Chapter-3

Style-shifting in

E.M. Forster's Novels
CHAPTER- 3

STYLE-SHIFTING IN E.M. FORSTER'S NOVELS

3.1. Introduction

Almost all linguists agree that literary texts are considered as authenticated sources for studying language and language use. Troike (1982) emphasizes this fact:

Literary sources (written or oral) may be valuable for the description they contain, as well as for the attitudes and values about language they reveal. Additionally, the communicative patterns which occur in literature presumably embody some kind of normative idealization, and portray types of people (e.g. according to social class) in terms of stereotypic use of language.

(Troike, 1982:117)

Style shifting is no doubt one of the most significant concepts that can be well represented in the work of verbal art. It occurs when a speaker shifts, for example, from casual to formal speech or vice versa, shifting from, say, *I wonder, do you happen to have any milk?* To, *Give me milk.* A number of markers allow speakers to recognize where these two occurrences fall on the formal-casual stylistic continuum. Whereas the first utterance's lexical content and intonational contour mark it as an indirect speech act designed to minimize a threat to the recipient's face (Brown and Levinson, 1987), being a locutionary act with the surface form of an information seeking question and the illocutionary force of a directive, the second utterance baldly
issues a command, without using even a mitigating please. It is noteworthy that this study is primarily concerned with style shifting at the pragmatic level, and that pragmatic theories, namely politeness theory and speech act theory will be used in the analysis of the concept. E.M. Forster shows a great interest in this concept, and makes a great use of it in building the social part of his work. Through speech style and particularly style shifting the characters negotiate their power position assigned to them by E.M. Forster. In this chapter, we will see how the characters negotiate their identity and social power through the style they adopt.

3.2. Style shifting and negotiating power position in Forster's novels.

E.M. Forster's characters exhibit their social power by virtue of style shifting. For example, in the dialogue between Maurice and Dr. Ducie the concept of power is highly manifested and clearly negotiated. See this extract from one of their dialogues:

"You live with your mother, don't you?" He interrupted, seeing that the boy has gained confidence.
"Yes, sir."
"Have you any elder brothers?"
"No, sir-only Ada and Kitty."
"Any uncle?"
"No."
"So you don't know many men?"
"Mother keeps a coachman and George in the garden, but of course you mean gentlemen. Mother has three main servants to look after the house but they are so idle that they will not mend Ada's stockings. Ada is my eldest little sister."
"How old are you?"
"Fourteen and three quarters."
"Well, you're an ignorant little beggar." They laughed.
(Maurice: 18)

From the very beginning of this piece of dialogue, Dr. Ducie exercises his power position by interrupting Maurice, as Forster tells us. The power position of Dr. Ducie comes from the fact that he is superior to Maurice in age, occupation, as well as experience. Dr. Ducie assigns to himself a powerful role or "footing" (Goffman 1981:128) that gives him the right to question Maurice repeatedly, whereas Maurice seems to have surrendered to the role or footing assigned to him by the doctor. He keeps on answering the doctor's questions without an attempt to change his role. Dr. Ducie takes advantage of his role to make a tremendous down shift in his style *well-you're an ignorant little beggar*, which is extremely impolite style causing a FTA\(^1\) to Maurice's positive face (Brown and Levinson : 66). And in order to minimize the FTA caused by his style shift, Dr. Ducie resorts to paralinguistic or body language features manifested in his non-verbal act of laughing. In this small piece of dialogue the asymmetry in power position between the two conversational participants is quite obvious and communicatively manifested in the functional use of language. Dr. Ducie manages to convince us of controlling his interlocutor as well as the communicative situation. Even when Maurice attempts to shift his role in the conversation, Dr. Ducie refuses indirectly and maintains his role.

\(^{1}\) FTA is an abbreviation for Face Threatening Act.
This is quite clear in the way he responds to Maurice question after informing him that his father had told him something that proved very useful. Maurice out of curiosity asks:

“Did he, Sir?”

“Shall I tell you what it was?” (Maurice : 18)

Dr. Ducie does not give a direct answer to Maurice’s question. Instead, he asks him another question that bears the illocutionary force of suggestion.

Maurice also falls in the same trap with Dr. Barry, a friend and neighbour of the family. After seeing Maurice shaking hand warmly with his house master’s wife, Dr. Barry says “Well, Maurice; a youth irresistible in love as in war.” (Maurice: 30). Dr. Barry in this piece of utterance adopts a quasi literary and thus “frozen style” (Joos, 1962:28). This style seems to be unfamiliar to Maurice, and therefore it is natural that he enquires about his interlocutor’s communicative intention as the uncertainty arises on him.

“I don’t know what you mean, Dr. Barry?” (Maurice: 30)

Instead of explaining to Maurice what he meant by what he said in his previous conversational turn, Dr. Barry replies in this way:

“Oh’ you young fellow! Butter wouldn’t melt in your mouth these days. Don’t know what I mean? Prudish of a petticoat! Be frank Man, be frank. You don’t take anyone in. The frank mind’s the purest mind. I’m a medical man and old man and I tell you that. Man that is born of woman must go with woman if the human race is to continue” (Maurice: 30)
It is clear that no direct clear answer is given to Maurice’s question. Instead of clarifying his message content, Dr. Barry goes on shifting from one style into another. He starts with an informal style, marked by using the appositive “you young fellow”, which is jocular in tone. Then he shifts into an idiomatic style, “butter wouldn’t melt in your mouth”, which implies that Maurice looks as if he would never do anything wrong, although Dr. Barry feels he might. Such idioms, according to Leech (1983:146), “enjoin us to say what is unpredictable and hence interesting”. Thus, Dr. Barry, in this idiom, creates unpredictability to Maurice, which is a feature of powerful language (Owsley and Scotton, 1984; Scotton, 1985). The scene here is that there is asymmetry in power. Dr. Barry is naturally in a more powerful socioeconomic position compared to Maurice, and exhibits his power through style-shifting. The doctor continues with his style variation. He shifts into what can be called a medical register “the frank mind’s the pure mind”, and then to an informative formal style “Man that is born of woman must go with woman if the human race is to continue.” This last utterance can be considered as a directive illocutionary act, i.e. Dr. Barry offers an indirect piece of advice to Maurice to fall in love with a woman or to get married. All these style shifts take place within the same conversational turn, and that Dr. Barry, using this communicative strategy, makes Maurice unable to respond to him verbally. Instead, he resorts to his mind style2, remembering Dr. Ducie’s sexual diagram (p:19),

2 The concept of mind style was first introduced by Roger Fowler (1977)
which can be considered as a perlocutionary effect that results from the illocutionary act of Dr. Barry.

In terms of Grice's cooperative principles, Dr. Barry fails to answer Maurice's enquiry "I don't know what you mean, sir." He fails because he has violated at least two of the conversational maxims: the maxims of quantity and manner. With reference to the first maxim, Dr. Barry doesn't make his contribution as informative as is required. The maxim of manner is also violated because he doesn't avoid obscurity and ambiguity, and his contribution is neither brief nor orderly.

However, in his dialogue with his coach, Maurice assumes a more powerful role compared to his interlocutor, and therefore it is he who shifts his style:

"How d'ye do, Howell. How's Mrs Howell? How d'ye do, Mrs Howell?"

