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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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Dear friends

There are a number of events of particular interest this month. **Iværk08**, Denmark's biggest trade fair for small and newly started businesses takes place on 12–13th September. The **Copenhagen Language Festival** organised by the Copenhagen Esperanto Association is on 21st September. And the **Communication and Language Forum 2008** organised by the *Union of Communication and Language Professionals* is on 25th September. See details on each event later in this issue.

Helping organisations in Denmark communicate with the rest of the world

Like many other translation companies, *English support* helps companies communicate their message to the rest of the world. We translate primarily into English, but our network of native-speaker language consultants covers 30 languages in all. So a lot of companies who want their websites, brochures or other materials in both Danish and English, or perhaps in several languages, come to us for what we call “one-stop shopping”. One company for all your translation work.



The *Sea Stallion* in Roskilde Fjord on 9 August.
Photo: Werner Karrasch,
Viking Ship Museum, Roskilde

This service is particularly important for small businesses, which is why we will be at the **Iværk08** trade fair. But there are a great many other organisations and institutions who have the same need for high-grade multi-lingual communication. For example, we translated all the reports of the voyage of the Viking Ship Museum's longship reconstruction, the *Sea Stallion*, as it sailed back home from Dublin this year. And we supply six-language translations to *Roskilde Business College* for prospective international students from eastern Europe, the Indian sub-continent, and China.

Helping scientists in Denmark communicate with the rest of the world

This year's *Communication and Language Forum* is focused on the communication of knowledge. Perhaps the most obvious and direct communication of new knowledge takes place in scientific papers, and *English support* is very heavily committed to helping scientists in Denmark produce better scientific papers.

To that end we not only proofread and edit a lot of scientific papers for researchers, but we also run courses in *Scientific Writing* at Denmark's Technical University (both in Lyngby and at Risø) and for Copenhagen University's Faculty of Life Sciences.

The courses are based on our pamphlet, *How to write a scientific paper*, and they motivate researchers to think in new ways about scientific papers and to express themselves in a clear and simple structure and style. And they have proved extremely popular.

You can order the pamphlet direct from www.englishsupport.dk.

How to write a scientific paper

Lawrence White

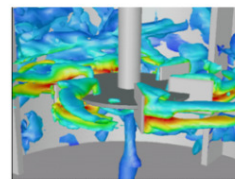


Figure 1: Global distribution of population for the year 2000 in author's brain

A brief practical guide to writing scientific papers in English, written for people who do not have English as their mother tongue

From the workshop...

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!

Arrive at and come to

These two phrasal verbs got a mention last month in contrast to the verb to *reach*. But it is also worthwhile noting the important difference between them.

Verbs of motion are usually followed by the preposition *to*: you *go to* the bank, *come to* a party, *run to* the railway station, *move to* another house, *fly to* Moscow, and so on. And the same applies to phrases implying movement: you take the bus *to* the bank, drive your car *to* the party, etc.

But in each case, you *arrive at* the bank, *arrive at* the party, and so on. The focus with *arrive* is on where you are *after* the movement rather than on the motion itself.

Moreover, the idea of movement can be combined with other prepositions: you can *go into* the bank, *go up to* a person, *climb on to* a table, and so on. If we used *arrive* in these cases, we would have to say: you *arrive in* the bank, *arrive at* the person, and *arrive on* the table.

So the verb *to arrive* is best not thought of as a verb of motion at all, even though if you *arrive* somewhere it means you were in motion just before you arrived... ☺

Get to

Note: The phrasal verb *to get to* is used both as a verb of motion and in the sense of *to arrive at*.

So you might ask a policeman how to *get to* Trafalgar Square (i.e. how to *move* from here *to* there). But when he has explained how to do that, he might say that you will know when you *get to* (i.e. *arrive at*) Trafalgar Square because you will see Lord Nelson's statue and a lot of pigeons.

At with aims, arms and looks

Where the subject of the verb does not move, though something else may, we often use *at*. So we *aim at* a goal, *shoot at* a target, *look at* a person, and so on.

Again we can make a contrast. If I point *towards* something, I point in its general direction, whereas if I point *at* it, I am being more precise.

To and towards

In English, we speak of the plane *to* London and the boat *to* Greenwich. We can also say the plane *for* London and the boat *for* Greenwich. But we do not normally say the plane *towards* London or the boat *towards* Greenwich.

The word *towards* is used for the *direction in which you face or point* something. It does not imply either the actual or intended *completion* of a journey or movement, which is usually the sense we want with boats and planes and other means of transport. But, of course, you can turn your boat *towards* the shore and your plane *towards* London (i.e. change the direction in which it is pointing).

“Language is the key to inter-cultural dialogue”

COPENHAGEN LANGUAGE FESTIVAL 2008

11 AM to 9 PM, Sunday 21 September, in Kulturhuset Dortheavej 61, 2400 Copenhagen NV

Information: <http://www.sprogfestival.dk>

Tel. 39 89 10 13 or e-mail: chatterjeebetty@hotmail.com

See you there!

