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Dear friends

Turnover for the first quarter of this year is already well up on the previous quarter, which itself was the previous best. So business is booming, and looks like continuing to do so. This does not mean wealth and riches, of course. After all, we are talking about the language business! But it does promise solid and steady future growth, giving more work to more people. And more and more people are also offering their services to *English support*.

Office space

As mentioned in last month's issue, *English support* has an option on some 50 square metres of office space in Business House. This creates a special opportunity for partners who would like a base in Roskilde. The idea is that language and communication freelancers working under the same roof can help each other and attain synergic gains.

This office space is now expected to become available from the beginning of April. If you are interested in an office or sharing an office at an address in the heart of Roskilde, please get in touch as soon as possible!

Course: *Business English Skills*

TIME: 9:00 am – 12:30 pm, four Saturday mornings: 11th March – 1st April inclusive

PLACE: Business House, Jernbanegade 23 B, Roskilde

COST: 2000 kr. (incl. VAT) per person

No wine yet for the professor!

It's a sad story (see last month's issue), but none of our readers seems to have been able to find even *one single solitary grammar book, dictionary or style guide* published in the English-speaking world that says *mr* or *mrs* is even possible, never mind normal.

Of course, the English-speaking world is a big place, so we should probably allow one more month. *After all, the professor seemed so sure of his case.*

But if no one can help him wade through all the literature to find his "source", he won't get that bottle of wine I've promised him.

And he has personally had all the time since well before Christmas to come up with something or other. *I wonder what's keeping him...* ☺



Be aware!

This is a straight case of mistranslation. Usually all it means is *Please note*. On a notice warning about some danger, the intended meaning is something like *Watch out!* or *Take care!*

Awareness is such a vague, general word that it almost always needs qualification, e.g. *political awareness* or *sexual awareness*. Similarly, the adjective *aware* needs contextual concretisation, e.g. *I am aware of that fact*. The use of either word without qualification sounds oddly vacuous.

To, too and two

There are two combinations that often get mixed up here: *to* and *too*, and *to* and *two*. Until very recently, I had never seen *too* confused with *two*.

The most common confusion is to substitute *to* for *too* used as a submodifier (e.g. in expressions like *a bridge too far*, and *it costs too much*). When *too* is used as an adverb, meaning *also*, there is usually no spelling problem.

The confusion of *to* with *two* is a special blind spot in Denmark, caused by the fact that the Danish for *two* is *to*.

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The present perfect vs. the past

English uses the present perfect tense (e.g. *I have finished*) in a more limited way than Danish, French, German and many other languages. It is best thought of as a present tense. It is used to make a kind of flash-back in time that throws light on the situation now. In a great many other languages, it is also (or even mainly) used to talk about the past. But in English, whenever we focus on a past time, we must use the *past tense*.

If I say, *I have worked as a teacher for many years*, this means that I still do. If I wanted to say that I no longer work as a teacher, I would say, *I worked as a teacher for many years*.

The sentence, *I have lost my keys*, means that I do not have them now. If I had already found them again, I would have said, *I lost my keys*.

So the present perfect in English could be called the “before-now” tense. It deals with *time before now and related to now*, in contrast to *past time*.

You cannot use it where you have a time adverbial in the past (e.g. *yesterday*, *two seconds ago*, *in 1851*). You cannot use it when the focus is on an activity completed in the past, which cannot be repeated, or in some other way clearly belongs to the past.

For example: *Steen Kaalø has written a lot of poetry*, while *Shakespeare wrote a lot of poetry*. Steen Kaalø is still writing poetry, unlike William Shakespeare...

Best wishes
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