

N B: 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!*

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Dear friends

English support will be holding a little “seminar” at Business House in Roskilde on Thursday 26 May under the title: *Do you speak “danglish”?* Those of you for whom it is not too far to come would be most welcome. The seminar is FREE for customers, associates, collaborating partners, and just about anybody else vaguely or potentially connected with *English support* (see below).

A question of word order

Two or three translators have asked me recently for advice on word order in English. Their problem is with adverbials. EV wrote: “I think it’s very difficult to work out where to put **also** and **soon** in a sentence, especially if they are both to go in the same sentence”, while AR and KG wanted more general guidance on word order with adverbials.

This is a very complex question and there is no way I could do justice to it in half a page – not even if I limited myself to **also** and **soon**. So I have decided to prepare a short grammar sheet on this issue, which I hope to have ready soon for those who are interested.

In the meantime, a lot of mistakes could be avoided if the following three rules are followed:

1. Adverbials should never come between a verb and its object (though this can happen if the object is another clause: *He said **on Saturday** that he would come today*).
2. Longer adverbials (two or more words) should be placed either *before the subject* or *after the verb and its object (if any)*. They should *not* normally come in the middle of the *subject-verb-object* group of a clause.
3. Since English likes to get to the verb as soon as possible, starting a clause with an adverbial gives it emphasis and you should never have more than one in this position. Longer adverbials usually come at the end of the clause (i.e. after any object of the verb):
*He met her **at the café every day**.*

Only short (one-word) adverbials can go in the middle of the *subject-verb-object* group, and the word **also** is one of a small group of adverbials that *always* go in this middle position (though in US English it can also go right at the end of the sentence, like *too* in British English).

The problem, of course, is to define exactly where the “middle” of the *subject-verb-object* group is! That requires more space. As do all the exceptions and special cases, typical of English.

Most adverbials of time cannot go in the middle, but **soon** is one of a small group of exceptions to this rule. So both **soon** and **also** can be present in the middle at the same time, in which case their sequence could express a subtle difference of meaning depending on whether the **also** refers to **soon** as well as the verb (*He will **also soon** be here* – i.e. neither one of two people is here yet) or just the verb (*He will **soon also** be here* – one person is present, the other expected soon).

From the workshop...

Looking forward to ...

A very common mistake is to write something like: *I look forward to **hear** from you.* This is just plain wrong. The correct usage is: *I look forward to **hearing** from you.* This is because the word “to” here is a preposition and not the “to” in the infinitive form: *to hear.* Contrast: *I hope **to hear** from you soon.* After prepositions, the gerund (*ING*-form) is used: *After **hearing** this, he left.*

Customers and costumers

These two words are often confused. *Word*'s spelling checker will not catch the mistake, and your *customers* will end up wondering why you call them *costumers*! (A *costumer* works in a theatre, supplying actors with costumes).

The below-mentioned form

The usual way of referring to a form (or anything else) below the text is to say *the form below.* If you like, the words *this text* are understood (i.e. not stated). The word *above* can be used in the same way (e.g. *See the graph above*), but here there is another usage which is perhaps more common. It comes from business letters and takes the form of referring to *the above* (something). This is short for *the above-mentioned*, but that is very formal nowadays. So the most common usage is: *The above X* and *The X below.*

I will revert if I need your help ...

Another phrase often seen in e-mails is the above misuse of the verb *revert.* While it is true that *to revert to* something (a topic, a religion, childhood, etc.) does mean *to get back to* in a certain sense, but that does *not* include the informal, modern expression: *I will get back to you.* That is what is meant here and should have been used. *Tip:* Keep it simple!

English support invites you to a seminar...

Do you speak “danglish”?

Globalisation means that more and more business is conducted in English. Not only business letters, but marketing materials, including web pages, are produced in English. But when we write in a foreign language, it is all too easy to be influenced by our mother tongue. Come and hear Lawrence White on where Danes (and others) often go wrong in English, how to do better, and where to go for help – *no prizes for guessing that one!* Lots of good tips to take home.

Time: 3 – 5 pm, Thursday, 26th May 2005.

Place: Business House, Roskilde

Please note: This seminar is FREE for all business associates of Business House, members of Roskilde Business Associations – and all you lucky people who are on the *English support* mailing list. *But space is limited, so if you want to come, please let us know.* You can register on www.BusinessHouse.dk or contact Business House on 70 26 89 10.

Look forward to seeing you!

Best wishes

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