A LINGUISTIC STUDY OF TWO STYLES

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Style, according to Curtis Hayes, "is the characteristic, habitual and recurrent use of the transformational apparatus in the language."[1] It has also been defined as a writer's typical use of linguistic variables.

In previous years, style has not been described scientifically and literary critics relied merely on intuition in judging an author's style, attaching impressionistic labels to it. During the past decade, however, a big stride has been taken in the field of stylistics by the application of the principles of linguistics. Linguistics has given literary criticism a "theoretical underpinning"[2] as necessary to that undertaking as mathematics is to physics.

Harold Whitehall asserted more than twenty years ago, and he was criticized for his assertion, that "no criticism can go beyond its linguistics."[3] Developments in linguistics, especially from Noam Chomsky's 1965 model of Transformational Generative Grammar and his followers, confirmed Whitehall's judgment. Literary criticism in its modern version is the relation between the organization of the human esthetic and the features of literary structure and language.

Recent work in linguistic stylistics, as M. A. K. Halliday calls it, may be divided into three types:[4]

1. Style as a deviation from the norm.
2. Style as a recurrence of convergence of textural pattern.
3. Style as a particular exploitation of a grammar of possibilities.

This paper is concerned with style as a particular exploitation of grammatical possibilities, and as defined earlier in this paper, as "the characteristic, habitual and recurrent use of the transformational apparatus in the language"[5] or a writer's typical use of linguistic variables.

According to Ohmann, "style is a way of doing *it*."[6] *It* may be anything — from

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[1] Curtis Hayes, "A Study in Prose Styles: Edward Gibbon and Ernest Hemingway," in *Linguistics and Literary Style,* ed. by Donald Freeman (U.S.A.: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., 1970), p. 280.

[2] Donald Freeman, "Linguistics Approaches to Literature," in *Linguistics and Literary Style,* ed. by Donald Freeman (U.S.A.: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., 1970), p. 3.

[3] *Ibid.*

[4] *Ibid.,* p. 4

[5] Hayes, "A Study in Prose Styles," p. 280.

[6] Richard Ohmann, "Generative Grammars and the Concept of Literary Style," in *Linguistics and Literary Style,* ed. by Donald Freeman (U.S.A.: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc. 1970), p. 263.

piano playing to playing tennis or writing. The piano player performing a Mozart concert must strike certain notes in a certain order; the tennis player must hit the ball over the net following the rules of the game; and the writer must wield his pen following the set of rules of his language. But in each case, there is a significant amount of freedom. The piano player can choose the degree of intensity or loudness in performing the concerto; the tennis player chooses from a repertory of strokes, shots, and placements, just like the writer from his linguistic resources. The person's use of these options, in so far as it is habitual or recurrent, constitutes his style. The idea of style, therefore, implies a choice for *different* ways of expressing the *same* content.

Keeping the above-mentioned assumptions in mind, the question arises: is it possible to describe and compare the styles of American and Filipino authors using the Transformational Generative Grammar of Chomsky?

This study is an attempt to analyze 100 randomly chosen sentences written by Max Lerner and 100 similarly chosen sentences by Carmen Guerrero-Nakpil. It aims to compare these sentences to see if there is a significant difference in the written English styles of these two authors. The approach used is that previously employed by Curtis Hayes in "A Study in Prose Styles: Edward Gibbon and Ernest Hemingway".

Many studies have been made on stylistics but here, only those using the linguistic approaches to prose styles will be mentioned.

"Generative Grammars and the Concept of Literary Style" by Richard Ohmann contends that recent developments in grammar, particularly on the transformational model, promise to clear away a good deal of mist from stylistic theory and to make possible a corresponding refinement in the practice of style analysis.

He presents a simple, analytic procedure that draws on the concept of grammatical transformations. He first analyzes a part of a sentence nearly two pages long from "The Bear" by William Faulkner. He reduces the complexity of the passage by reversing the effects of three generalized transformations: relative clause, conjunctions and comparative transformations. Though the contents of the passage remain partly the same, the style undergoes a revolution which leaves no trace at all of Faulkner's style.

