

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. 55 – July 2009

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Dear friends

Please note our new address! The company moved twice in our 5 years at *Business House*, both times into a slightly larger office, but this time we have moved right into the centre of Roskilde and have taken over more than 350 square metres of office space to create our new *Language Support Centre*. The aim is to make the native-speaker language skills of our large network of freelancers both more visible and more valued – and to gain the benefits of increased synergy.

Steady as she goes! – 2nd quarter shows continued growth

Of course, the *Language Support Centre* project is going to take a certain amount of time to get up to steam. So the good news is that *English support* is showing continuing growth, despite the crisis.

Turnover for the 2nd quarter is nearly 14% up on the same quarter last year and 9.5% up on the exceptionally good first quarter this year. While not fantastic, it is enough to keep us on course for the expansion involved in the new centre.

But expenses will also be high. Higher rent, a lot of new furniture and equipment. And at the same time we want to keep the cost of renting a work space in the new Centre as low as possible.

So what does the future look like? Well, the 3rd quarter is already looking good and the 4th quarter is usually the best of the year, so with a bit of luck and a following wind *English support* should be able to cope even if the new Centre has a difficult start-up period due to the current crisis.

But, in fact, freelance interest in renting space is growing as people come back from their summer holidays and start thinking about how they would like their working day to be ... ☺



One corner of the “reception” area under construction.
This is the only “open-plan” part of the office space (with just two work spaces), but those who sit here will enjoy rather more space, as well as playing a role as a reception for visitors.

On Thursday 3rd September,
the Mayor of Roskilde, Poul Lindor Nielsen, will
officially open the new
 **LANGUAGE**
SUPPORT CENTRE

The celebrations start at **2 pm**, and all our readers
are most welcome! See www.englishsupport.dk.

In case you missed it ☺, the address is:

Stændertorvet 2, 1
4000 Roskilde

Open already now for freelancers!

Roskilde’s Mayor, Poul Lindor Nielsen, will be officially opening the *Language Support Centre* on 3rd September, but we are already open now for freelancers.

So, whether you are already in business or are considering becoming a freelance professional, come and see what we have to offer!

For more information, see page 2.

For pictures, see www.englishsupport.dk.

What it means for you

NOTE
This page is reprinted from
News & Tips no. 54.

The new *Language Support Centre* – opening in September

This is the physical beginning of the realisation of an ambitious project to create a multilingual centre for teaching and translation into a wide range of languages by native-speaker experts. Our customers will range from companies and organisations of all sizes to schools and universities.

Freelance translators and teachers

This place is designed for you! Perhaps you're thinking of going freelance, or perhaps you've had your own one-(wo)man business for a while, but are fed up with having no colleagues to talk to.

Either way, we're trying to create an ideal environment for your language business. The rent for a work space has been set as low as possible to make it as attractive as possible. We will not be making any money on renting space out. But we do expect to gain from the **synergy** (see page 3) from having a variety of different self-employed people working in the same place.

For just 2500 kr. a month (+ VAT) you get an ergonomic desk and chair, a lamp, bookcase and cupboard, and a quiet, friendly office with one or two others. We assume you will have your own laptop and mobile phone for your business. You share the rest of the facilities, kitchen, veranda, roof-terrace, classroom/meeting rooms, etc. with about 20 people in all.

If you want a desk just one or two days in the week, we will accommodate you. This means you can be a *part-time* freelancer – which is not a bad way to start. Here is the table of charges:

These charges include water, heating and lighting, normal electricity use, a fast internet connection, and a common reception. And your company gets a very fine address in the centre of Roskilde!

Who are we looking for?

From our point of view, the ideal freelance partner will have several skills to contribute. If you can teach as well as translate or edit text in your mother tongue, that is a real plus. We want to offer native-speaker teaching.

But other skills (marketing, accounts, IT, etc.) are also useful in such a community. ***This is not yet another translation bureau!*** We are independent freelance partners working together, helping each other, and enjoying shared facilities.

English support and Language support

English support already has a large number of customers who need translation, proofreading and teaching. Much of our translation work now is to other languages, including Danish, and we have carried out quite a few orders for multi-language translation. With the launch of *Language support*, that trend will continue and expand.

Our network of over 200 freelance partners covering 33 languages means that we only ever say ‘no’ to work we really wouldn’t want anyway. And we get a lot of work. Some of that work will come your way, because you are right there in the same building!

The new *Language Support Centre* will officially open on 3rd September, but you can apply now to be among the first to share its facilities (from 1st August).

If all this sounds interesting to you, get in touch here: LW@englishsupport.dk.

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Proofreading • Copy editing • Translation • Teaching

NOTE

*This page is reprinted from
News & Tips no. 54.*

The new Machinery Directive

An example of synergy

A great many engineering companies in Denmark will have a particular interest in one of the half-day seminars we will be running at the *Language Support Centre* this autumn. It will focus on the requirements of the new Machinery Directive which comes into force on 29th December this year.