From the workshop...

History and story

These two words have a common origin, but are used quite differently in English. While *history* is usually meant to be what actually happened, a *story* is usually fictional. Where both words *could* be used (as in “*the story of Buckingham Palace*”), the choice of the latter usually implies a more popular or gossipy account of “goings-on” rather than a strictly factual account.

Safety and security

These two words do not have a common origin, but are often just one concept in other languages. They do *overlap* in meaning (e.g. “*All the security at airports nowadays is for our own safety*”), but they are two quite separate concepts in English.

Security and the adjective *secure* relate to the avoidance of criminal intrusion or violence (whether against a person or property). The verb to *secure* can mean little more than to take possession of something.

Safety and the adjective *safe* relate more to the avoidance of personal injury or illness. So *safety* and *security* can conflict: the *safety* of people attending a discotheque may require that the emergency exit doors remain unlocked, while the *security* of the premises may lead to them being locked.

So the people who guard premises are often referred to as “security”, while the “safety officer” is the person who tries to ensure “safety at work”.

Humour and mood

In modern English, *humour* (US: *humor*) and *humorous* are related to being funny (in the sense of making people laugh), but there are a few expressions that preserve the older meaning of a *state of mind* or *mood*, e.g. if you are *in a bad mood*, you might be said to be *out of humour*.

Tip for non-native speakers: Use the word *humour* only in its modern sense!

REMEMBER:

KOMMUNIKATIONS- OG SPROGFORUM 2008

(Communication and Language Forum 2008)

9 AM to 4 PM, Thursday 25 September, in “Ovnhallen”, CBS Copenhagen

Information and booking: <http://www.kommunikationogsprog.dk/Forum>

Tel. 33 91 98 00 or e-mail: forum2008@kommunikationogsprog.dk

See you there!

Farther and further

The comparative form of *far* can be *farther* or *further*, but in modern English the latter form is by far the most common (especially in British English, but also in American English). If used at all, *farther* is only used as an adjective of literal distance.

Further, on the other hand can be used as an adverb (e.g. “*He further annoyed me by being drunk at the time*”) meaning *additionally*. It can even be a verb – meaning to *promote* (e.g. “*He was just furthering his own interests*”).

Farthest and furthest

With the superlative forms, US English tends to prefer the former and British English the latter, although the preferences are not quite so clear cut as with the comparative forms.

Further and furthermore

Some people use the word *further* in the sense of *furthermore*. I do not recommend this usage for non-native speakers, because it is so easy to use it in the wrong place. ☺

So if you mean *furthermore*, use *furthermore*.

Where was the Danish Government?

When the *Sea Stallion* came home to Roskilde, fifteen thousand people came to the Viking Ship Museum to welcome the ship and crew home after the long voyage from Dublin. And there were official speeches of welcome from Poul Lindor Nielsen, the mayor of Roskilde, Dr Martin Mansergh, TD, Irish Minister of State at the Department of Finance and the Department of Arts, Sports and Tourism, and of course Tinna Damgård-Sørensen, the Director of the Viking Ship Museum in Roskilde.

Notable by their absence was any representative of the Danish Government.

Ask people round the world what they know about Denmark, and the chances are they will mention two things: the Mohammad cartoon crisis and the *Sea Stallion*. As Henrik Kastoft, a communication consultant with the UN, put it, the *Sea Stallion* is a 30-metre long piece of sailing public diplomacy. In fact, he suggested it should be financed by the Foreign Ministry! Hundreds of thousands of people all over the world followed this two-year project, and the BBC made a two-hour documentary on it, which has recently been shown to millions of viewers all across Europe.

Yet the surprising fact of the matter is that the Irish Government contributed *ten times* as much to the project as the Danish Government, that private foundations in Denmark also played a much more significant role, and that marine archaeology in Denmark is desperately short of public funding.

Research and innovation

Unfortunately, the same is true of research in general. Those whose job it is to decide these things tell me that the lack of funds means that at least as many good research projects get turned down as are given grants. This not only a terrible waste, but it means that researchers often spend a lot of time competing for limited funds instead of on research!

Another area of waste is in the field of new businesses. Most collapse within the first two years because starting up in business can be tough, even when the business idea is good. Free business consultancy support for the first year would probably save a lot of trouble for all concerned.

It really is time the Government put more money behind all the talk about the importance of knowledge and innovation for Denmark's future!

Come and support innovation at Denmark's biggest trade fair for start-up businesses

IVÆRK08

Friday and Saturday, 12 and 13 September 2008, in Forum Copenhagen

Practical Information: www.ivaerk.dk
Tel. 24 40 13 79 or e-mail: info@ivaerk.dk

English support will have a stand (no. 409) in the HR area.

See you there!

Best wishes

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Your natural language partner