Ohmann uses the same procedure in his analysis of Hemingway and he changes nothing that seems crucial to Hemingway's style — only the pronominals. In the analysis of a sentence by Henry James, he finds that the procedure used in the analysis of Faulkner cannot be applied to the special style of James. Instead, he removes the embedded elements and thus gets rid of the complexity. Ohmann concludes that James' style is characterized by self-embedding. The last sample analyzed is a passage by D. H. Lawrence which depends heavily on deletion. With the deleted elements replaced, a large amount of repetition shows up. Ohmann also discovers that Lawrentian deletion is a stylistic alternative to conjunctions.

In the above study, Ohmann shows that authors prefer certain types of operations: to add, delete, reorder, and combine. He concludes that style involves the notion that there are alternative ways of saying the same thing, and that by using transformational grammar as a theoretical base, we can do away with mere intuition.

Curtis Hayes in "A Study in Prose Styles: Edward Gibbon and Ernest Hemingway" chooses at random 100 sentences from each author, making a total of 200.

He uses the textual sentence as the basic unit of description, rewrites them into simple source sentences and notes the different transformations they undergo. He makes

a table with the transformations in the left hand column, the frequency of transformations of both Gibbon and Hemingway in the center columns and the significance noted in the right hand column. He comes up with the conclusion that Hemingway's style is simple and direct as contrasted with that of Gibbon's which is elaborate and elegant. This conclusion is based not on mere intuition or impression by the reader but on significant statistical differences of the number of transformations used, their ordering, and their transformational operations preferred, like Gibbon's preference for the passive voice and Hemingway's preference for the active voice.

Hayes' study is an experiment in the use of generative transformational grammar and reflects the thesis that the generative grammar following the Chomskian model is a powerful and valuable tool in analyzing literary style. He shows that, following the above-mentioned model, generative grammar has the ability to generate or enumerate all the well-formed sentences of a language and is able to provide a deep structural description of each. Since the impression of the reader depends on the syntactic processes used by the author, then, generative grammar might help in the explication of literary style.

Hayes also concludes that transformational grammar has the power to differentiate styles and that speakers as well as writers may employ various and different models or sentence types to express relatively the same content. The intuitively felt differences between two styles can at least be explained by the types of transforms each author employs. This study does not preclude, however, the possibility that the difference may also exist on other levels like imagery, metaphor, etc. This method does not make strong claims for correcting all the ills of past analyses of style.

This present study is similar to that of Curtis Hayes, using the same number of sentences as basis for analysis and the same statistical methods. The difference is that this study uses Jacobs and Rosenbaum's "English Transformational Grammar" as basis for analysis (using the concepts of deep and surface structures as illustrated by grammatical trees) while Hayes and Ohmann used the concept of kernel sentences.

A linguist, when the corpus is too large for individual analysis, resorts to sampling. While sampling is an economical procedure, the analyst hopes that his sample is typical and representative of the data being analyzed. He, therefore, uses tests for reliability which is:

Standard Error = PQ/N

P = proportion or frequency of items being counted

Q = absence of that item

N = total number of items counted

If the Standard Error exceeds 5%, more items must be selected to reduce the error.

In this paper, however, the samples were chosen at random and limited to 200 sentences. When the standard error exceeded 5% for particular transformations, instead of looking for more items to reduce the error, these transformation were left for future studies.

To determine whether a specific transformation is characteristic of one author in comparison to another, Hayes' method of testing for statistical significance was followed. These formulas, which are used when comparing two proportions, were applied.