(Maurice: 22-23)

Forster realizes this shift and tells us through his narrator that Maurice adopts a style “different from that he used to gentle folks” (Maurice: 23). The dialogue continues:

"Isn't it a new garden boy?"
"Yes Master Maurice?"
"Was George too old?"
"No Master Maurice. He wanted to better himself."
"Oh, you mean he gave notice"
"That's right."
"Mother said he was too old and gave him notice."
"No Master Maurice." (Maurice: 22-23).
Unlike his two previous conversations with Dr. Ducie and Dr. Barry, Maurice is comparatively in a better conversational position. Taking advantage of his powerful position, he is now able to control his interlocutor and succeeds to lead the conversation the way he wants. From the very opening conversational turn, Maurice shifts his style by greeting his coach with "How d'ye do", which is grammatically an informal or casual style featured by using the elliptical form of the verb "do" and the informal short form of /yu:/ . He also shifts his style by using the informal vocative term boy in "isn't it a new garden boy?"

On the other hand, Howell could do nothing other than responding to Maurice questions and addressing him very formally. His speech style suggests that he accepts his inferiority to his addressee as well as the asymmetry of social power. The length of the conversational turn is also another factor that goes in favour of Maurice in this dialogue.

Similarly, in a Passage to India Mr. Fielding shifts his style drastically in his dialogue with Dr. Aziz. It takes place when Dr. Aziz mistakingly takes Ralph for Miss Quested's brother and asks him to jump in:

"Jump in, Mr. Quested, and Mr. Fielding"
"Who on earth is Mr. Quested?"  (APT1: 269)

By using the expletive "On earth", Mr. Fielding shifts his style into an informal style. His disapproval of what Aziz says is verbally expressed by this down style shift, which causes conversational uncertainty to Dr. Aziz. This uncertainty, according
StyCe-sRifting in E.M. Forster's Novels

to Berger and Bradac (1982: 117), is "the inability to structure the environment as to render it predictable". Dr. Aziz, out of uncertainty, adopts a careful formal style in his next conversational turn in order to protect himself from another style shift from Fielding's side:

"Do I mispronounce that well-known name? Is he not your wife's brother?" (APTI: 269)

By using this formal style, Dr Aziz attempts to remove any misunderstanding and avoid another FTA against his positive face. But he fails, as Fielding does not respond to his initiative and again downshifts his style:

"Who on earth do you suppose I have married" (APTI: 269)

The effect of this second shift on Aziz is so huge that he couldn't take his next conversational turn. Forster tells us that he "tried to withdraw but it was too late" (APTI: 269)

The perlocutionary effect caused by Fielding's style shifts seems to have gone beyond the immediate situation and thrown its shadow on Aziz's later dialogue with Fielding's brother-in-law, Ralph Moor:

"Your hands are unkind"

"What the devil have my hands to do with you? This is a most strong remark. I am a qualified doctor, who will not hurt you"

(APTI: 276)

This is the first conversation for Aziz with an English person since that conversation with Fielding in which style shifting has taken place. Aziz is now doing what he could not do with Fielding. He
resorts to down style shifting to express his anger with Ralph by means of using the expletive "What the devil". With this down shift, Aziz commits a FTA to Ralph’s positive face because it implies a direct contempt for his addressee. In this dialogue, Dr. Aziz is in a more powerful role being the doctor, whereas Ralph is in a powerless role being the patient. It can be argued here that Aziz, with his shift, takes an indirect verbal revenge of Mr. Fielding through his brother in law. The shift might have also been motivated by Aziz’s hatred to the English, which has further increased after being charged with attempting to rape Adela (see the appendix). This is quite revealed in the same dialogue with Ralph:

"Dr. Aziz, we have done you no harm."

"Aha you know my name, I see, Yes, I am Aziz. No, of course your great friend Miss Quested did me no harm at the Marber"

(APTI: 277)

In Where Angles Fear To Tread, the concept of asymmetry of power manifests itself in the dialogue between Philip and Caroline. When Philip asks Caroline about Gino’s father, she replies:

"His father"..... "Well, I don’t suppose you’ll think it a good match. But that’s not the point. I mean the point is not — I mean that social differences — love, after all — not but what — ”

According to Lakoff (1975), this style is a powerless style usually adopted by women. Hosman et al (2002) refer to it as a powerless style without classifying it as masculine or feminine. It is a
powerless style because it is full of hesitations signified here by dashes. It is also featured by hedges such as "I don’t suppose", "I mean". By adopting this style Caroline reveals not only her gender, but also her poor communicative fluency, which makes her unable to take her conversational turn properly or convey her message to Philip accurately. Even when she is given one more chance, as Philip doesn’t take his conversational turn, she fails to get rid of her powerless speech style:

"Gentlemen sometimes judge hardly. But I feel that you, and at all events your mother — so really good in every sense, so really unworldly — after all, love— marriage are made in heaven” (WAFTT: 25).

It is clear that Caroline does not want to answer Philip's question. Moreover, she attempts to shift Philip's attention to another topic, but he ironically rejects the attempt:

"Yes, yes, Miss Abbot, I know. But I am anxious to hear heaven's choice. You arouse my curiosity. Is my sister in law to marry an angel?" (WAFTT: 26)

Now, Caroline, who feels that Philip’s style threatens her positive face by means of ridiculing her, finds no other way but to answer his question, without overcoming her hesitation:

"Mr. Herriton, don’t — please, Mr. Herriton — a dentist. His father's dentist" (WAFTT: 26).

Even when she appears to be in a slightly better position, Caroline proves her failure of shifting into a powerful speech style. Consider, for example, the following excerpt from her dialogue with Philip in which she reveals to him that she loves Gino:
Style-shifting in E.M. Forster's Novels

“I thought I was past all this, you’re taking it wrongly. I’m in love with Gino—don’t pass it off. I mean it crudely—you know what I mean. So laugh at me”. (WAFTT: 177-178)

On the contrary, Lucy, the heroine of A Room With A view, resorts to a style that is in contrast with more or less essentialist theories about distinct ‘woman’s language’. This is quite evident in her dialogue with her cousin, Miss Bartlett. Miss Bartlett had revealed Lucy’s affairs with George to Miss Lavish who put it as a major scene in her new novel. When they meet after the incident, Lucy opens the conversation in this way:

“Something too awful has happened” “Do you know anything about Miss Lavish’s novel?” (ARWAV: 159)

The first impression one can make about this style is that Lucy is not committed herself to the basic principle of the conversational opening of “greeting”. She immediately starts with a powerful speech style featured by uttering an ambiguous assertion that no doubt leads the conversation unpredictable and uncertain. Then, she shifts into a formal interrogative speech act, without giving Miss Bartlett an opportunity to take her conversational turn. With this verbal act, Lucy violates what Schegloff (1972) calls conversational “sequencing”. This powerful opening causes a non-verbal perlocutionary effect to Miss Bartlett, as Forster tells us through his narrator “Miss Bartlett looked surprised” (ARWAV: 159). She attempts to deny her knowledge about the book and its content, but Lucy does not believe her. She goes on questioning her repeatedly till she finally confesses:
"I did just happen when I had tea with her at Rome—in the course of conversation." (ARWAV: 160).

