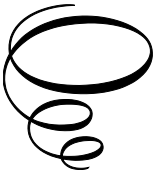
A Multidimensional Perspective on Educational Practices

Edited by

İsmail Hakkı Mirici

Cambridge Scholars Publishing



A Multidimensional Perspective on Educational Practices

Edited by İsmail Hakkı Mirici

This book first published 2026

Cambridge Scholars Publishing

Lady Stephenson Library, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE6 2PA, UK

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data
A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

Copyright © 2026 by İsmail Hakkı Mirici and contributors

All rights for this book reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without the prior permission of the copyright owner.

ISBN: 978-1-0364-6208-6
ISBN (Ebook): 978-1-0364-6209-3

CHAPTER TWO

ON PEDAGOGICAL STYLISTICS, SUSTAINABILITY, AND DISABILITY IN LANGUAGE TEACHING: SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES

MEHMET GALIP ZORBA, TAYFUR CIHANTIMUR, AND ARDA ARIKAN

Abstract

Writing instruction goes beyond acquiring rudimentary writing skills and mastering discrete grammar rules and vocabulary knowledge. As argued, linguistic forms are socially constructed in response to the functions they are required to perform. Therefore, stylistics becomes essential for foreign-language learning and teaching practices mainly because it investigates how literary and nonliterary texts are understood to convey their meanings. From this standpoint, this chapter focuses on pedagogical stylistics, SDGs, and language teaching, particularly on disability, and suggested materials to realize the goals set. Therefore, following a functional approach to learning and teaching ordinary language as a component and extension of developing students' skills, this chapter also aims to create language-teaching materials conducive to building a sustainable future.

Keywords: stylistics, English-language teaching, disability, suggested materials

Style and Stylistics

What is a text without a style? It is purely meaningless grammar. This rhetorical exchange exemplifies the importance of style in writing. With formal or informative instruction of style, apart from those who have

excellent skills in creative writing, of course, writing instruction will go beyond acquiring rudimentary writing rules. The history of the teaching of writing shows that, "In composition classes, the absence of stylistic accomplishment marked the grotesque bodies of students, who were instead taught correctness" (Howard, 2005, p. 44). Hence, if a teacher demands correctness, it is acceptable to teach the rules. Still, if the intention is to educate successful foreign-language learners who can write skillfully, then the necessity of including stylistics in the curriculum becomes more evident. Recent studies showed that undergraduate-level English language and literature students had difficulty and experienced writer's block while writing argumentative and critical essays, mainly because such essays entail a complex process in which arguments and criticality must be reflected through style (Hazaea, 2023; Zorba, 2023).

Knowing the grammar rules is only one component of one's overall language-learning experience. Language is all about style. Imagine you are reading or listening to a scientist's introduction to a lengthy speech or article:

> Cows can enter a toilet. Can we make them pee there? Yes. Germans did it. They can pee in certain spaces. Farms can treat their urine now. It pollutes nature. We can use urine as fertilizer.

An A1-level language learner will find this text understandable, while a C2-level user will find it rude and unacceptable. Comparing this to the next one, an advanced-level user of the language will see that these two texts carry similar messages but are entirely different in social use because of their "style":

> You can lead a cow to a water closet, but can you make it pee there? It turns out that yes, you can. Researchers in Germany successfully trained cows to use a small, fenced-in area with artificial turf flooring as a bathroom stall. This could allow farms to easily capture and treat cow urine, which often pollutes air, soil and water, researchers report online September 13 in *Current Biology*. Components of that urine, such as nitrogen and phosphorus, could also be used to make fertilizer. (Temming, 2021)

Both are fine pieces without severe errors regarding how English grammar is used. Hence, grammatically, they are appropriate. When comparing these two texts stylistically, we may come up with differences, such as the former needing to be longer, written without much detail, being direct, having no connectors, etc. The question is: Which one is easier to

learn while learning writing: the former or the latter? Why? The answer is obvious. The former is short and direct, but it lacks a meaningful storyline that can make understanding it easy. Having a closer look at the related literature, it can also be claimed that this speech is uttered by a schizophrenic individual whose speech lacks coherence. The latter is verbose and full of advanced lexis but is easier to imagine, for it provides the reader with a coherent storyline in a step-by-step procedure. Also, the reader senses that it is a scientific text just by looking at the lexis.