1. Significance $- P = \dfrac{N1P1 + N2P2}{N1 + N2}$

For example, in the case of the number of sentences with Noun Phrase complements (See Table 2: Complements in Lerner and Nakpil), the foregoing formula was applied, thus, arriving at this results:

$$P = \frac{100 \times .48 + 100 \times .26}{100 + 100}$$

$$= 74/200$$

$$= .37$$

With the P (which is simply the proportion for the two samples combined) computed as .37, the investigator proceeded to compute for the Standard Error of the difference between these two proportions:

$$2. \underline{\quad} \quad P1 - P2 \quad = \quad \sqrt{\frac{PQ + PQ}{N1 + N2}}$$

$$= \quad \sqrt{\frac{.37 \times .63 + .37 \times .63}{100 + 100}}$$

$$= \quad \sqrt{.004661}$$

$$= \quad .069$$

The actual difference between the two proportions of Lerner and Nakpil is .22 (.48 − .26 = .22). With the above data, the author tested for the Significance in Standard Errors.

$$3. \text{ Significance in Standard Errors } = \frac{\text{Actual Difference}}{\text{SE Difference between two proportions}}$$

$$= \frac{.22}{.069}$$

$$= 3.19$$

Consultation of a probability table shows that if the Standard Error (SE) is 1.96 or more, the difference between the proportions is significant at the 5.9 level. Anything less than 1.96 denotes that the SE is nonsignificant and is usually taken by statisticians to denote a *chance* deviation.

In the tables below, the author no longer computed for the reliability and significance of items which had an actual difference of .10. For those with an actual difference of .10, the above formulas for comparing two proportions were applied. For Table 1, the author computed the significance for the first sentence structure (s), even if the Actual Difference were nine, to show that its significance at 1.48 is below 1.96 and therefore, nonsignificant. If this area were to be studied more thoroughly, then the sampling should be increased.

Method of Approach

Four columns each of Lerner and Nakpil were randomly selected from the Sunday Times Magazine. Then, thirty three beginning, thirty four middle and thirty three concluding sentences were chosen at random from Lerner's columns to make 100 sentences and similarly from Nakpil's columns. These sentences were analyzed, that is, their deep

structures were specified and drawn on individual cards, and the different transformations necessary to relate these to the surface structures were enumerated. Finally, the transformations habitually used by each author were identified and their frequencies counted.

The first items analyzed were the sentence structures of the two authors. With the sentences on hand, the writer observed that both Lerner and Nakpil use the simple sentence in its deep structure. In the deep structure tree of a simple sentence, the S immediately dominates the constituents NP and VP.

> Nakpil 38: The incident is almost unnoticed.

A second structure with two conjoined sentence is the next preference of the authors followed by the three conjoined sentences. Although Lerner and Nakpil did not often use the compound sentences with four conjoined sentences, it is interesting to point out that they both used four conjoined sentences twice. An example is given below:

> Nakpil 97: One plays up pregnant men, coeds raped by their fathers, tourists belted in the tourist belt, politicians running casinos and motels and so on.

The table indicates the frequency of occurence of each sentence structure in Lerner and Nakpil. Although there is no significant difference in their use of the sentence structures, investigators cannot at this point claim that both styles are simple just because both employ simple sentences. In the next part, we will see that the reason why Lerner's deep structure trees are characterized by an S dominating the constituents directly is due to the use of sentence embedding.

Two explanations for the infinite number of sentences possible in a human language are first, conjunction of sentences and sentence embedding. This possibility is called sentence recursion. As there is no limit on the number of conjoined sentences, so also is there no limit on the number of embedded sentences in a grammatical English sentence. Sentences may be embedded in the Noun Phrase or the Verb Phrase and they are called Noun Phrase Complements or Verb Phrase Complements, respectively. We will first discuss the NP Complements.

Noun Phrase Complement. This is a sentence dominated by NP and preceded by another NP. Some NP complements undergo the .Adjective Verb Shift Transformation whereas others are introduced by the complementizers like the clause complementizer, the most common of which is "that", the infinitive complementizer "for . . . to" and the gerundive complementizer " 's . . . ing" or " '. . . ing", in which case they are called relative clauses. The NP Complement may be embedded in an NP in the subject or the object position. The different kinds of NP Complements are illustrated below except the infinitive and gerundive complements because no example can be found in the corpus.

