g. *I used to live in a place called Wild Hill, which consisted of a couple of houses and a pub*.

We also use *in* with reference to being “inside” periods of time (longer than one day): *in Week 27*, *in April*, *in 2009*, *in the 18<sup>th</sup> century*. And *in the beginning* and *in the end* are only used of time.

Finally, *in* can be used when talking about time that must pass before something happens: *I will be there in two months*, *in two hours*, *in two seconds*. Please note the difference in meaning if you use *within* instead: *I will be there within two months* means that a *maximum* of two months will go by before I get there. *TIP*: Don't use *within* where *in* will do – see *News & Tips* No.18.

### On a “surface”, but also a day ...

As we noted last month, *on* is used for surfaces (even the ceiling) and speak of being *on a ship*, *on a train*, and *on a bus*. But we also use it for dates and days: *on Friday*, *on 23<sup>rd</sup> May*, and *on New Year's Day*. And there are also lots of expressions: *on arrival*, *on that occasion*, *on time*, etc.



## 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

Published by *English support*. Order it now from your local bookshop or direct from [www.englishsupport.dk](http://www.englishsupport.dk)

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# From the workshop...

## **Find and think**

The word *find* in English does not mean to *think* or *believe*. It is connected with *discovery*. Even when a judge *finds* the defendant guilty, it is the result of a long process of investigation and hearing of witnesses, etc.

So when Danes carry the *think* or *believe* usage of the Danish cognate (*finde*) over into their English, it can sound very strange, and unfortunately, even pompous.

And *findings* are the outcome of an enquiry of some kind, not just opinions.

## **Find out and work out**

Similarly, the phrasal verb *to find out* contains the idea of *discovery* as distinct from *invention*. So you can **find out** a fact (e.g. that tigers do not live in Africa), but you must **work out** a plan or a solution (i.e. something that does not exist before you create it).

## **Dependent on and independent of**

The preposition that follows *dependent* is *on*, as in the phrasal verb *to depend on*. But when we say the opposite and use the word *independent*, the preposition that follows is *of*:

*She is not dependent on him; she is independent of him.*

Over 500 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.

## **CBS drops the courses that lead to “state-authorized” translators**

On 18<sup>th</sup> January, Copenhagen Business School announced that it would no longer be running the courses that lead to authorised translators and interpreters in French, German, Italian, Russian and Spanish. As from this year, there will only be such a course for English.

This is a body blow for those who think that this particular qualification is what separates the sheep from the goats. At *English support*, we think the real test is the quality of the product. By way of illustration, it seems that some of the *teachers* on these courses are not “qualified” to take the course themselves! But they do have the very real qualification that they are native-speakers capable of teaching at that level. *And when it comes down to it, what can be better than that?*

The courses are really good, but the focus on the formal qualification that comes out of them has reached absurd levels. So it may well be that the discontinuation of these courses will shift the focus back to where it should have been all along – on the *quality of the work produced*, rather than the formal (Danish) qualifications of the person doing the translation into a foreign language.

More next month!

Best wishes  
Lawrence White  
[LW@englishsupport.dk](mailto:LW@englishsupport.dk)

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Your natural language partner

*Please turn over!*

# Correspondence

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!

## An open letter to the *members* of TF and DT

Dear fellow translators!

I have now completely lost patience with the leaderships of your two organisations. They may be about to merge, but there is absolutely no sign that that is going to improve things *one little bit*.

In 2004, I held a small seminar in Roskilde entitled *Do you speak "danglish"?* It was a considerable success. Nearly 50 language-interested people came, many of them translators, including members of both *Translatørforeningen* and *Dansk Translatørforbund*. Everybody enjoyed themselves. No one got upset.

One of my examples of "danglish" was the expression *state-authorized translator* – a literal syllable-for-syllable translation of the Danish word *statsautoriseret*. But the Danish word is very positive, while the English has *negative* connotations – as in *state-authorized phone-tapping, assassination and terror*. So it's a bit like translating a word meaning "famous" with a word meaning "infamous". Many of the translators present agreed it was an unfortunate translation, but said "*You'll never get our organisations to change it!*"

How right they were! Dee Shields, an American member of *Dansk Translatørforbund*, went so far as to demand the seminar picture showing the example be taken off my website! She quoted herself and *Dansk Translatørforbund* as authorities on the question and accused me of "impugning her profession". The full correspondence can be read in *News & Tips* Nos. 12 and 13.

Shields published our exchange as the main feature in *MDTnyt* (3/05), *Dansk Translatørforbund's* magazine – wrapped in another 4400 words entirely devoid of any academic value and solely devoted to a virulent attack on myself and my company. But she also let slip that her story about deep reasoning lying behind the translation of "*statsautoriseret*" with "*state-authorized*" was a "*pseudo-scientific dissertation*", or as more honest people might say, a *lie*. See my reply in *News & Tips* No. 21.

Well, of course, that completely destroys her argument, which was already looking very much like Swiss cheese. And *making things up* is not normally considered good academic practice. When I discovered this article (I am not a regular reader of *MDTnyt*, and of course Shields did not inform me about it), I wrote to *Dansk Translatørforbund* to ask for the right of reply in their magazine. The leadership of DT refused. DT chairman Mette Aarslew's haughty letter can also be read in *News & Tips* No. 21.

*With the merger negotiations going on between the two organisations, I wrote to the leadership of Translatørforeningen to ask them 1) to take a clear stand against Shields' scurrilous attack on a fellow professional, and 2) to insist on my right of reply in the first issue of the magazine of the new merged organisation.*

TF Chairman Claus Bentsen did not even take the trouble to *sign* the dismissive reply I received – see last month's issue. (You can download back issues at <http://www.englishsupport.dk/EN/backissues.htm>). The TF leadership's refusal even to take a position on *the right of reply to an article defamatory of another translator* is an appalling abdication of leadership. Last year TF also refused to allow *English support* to advertise on their website on the grounds I am not a "state-authorized" translator; *Gyldendals* can advertise their dictionaries, but we may not advertise *our* services to translators! And when I sent TF a full set of corrections to the English on their website, I received *no* reply. I had criticised something they had written. And *no* corrections were made. Presumably they believe no corrections are needed.

Now this is, of course, exactly the same problem that Dee Shields had. She just could not accept that someone who was not among the chosen few could even have an opinion on the subject. So she made up a cock-and-bull story and poured abuse on the critic in the hope that no one would listen.

What we are dealing with here is a load of *vanity and pride* – the twin curses of the translation profession in Denmark! *With this calibre of leadership in the two organisations that claim to speak on behalf of the translation profession in Denmark, it is high time these "leaders" were replaced!*

I wish you all the very best of luck in this endeavour!

Best wishes  
Lawrence White  
[LW@englishsupport.dk](mailto:LW@englishsupport.dk)

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