A close but brief look at the history of stylistics will help identify our goals in writing and reading. As stated by Paton (2000, p. 167), newer approaches to language learning and teaching emphasize the social dimensions of language, or, to be more exact, how we perceive foreign-language education today:

> Anglo-American stylistics has changed considerably since its emergence as a distinct field in the 1950s. As Carter and Simpson have observed, stylistics was initially concerned with defining "style" as a literary concept and identifying the characteristics of individual and period styles. The 1960s and early 1970s then saw the emergence of Noam Chomsky's transformational grammar, which led to more formalist and supposedly more "scientific" applications of stylistics. This transformational-generative approach (best represented in the United States by Richard Ohmann) was then challenged by the functional approach of the British linguist Michael Halliday, who argued that linguistic forms are not cognitively innate (as Chomsky had suggested) but are socially constructed in response to the functions they are required to perform.

For Halliday, language "needs to be studied in terms of the lived experience of its users, rather than as an abstract system of logically consistent rules" (as cited in Paton, 2000, p. 167). Reading and thinking about Halliday's attack on previous positions characterized by the study of language as an abstract system of rules may remind us of our experiences as students. For some, learning a foreign language in the classroom included a teacher's writing of "S+V2+O" on the board to understand how to use the simple past tense. This kind of teaching was premised on the belief that by learning the structures, rules, and words, one could easily use the language learned. We will not argue that this kind of learning and teaching was fruitless. Just the opposite could be true for many learners. Millions of people learned various languages this way, and such methods worked fine for them. However, teaching languages this way was boring. Worse, when the learner was exposed to other language users' spoken or written discourses in different contexts, they got lost in the ocean of many distinct

language uses circulating them. Hence, such learning included everything but one: formal instruction that creates an awareness of differences in style in communication.

A language is made of rules that users can quickly learn. With this logic, one can claim that everyone can paint given the same canvas, brushes, and paint. Leonardo, Picasso, Rembrandt, and Warhol did paint, and they did it very well. The commoners, including us, cannot draw and paint even at a minor level of beauty, but we can imagine ourselves painting between Leonardo and Warhol. However, the three of us come and sit with different skills. Naturally, the results of our painting will be pretty different. Apart from our experience, knowledge, and abilities, regardless of how successful our painting will be, there will be one aspect of our finished work that has little to do with success: style. Viewers of our completed work will notice our poor painting skills, sensing that the one on the left is by Warhol for its expressive colors and interesting, Warhol-like contours.

Foreign-language learners can resemble painters or artists. Kramsch (2000, p. 317) asks an important question: "What stylistic differences do learners bring with them to the acquisition of another language?" Although an answer to this question cannot be found unless it is approached through research studies, she explains that stylistics is a necessary part of, at least, literary reading because it "investigates how literary and nonliterary texts, as social and historical artefacts, are understood to convey the meanings they do" (p. 320).

Having a look at the following sentences that Kipling wrote to start his action-packed story will show how meaning can only be achieved only when readers "know" the words about specific animals and geography-specific language uses:

> This is the story of the great war that Rikki-tikki-tavi fought single-handed, through the bathrooms of the big bungalow in Segowlee cantonment. Darzee, the tailor-bird helped him, and Chuchundra, the muskrat, who never comes out into the middle of the floor, but always creeps round by the wall, gave him advice; but Rikki-tikki-tavi did the real fighting (Kipling, 1989, p. 13).

