

To whom it may concern,

I worked with Dann Vinther for more than a year at Newsquest, which is one of Britain's largest newspaper groups.

I was his line manager, and Dann was one of only two non-native English speakers with whom I have worked in more than 15 years as a sub-editor in both the UK and Australia.

The English language can be complicated, and it is certainly difficult to use correctly, with odd grammatical rules that get selectively broken and with words that can mean different things in different situations.

As with any language and culture, it takes a long time of being submerged in it to truly understand the subtle nuances and hidden meanings behind words and their appropriate use in particular contexts.

There are even considerable differences between English-speaking nations. The British and Australians, for example, rely heavily on irony and sometimes sarcasm, whereas our American cousins are not so big on either. The Americans also lean towards the use of particular words or phrases, or American versions of English words – for example, 'gotten', instead of 'got'.

So it is that I can say that Dann's talent for written (and spoken) English is certainly exceptional, and such that one would not know he was actually from the Faroe Islands rather than Britain.

His headlines were often creative, always solid, and rarely if ever changed, while the copy he edited was consistently clean and never the cause of any complaints from our scores of newsrooms across the country.

Which is really quite something for a non-native English speaker – I am sure more than half of the native population of the UK would have problems being as accurate as Dann in the use of their own language.

It is obvious that language, and English in particular, is something Dann has an unusual talent for.

Julian McLeod
Regional co-ordinator
Newsquest Media Group