Two of our freelance technical writers have made a point of studying the requirements of this new EU directive. As a result we will be able to offer the following assistance:

1. Seminar on: ***What the new Machinery Directive means for your company.***
2. Individual consultancy help tailored to the needs of your particular business.
3. Technical-writing assistance with preparing original documentation in Danish or English.
4. Translation assistance with the task of providing documentation in the languages needed.

Is it really new?

Much of the content is not new, but Directive 2006/42/EC is termed a “recast” of the Machinery Directive, and the modifications are presented in the form of a new directive.

DIRECTIVE 2006/42/EC OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL of 17 May 2006 on machinery, and amending Directive 95/16/EC (recast)

(Text with EEA relevance)

The main thrust of the changes is aimed at improvements in health and safety, including risk assessment at design stage and manufacturing stage, and risk prevention in use (including risks to the health of operators). And the new directive introduces the concept of what is ‘reasonably foreseeable’ with reference to risk, hazard, misuse, etc.

Quality assurance

One major problem for many manufacturers and importers of machinery will lie in fulfilling the new requirements with regard to documentation: ‘*The contents of the instructions must cover not only the intended use of the machinery but also take into account any reasonably foreseeable misuse thereof*’. The instructions and declarations of conformity and incorporation must be given in the original language (authorised and verified by the manufacturer) and (if different) the official language(s) of the EU countries where the machinery is to be put on the market and/or used.

And all this documentation will be part of the quality assurance requirement for the machinery as from 29th December this year.

This means that between now and the end of the year, a lot of technical writing has to be carried out and approved – all of which will then need translation into the language(s) where the machinery is going to be put on the market and/or used.

A complete package

Our strength in this area is that we will be able to offer *one-stop shopping*. A seminar to help you understand the new requirements, and then advice tailored to your company on the documentation needed, followed by assistance with the technical writing and the translation work as required.

We do not pretend we will know all the answers, but we will be able to help you find them.

What the new Machinery Directive means for your company

The new *Language Support Centre* will be offering a **half-day seminar** to explain the significance of the new Machinery Directive on the following dates throughout September: 7th, 8th, 15th, 16th, 23rd, 24th, 28th and 29th. The seminar will start at 1 pm each day and finish around 4 pm. The dates and times have been chosen to enable as many as possible to attend, because we think this issue is of vital importance for a great many companies who manufacture, import, or sell machinery in the European Economic Area.

From the workshop...

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

For the time being ...

As noted in *News & Tips* no. 30, this expression is often used in Denmark where what is meant is *at the moment*. Here are some recent examples of the mistake:

She is for the time being participating in ...

For the time being, he is working on a project dealing with ...

The first sentence also has the adverbial phrase misplaced in the middle of the sentence. Adverbials of more than one word should normally be placed at the end or the beginning of the sentence (as in the second example). See *News & Tips* no. 7.

In both cases, what the author wanted to emphasise was the *temporary* nature of the participation or work. The most common way of doing this in English is to use *at the moment* in combination with the continuous form of the verb (see *News & Tips* no. 6):

She is participating in ... at the moment.

At the moment, he is working on a project dealing with ...

When to use for the time being ...

While *at the moment* is used to focus on the temporary nature of something that is going on *now*, the phrase *for the time being* is used to focus on the *future extension* of such a temporary situation. So *for the time being* is often used in relation to temporary disruptions of services or options:

Gale winds have led to the bridge over the Great Belt being closed for the time being.

For the time being, I want you to share this desk. Next week, you will get your own.

Note: You can always use *at the moment* instead of *for the time being*, but this sense of future extension is lost. On the other hand, this does not usually matter very much, so if in doubt, use *at the moment*. ☺

Did you know?

English support has special expertise in medical, juridical, financial and many other areas of technical writing, from architecture to nanotechnology and aircraft engineering

“Only few”

In *News & Tips* no. 33, we looked at the difference between *few* and *a few*, and between *little* and *a little*, and in *News & Tips* no. 39, we looked at the use of the word *only*. Recently I came across some examples of “*only few*”.

This is almost always a mistake and should be corrected to “*only a few*” in normal English (as opposed, for example, to what we might call “headline” English, where small words disappear). But in some cases, what is meant is “*very few*”.

The point is that the word *few* is negative, while *a few* is positive: “*He has few friends*” means he doesn’t have many, while “*He has a few friends*” means he does have some. When we qualify with the limiting word *only*, we must qualify the positive version: “*He has only a few friends*”.

Contrast qualifying with the strengthening word *very*, which must come immediately before *few* and where the sense strengthened is always negative: *a very few = very few*.

More neutral is the qualifying word *quite* which can strengthen either the negative or the positive version: “*He has quite few friends*” means he really doesn’t have very many, while “*He has quite a few friends*” means he actually has quite a lot of friends.