1. NP complement undergoing the adjective verb shift transformation.
   > Nakpil 45: The *older* delegates, after initial surprise, recover quickly.
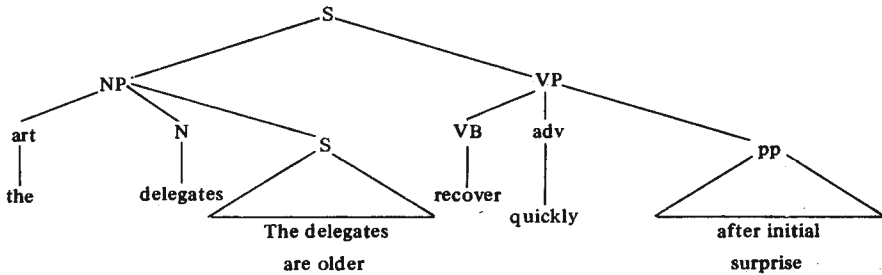   >> (See Deep Structure Tree 11.)

2. NP complement with "that" complementizer.
   > Lerner 27: It is the rare girl today who doesn't want to find some work that is hers that she can pursue through her life as men have done for centuries.

3. NP complement in the subject position.
   > Nakpil 63: The player who pays his contributors least, makes his staff work

Deep Structure Tree 11

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                              S
            NP                              VP
   art       N        S          VB   adv          pp
   the    delegates              recover
                   The delegates        quickly    after initial
                   are older                       surprise
```
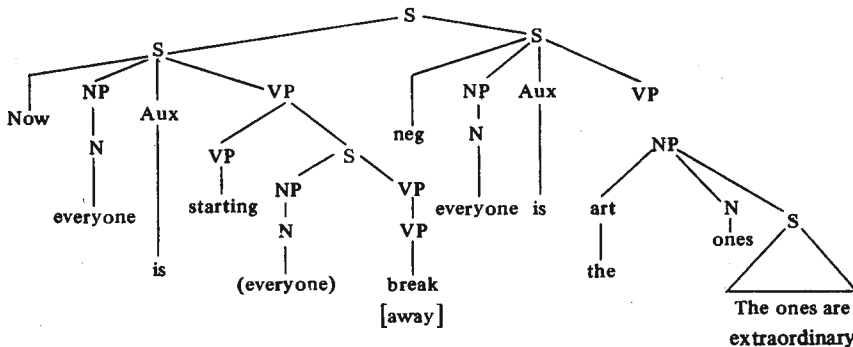
hardest and buys the oldest printing machine wins the first round.

4. NP Complement in the Object Position.

Lerner 51: It is a vision that may be worth exploring.

Verb Phrase Complements. These are sentences which are immediately dominated by verb phrases. These constructions have the infinitive complementizer and the identical noun phrase deletions as obligatory. Example:

Lerner 96: Now, everyone is starting *to break away,* not just the extraordinary ones. (See Deep Structure Tree 15.)

Deep Structure Tree 15

```
                              S
          S                              S
     NP      Aux      VP           NP   Aux    VP
Now   N                VP      neg  N
                            S
      everyone        starting  NP     VP        everyone is     NP
                                N      VP                      art    N    S
           is              (everyone) break                    the   ones
                                      [away]                         The ones are
                                                                     extraordinary
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It is interesting to note from the previous table that Lerner employs sentence embedding in the noun phrase, in particular relative clause embedding, more than Nakpil. Of the three complementizers, the clause complementizer was more common, Lerner using it thirty two times while Nakpil using "that" and "who" almost evenly — nineteen and eighteen times, respectively.

Both Lerner and Nakpil employ the verb phrase complement transformation with a minimal difference of two. Notice, however, that Nakpil uses a relatively equal number of sentences with NP and VP complements while Lerner uses sentences with NP complements twice the number of sentences with VP complements.
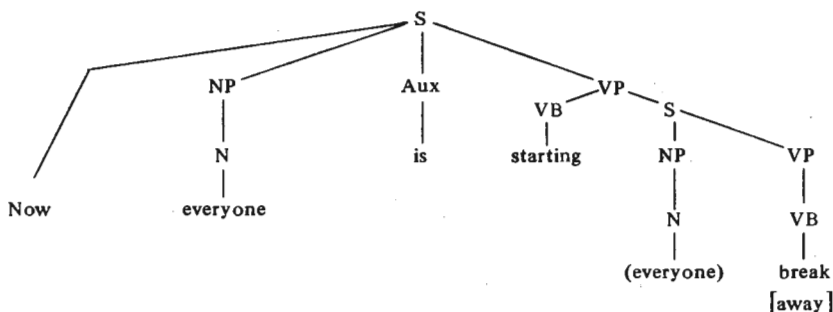
Deletions

