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News & Tips

from

English support

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!*

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Happy New Year to all our readers!

Dear friends

Well, here we are, in the new year! *English support* is celebrating its 4th birthday (b. 1.1.2004), and as usual, we present our vision for the coming year, extremely mindful of the fact that certain aspects of our vision for 2007 (and even for 2006) have yet to be achieved. But there is no doubt that we are in a much stronger position today than we have ever been, and we are getting stronger all the time.



Vision for 2008

We closed the year by supplying *Roskilde Business College* with a 6-language translation of their terms and conditions for foreign students. The six languages were Bangla, Chinese, Hindi, Nepali, Polish and Urdu. These top-quality translations required an extension of our network and expertise into languages and scripts from the Indian subcontinent.

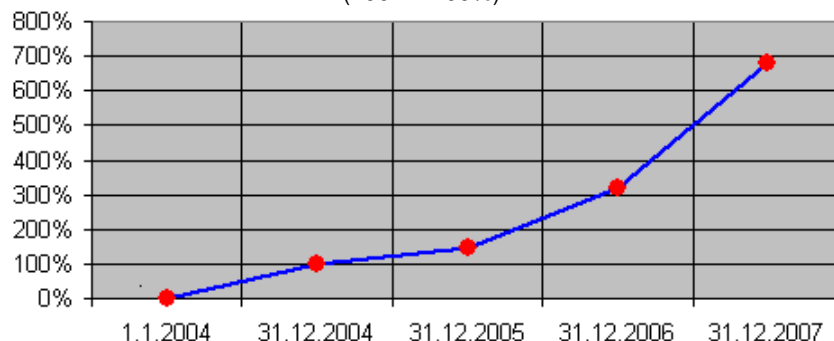
Our vision this year is to expand our network of native-speaker language experts still further. Our *Language support* website must be up and running on full blast in the first half of the year, and the considerable resources now represented by the *English support* network must be put to full use.

The overwhelming majority of our work will remain concerned with English, and like last year, teaching will be a large part of this. We already have pre-orders for nearly half a million Danish kroner in 2008. Much of this is teaching, since that is one activity which really does need to be booked well in advance. But translation and proofreading will certainly dominate the picture as the year goes on. And we will continue to fight for better English, both in Denmark and abroad.

Finally, we hope that the general trend from our first four years will continue. ☺

Turnover: First 4 years

(2004 = 100%)



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Please turn over!

As – a word with many meanings

The little word *as* has many meanings, so the basic rule for non-native speakers is: *Use it with caution!* If you have a perfectly good alternative, you would be well advised to use it instead – for the sake of clarity.

For instance, one common usage of *as* is the temporal meaning of *while*, as in: “*I noticed the man as I was crossing the road*”. But *as* in this sentence could also mean cause or reason: “*I noticed the man because I was crossing the road*”.

To avoid this kind of ambiguity, it is best to use a conjunction that clearly expresses the meaning you intend in such sentences, e.g. *while* or *because*, rather than *as*.

Like instead of as

When making comparisons between one noun and another: “*Elizabeth sings like a bird*” or “*Like children, small dogs need love and care*”.

As instead of like

When describing how someone or something is regarded, or what their function is: “*They thought of him as slow*”; “*She was described as an expert*”; “*As a parent, I think education is important*”.

As or like

In some situations, both *as* and *like* can be used, but the meaning is different: “*He worked as an auditor*” means that was his role or job, whereas, “*He worked like an auditor*” means that he worked in a similar way to the way an auditor works – *not* that he was an auditor or played that role.

As, just as, and like

“*When in Rome, do as they do in Rome*”. This use of *as* means *the same as* and is often prefaced with *just* in modern English: “*He did just as I told him*”.

With verbs other than *do*, it is common to use *like* instead: “*She wore a sari like they do in India*”, and with action verbs *just as* could mean *at the same time as*, so *like* will often be used for the sake of immediate clarity: “*He came down the stairs like his sister had done*” – contrast: “*He came down the stairs just as his sister arrived*”.

But there is a special usage in which *as* alone is followed by inversion with the verbs *to be* or *have* or an auxiliary or modal verb and used

to indicate that a statement also applies to another subject: “*He came down the stairs, as did his sister*”; “*I am a teacher, as is my wife*”.

As ... as

When used to make adjectival comparison, *as* is usually used in pairs: “*It was not as difficult as she had expected*”.

The same applies to adverbial comparisons: “*The car did not go as fast as she expected*”.

And the closing *as*-clause can be left out if it is clear what is being compared: “*It was not as difficult*” or “*The car did not go as fast*”.

Note: the negative “*not as ... as*” could be replaced with “*not so ... as*” in both the above examples.

Such ... as

The word *as* can also be a relative pronoun after *such*: e.g. “*All such staff as have been off sick*” means the same as “*All those staff who have been off sick*”. The first sounds a little stiff, so it is best to use the latter.

Like or such as

And *such as* can be used to introduce examples: “*Public employees, such as policemen, nurses and teachers, ...*”. Here, *such as* can be replaced with *like*.