Note: Very similar patterns apply to *little* and *a little*. So I hope that explanation was *only a little* confusing! ☺

From the workshop...

Comprehensible and comprehensive

It is not unusual for non-native speakers to use the wrong word. Here we have two words that come from the same Latin root, but whose meanings are quite different.

Comprehensible means understandable. So, “*The text was comprehensible*” means the text could be understood.

Comprehensive means “including everything or everyone”. “*The text was comprehensive*” means it covered all the relevant points.

Ameliorate

This verb means to “make something better”, but not so long ago I found someone offering to “ameliorate” the English in scientific papers. The service on offer was proofreading and editing, but the word *ameliorate* simply won’t do. Why not?

Well, the problem is that *ameliorate* is only ever used in a very general sense and never in relation to anything concrete. You can “take steps to ameliorate the situation”, but while you can *treat* a patient, *improve* a painting or a plan, or *resolve* a conflict, you can’t “ameliorate” any of them!

The word “improve” would be, well, an improvement. ☺

Problems and challenges

I recently had a proofreading job in which the writer had consistently used the word “challenge” where I would use “problem”.

Almost everyone knows the uplifting view that there are no such things as *problems*, only *challenges*, but of course that view only has meaning if problems and challenges are *not* the same thing!

A *problem* is an objective difficulty to be overcome, while a *challenge* is a something you can accept or refuse – a matter of choice. So seeing problems as challenges is a way of taking control. But they are *not* synonyms.

Efficient and effective

These two words are often used as if they were interchangeable, but they have quite distinct meanings in most contexts. A system is considered *efficient* if the input (in terms of energy, cost, resources, etc.) is low in proportion to the output gained. A system is considered *effective* insofar as it achieves the results aimed at.

So an engine can be *efficient* but not *effective* (if, for instance, it is simply not powerful enough for the job). The reverse is also true. An engine can be *inefficient* (requiring inputs far exceeding outputs), but *effective* because it easily gets the job done.

Efficiency and effectivity

You might expect that the abstract nouns *efficiency* and *effectivity* would reflect this distinction, but in fact they are mostly used metaphorically and *efficiency* (outside of engineering texts) often refers merely to the smooth running of a system, while *effectivity* has taken on the relationship between inputs and outputs (e.g. in business texts).

Did you know?

The *Language Support Centre* can now offer you **native-speaker** translation and proofreading help with not only *English*, but also *Arabic*, *Bangla*, *Bulgarian*, *Chinese*, *Czech*, *Danish*, *Dutch*, *Farsi*, *Finnish*, *French*, *German*, *Greek*, *Hebrew*, *Hindi*, *Hungarian*, *Icelandic*, *Italian*, *Japanese*, *Korean*, *Kurdish*, *Malay*, *Nepali*, *Norwegian*, *Polish*, *Portuguese*, *Rumanian*, *Russian*, *Serbo-Croat*, *Spanish*, *Swedish*, *Turkish*, *Ukrainian*, *Urdu* and *Vietnamese*.

And we can translate and proofread scientific papers in *English*, *Danish*, *Russian* or *Czech*.

Hi Michael

Could I humbly :) ask you if you might know what "afsnit" is in English? It is somewhere in a hospital. Could it be station? ward? – but ward is "afdeling", I believe ... Could one say section? It is some form of subdivision ...

The problem arises because the subdivisions in a hospital are treated differently in Danish and English. In Danish, the terminological focus is on administrative hierarchy, while in English the focus is on the physical space.

A ward in English is a room with beds for patients, usually requiring similar treatment. Often a ward is quite big (like a Danish *afdeling*), but some wards are smaller (like a Danish *afsnit*).

In non-hospital contexts, e.g. universities, companies, etc., the word *afsnit* usually = section, and this can also be the case with parts of a large ward in a hospital, but remember the difference in focus. But a large hospital might also be divided into sections, e.g. for different age groups, each of which contains one or more wards.

So you cannot rely on these words being used in a strictly hierarchical way as you might expect from the use of "equivalent" words in Danish.

Focus or emphasis?

Dear Lawrence

I hope that you have time to answer a very short question, which is whether we should use the word "focus" or "emphasis" in the following sentence:

Physical activity in the Danish population with **focus/emphasis** on recommendations.

A subtle one! In the context, I feel *focus* is the right choice. The word *emphasis* is heavier and tends to suggest that the recommendations are the main content. The word *focus*, on the other hand, suggests more that a study was made in order to be able to make some recommendations.

The Language Support Centre

Finally, here are some new pictures of the new centre taken by my two daughters:



The south-facing roof terrace



The view from the roof-terrace



And the view to the north ...

More exciting news and tips next month!

Best wishes
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www.Englishsupport.dk
Your natural language partner