Deletion is one of the three different kinds of elementary transformations, the other two being adjunction and substitution. The types of deletions found in the sentences are:

Identical Noun Phrase Deletion. – This type of transformation is best explained in the sentence:

Lerner 55: Now, everyone is starting to break away . . . . .

Deep Structure Tree 16

```
                          S
          _____/___|_____
         /      NP    Aux      VP
        /       |      |     VB    S
       /        N      is  starting  _____
      /         |              NP       VP
    Now      everyone          |        |
                               N        VB
                               |        |
                          (everyone)  break
                                      [away]
```

In the deep structure of the above sentence, we see that *everyone* is the subject of both the main and the embedded sentences, thus the identical noun phrase deletion transformation occurs and deletes the second noun phrase.

Identical Verb Phrase Deletion. When two verb phrases are identical, the second verb phrase is deleted. This transformation is called the identical verb phrase deletion.

> Lerner 7: This isn't new, although the scar of hurt is tenderer than it used to be (*tender*).

Other Deletions. There are other types of deletions observed in the corpus and they are:

1. Noun Phrase – Auxiliary Deletions. In this type of deletion, only the object noun phrase or the prepositional and/or adverbial phrases would be left in the surface structure. Example:

   Nakpil 76: More changes in the next reels.

2. Auxiliary Deletion. Only the auxiliary is deleted in the surface structure.

   Nakpil 27: Metrokill – a riot control game, deadly and brutal, based on actual happenings in front of Congess.

3. It Deletion and It Replacement. These two transformations are discussed together because when the "it" deletion occurs in the object position, "it" replacement occurs. "It" replacement is one of the transformations of the complement system. The other are identical NP deletion, extraposition, a "it" deletion. In the example for "it" replacement given below, note that "it" deletion is first applied. The NP complement is then introduced, with the complementizer replacing "it".

Lerner 32: I doubt that similar negative results will issue from the laboratories and doctors about marijuana.

From Table 3, we easily observe that the outstanding difference between Lerner and Nakpil is in the area of deletion, in particular, the NP-Auxiliary deletion transformation with the "it" deletion and the "it" replacement transformations.

Nakpil has the habit of starting out sentences with both the noun phrase and auxiliary deleted. Whereas Lerner would employ conjunctive sentences, noun phrase complements or identical noun phrase and verb phrase deletions, Nakpil would start off sentences deleting the noun phrase auxiliary of the succeeding sentences. Identical noun phrase or verb phrase deletions occur in the same sentence while Nakpil employs a similar deletion transform but in another sentence, in which case, it is referred to in this paper as the noun phrase auxiliary deletion transformation.

The "it" deletion and "it" replacement transformations are characteristic occurrences in Lerner. This is but logical, because as evident in the discussion of noun phrase complements, we concluded that Lerner habitually uses relative clauses. In the "it" replacement, "it" is replaced usually by relative clauses. This finding in the area of deletion confirms our previous findings in the area of complements.
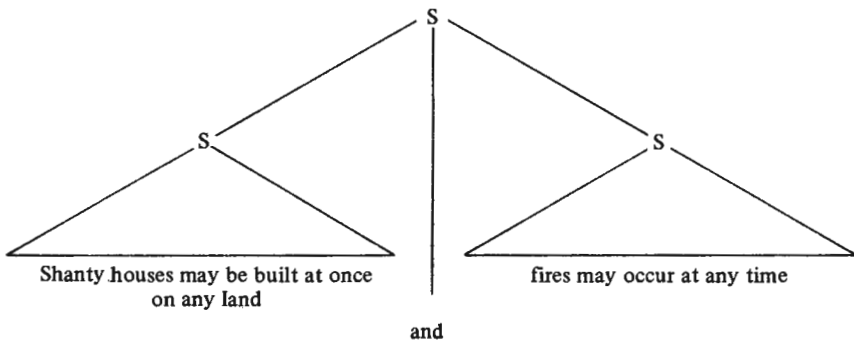
Connectives