Reading Lewis Carroll's "Jabberwocky" presents further problems, as even knowing the grammar perfectly cannot guarantee that the reader will understand the text. Readers will quickly experience that reading a simple poem written for children, as can be seen below, has little to do with having grasped syntactical patterns in English:

> 'Twas brillig, and the slithy toves
> Did gyre and gimble in the wabe:

All mimsy were the borogoves,
And the mome raths outgrabe. (Carroll, 1988 p. 3)

When the history of stylistics is considered, one historical trend appears attractive, especially when foreign-language classrooms are considered. Bally (1951, p. 133) believed that a stylistic study of daily or ordinary language reveals that ordinary people's language use, "reflects not pure ideas but emotions, feelings, wills; impulses, in short: the language of ordinary people as an instrument of expression and action." Understanding this approach to ordinary language has significant repercussions for language learners. For instance, Pym (2014) uses Bally's sentences, all of which are used by an interlocutor to make their counterpart leave the room:

1. I want you to leave.
2. I order you to leave.
3. You have to leave.
4. You must leave.
5. Leave the room!
6. Get out!
7. Out!
8. [Gesture toward the door and facial expression indicating irritation.]
9. [Throwing the person out.]

This list shows that all these statements are equivalent in their functions in terms of the performative aspect of language, what we "do" with language, or how our utterances result in completing specific tasks. However, although their functions are almost identical, there are significant differences among these particular language uses. If we add "Could you please leave?" or "I'm kindly asking you to leave" to this list, it becomes apparent that these language uses have degrees of kindness and politeness, adding that a message can be passed across without spoken language, while "I'm kindly asking you to leave" is the politest expression. Throwing the person out by physical force is the most aggressive one. In either case, however, the speaker reaches their aim simply because the language (spoken or physical) is used to perform its intended function of making the person leave the room. Therefore, language learners must know how each of these uses carries a (slightly or seriously) different meaning and why, while also considering the possible repercussions of their speech patterns or choices.

The nuanced understanding of language's social and functional roles in these examples, apart from linguistic, corpus, or narrative stylistics, aligns with Bally's (1951) understanding of stylistics, which suggests a functional

approach to ordinary language. By working on his famous example,[1] "It's raining," we can see that this language use is not a declarative or informative statement but an emotional one. The interlocutors already know that it is raining. The interlocutor wants some elaboration on or a small chat about what is going on in daily life. Thus, language learners must learn that expressions like "It's raining" may not specifically relate to the weather in many social contexts.

The examples bring us to discuss styles in language learning and teaching. Howard (2005, p. 56) proposes, among many other terms that can be applied in the teaching of the style, the teaching and learning of reflexivity, which "would prompt students not only to engage context as a way of understanding their stylistic options but also to acknowledge what they learn about themselves and their relation to contexts." From an activity theory perspective, this means internalizing forms, uses, and semantic meanings by language users. All these notions have symbolic repercussions for reading and writing development, all of which must be carefully considered by foreign-language teachers and researchers. Learning more about the stylistic aspects of reading and writing will inevitably enrich the classroom atmosphere in which participants will develop ways of discovering and using the language they are learning in a meaningful and helpful manner.

Indeed, individual users of languages develop their styles as they continue expanding their linguistic repertoire. However, when the branch of stylistics is considered as a distinct field of study, analysis of individual differences is not significantly important because the critical task of stylistics is to link such differences with others as though they are the pieces that make up a chain of similar linguistic or artistic realities (Todorov, 2016, p. 105). Hence, comparing two different authors' styles is possible only when one gains awareness of the various particularities of distinct language pieces given in literary texts in fragments. In short, only when small "linguistic" pieces of the puzzle are put into the correct slots is further analysis of speech by users possible. As such, linguistics does not refer to a study area but a comprehensive reality of all-encompassing human knowing.

---

[1] This example is based on speakers who know it is raining, but one of the speakers wants to start a conversation, so he uses "the rain" as a starting point for their future conversation. The utterance "It's raining" is grammatical and informative, but its function is not to inform, similar to the expression: "Let's have lunch sometime!" This expression is rarely followed by an invitation or setting a time for a meeting but almost always aims to show the speaker's sympathy towards the listener. See Bally (1951) for further details.

