



STYLES & INNOVATIONS IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING

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ABSTRACT

The objective of this paper is to enumerate how language is essentially a skill that learned through applied styles and innovation. It is not a content-subject like science, social studies, commerce, etc. which aims at imparting information and fill the human mind with knowledge. A skill may be called the ability to do something well. Swimming, playing, etc. are skills which people perform after acquiring them. Knowing about these things is an intellectual exercise. Cognition and using or doing them is a skill (action). It must be remembered that language is a complex skill involving styles and innovations that paper deal with.

And also paper would enlighten us to use new styles to be more innovative through language exercise. One such language exercise is added.

Styles and Innovations for English Language Teaching:

- Styles that involve real communication are essential for language learning
- Language exercises in which language is used for carrying out meaningful tasks promote learning
- Language that is meaningful to the learner supports the learning process through Styles and Innovations.

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TEACHING STYLE IN LANGUAGE LEARNING CLASSROOMS

My focus in this paper is on teaching styles to the learners of various Indian languages as second language. Once the basic language skills are achieved in their target language, or along with the acquisition of the basic structures and language skills, the learners should be exposed to the ocean of literature in their target language. The heritage of the target Indian culture is directly revealed through the various literary works in the target language. Current idiomatic expressions are better learned through the literary pieces.

The second language learners attain greater facility in their target language when they begin to master and use the various styles adopted in their target language. Mastery of the styles adopted in the target language should begin in right earnest as early as possible in the language curriculum. Introduction to the style adopted in the target language enables the second language learner to gain an additional familiarity with many linguistic structures, forms, and conventions of the oral and written modes.

ON DEFINING STYLE

In order to teach styles, we must first have a clear notion of what style is. However, there are as many different approaches and different definitions of

style as there are different styles themselves. The notion regarding style should come from the linguistic differences that are likely to distinguish one style from another. This is certainly not a satisfactory or an adequate attitude towards teaching style.

In order to arrive at some working definition or understanding of style, we may list out those elements of language that generally from the notion of style irrespective of the differences in the approaches to the study of style.

LOCATING DIFFERENCES IN STYLE

We may identify the differences in style based on the following:

1. **The writer and his message:** The tone of the writing, the subject of writing, and the theme of writing are three important elements to be considered here. Strictly speaking, these are not the elements of linguistic structure. Yet without an assumption about the tone, subject, and theme of the writing and the author, we will not succeed in identifying the style employed.
2. **Lexical differences:** These differences may be considered under the following categories.
 - i. Choice of words and the variety of the language from which the words have been chosen for the purpose of the writer. For example, in Tamil, the modern writers may choose their words from a variety of sources such as classical Tamil, spoken Tamil, modern written Tamil, and regional and social dialects. On many occasions, just a simple word deliberately chosen from a specific variety, and interspersed in an utterance, carries a lot of information over and above the literal meaning conveyed by the word.
 - ii. Precise and vigorous diction.
 - iii. Concrete and abstract.
3. Idiomatic usages.
4. Figure of speech.

5. Conventions of usage such as spelling based on written or spoken, and social, regional and professional varieties, adoption of strict spelling rules that force the writer to combine words, or not following strict rules of spelling, or the choice of modern spelling with some freedom to introduce current and idiosyncratic spelling for certain specific effects.

6. Synonymy.

The list is endless, and if the teacher has an adequate background in the target language literature, he or she should be able to add to the list depending upon the interest and skill attainment of his class.

THE WRITTEN VARIETY

The written variety cannot be fully analyzed in isolation from the spoken or colloquial variety. Our understanding of the written variety clearly draws on our knowledge of the corresponding spoken variety and on our linguistic competence in general. Unless we know the relation between the spoken and written varieties in an Indian language, we will not know fully well what the target language literary piece that mixes these two varieties wishes to communicate.

Remember that Indian literature has a very, very long tradition of mixing the spoken and written varieties to bring several effects in the minds of the reader. Kalidasa has used this technique deliberately.

Natya Sastra encourages this and delineates certain conditions for mixing these two. You can cite old historical sources from other leading Indian languages such as Telugu and Kannada. In modern or current Hindi literature, mixing up the written and spoken is taken to another level. In this level, the language-like dialects are mixed within the spoken mode. Also in Urdu, we notice the mixing up of the Persian and Arabic words for specific effects. It appears that no major Indian language is an exception to the process of mixing the spoken and the written forms for specific effects. Styles are developed around this technique by the authors to suit their characters and themes.

SYNTACTIC AND MORPHOLOGICAL DIFFERENCES

1. Authors may prefer verbs to nouns in their constructions for specific purposes. Sometimes they may avoid the verbs altogether and may try to communicate with the nominalized constructions.
2. They may choose between the active and passive voice constructions.
3. They may show some preference to the abstract terms over the concrete terms, or vice versa.
4. Personal and impersonal way of narrating.
5. Emphasis on word order, co-ordination, and subordination, etc.
6. Idiosyncratic features such as clichés, exaggeration, deletion of case markers, etc.

THE TECHNIQUES OF PARAGRAPH FORMATION:

1. Unity and Coherence.
2. Length, methods of transition from one paragraph to another, variety of content within a paragraph, and emphasis.
3. Opening and closing paragraphs.
4. Expository paragraph: Description, Clarification, Comparison, Contrast, etc.