The use of connectives crop up when we talk of compound sentences. Sentences are called compound if their deep structures contain two or more conjoined sentences which may be put together by a conjunction or connective. According to Milic, who wrote a paper on connectives used by Swift, "connectives are signposts which provide the reader with the author's own key to the relation of materials and throw the entire composition into focus".[7]

This is an area where there is a wide variation in the use of connectives and writers usually show preference to a particular type, in its frequency and positioning. The connectives analyzed here are the conjunctive "and", disjunctive "or", "but" and "as". Other sentences in the surface structure are conjoined by punctuation marks, but these are not discussed in this paper. Below are examples of sentences using these conjunctions:

1. And

    Nakpil 57: Shanty houses may be built at once on any land *and* fires may occur at any time.

Deep Structure Tree 21

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[7]Milic, Louis T., "Connectives in Swift's Prose Style," in *Linguistics and Literary Style,* ed. by Donald Freeman (U.S.A.: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., 1970), p. 243.

2. Or

Nakpil 4:   . . . one does not, absolutely does not — preach about thrift, *or* feature the ten most Mary-like dresses, or exhort the rich to sell what they have and give to the poor.

3. But

Nakpil 73: One can hardly hope that the suggestions given below will be followed, *but* as a preparation for life, the following toys for modern Filipino children can probably not be improved upon.

4. As

Lerner 94: She doesn't sweep it away majesterially *as* some writers have done.

As shown above, "as" is used as a connective between the two sentences. "As" could be used as a preposition as shown here:

Lerner 68: This strikes me *as* a sensible course, at least for the present.

Introductory Conjunctions

Lerner 69: *But* the longer effect of the movement comes from its less strident aspects.

We notice that there is not much of a significant difference in the uses of conjunctions "and", "or" and "but". "As" has been used as a preposition but in fifteen cases in Lerner, it has been used as a connective signifying that he habitually uses it. This is due to Lerner's usage of the comparative transformation.

Lerner was also found to have used conjunctions to begin a sentence eleven times more than Nakpil with a significant standard error of 2.3. This occurrence, therefore, is not due to chance but to a habitual preference for introductory conjunctions.

Verb Phrase Constituent

The three major constituents of the sentence, as mentioned earlier, are the noun phrase, auxiliary, and verb phrase. A verb phrase must at least contain one constituent and that is a verbal — VB. A verbal is thus a primary constituent of a verb phrase. Some verb phrases may contain only a verbal, in which case, it is called an intransitive verbal.

A verb phrase may also contain a verbal and a noun phrase or a verbal and two noun phrases, in which case, it is known as a transitive verbal.

The passive transformation can be roughly described as the process which interchanges the subject noun phrase and the object noun phrase, introduces the form of "be" and adds the preposition "by". Although the passive transformation is a test for the noun phrase, this particular transformation is discussed under the verb phrase constituent because of the change that the verbal undergoes when this passive transformation is applied. The active and passive versions of a sentence have the same meaning or deep structure; and this portion of the study is interesting because we investigate what transformation appeals more to the writer who thus chooses it habitually over the other.

The other transformation observed is the particle transformation. The particle is a verb feature and with the particle transformation, the particle segment is introduced into the structure. Particles like "up" and "out" are verb features and not prepositions because they cannot be preposed in questions, unlike the prepositions. Example:

Lerner 6:   Which means that the world is opening up for them as never before.

From the table, we observe that Nakpil, as predicted, used the passive transformation more often than Lerner with an actual difference of .22 and a significance of 3.9. On the particle transformation, however, we notice that Lerner uses it more often with an actual difference of .11 and a significance of 2.4.