Global Issues: Sustainability and Disability Among Many

The United Nations' new 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (SD) underlines the importance of adjusting all state-operated and private-run establishments to move citizens' focus onto global problems such as hunger, pollution, and socio-economic inequalities, and to foster swift but enduring behavioral changes. As Tang (2017, p. 1) explains:

> Global issues – such as climate change – urgently require a shift in our lifestyles and a transformation of how we think and act. To achieve this change, we need new skills, values, and attitudes that lead to more sustainable societies … Education systems must respond to this pressing need by defining relevant learning objectives and learning contents, introducing pedagogies that empower learners, and urging their institutions to include sustainability principles in their management structures.

In line with this, language-learning programs are critical in SDGs since such programs "provide excellent opportunities to develop a global orientation to sustainability studies. This is particularly true at higher-grade levels when current publications in the second language can be used as source material" (UNESCO, 2018, p. 36). Believing that converting all educational curricula to introduce such empowering pedagogies is achieved by including sustainability principles, what follows is a set of activities that can be used in English language and literature classes. Of course, teachers' curriculum designers are free to make adjustments and modifications while using such materials to make their instructional materials more suitable for their contexts. The point is to step forward to realize our shared goal as informed and responsible citizens: to ensure a safe and sound future for all organic and inorganic beings. As language teachers and curriculum designers, we can formulate this attempt simply as "language+SD." In this simple formula, language incorporates all skills and subskills, with specific attention paid to style, and SD involves all SDGs and the related targets and indicators that the UN underlines.

The materials we prepared and suggested in this chapter aim to develop each student's language skills, focusing on style and an extension towards SD. While doing that, we notably created certain activities about disability for two main reasons. First, disability is among the least represented topics or issues in language coursebooks (Bulut & Arikan, 2015) despite the pressing need to raise awareness of disability globally and socially. Second, disability is referenced in various Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), such as Goal 4, Goal 8, Goal 10, Goal 11, and Goal 17, which makes this issue critical as it allows teachers or practitioners to teach the links between

SDGs while integrating these goals into language teaching (Arikan & Zorba, 2024). The important segments presented below can give us a hint about disability in SDGs so that we can move on to the pedagogy of teaching them:

Goal 4 (Quality Education): the proposal calls for building and upgrading education facilities that are child, disability, and gender-sensitive and provide safe, non-violent, inclusive, and effective learning environments for all.
Goal 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth): to achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all women and men, including for persons with disabilities, and equal pay for work of equal value.
Goal 10 (Reduced Inequalities): empowering and promoting the social, economic, and political inclusion of all, including persons with disabilities.
Goal 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities): would work to make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe and sustainable … to provide access to safe, affordable, accessible and sustainable transport systems for all, improving road safety, notably by expanding public transport, with special attention to the needs of those in vulnerable situations, such as persons with disabilities.
Goal 17 (Partnerships for the Goals): to enhance capacity-building support to developing countries, including least developed countries (LDCs) and small island developing states (SIDS), which would significantly increase the availability of high-quality, timely, and reliable data disaggregated by disability.

Disability and the participation of individuals with disabilities in society constitute a significant agenda item for all governments and institutions today. Therefore, raising social awareness about disability is vital to establishing an inclusive world. Although laws and regulations take essential steps regarding accessibility and rights, they are not enough to change the social mindset characterized by discrimination against others based on prejudices and misperceptions. Public education, inclusive curricula, and accurate representations in the media can be strong allies in transforming society's perception of disability while combating discrimination.

As for the scope of disability, it is not only perceived as an individual health problem but as a social and cultural phenomenon. According to the medical model, disability is a personal defect, something inherent in the individual that needs to be cured or eradicated. The social model defines disability in terms of the physical, social, and systemic barriers created by society rather than the disabling characteristics of the individual. Finally, the cultural model focuses on how disability is represented in literature, art,

and media, and examines how these representations shape and are shaped by society's perception of disability. Disability studies, thus, bring together different disciplines, such as art, law, media, sociology, education, and literature, to offer an interdisciplinary perspective. For example, schooling is not merely a reflection of individuals' learning experiences but also society's prejudices and discriminatory attitudes towards various social problems, including disability; through such studies, not only do the (in)visibility of disabled individuals become apparent but also the societal realities encompassing disability become even more manageable. In that sense, the following materials/activities are prepared to help learners develop their language skills from a stylistic perspective while familiarizing them with global issues such as sustainability and its component disability.