Thus, Lucy has led the conversation successfully. She has managed, through the communicative strategy of powerful speech style, to make Miss Bartlett confess that she had revealed her secret.

Lucy uses this communicative technique not only with interlocutors of her own gender, but also with those of the other gender. In her dialogue with Cecil, which ends in breaking off their engagement, she talks to him in this style:

"I am very sorry about it; I have carefully thought things over. We are too different I must ask you to release me, and try to forget that there ever was such a foolish girl"

(ARWAV: 167)

At the surface level, Lucy adopts a powerful style characterized by the absence of hedges, hesitation, contracted verb forms, ellipsis, etc. E.M. Forster comments on this style through his narrator, saying that:

"It was a suitable speech, but she was more angry than sorry, and her voice showed it" (ARWAV: 167)

Likewise, in *Howards End* Mrs Munt resorts to shifting her style into a powerful one in order to stop Charles’s vulgarity and rudeness. The scene takes places when Charles starts talking about Helen (Mrs Munt’s niece) in a very bad manner. He states that his brother should be ashamed of marrying her and that she is not the woman who can stand the climate. He further comments on the way Helen spread the affair with his brother by saying:
"Whereas Miss Schlegel [Helen] has lost no time in publishing the news". (HE: 17)

After this, Mrs Munt replies to him in this manner:

"If I were a man, Mr Wilcox, for that last remark I'd box your ears, you're not fit to clean my niece's boots, to sit in the same room with her, and you dare—you actually dare—I decline to argue with such a person". (HE: 17)

By adopting this style, Mrs. Munt disregards all what the theorists of politeness say. She commits FTAs in their fullest forms to Charle's positive face, and shifts drastically from a distinct woman's language. But with this technique, she manages to make Charles shift into a polite speech style:

"All I know is, she's spread the thing and he hasn't, and my father's away and I —

"And all that I know is

"Might I finish my sentence, please?"

"No" (H.E.:17)

Thus, in asking her to finish his sentence Charles adopts the most polite formula of performing a speech act of request, featured by using the most formal modal verb "might" and the mitigating "please". The interruption here is a powerful language feature (Scotton, 1985), which goes in favour of Mrs. Munt. Charles does not expect this style shift from Mrs. Munt who was so polite to him prior to these conversational turns. She even addressed him twice with "Sir", that "Would almost never be used by women" (Quirk et al, 1985:1483), let alone aged women like Mrs. Munt:

"I quite agree sir" "yes sir" (H.E: 16).
However, in *the longest Journey*, we find Stephen unable to shift into a powerful style despite the frequent FTAs against his negative and positive face committed by Agnes. Stephen is an illegitimate half brother of Agnes’ husband, Rickie. When he comes to discover that he is Rickie’s brother, he goes to them to tell the news. However, Agnes shocks him when she says that they already know his “tremendous news”. Then, she attempts to make a deal with him by offering an open check, provided that he tells no body that he is Rickie’s brother (TLJ: 248-249). Stephen refuses the deal, and then the following discussion occurs:

“I see. All right. It takes a fool; a minute. Never mind. I’ve made a bad mistake”
“You refuse?” “Then do you worst! We defy you!”
“That’s all right, Mrs. Elliot [Agnes]” he said roughly
“I don’t want a scene with you, nor yet with your husband. We’ll say no more about it. It’s all right. I meant no harm”.

(T.L.J: 250)

Thus, Stephen is incapable of defending his self-image throughout this extract. His utterances in the first conversational turn predicate a speech act of apology, as if he were the one who committed the FTA of blackmailing. His powerless speech style encourages Agnes to perform two directive illocutionary acts or behabitives in the same conversational turn. These acts are “defying” and “commanding”, which cause a direct threat to Stephen’s negative face. In his next conversational turn, Stephen could do nothing to save his face. He does not retort to Agnes’

3 The term behabitive was introduced by Austin (1962:81)
face threats or at least withdraw peacefully. Instead, he resorts to using some speech acts of self reflecting effect. For example, his utterance "We'll, say no more about it" can be interpreted as an unwilling promise, which, according to Brown and Levinson (1987:68), damages the speaker's negative face. Similarly, his last assertion "I meant no harm" commits him to the truth of the "proportional content" (Searle: 1975). This accordingly means that any intended violation of the truth of his propositional will turn his utterance false. Thus, Stephen takes the risk of committing himself to what he says, which adds more pressure on his negative face wants. Therefore, It can be argued that it is not only Agnes that threatens Stephen's face, but he himself contributes a good deal of doing acts against himself. Even when he appears to be offended and intends to leave the place, Stephen makes no attempt to shift his style:

"There, that's all right its my mistake I'm sorry"

(TLJ: 250).

He again proves his powerless communicative position by virtue of performing some self-humiliating speech acts; approving, confessing, and apologizing. In short, Stephen in this extract is in a fundamental contradiction with what Buck and Austin (1995) argue that:

Forster's characters are seeking continuously to empower themselves through the language they use

---

4 At least in this particular communicative situation (see Brown and Levinson: 68)
and to modify the status that the society has assigned
them to better suit their aspirations.

(Buck and Austin, 1995:71)

3.3. Types of style shifting in E.M. Forster's novels

Sociolinguists and ethnographists have realized a number of
style shifting demonstrated by the speakers in their conversational
spoken discourse. Given below is an analysis of some of these
types that are used by E.M. Forster's characters as communicative
strategies for achieving certain communicative goals.

3.3.a. Style shifting according to the Topic of discourse

This type of style shifting has been discussed by a number of
scholars, for example, Ervin-Tripp (1972), Saville-Troike (1982),
and Bell (1984, 2001). They all suggest that style may shift
according to the topic of discourse. Ervin-Tripp and Troike study
this style shifting under what they call “situational shifting”, whereas Bell discusses it in terms of “responsive style shifting”.

In a number of occasions, E.M. Forster’s characters shift
their style according to the topic they are involved in. For
example, in Howards End, Charles shifts his style according to an
annoying topic picked up by his wife, Dolly:

“But you haven’t listened, Charles”-
“What’s wrong?”
“I keep on telling you-Howards End. Miss Schlegel’s got it.”

