

Topical Pivoting
Moving students from B2 to C1 with practice in dynamic topic management
by Carole Eilertson

'Good point but to be honest ...'

Quotes

On topical Pivots:

'The expressions tend to be figurative phrases (i.e. larger than one word), many may be learned as single items, and they are formulaic or relatively fixed in composition.'

Drew and Holt

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**On the Differentiator between B2 and C1:**

*B2: An independent learner who can process and pass on comprehensive information (11 words)*

*C1: A competent learner who can direct and chair discussions involving complex information.*

(12 words)

Common European Framework

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On what language is:

'Language is not just a window onto the world but a fistula, an open wound through which our innards are exposed to an infectious world.'

'Language has a dual function.

One: it conveys content, a promise, a proposition a command.

Two: it ratifies or changes a relationship type. People aren't just modems downloading data into each others brain. We always have a social relationship with the person we are talking to.'

Steven Pinker, Harvard Professor of Psychology

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**On memes:**

*'Could International Business English be a meme?'*

Mark Powell, EFL author

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On referential meaning versus interpersonal meaning:

'...the speech of many Finns is 'more densely packed with information since almost all words carry referential that rather than interpersonal meanings'

Nikula (1992) as quoted by R. Wilkins

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**On problems:**

*'A problem is a perceived gap between a current situation and a desired outcome.'*

Source: Unknown (Something Carole came across 20 years ago in a book on Technical English. She would love to know the original author and credit him or her.)

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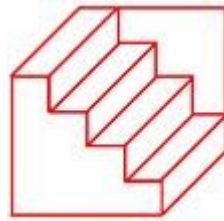
Author Team

Carole Eilertson: cjeilert@aol.com ~ Tel. 00 49 (0) 40 472 334 ~ Skype: carolejudith (Hamburg)

Louise Kennedy: louise.kennedy@online.de ~ Tel. 00 49 (0) 160 97 33 1085 ~ Skype: louise.kennedy (HH)

Illusions

Reversing Staircase



‘The Schroeder reversing staircase is another example of the *multistable figure*. After a few moments, most people experience the staircase inverting, or turning upside down. As we continue to observe the Schroeder staircase or the , we become more and more certain about the nature of the object we are viewing. When we have become perfectly certain, our image of (the in going Necker cube or) the up going staircase vanishes (we cannot perceive a certainty), and is replaced by the alternative image: the outgoing cube or the downgoing staircase. As that object becomes nearly certain to our brains, the orientation shifts again.’

The Rubin Vase

A Figure/Ground illusion by the Danish psychologist Edgar Rubin



To see an amazing 3-dimensional version of this with the vase spinning and the figures talking go to this site:

http://www.psychologie.tu-Dresden.de/i1/kaw/diverses%20Material/www.illusionworks.com/html/talking_vase.html

Backgrounds are essentially formless and serve mostly to help us judge the location of objects we see in front of them. Psychologists use the terms figure and ground to label an object and its background, respectively. The classification of an item as a figure or as part of the background is not an intrinsic property of the item; rather, it depends on the behaviour of the observer. Sometimes, we receive ambiguous clues about what is object and what is background.’

Carlson, 1993, p137

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... and even more mind-blowing is this spinning dancer. You will finally find out if you are right-brained or left-brained.

<http://www.news.com.au/heraldsun/story/0,21985,22556281-661,00.html>



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Must Reads - Great Lit

Gossip

If you've ever wondered why we gossip, read:

'Grooming, Gossip, and the Evolution of Language' by Robin Dunbar.

He theorizes that humans are the only primates that use language, and that we gossip to strengthen our social status.

Source: Robin Dunbar, Professor of Psychology, University of Liverpool

Gesturing

Can't find the right word? You might want to start moving your hands. New research at the University of Alberta suggests that gesturing while you talk may improve your access to language.

Source: <http://www.newswise.com/articles/view/511676>

Paul Drew, Elizabeth Holt

Idiomatic expressions as topical pivots

<http://www.cs.bham.ac.uk/~jab/CorpusLinguistics2001/Abstracts/drew.htm>

Almut Koester

Koester, A. 2006. Investigating Workplace Discourse. London, Routledge. ISBN 0-415-36471-X, 183 pp.

Koester, A. 2004. The Language of Work, London: Routledge. ISBN 0-415-30730-9, 124 pp.

Koester, A. 2000c. Teaching spoken discourse: What we can learn from 'real conversations.

Koester, A. 2002. The Performance of speech acts in workplace conversations and the teaching of communicative functions. System 30 (2): 167-184. ISSN: 0346-251X

Koester, A. 2005. A corpus-based study of politeness and solidarity in workplace conversations. TESOL Applied Linguistics Forum 25 (2):

http://www.tesol.org/s_tesol/docs/3600/3597.html?nid=2857

Koester, A. 2007. The Contribution of Materials Development in ESP: The case of Business English. A TESOL Symposium: Teaching English for Specific Purposes, Universidad Argentina de la Empresa, Buenos Aires, Argentina, 12 July 2007. Alexandria, Virginia: Teachers to Speakers of Other Languages, Inc. (This should be available from the TESOL website, but possibly only for TESOL members - I'm not sure. Ask Almut.)

Whitstable, Kent

In Pulverness, A. (Ed.). IATEFL 2000 Dublin Conference Selections. Whitstable, Kent: IATEFL, 55-56

Mark Powell

Working language: Unnatural selection

It's a dog-eat-dog world: Mark Powell makes the case for Idiomatic evolution

Working language: Recycling is the answer

Working language; Get a slimmer model

http://www.onestopenglish.com/sub_subscribe.asp

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Steven Pinker

The Stuff of Thought - Language as a Window into Human Nature (Allen Lane/Penguin)

The Language Instinct

Words and Rules

Gesturing and Language

<http://www.newswise.com/articles/view/511676>

Richard J. Wilkens :Cultural terms for communication: sources of intercultural asynchrony in ESL settings in Finland.

<http://www.allbusiness.com/to-be-deleted/sector-54-professional-scientific/3960571-1.html>

Carole Eilertson

Topical pivots: Using topical pivots to direct discussions

Zooming and grooming: Tailoring relationship-building talk to different business settings

Up to Speed Game (www.cornelsen.de/uptospeed)

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