Suggested Material I (All Levels)

Write (advanced levels)/Choose (lower levels) what this WhatsApp message is trying to say.



Fig. 2.1. WhatsApp Message

A. There is a house with mice in it, so you must see it.

B. At home, in the toilet, there is a mouse. Come urgently!

C. How come ice is so cold?

D. A building, a toilet, and a mouse are all dangerous.

E. I am home, washing my hands. Can I wash our mouse, too?

Suggested Material II (Intermediate +)

Goal: Sensitizing students with degrees of differences in meaning, using definitions to suggest/create further meanings.
Procedure: Students read the two definitions given and then decide which texts (visual or written) are science-fiction examples and which are fantasy literature (IMDb).

Definitions:

(a) Science fiction explores possible scenarios. Scientific advancements, innovative technologies, spaceships, and time machines are always popular. Science fiction is scientific!

(b) Fantasy literature is imaginative literature. The setting is in other worlds or times. The characters are supernatural or unnatural beings. There are mythological creatures that live in imaginary environments. Fantasy literature is magical!

Sentences:

(1) It is raining, Master Dwarf, and it will continue to rain until the rain is done. If you wish to change the world's weather, you should find another wizard.

(2) I finally invented something that works!

(3) The most plausible theory is that they chose places on Earth with the lowest incidence of lightning strikes.

(4) Wait a minute. Wait a minute, Doc. Ah … Are you telling me that you built a time machine?

Suggested Material III (Intermediate +)

Goals: *Should* and *must*, sensitizing students with degrees of differences in meaning, working in pairs, Sustainable Development Goals.
Procedure: Start saying/writing: "Hunger is a big problem in the world" or "Millions of people are hungry." Then, ask students to read the following sentences:

- Hunger is a big problem, especially for women and children.
- Hunger happens in countries where there are wars.
- There is almost no hunger in forest areas.
- Hunger occurs when people cannot find water.

Then, ask students to reread the problems and find solutions. After they complete their brainstorming, ask them to share. Finally, ask them to examine the issues with the two solutions provided. They should choose the correct solution by working in pairs.

Problem 1: Hunger is a problem, especially for women and children.
Solution A. There should be food programs for men.
Solution B. There should be food programs for women and children.
Problem 2: Hunger happens in countries where there are wars.
Solution A. We should spend more on guns.
Solution B. We should spend more on education.
Problem 3: There is almost no hunger in forest areas.
Solution A. We should cut all the trees.
Solution B. We should plant many trees.
Problem 4: Hunger happens when people cannot find water.
Solution A. We must use water carefully.
Solution B. We must use up all the water in the world.

Suggested Material IV (All Levels)

Goal: Sensitizing students with degrees of differences in meaning, using visual clues to suggest/create further meanings, learning about socially acceptable speech (inclusive speech) and dictionary use.

Procedure: Students read the written note titled "Socially Acceptable Speech." Then, they choose the "socially acceptable" word or expression. They can work in pairs and use their dictionaries when needed. They should also match the words/expressions with the visuals.

stewardess	flight attendant
homemaker	housewife
crippled	disabled
Hello all!	Hello guys!
The fat one is my friend.	The curvy one is my friend.
Merry Christmas!	Happy Holidays!
He is a great pet owner.	He is a great pet parent.

Socially Acceptable Speech
When we communicate, we must be kind and considerate. Gender is a case in point. We do not say "housewife" because there are also males whom we call "housemakers." We must use certain words when talking about people with disabilities. We must also be sensitive to others' religious beliefs, parenting styles, jobs, and body sizes.