---

5 They follow Bloom and Gumperz (1972:424) who differentiate between “situational switching” and “metaphorical switching”
“Got What?” said Charles, unclasping her. What the dickens are you talking about?” (H.E:86)

It is his last utterance in this extract that marks Charles’ style shifting. The topic seems to be so disturbing that makes Charles forget his promise to his wife not to use this type of speech with her, as Dolly tells us:

“Now, Charles, you promised not to say those naughty-”

(H.E. 86)

His style shift is evaluated as a downshift featured by using the expletive phrase “what the dickens”, which is usually used to express annoyance or surprise. But, it is clear that Charles resorts to this communicative strategy to express his annoyance at the topic. His physical action of “unclasping her” supports this argument. Besides, his next utterance highly reveals his annoyance:

“Look here, I’m in no mood for foolery, it’s no morning for it either.” (H: 86)

The extent to which the topic affects the speaker’s selection of a particular style is highly manifested in Helen’s case. Helen, in most parts of Howards End, is accustomed to speaking informally. Consider, for example, her style in the following extract, which clearly reveals her style identity:

Meg, Meg, I don’t love the young gentleman, I don’t love the young gentleman ‘..........Oh, boo hoo! Boo hoo hoo! Meg’s going to return the call, and I can’t Cos why? ‘Cos I’m going to German eye’ ..........O lud, who’s that coming down the stairs? I vow’ tis my brother. O’ crimi. (H E: 58)
However, when the topic appears to be extremely serious, Helen pays a maximum attention to her speech. In the dialogue between her and her sister, Margaret, in which she reveals to her the secret of being illegally pregnant, Helen selects a style that suits the seriousness of the topic:

I was just saying that I have stopped leaving haphazard. One can't go through a great deal of..... without planning one's actions in advance. I am going to have a child in June, and in the first place conversations, discussions, excitement, are not good for me. I will go through them if necessary, but only then. In the second place I have no right to trouble people. I cannot fit in with England, as I know it. I have done something that the English never pardon it. So I must live where I am not known. (H E: 268)

Helen recognizes that what she is talking about is an extraordinarily serious matter, and therefore it is a must to shift into a formal style. Except the contracted form “can’t”, her style is purely formal. The sensitivity of the topic, it can be argued, has thrown its shadow on Helen’s speech style. This example gives clear evidence that Helen is communicatively competent, as she is able to shift her style whenever and wherever necessary. It further suggests that Helen, using this speech style, attempts to maximize the credibility of her speech content by adopting the most suitable role, i.e. the role of using standard language form (Ervin-Tripp, 1972:248). Her style is no doubt the most appropriate alternative for discussing a topic such as this. Furthermore, Forster wants to tell us that Helen has a large repertoire of speech alternatives,
which can no doubt enable her to shift from one style into another on demand.

Likewise, Dr. Barry makes a good use of style shifting in his dialogue with Maurice. The topic of discourse plays a dominant role in making Dr. Barry adopt a style that is not familiar to Maurice. Maurice's mother had complained to Dr. Barry that Maurice was sent down from Cambridge because he refused to apologize to the dean for his misbehaviour, and that he was verbally unkind and brutal to her when she asked him to apologize. As a result of these unpleasant developments, Maurice was asked by Dr. Barry to go round to be talked to. When he arrived, the doctor starts:

"Well, Maurice, and how goes the career not quite as you expected, eh?" (Maurice: 79).

In terms of Brown and Levinson, Dr. Barry commits a FTA to Maurice's positive face by discussing a topic "how goes the career", which Maurice doesn't want to discuss with anybody. Dr. Barry's use of the conjunctive "and" makes his utterances appear as if they were a continuation of discourse. But as a matter of fact, the use of "and" here does not readily belong to either of the four functions identified by Halliday and Hasan (1976), as additive, temporal, causative, and adversative. Van Peer (1985) realizes one more function for "and":

*And* (italics mine) may not only be used to simply link two consecutive speech acts which follows each other immediately in the turn taking position of the unfolding
discourse, it may also and simultaneously be employed
in order to bridge moments of silence.

(Van Peer 1985:371)

Thus, there was a moment of silence between Maurice and Dr. Barry, which may suggest that the doctor might have been reluctant to get involved in discussing such a sensitive personal topic. However, he adopts a good technique by going into the topic gradually. He starts with taking a long conversational turn in which he gives some hints before touching the main topic:

"Oh, it's all for the best. What do you want with a university degree? It was never intended for the suburban classes... Quite right to insult the dean..." (Maurice: 79)

In this excerpt of his long turn, Dr. Barry sounds as if he were preparing Maurice for this super style shifting:

"How dare you bully your mother, Maurice? You ought to be horsewhipped. You young puppy! Swaggering about instead of asking her to forgive you! I know all about it. She came here with tears in her eyes and asked me to speak. She and your sisters are my respected neighbors, and as long as a woman calls me I'm at her service. Don't answer me, sir, don't answer, I want none of your speech, straight or otherwise. You are a disgrace to chivalry. I don't know what the world is coming to. I don't know the world- I'm disappointed and disgusted with you." (Maurice: 79-80)

In these utterances, it is clear that Dr. Barry never considers Maurice's positive or negative face wants. He commits FTAs on record without redressive actions. Form the beginning till the end, he keeps on assaulting Maurice, using every offensive word and expression. He starts with a negative value laden speech act "how
"dare you bully your mother", which implies that Maurice is less powerful than the would-be bully. Then, he moves to a more offensive speech act in its declarative form "you ought to be horsewhipped", which would no doubt make Maurice lose his face. The attack continues severely with the use of the abusive appositional phrase "you young puppy", which causes a direct threat to Maurice’s positive face. Moreover, his exclusion of Maurice from being his neighbors in his utterance "she and your sisters are my respected neighbors", adds more burden on Maurice’s positive face, for this utterance indicates that Dr. Barry does not emphasize that he and Maurice "belong to some set of persons who share some wants" (Brown and Levinson, 1987:103).

However, the offensive reaches its climax with Dr. Barry’s utterance "You are a disgrace to chivalry". Maurice interprets this utterance as an illocutionary act bearing the force of accusation:

"A disgrace to chivalry" he considered the accusation.

(Maurice: 80)

Thus, Maurice disregards all the FTAs committed against his face except this utterance. But even when he considers it, he can’t help retorting to it or even enquire why he is accused of being so. Dr. Barry’s style is really impolite, rude, hostile, and aggressive, but it seems justified due to the seriousness of the topic. Maurice is given no chance to save his face, but even if the chance is provided to him, what can he say and what argument can he provide to exonerate himself from the blame?! The best strategy
one can resort to in order to avoid more FTAs against his face is to remain silent, or to resort to one's mind style, as Maurice does:

"He followed out his brain of thought with difficulty. His brain was still feeble. But he was obliged to use it, for so much in current speech and ideas needed translation before he would understand them. (Maurice: 80).

Although Dr. Barry has extravagated in scolding Maurice, the perlocutionary effect of his verbal attack has been fruitful and tangible, for Maurice, thanks to the doctor's style, has shown, as Forster tells us:

"Some change in his mouth and eyes and voice since he had faced Dr. Barry". (Maurice: 80)

Similarly, Caroline in her dialogue with Gino shifts her style according to the topic. She, whose dialogue with Philip was characterized by her using a powerless speech style (see PP. 100-101of this chapter), is now able to shift into a powerful one. Caroline falls in love with Gino without his knowledge and now comes to know that he is going to marry. The topic seems to be serious enough to make her shift her style:

"Do I understand that you are proposing to marry again"
"He nodded"
"I forbid you, then!"
"He looked puzzled, but took it for some foreign banter and laughed"
"I forbid you"
"But why"
"You have ruined one woman; I forbid you to ruin another".
It is not a year since Lilia died, you pretended to me the other day
that you loved her. It is a lie. You wanted her money. Has this
woman money too?" (WAF: 131)