As at, as from, as of, as per

The word *as* is often used in conjunction with a preposition to indicate the limited sense in which something is true: “*The figures as at 9 am on Tuesday*” means the figures as they were then, not as they may have been at any other point in time.

From the workshop...

As – contd.

As if, as though, and like

These are common when describing how someone or something looks or behaves: “*She looked at me **as if** I were mad*”; “*Their furniture looked **as though** it had all been bought quite recently*”.

Note that in more colloquial English (both British and US) these are often replaced with *like*, and the (formal) subjunctive (*were*) disappears: “*She looked at me **like** I was mad*”.

The same ... as, similar ... to, different ... from

The same is often followed by *as*: “*She lives in **the same** road **as** I do*”. Contrast: “*She lives in **a similar** road **to** the one I live in*”, and “*She lives in **a different** road **from** the one I live in*”. Note that *to* and *from* are prepositions, while *as* in the first sentence is a conjunction.

A prepositional *as* is also possible here: “*She lives in **the same** road **as** the one I live in*”, but this is commonly colloquially reduced to “*She lives in **the same** road **as** me*”.

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.

Just and only

The adverb *just* has several meanings: *exactly*, *by a near thing*, *very recently*, *really* and *merely*:

“*It is **just** what I wanted*”; “*The food lasted **just** long enough*”; “*She has **just** arrived*”; “*The film was **just** brilliant*”; “*He was **just** an ordinary man*”.

The adverb *only*, by contrast, has just one meaning: the event or action of the verb is *limited* to the people or things that follow the word *only* in the sentence:

“***Only** the good die young*”; “*He encountered difficulties **only** when he came to London*”; “*It could have happened **only** by mistake*”.

Only as an adjective

The word *only* can also be applied to a noun or the word *one*:

“*She is the **only** woman for me*”; “*She is the **only one** for me*”; “*That was my **only** copy*”; “*It was the **only** thing they could do*”; “*He found **only** two mistakes*”.

Only as an adjective is seldom seen with an indefinite noun, but there is one common exception: *an only child*. This means that the child has no brothers or sisters.

Only as a conjunction

The word *only* can also play the role of a conjunction expressing contrast:

“*He says he’ll come, **only** I don’t believe it*”; “*She thought she was a princess, **only** she wasn’t*”.

This usage is longstanding and well established, but some people mistakenly think it is colloquial or informal. If you are one of these, use *but* or *except that* instead. ☺

Please turn over!

Am I being difficult?

Dear Lawrence

Are you trying to make it difficult for the **Translatørforeningen** and **Translatørforbund** to reach agreement on a merger by once again raising the question of Dee Shields' attack on *English support*? Wouldn't it be better to let bygones be bygones?

Well, I don't really have an opinion on whether it is a good thing or not for the two organisations to merge. Time will tell. And since I am not a member of either organisation, it's none of my business. The attack on *English support*, however, is my business. So long as it is not repudiated, retracted or apologised for, and my right of reply is denied, what it means is that the leadership of *Translatørforbund* fully backs the attempt to damage the reputation of my company. Not only is such backing clearly indicated in Mette Aarslev's e-mail reported in *News & Tips* No.21, but the article is still pumping out its poison on the *Translatørforbund* website.

I have given the leadership of *Translatørforbund* plenty of time to rethink their position. They have not done so. Now they want to merge with *Translatørforeningen*. This makes it one of the issues the latter must clear up before the merger can take place. Otherwise, the new organisation will clearly take on legal responsibility for the slander in *MDTNyt* and become only place I will be able to seek redress.

So before the issue can be called a "bygone", it is surely obvious that *both* organisations need to distance themselves from Dee Shields' article.

One word or two?

Dear Lawrence

How do you write **Introduktionsprogram** in English? Is it **introductionprogramme** in one word or two, or is it **introductory programme**?

Hope you have time to answer, because it would be a great help.

Unlike Danish and German and some other languages, the most common way in which English combines nouns is to use one of them as an adjective: e.g. *town hall*, *railway station*, *car park*, *kitchen utensil*. The two words in the compound are written separately, but (usually) only the second one takes a plural form. So the first can be considered as being used adjectivally.

There are exceptions to this two-word pattern, but they are relatively few and can be found as separate entries in the dictionary. Sometimes the two words have grown together into one word, e.g. *railway*, *audiotape*, and just occasionally they may be linked with a hyphen where they clearly form one concept but not yet one word, e.g. *city-state*, *owner-operator*, *owner-occupier*.

So *introduction programme* would be two words. But here another factor comes into play: where there is an adjectival form of the noun (here *introductory*) with the same meaning in the context, we prefer to use the adjectival form rather than the noun as an adjective. So we don't speak of *atmosphere pressure* but of *atmospheric pressure*, and, instead of *parliament questions*, we say *parliamentary questions*. So the best solution for you here is probably **introductory programme**.

More next month!

Best wishes

Lawrence White

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