Conclusion

Writing instruction goes beyond acquiring rudimentary writing skills and mastering discrete grammar rules and vocabulary knowledge. Since linguistic forms are constructed socially in response to the functions they are required to perform, knowledge and use of stylistic devices are necessary for any foreign-language learning and teaching endeavor. With this view in mind, this chapter focused on pedagogical stylistics, SDGs, and language teaching, particularly on disability, and suggested materials to realize the goals set. Therefore, following a functional approach to learning and teaching ordinary language as a component and extension of developing students' skills, we aimed to create language-teaching materials conducive to building a sustainable future. The materials suggested in this chapter require in-class practical applications so that their instructional merit can be empirically investigated. However, it should also be noted that there is a pressing need for such materials and activities focusing on integrating SDGs and underrated topics, such as disability, to disseminate the knowledge we need to build a sustainable future together as world citizens.

References

Arikan, A., & Zorba, M. G. (2024). Raising pre-service English language teachers' awareness of sustainable development goals through literary texts. International Journal of Sustainability in Higher Education, 25(8), 1681–1695. https://doi.org/10.1108/IJSHE-06-2023-0256

Bally, C. (1951). Traité de stylistique française (Seconde édition). Klincksieck.

Bulut, M., & Arikan, A. (2015). Socially responsible teaching and English language coursebooks: Focus on ethnicity, sex and disability. E-Journal of Yaşar University, 10(39), 13–20.

Carroll, L. (1988). Jabberwocky. Simon & Schuster.

Carter, R., & Paul S. (eds.). (1989). Language, discourse, and literature: An introductory reader in discourse stylistics. Unwin Hyman.

Hazaea, A. N. (2023). Process-genre approach in mixed-ability classes: Correlational study between EFL academic paragraph reading and writing. Novitas-ROYAL (Research on Youth and Language), 17(2), 1–12. https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.10015742

Howard, R. (2005). Contextualist stylistics: Breaking down the binaries in sentence-level pedagogy. In T. Johnson & T. Pace (Eds.), Refiguring prose style: Possibilities for writing pedagogy (pp. 42–56). University Press of Colorado. https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctt4cgq34

Kipling, R. (1989). Rikki-tikki-tavi. In Prentice Hall literature bronze (pp. 3–22). Prentice Hall.

Kramsch, C. (2000). Second language acquisition, applied linguistics, and the teaching of foreign languages. The Modern Language Journal, 84(3), 311–326. Retrieved September 11, 2021, from http://www.jstor.org/stable/330563

Paton, F. (2000). Beyond Bakhtin: Towards a cultural stylistics. College English, 63(2), 166–193. https://doi.org/10.2307/379039

Pym, A. (2014). Charles Bally and the origins of translational equivalence. FORUM. Revue internationale d'interprétation et de traduction [International Journal of Interpretation and Translation], 12(2), 45–63. https://doi.org/10.1075/forum.12.2.03pym

Tang, Q. (2017). Education for sustainable development: Learning objectives. United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization.

Temming, M. (2021, September 14). Potty-trained cattle could help reduce pollution. Science News. https://www.sciencenews.org/article/cow-cattle-pee-potty-training-bathroom-pollution-ammonia.

Todorov, T. (2016). Yazın kuramı: Rus biçimcilerinin metinleri. Yapı Kredi.

UNESCO. (2018). Integrating education for sustainable development (ESD) in teacher education in South-East Asia: A guide for teacher educators. UNESCO.

Zorba, M. G. (2023). Undergraduate students' writer's block in English as an academic language: Causes, coping strategies, needs. Bayburt Eğitim Fakültesi Dergisi, 18(39), 1024–1046. https://doi.org/10.35675/befdergi.1262440

References (Materials)

Britannica, T. Editors of Encyclopaedia (2024, November 1). Fantasy. Encyclopedia Britannica. https://www.britannica.com/art/fantasy-narrative-genre.

Sterling, B. (2024, November 14). Science fiction. Encyclopedia Britannica. https://www.britannica.com/art/science-fiction.

IMDb. https://www.imdb.com.