At the grammar level, Caroline’s style is free from all the features
of powerless speech style. It is characterized by the absence of the
entire powerless features, which dominated her style in her
dialogue with Philip. At the speech act level, Caroline performs a
"directive illocutionary act", i.e. the act of “forbidding” (Searle:
1975:32), with which she interferes in Gino’s freedom of action,
and thus commits a FTA to his negative face wants (Brown and
Levinson: 70). This illocutionary act has a double perlocutionary
effect on Gino, shown by facial expressions (puzzling and
laughing). In terms of Austin (1962), Caroline’s forbidding is an
infelicitous illocutionary act because she is not in authority to
perform it. Then, she performs another illocutionary act by
accusing him of ruining a woman, referring here to Lilia who died
in giving birth. She goes on exercising her artificial power by
repeating the same infelicitous illocutionary act of forbidding.
Caroline does not stop violating Gino’s face wants nor does he
defend himself. As a matter of fact, Gino does not take Caroline’s
utterances as FTAs but as a piece of advice coming from a friend,
as his next utterance reveals:

“So you do not advise me” (WRA: 131)

In this extract, Caroline resorts to style shifting strategy in order
to prevent Gino from getting married. It is one of the few
occasions in the novel where Caroline shifts to a powerful speech
style. The topic of discourse with its sensitivity obliges her to abandon her powerless speech habit, at least in this important communicative situation.

It is worth mentioning here that not only style shifting can occur in response to the topic of discourse, but also topic-shifting can in many occasions be a successful strategy used by speakers to avoid certain FTAs either to their own faces or to the faces of the addressees. E.M. Forster successfully assigns this strategy to his characters.

3.3.b. Topic Shifting:

Dr. Aziz resorts to this communicative strategy when he feels that the topic being discussed with Fielding can lead their conversation future uncertain. The incident takes place when Fielding tells Aziz that he is going to England for business, and Aziz thinks that Fielding may intend to meet Adela there. Aziz does not want to discuss any topic related to Adela, so he prefers to shift the conversation to another topic:

"What is the nature of the business? Will it leave you much spare time?"

"Enough to see my friends."

"I expected you to make such a reply. You are a faithful friend. Shall we now talk about something else?"

"Willingly. What subject?"

"Poetry"... ‘Let us discuss why poetry has lost power of making men brave. My mother’s father was also a poet, and fought against you in the Mutiny. I might equal him if there was another Mutiny. As it is, I am a doctor, who has won a case and has three
children to support, and whose chief subject of conversation is official plans."

"Let us talk about poetry" (APTI: 245)

Dr. Aziz makes a successful topic shift by selecting "poetry", which is a safe topic for both. In Brown and Levinson system, selecting a safe topic minimizes the FTA to the hearer's positive face (p. 112). Aziz considers "poetry" a safe topic because he knows in advance that Fielding is interested in poetry, especially the Persian poetry. However, it can be argued here that Dr. Aziz tends to shift the topic more to protect himself than to save Fielding's face. Poetry is a truly safe topic, but Aziz exploits it politically by virtue of highlighting his mother's father's struggle and fighting against the British, and that he may be doing the same thing. Poetry, discussed in such a manner, is no longer an appropriate or safe topic for Fielding. Therefore, he insists on discussing poetry as it is, refusing any further sub-shifts that may result in an unpeaceful conversational atmosphere:

"Let us talk about poetry." (APTI: 243)

Hence, the discussion goes in this direction "poetry"

As a matter of fact, this is not the first time in which Mr. Fielding manages to control his interlocutor's topic-shift. He falls in the same trap with Adela, who shifts the topic from discussing her affair with Aziz at the Marber Caves to a religious topic by asking him if he really believes in heaven:

"Do you not believe in heaven, Mr. Fielding. May I ask?"

She said looking at him shyly.

"I do not. Yet I believe that honesty gets us there."
Adela adopts a very formal speech style in asking Fielding this question, presumably knowing that this topic is not favored by Fielding, who is presented by Forster as an atheist. By this topic shift, Adela commits a FTA against Fielding’s positive face, because raising topics, such as religion, race, politics, in Brown and Levinson system:

Shows that the [speaker] doesn’t care about or is different to the [hearer’s] positive face.

(Brown and Levinson, 1987:66-67)

However, Adela softens the threat by giving him the option not to comply “May I ask?”

On the other hand, Fielding gives a contradictory answer by means of violating Grice’s maxim of quality “speak the truth, be sincere”, which suggests that he cannot be telling the truth. By using this strategy he encourages Adela to look for an interpretation that reconciles the two contradictory propositions: “I do not”, “Yet I believe that honesty gets us there”. When she fails to do so and asks for further explanation, Fielding resorts to shifting the conversation back to the main topic in order to avoid any possible threat against his own face or against his addressee’s that can result from explaining his contradictory utterances. Thus, Fielding proves for the second time that he is communicatively more powerful than his interlocutors. This power enables him to lead the conversation in both cases safe and peaceful despite the
attempts made to create uncertainty and unpredictability in the conversation.

In the *Longest Journey*, Mrs. Failing, also adopts the same communicative strategy when she feels that she has hurt Stephen’s positive face:

“A thing of beauty you are not. But I sometimes think you are a joy forever.”

“I beg your pardon?”

“Oh, you understand right enough”........... Large and steady feet...have this disadvantage-you can knock down a man, but you will never knock down a woman.”

“I don’t know what you mean. I’m not likely-

“Oh never mind-never mind. I was being funny. I repent. Tell me about the sheep. Why did you go with them?” (TLJ: 102)

It is clear that Mrs. Failing recognizes that she has done something wrong with Stephen’s positive face; therefore she shifts the topic back by asking him about the sheep. However, Stephen realizes that it is just a technique made by Mrs. Failing to redress her attack on his face in her previous turns. Therefore, he doesn’t go through the details of the story of the sheep, which he had already narrated:

“I did tell you. I had to” (TLJ.: 102)

Then, Mrs. Failing makes one more redressive action in terms of indirect invitation:

“Did you have any lunch”(TLJ.: 102).

Stephen, who has not yet recovered from the FTAs made against his face, refuses the invitation indirectly:
“I don’t hold with regular meals” (TLJ.: 102)
This refusal seems to be justified and expected from Stephen whose face was severely attacked by Mrs. Failing. His indirect refusal, it can be argued, suggests that Mrs. Failing fails to draw his attention away from the threat in spite of her redressive action. This dialogue clearly illustrates Stephen’s powerless communicative position. He is not able to defend his face or retort to Mrs. Failing’s attack on his face. Unlike Fielding who could manage the situation, Stephen surrenders, giving every possible chance to his addressee to lead the conversation. He does not attempt to shift the conversation to another topic or even drive it back to the main topic as done by Fielding. The only thing he manages to do is to reject Mrs. Failing’s invitation, but even the rejection is made indirectly, which shows that he cares for her face despite her violation of his self-image.

At another occasion, Mrs. Failing makes another topic shift, which plays a significant role in the development of the plot of the novel. The shift takes place in one of the dialogues with her nephew, Rickie:

“I don’t mind Bulford camp” said Rickie... “The men there are the son of the men here, and have come back to the old country. War’s horrible, yet one loves all continuity and no one could mind a shepherd.”

“Indeed what about your brother – a shepherd if ever there was? Look how he bores you! Don’t be so sentimental.”