CONCLUSION

To sum up, the significant differences discovered are:

1. Noun Phrase Complements, specifically relative clauses, are used more often by Lerner rather than by Nakpil, thus Lerner's style is characterized by embedding.

2. Nakpil employs the noun phrase auxiliary deletion transformation, thus her style is characterized by deletion.

3. Lerner, in his embedding of sentences, at times deletes the "it" and replaces it with the embedded sentence called the relative clause.

4. Lerner uses adjunction more often and even introduces some of his sentences with conjunctions. He also uses "as" not only as a preposition but as a connective, signifying his habitual use of the comparative transformation.

5. Nakpil used the passive transformation more often than Lerner.

6. Lerner used verbs with particles in his sentences more often than Nakpil.

In describing their styles, one can probably say that Nakpil's is simpler and Lerner's is more complex. The term "simple" here means that the deep structure trees are easier to draw because the sentences are characterized by deletion, nonsignificant embeddings and adjunctions. Lerner's style is complex because as seen in the deep structure tree diagrams of his sentences, adjunction, comparative transformations, embeddings, and "it" replacement make the trees complicated and long.

To quote from Hayes, "the importance of this type of analysis is that the intuitively felt differences between two differing styles can at least be explained by the types and frequencies of transformations that each author employs in constructing his sentence".

From the foregoing, we see that we have given the study of style a scientific approach. This, however, is only on the syntactic level and does not go into the area of imagery, figure of speech, and choice of lexicon. But it cannot be denied that this transformational approach to a study of literary styles is important because we see the different stylistic alternatives open to the writer and his choice of a particular transformation which is done habitually and recurrently and thus characterizes his way of writing.

This study does not claim that it has exhausted all the possibilities of discovering other differences between Lerner and Nakpil. The prepositions, the adjective verb shift transformation, adverbialization and the like have not been treated here because the sample is not large enough. Further studies with a bigger corpus would perhaps adequately describe their usage by these authors.

In the field of language teaching in the Philippines, we can show the students that style is a recurrent or habitual use of options within the system. We present these options and the particular choices of well-known writers. Exercises may be geared towards a preferred transformation and students should be shown the degree of freedom that they can employ in developing their style in writing. If they want to develop a style similar to that of Nakpil, then they should know that they would have to use deletion transformations and veer away from embedding, adjunction, and comparative transformations. On

SUMMARY OF TABLES

Transformations	Lerner	Nakpil	Actual Difference	Significance
Sentence Structures				
S	61	70	.09	1.48
S / S S	24	18	.06	—
S / S S S	13	10	.03	—
S / S S S S	2	2	.00	—
Complements				
NP Complements	61	47	.14	2.00
Number of Sentences with NP Complements	48	26	.22	3.19
VP Complements	20	20	.00	—
Deletions				
Identical VP Deletion	10	17	.07	—
Identical VP Deletion	4	3	.01	—
NP-Auxiliary Deletion	13	33	.20	3.52
It deletion and It Replacement	20	10	.10	1.79
Connectives				
And	79	71	.08	—
Or	2	7	.05	—
But	16	8	.08	—
As	15	0	.15	5.7
Introductory Conjunction	18	7	.11	2.3
Verb Phrase				
Passive Transformation	4	26	.22	3.9
Particle Transformation	15	4	.11	2.3

the other hand, if they want to imitate Lerner's style, then the transformations that characterize his writings should be employed and practiced until the choices become recurrent and habitual.

This paper is a modest thrust in the field of linguistic stylistics in the Philippines. If similar studies could be made, comparing American and Filipino writers, then we would discover what transformations characterize them. At this point, we cannot jump into generalizations because this study is based only on two authors. However, if we follow this linguistic approach, we would be able to arrive at a definition of American and Filipino English in the written form.

In conclusion, we can now answer the question — is it possible to describe and compare the styles of American and Filipino authors using this linguistic approach? The answer is "yes". We have seen that transformational-generative grammar in particular Jacobs and Rosenbaum's insights, can describe and compare the styles of American and Filipino authors.