OTHER ELEMENTS

1. Comparison and analogy.
2. Simile and metaphor.
3. Manner of highlighting.
4. Manner of Narration: tense (the relationship between the time of the story and the time of discourse); aspect (the way in which the story is perceived by the narrator); mood (the type of discourse used by the narrator); and the order of events, duration of events, frequency of occurrence of the event or events, mood, and voice, etc.
5. Use of borrowed language elements.

The points presented above may be used to identify the characteristics of the style adopted and to distinguish one style from another. This is not an exhaustive list, nor is it presented in any particular order.

As the teacher begins to look at the style adopted in a literary piece, he or she will be able to identify the

specifics of the style adopted by the narrator. Once some of these specifics are noticed and brought to the attention of the students along with the communicative functions such stylistic characteristics perform in the literary piece, the students themselves will begin to identify the other characteristics of the style of the literary piece. But our focus is not on listing out the features. Our focus should be on using these features in the communication process either in the oral or written mode.

HOW DO WE DEFINE TEACHING OF STYLES?

I would suggest the following points for consideration:

1. Teaching style is not teaching the forms (words, etc.).
2. Teaching style is not teaching rhetoric.
3. Teaching style is not teaching content organization.
4. Teaching style is not teaching even the manner of presentation.
5. Teaching style in Indian language classrooms, for example, in Tamil, revolves generally around the notions of correct Tamil, error-free Tamil, Tamil free of colloquial forms, pure Tamil, simple Tamil, clear Tamil, plain Tamil, classical Tamil, etc. You can easily translate the Tamil situation into major Indian languages! Teaching style in all these situations is not really based on the notion that style is, indeed, a very personal thing. The medium-based factors such as purity, simplicity, correctness, etc., need not be mixed with the fundamental notion that style is a personal thing.
6. Style includes all the above, but is well beyond all these characteristics as well. It is a super-ordinate category, not a subordinate category.

STEPS THAT TEACHERS CAN ADOPT

How best the teacher can work with his class to teach styles? At present, information on style is restricted to pointing out the peculiar uses in the target language and the literary techniques employed in the text. While this certainly helps the

recognition of the peculiarities of the style adopted in a text, our ultimate goal is not style-recognition but the production of one's own style. In order to achieve this goal, the following processes may be adopted. The list is only suggestive of the initial steps.

1. Imitation as a beginning step; however, it is important to recognize that imitation is the anti-thesis of individual style. If imitation is continued as an exercise repeatedly, it will result in stereotype writing.
2. Influence and impact through various processes of reading, association, content similarity, etc.
3. Influence and impact are better than imitation. However, the students should consciously develop freedom from the influence and impact of the materials written by the well-known authors and should be encouraged to explore newer ways.
4. Recognition of the stylistic features, their distribution, and their function.
5. Identification of the elements that contribute to the special characteristics of a style.

6. Analysis of the elements that make the manner of expression a distinct style of the author.
7. Graded exercises with potential to result in a variety of styles.

INNOVATIVE STYLE FOR LANGUAGE EXERCISE

MIND MAPPING SESSION:

This session helps in developing communication skills. We can continuously converse on any given topic provided we know the technique of mapping our mind. Mind mapping aids in

- Generating ideas
- Connecting ideas
- Articulation of ideas

PROCEDURE:

- A topic is announced
- Ideas relating to the topic are to be noted down in the stipulated time
- These generated ideas are to be connected
- Finally the framed context is to be articulated.

Let's take 'COLLEGE' as a topic for mind mapping. Spontaneous Ideas relating to the topic are jotted down in a given table say 1 minute

Bus	Books	Faculty	Library	Ragging	Principal
Senior	Junior	Backlog	Canteen	Classroom	Cell phone
English	Sports	Club	Fees	Semester	Playground
Colleague	Cinema	Friend	Party	Parents	Goal

With every idea many sentences can be formed. If we take the first idea "bus"

- We have 7 college buses
- Our bus starts at 9 in the morning

- We have a separate bus for faculty
- Bus facility is available from Guntur

These sentences are linked into a structured paragraph as under:

TOPICS

- Mother
- Cinema
- I
- Ragging
- Friend
- Purse
- Library

PRACTICE SESSION

DATE :

TOPIC :

IDEAS :

CONNECTING IDEAS

ARTICULATION LEVELS:

CONCLUSION

I will make just one observation and conclude. Four years ago, when I entered the teaching profession I was deeply touched by sayings of B.V.Pattabiram. This is how it goes:

“CHANGE IF DISLIKE

TRY; IF IT’S HARD

LEAVE THEM IF NEITHER OF THEM”

This in Telugu saying led me to be an English teacher. Like him, the English teacher doesn’t seem to be doing what he has set out to do. And this has gone on for many decades. It’s time we took a hard look – a critical look – at our own classroom practice and reorganized it on proper

lines. I said it’s time because we live in an age of globalization when, like anything else, higher education is also going to be marketed, and we will have to compete with foreign universities on our own soil. Unless our courses are suitably restructured and our classroom methodology revitalized to meet the needs of our learners, we cannot withstand the competition, as there will be no takers for our courses. Our spoken English courses, in particular, need to be reorganized on a different styles and innovations – perhaps, on the principles of English Language Teaching which has been found to be effective. I mean, if it gets this message across – It will have served its purpose.

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