“But – oh, you mean -”

“Your brother Stephen”
"Stephen Wonham isn’t my brother, Aunt Emily"

(TLJ: 149-150)

It is through this tremendous topic shift that Rickie comes to know for the first time that Stephen is his half brother. The significance of this shift is that, its perlocutionary effect is not a short-term effect that would disappear with the end of the conversation. Rather, it will remain with him throughout the rest of his life in the novel. Therefore, one can confidently say that the story starts at this very moment in which Mrs. Failing performs this topic shift.

The power of the shift is highly portrayed by Rickie’s verbal reaction. He is shown unable to take his conversational turn properly after the shocking news “But—oh, you mean—”. Furthermore, when he attempts to make a negative assertion in his next turn, Forster tells us that he adopts “... deferential tones that one uses to an old and infirm person”\(^6\) (p 149-150). The effect is no doubt huge and enormous, but Rickie has no choice but to admit the fact that the shepherd, Stephen, is his brother.

Similarly, Mr. Wilcox makes one of the most significant topic shifts in Howards End. It is considered as one of the most crucial turning points in the novel. Margaret comes to Mr. Wilcox to tell him that she has changed her mind with reference to renting his house and that she cannot take it because it doesn’t suit her family. In the course of discussion, Mr. Wilcox shifts into another topic, which can more or less be considered a marriage proposal:

---

\(^6\) The emphasis on describing his tone suggests that this tone is different from the one adopted in the previous turns. This accordingly means that his tonal shift is motivated by the topic picked up by Mrs. Failing.
"Miss. Schlegel' his voice was firm – "I have had you up on false pretence. I want to speak about a much more serious matter than a house"

Margaret almost answered: "I know—"

"Could you be induced to share my—is it probable—"

"Oh, Mr. Wilcox!' she interrupted, holding the piano and averting her eyes. "I see, I see. I will write to you after words if I may."

"Miss. Schlegel – Margaret – you don’t understand"

"Oh yes! Indeed, yes!"

"I am asking you to be my wife" (HE: 150)

Mr. Wilcox does not go into the topic directly in order not to shock her. In terms of Brown and Levinson, Mr. Wilcox goes off record, i.e. his utterance implies more than one attributable intention so that he cannot be held to have committed himself to one particular intent. However, Margaret shows her ability of reading people's communicative intention even when they use "hinting strategy" (Leech, 1983:97). Despite this encouraging step that she knows what he is going to talk about, Mr. Wilcox is still unable to show his bravery of making the proposal. His style is still marked by hesitation and incomplete meaningless utterances "could you be introduced to share my – is it probable - ".

On the other hand, Margaret shows that she is in a more powerful communicative position than him by means of interrupting his conversational turn. She goes on impressing us with her

---

7 Brown and Levinson: p 69.
8 For instance, if Margaret interprets his utterance as a FTA, he can simply deny that FTA was ever really intended.
StyCe-shifting in T.M. Torster's 9fove[s communicative power when she gives no instant answer to Wilcox's proposal despite the fact that she adores him. As a matter of fact, Margaret wants to send a message to Mr. Wilcox that she can control her sentiment and that such serious matters cannot be decided in haste. Her conditional speech act "I will write to you after words if I may" presupposes that no assurance is given to him, and that his proposal is subject to refusal. With this, she frees herself from any personal commitment in future.

Mr. Wilcox in his next conversational turn makes it clear that he is unable to take the consequences of his topic shift. Up till now, he neither conveys his message clearly nor his communicative purpose. Furthermore, he takes a turn in which he shifts⁹ form one style into another, and commits a FTA against Margaret's positive face. "Mrs. Schlegel, Margaret you don't understand." Margaret, however, doesn't take his last utterance as a FTA to her positive face, being a negative assertion having the illocutionary force of accusation; she just confirms her understanding "Oh, yes, indeed yes!" This confirmation encourages Mr. Wilcox to make the proposal straightforward, plain, and bold in terms of speech act of request:

"I am asking you to be my wife" (H.E.: 150)

By performing this speech act, Mr. Wilcox commits a FTA on record without redressive action and with maximum efficiency¹⁰. The threat could have been avoided, given the fact that Margaret

⁹ By virtue of using two different address forms "Miss Schlegel" and "Margaret", he shifts his style from formal to informal respectively.

¹⁰ Brown and Levinson: PP. 68-69
was able to interpret his hints in his three previous conversational turns. However, his insistence on taking another turn seems to be an attempt made by him to remove any ambiguity, vagueness, or uncertainty that might have occurred in his preceding turns. The importance of this topic shift is that Margaret and Mr. Wilcox shift their relationship from friendship to emotional relationship, which ends later in their marriage.

3-3.c. Emotional Style shifting

Style shifting, which is associated with emotional effect, is called emotional style shifting. For example, Sato (1973) finds that emotion changes are associated with shifts in speakers of Hawaii Creol English. With reference to literary discourse, Roger Shuy (1980) finds that D.H. Lawrence in lady Chatterley’s lover uses style shifting as a literary device to demonstrate the emotional power of sexuality. Ervin Tripp (2001) comments on Shuy’s study:

Roger Shuy has drawn attention to D.H. Lawrence’s use in lady Chatterley’s lover of skilled dialect shifts by the gamekeeper for powerful social effects in redefining encounters. Lady Chatterley’s awkward attempts to speak the gamekeeper’s dialect in afterglow talk are a demonstration of the Lawrence belief in the emotional power of sexuality. There is iconization of dialect as naturalness, at least for lady Chatterley.

(Ervin-Tripp, 2001:48)

Emotional style shifting has been noticed in E.M. Forster’s novels. The characters shift form one style to another when the
The conversational atmosphere is emotional. For example, Maurice, who is impolite to everyone including his mother and the dean, shifts to a formal polite style in his dialogue with the servant Alec. The shift takes place after getting a sexual benefit from Alec.11

“May I ask your name?”
“I’m Scudder”
“I know you’re Scudder – I meant your other name.”
“Only Alec just.”
“Jolly name to have.”
“It’s only my name.”
“I’m called Maurice.” (Maurice: 171)

Maurice opens the dialogue with a formal polite style that is usually used for addressing a superior interlocutor. His concern about Alec’s negative face is clearly shown in his mitigating use of speech act of permission. Instead of asking him directly about his name, he first asks for permission to ask. By using this polite strategy, Maurice minimizes the imposition by giving Alec the option not to comply. After the name is asserted, he takes another emotional shift by praising his addressee’s name “Jolly name to have”. With this utterance Maurice fulfills Alec’s positive face wants,12 that he is liked by others or some of his wants be liked by others. He continues with his emotional shift by allowing Alec to call him with his first name “I’m called Maurice”, dropping

---

11 Maurice is presented in the novel as a homosexual character.
altogether the formal address form Mister and Sir. This step can be interpreted as an attempt made by Maurice to minimize the social distance between himself and Alec.

However, Maurice doesn’t maintain this sociolinguistic behaviour for long. Later in the novel when Alec tends to address him in his first name, he doesn’t accept it and insists on maximizing the social distance:

“Maurice, listen, I only...”

“Maurice, Am I?”

