



LSLP Micro-Paper 98: *Substance and Style*

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Defining the Term

Substance and style are two crucial, interconnected aspects of effective [discourse](#), particularly in academic and professional settings. We describe the core message, ideas, and communicated information when discussing substance. Substance is the foundation for effective communication, as it helps determine the value and impact of the message. Without it, the message may lack depth, credibility, and relevance. In the case of writing, substance involves providing accurate and relevant information, supporting arguments with evidence, and conveying ideas. Regarding speech, substance entails delivering a well-researched and organized message that engages the audience and conveys the intended meaning.

When we talk about *style*, we refer to how one presents content. This includes elements such as language choice, rhetorical devices, tone, and sentence structure, all adding flair, creativity, and uniqueness to the communication. Style makes messages engaging and memorable for target audiences. Style in writing varies depending on the purpose, audience, and context. For instance, in academic writing, people often require a formal and objective style, while creative writing allows them to use more expressive and imaginative language. In the case of speech, style involves using vocal variety, gestures, storytelling techniques, and other elements to captivate the audience and convey the message effectively.

In other words, both substance and style are vital for effective communication. Balancing them, therefore, is crucial to ensuring that the message is clear, credible, and impactful.

Connecting it to LSLP

At LSLP, the interplay of substance and style is central to our approach to effective academic communication. This is exemplified in our Micro-Papers, which embody this matter as a sustained exercise in conceptual and scholarly writing. The Micro-Papers challenge LSLP researchers to rigorously engage with complex topics while presenting their ideas clearly, concisely, and engagingly.

The format of the Micro-Papers, a one-page accessible overview of a concept or idea, requires researchers to balance style and substance carefully. On the one hand, regarding substance, authors must conduct thorough

research, synthesize key points, and convey accurate, well-supported information. This ensures that the core message has depth, credibility, and relevance. On the other hand, regarding style, this format pushes authors to develop an [aesthetic connection](#) with their texts as they must employ precise language, effective rhetorical devices, and an inviting tone to make accessible and memorable ideas.

Our focus on substance and style extends beyond the Micro-Papers to other [academic literacies](#), such as our webinars and national and international conference presentations. Our researchers draw on their deep knowledge to deliver informative, evidence-based discussions. They also hone their stylistic delivery through vocal variety, strategic visuals, and adaptive language use. This constant [communicative competence](#) exercise is substantively rich and stylistically compelling for our Legion.

Expanding Second Language Research

Substance refers to the content, knowledge, and information learners acquire in second language acquisition. At the same time, style encompasses language use, including vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, and cultural nuances. It looks at cognitive processes, linguistic structures, and [sociocultural factors](#) that affect how people learn and become fluent in a second language. It also examines how politeness, pragmatics, and [discourse analysis](#) affect people's interactions.

Researching and analyzing substance and style would help identify effective teaching methodologies, linguistic patterns, and strategies that facilitate language learning and gain insights into the sociolinguistic aspects of language learning, including how learners adapt their language use in different contexts, social groups, and cultural settings.

References

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Declaration of Generative AI and AI-assisted Technologies in the Writing Process

The author wrote the different drafts of this text without AI assistance. Before uploading the micro-paper, final edits were made using Grammarly. The author takes full responsibility for the publication's content.