“You call me Alec...I’m as good as you.”

“I don’t find you are” (Maurice: 196)

Thus, it can be argued here that the shift made earlier by Maurice was just a situational one motivated by his emotion towards Alec after fulfilling his homosexual desire. Once the motivation disappears and they return to their normal life, each of them should maintain his social power, i.e. Maurice is Mr. Maurice or Sir and Alec is just a servant.

Similarly, Margaret’s emotion towards Henry leads her to shift her style when she comes to discover his illegal relationship with Jacky. In an attempt to show that she is not disturbed or hurt by the affair, she addresses him in this way:

“Leave it where you will boy. It’s not going to trouble us. I know what I’m talking about, and it will make no difference” (H E.: 223).

13 In the same conversation, Maurice insists on Alec not to call him sir “you mustn’t call me sir” (p 172).
Although the matter is extremely serious, Margaret shifts from the impolite, harsh, and tough style that is usually expected and normally used in such sensitive circumstances to a marked casual informal one featured by using the informal vocative “boy” for addressing Henry. By adopting this style, which is a deviation from the norm, Margaret assumes the role of the superior. According to Scotton (1985):

> In any exchange, conventionalized or not, a speaker initiating moves using individual variants [boy] or entire verities encoding solidarity is perceived as making a negotiation of power by assuming the role of the superior.

(Scotton, 1985:116)

However, in this exchange Margaret neither negotiates her interactional power nor the statusful one. Rather, it is her emotional power that guides her to adopt such a style in such a critical situation. For Margaret, who is not ready to lose Henry whatsoever be the price, using this communicative strategy seems to be inevitable. Thus, once again she proves her success in dealing with serious subject matters and again triumphs communicatively over Henry.

Adela also uses the same technique in *A Passage To India*, but the aim of the shift is totally different from that of Margaret. While Margaret has adopted that device to maintain Henry’s relationship, Adela utilizes it to get released from Ronny’s engagement:
“I’ve finally decided we are not going to be married, my dear boy.” (APTI: 71)

The use of the vocative form phrase dear boy shifts Adela’s style from formal to informal. By this shift, she tries to minimize the perlocutionary effect on Ronny that would result from her declarative illocutionary act that takes the force of an announcement. Ronny, who the announcement hurts deeply, controls himself and retorts to Adela in the same way:

“You never said we should marry, my dear girl; you never bound either yourself or me – don’t let this upset you.”

(APTI: 71)

In these utterances, Ronny shows that he doesn’t receive Adela’s announcement as a FTA. Instead, he turns the threat back on her face by means of trivializing her announcement, asserting that no proposal has yet taken place so as to be broken off. Both of them seem to have handled this emotional situation by resorting to a style that can more or less be called a deviation from the norm.

One of the most remarkable emotional shifts is found in The Longest Journey. It occurs when Rickie comes to Agnes after her fiancé’s death. When she sees him, she immediately says through her “mind style”:

“These are the people who are left a live” (TLJ: 63)

Forster comments on her utterance through his narrator as “From the bottom of her soul she hated him” (p 63). Her style content reveals her extreme hatred to him to the extent that she wishes he

---

14 In many occasions, lovers end their emotional relationships offensively, but Adela and Ronny deviate from this norm.
would die instead of her fiancé. However, once he starts speaking, this extreme hatred turns into admiration, and then emotion:

"It's the worst thing that can never happen to you in all your life. And you've got mind it you've got to mind it. They'll come saying 'Bear up-trust to time', No, no; they are wrong. Mind it" (TLJ: 63).

In this conversational turn, Rickie highly deviates from the norm of speech act of condolences. He doesn't use words or expressions that are usually used by people in such circumstances, such as "Bear up, trust to time". He seems to have recognized that Agnes needs someone who is able to assess and look at the matter the way she does. His speech style content shows that he cares for Gerald's death, which in Brown and Levinson system, he fulfills some of Agne's positive face wants. In other words, by performing the directive command "you've got to mind it", though Rickie commits a FTA on Agne's negative face, he still attends to her positive face by means of commanding her to do what she really likes to do. The way he singles himself out communicatively makes Agnes change her attitude towards him and admit for the first time that "[the] boy was greater than they supposed" (TLJ: 64). The conversation continues till Forster informs us that "her hatred was lulled" (TLJ: 64).

After this report, Agnes shifts her style drastically and for the first time in the novel addresses Rickie in this manner:

"Dear Rickie" and held up her hand to him........... "Dear Rickie-but for the rest of my life what am I to do?"
"Anything – if you remember that the greatest thing is over"

"I don’t know you", she said tremulously “You have grown up in a moment. You never talked to us and yet you understand it all. Tell me again – I can only trust you – where is he?"

“He is in heaven”

“You are sure” (TLJ: 64-65)

Thus, one can hardly believe that it is Agnes speaking. Her speech style highly reveals a change in her emotion from hatred and hostility to respect, trust, and perhaps love. She speaks to him so intimately, as if he were not the person whom she hated some conversational turns ago. She starts her shift by addressing Rickie as dear, which is an informal address term used for intimates. Her physical action, i.e. her holding up her hand to him, reinforces her linguistic act of solidarity. Then, she assigns to Rickie the role of the superior by asking for his advice and guidance. After Rickie’s answer, Agnes starts using some assertive speech acts in which she fulfills some of his positive face wants. And finally, she concludes her shift with a strong utterance in which she states that Rickie is the only one she can trust. With this conversation, Agnes and Rickie open a new chapter in their relation. Later on, they develop this relation into love and then marriage.

Similarly, in Where Angels Fear to Tread, Caroline shows some change in her emotion towards Philip and exhibits that in her speech style. The shift takes place after a number of unfriendly and hostile conversations between them, which reaches its climax when Philip once accuses her of being either a spy or traitor:
"Permit me to begin by asking you a question. In which capacity have you come to Monteriano - Spy or traitor?"

"Spy". (WAFTT: 106)

Towards the end of the novel, however, they tend to shift their styles:

"I'm muddle-headed and stupid, and not worth a quarter of you, but I have tried to do what seemed right at the time. And you- your brain and your insight are splendid. But when you see what's right you're too idle to do it........." (WAFTT: 148).

In this conversational turn Caroline defames herself and praises Philip, which she hardly does throughout the novel. Then she makes a sudden contradictory shift by means of violating Philip's positive face "But when you see what's right you're too idle to do it". According to Scotton (1985), this type of shift:

Increases the uncertainty and inability of the addressee to provide explanation of the speaker's behaviour.

(Scotton 1985: 116)

Philip, whose uncertainty increases, finds no words other than praising his addressee's positive face.

"You are wonderful" he said gravely." (WAFTT: 148)

With this utterance, Philip succeeds to make Caroline repent for what she has said in her contradictory shift. Before she starts speaking, Forster gets us prepared for the shift by portraying her physical act:

She came up to him, and then her mood suddenly changed, and she took hold of both his hands. (WAFTT: 148).

Forster's description illustrates that Caroline makes maximum use of what is known in the world of proxemics as "posture and
interpersonal distance". After this description, she speaks in this way:

“You are so splendid, Mr. Herriton that I can’t bear to see you wasted.”... “I can’t bear – she has not been good to you – your mother.”"¹⁵ (WAFTT 148)

Caroline starts her shift by using exaggerative positive expressions to show her sympathy with him (Brown and Levinson: 104). Then, she takes another step in which she shows her concern for him against his mother. By referring to his mother, Caroline appears to be optimistic.¹⁶ In other words, she presupposes that Philip who suffers from his mother’s orders and obligations will like the reference. In his next turn, Philip takes advantage of her shift to gain more sympathy from her. He takes a long turn in which he narrates many events where he fails to meet his ultimate goals. One of these events is his failure to fall in love.

“I don’t die- don’t fall in love. If other people die or fall in love they always do it when I’m just not there.” (WAFT: 148)

Caroline’s sympathy increases accordingly and says:

“I wish something would happen to you my dear friend.”

(WAFT: 149)

This dialogue puts an end to suspect, distrust, and uncertainty, which dominated their relationship in the past and opens a new horizon for confidence, trust, and friendship between them.

¹⁵ Caroline’s speech style is again featured by hesitation, signified by dashes.
¹⁶ Brown and Levinson : 125
3.3.d. Initiative style shifting:

Initiative shift refers to that type of shift in which a speaker adopts a style beyond the immediate style of the conversation. According to Bell (2001):

> Initiative style shifts derive their force and their direction of shift from their underlying association with classes of persons or groups.

(Bell, 2001:147)

The speaker here shifts into a style of a third person that is not usually present at an interaction but he/she influences style even in his/ her absence. The third person, whose style is adopted, is usually called "referee".

Initiative style shift is found in Forster’s novels but with a limited number of occurrences. For example, in a Room with a View Mr. Beeb adopts signora Bertolini’s style in her absence. The incident takes place in his conversation with Lucy and Miss Alan:

> “Ho, Mr, Beeb, if you knew what I suffer over the children’s educashion! Hi won’tave my little Victoria taught by a hignorant Italian what can’t explain nothink.” (ARWAV : 32)

In terms of Bell (2001), Mr. Beeb adopts a style beyond the immediate style of the conversation. He shifts into Mrs. Bertolini’s style, who is a non-native speaker of English and who is not present in the conversation. If Mr. Beeb resorts to this style to redefine his identity in relation to Signora Bertolini, then it may be called initiative style shift. But the context does not suggest

---

37 See chapter one: PP. 38-39
StyCe-shifting in E.M. Forster's Novels

this, as Miss Alan who is present in the conversation tells us that Mr. Beeb shifts into this style to mock her in an agreeable way (p.33).

Similarly, Mr. Eager adopts the American accent when he happens to comment on a piece of chat between an American girl and her father; he says, addressing Lucy:

"You know the American girl in Punch who says. "Say. Poppa, what did we see at Rome?" and the father replies "why, guess Rome was the place where we saw the Yaller dog" (ARWAV:59)

This shift is made by virtue of using the informal kinship term "Poppa" that is usually used by Americans. It is also realized phonetically in the word "Yaller" for "Yellow", by replacing the falling diphthong /ou/ with the post alveolar /r/, which is a feature of American English.

There is strong evidence in the conversation that makes one claim that Mr. Eager does not shift his style arbitrarily. Forster tells us this evidence through his narrator:

But Mr. Eager proceeded to tell Miss. Honeychurch [Lucy] that on the right lived Mr. Someone, An American of the best type so rare!... (A.R.W.A.V. 59)

This report occurs in the same conversation in which Mr. Eager shifts his style. The way Mr. Eager speaks about the American man highly reveals his respect and admiration for him "an American of the best type- so rare". Accordingly, one can argue that Mr. Eager shifts into the American accent to show that he is

so influenced by the man to the extent that he adopts his own accent while he is absent. In terms of Bell (2001: 147), the American man is a referee who can “influence style even in [his] absence”.

In *Howards End*, E.M Forster exploits the concept of initiative style shift to explain the unrevealed relationship between Mr. Wilcox and Jacky. Throughout the novel the reader is not informed that there is an illegal relationship between the two characters, nor does Margaret know about the affair. This secret is only disclosed through Jacky by means of shifting her style from the immediate speech style of the conversation with Mr. Wilcox in the presence of Margaret (Mr. Wilcox’s fiancée):

“*Madam, you will be more comfortable at the hotel*” he said sharply.”

Jacky replied: “*If it isn’t Hen!*” (HE: 211)

In this excerpt, Mr. Wilcox addresses Jacky in a very formal style that is used with strangers. The use of the formal vocative term *Madam* suggests this formality. This communicative strategy is usually adopted when there is a considerable social distance between the conversational participants. Thus, it is a good technique from Wilcox’s side, for Margaret is present in the conversation. His style shows that he wants the conversation to go formally. However, Jacky destroys every communicative effort made by him and insists on scandalizing him in front of his fiancée:

“*If it isn’t Hen!*” (HE: 211)
By addressing him in this manner, Jacky deviates from the style of the immediate situation established by Mr. Wilcox. Her style is a markedly casual style featured by the generic vocative term Hen for Henry, which is not used unless the addressee is extraordinarily intimate.

This style causes uncertainty to Margaret who gets shocked at the way Jacky addresses her fiancé. As her doubts increase, she finds no other way but to ask Henry about it:

"Why does she call you Hen?" "Has she ever seen you before?" (H.E: 212)

The answer comes, but not from Henry:

"Seen Hen before! ‘Who hasn’t seen Hen? He’s serving you like me, my dear. Those boys! You wait still, we love’ em".

(H.E. 212)

Henry, who knows that Jacky and Margaret know each other through Leonard (Jacky’s husband), thought he was trapped. Therefore, he makes no effort to deny the fact:

"I am a man and have lived a man’s past. I have the honour to release you from your engagement." (H.E: 212)

While he tends to confess his affair with Jacky in an indirect constative speech act, he announces his release from Margaret in a very bold and plain directive speech act without attending to her positive or negative face. It seems reasonable here to argue that Mr. Wilcox resorts to this communicative strategy to avoid any further possible FTAs to his negative and positive face from Margaret, in case she further asks him about his affair with Jacky.
Thus, it is clear that all these complexities have resulted from Jacky’s initiative style shift. Forster does not mention or even hint to this affair. Instead, he prefers to let Jacky inform both the reader and Margaret about it through her speech style. This conversation reveals a good deal about the hidden side of Mr. Wilcox’s character. Margaret now knows better than any time before whom she is going to marry, thanks to Jacky, and thanks to her initiative style shift.

Thus, this chapter has illustrated how Forster utilizes the concept of style and style shifting to reveal many social aspects about his characters. The analysis of the concept has, for example, shown that it is used by the characters as a communicative strategy to negotiate their social power in the conversation. Most of the examples have shown that it is used by those characters that are comparatively in a more powerful position in the conversation. It is for the first time one comes to know that style shifting is a significant stylistic device used by E.M. Forster in his novels. One of the most important benefits of using this concept is that it highlights the element of reality in E.M. Forster’s novels. In other words, the intensive use of this concept makes one claim that there is a lot of similarity between Forster’s fictional world and the outside world. For more details, however, see the concluding chapter.