

# Style Language: Creating Words for Sharing Diverse Ways of Doing

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This paper presents "Style Language" as a new method for sharing various ways of doing for a specific activity, with support for designing your own activity styles. In the method of "Style Language," the elements of styles are described in the manner of approach and implementation. By collecting, organizing, and describing a number of styles, it will be easier for people to talk about styles and to gain new ideas beyond their personal experience. Although Style Language can be used as a vocabulary for supporting creative thinking similar to a pattern language, there are differences between them. First, while a pattern language shows a better way of improving the *quality* of a creative act, the Style Language helps to recognize *diverse possibilities* for the ways of implementing the act. In that sense, the Style Language can be used by itself, but it becomes a powerful support tool in combination with pattern language. In this paper, we introduce "A Style Language for Family Lifestyle," and "A Style Language for Cooking Class" as specific examples of Style Languages. Finally, we demonstrate a way to utilize Style Languages through the "learning with peer" in a setting we call a Chatting Workshop and the "matching" between supplier and users.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

In any domain, there are various ways of doing. In other words, various styles exist for implementing an activity. Such styles may derive from historical backgrounds, cultural influences (environments), personal taste, and accidental events. These styles are different from each other, and each one of them has its uniqueness. These styles are the focus of our work. We call the language for describing these styles a "Style Language." In this paper, we present in this paper the concept of the Style Language which consists of "styles." Each language element describes a specific style, and they function as a "discovery media" to recognize various ways of doing. The concept of a Style Language was developed through inspiration from the concept of pattern language (Alexander, 1977; Iba, 2016a). In this paper, we will describe about the concept of Style Language and compare them to pattern language. We also introduce two specific examples of Style Languages; A Style Language for Family Lifestyle and A Style Language for Cooking Class.

## 2. WHAT IS STYLE LANGUAGE?

### 2.1 Definition and Structures of Style Language

Style Language is a language that describes the various ways of doing in a specific field or subject. A Style Language consists of elements called "Style," and each "Style" visualizes one good approach that a certain person practices. Since a particular approach is influenced by an individual person's culture and background, the styles are not necessarily applicable by all people. However, the Style Language collects unique ways of doing from diverse backgrounds and this makes it possible to suggest the various diverse approaches that exist

to fulfill a purpose. The Style Language helps people assist in creating ideas for new approaches by helping people recognize their diversity and by providing discovery from the diverse ideas that have been proven to work.

The structure of every single Style consists of the style content, a summary of what can be done in what kind of situation, and the “Style word” (see Figure 1).

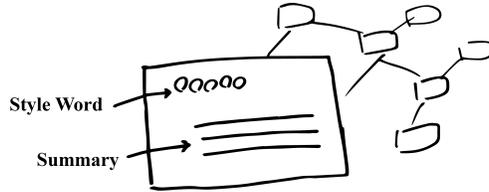


Figure 1: Style Form: Style word and summary

For example, let’s look at the Style word “Papa • Pancake” (Figure 2). The summary for “Papa • Pancake” is:

“Every Sunday Morning, my dad made us pancakes. Even though he’s not usually much of a cook, he would try his best to make them into cute shapes. Every Sunday Morning was somehow special for me.”

In this way, the contents are written specifically and positively for the summary, “Style Content.” The name of the Style, “Style word,” represents each Style's feature and this name becomes part of the vocabulary, to be recognized, remembered and discussed.



Figure 2: Style Form: Style word and summary

## 2.2 The Relationship between Style Language and Pattern Language

The concept of Style Language was developed through inspiration from A Pattern Language (Alexander, 1977; Iba, 2016a). Although both support the creative acts as vocabulary, their functions and goals are quite different. Pattern languages shares practical knowledge and enhance the *quality* of the creative act, whereas Style Languages support giving recognition to the *diverse possibilities of execution*. In other words, a Style Language is a language which expresses and provides insights into the *diversity* of approaches (Figure 3). Although it is not a method to generate and achieve a *quality* of the creative act, it can be used to help achieve this quality.

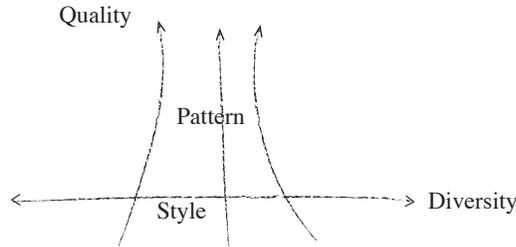


Figure 3: Different Vectors Patterns and Styles Work

In a pattern language, each individual pattern includes information as shown in Figure 4. In particular, in "Pattern Language 3.0" (Iba, 2016a), patterns are explicitly written in this format. Idea and method for solving a problem are abstractly summarized as "Solution" and specific ideas and methods are exemplified as "Action." In the pattern description, two or three representative examples are introduced in a part of "Action." Pattern practitioners will think about specific ways for designing their own actions by referring to these examples.

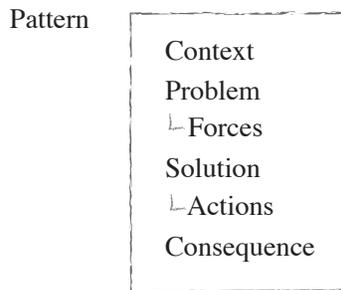


Figure 4: Basic Pattern Format of Pattern Language 3.0

It can be said that Styles in the Style Language are indicating various examples of "Actions" in Pattern Language 3.0 format (Figure 5). The Styles of a Style Language presents ways of implementing the solution, which are functionally equivalent to actions in Pattern Language 3.0.

Although the Style Language and the pattern language have different functions, it can be argued that since diverse approaches which generated good consequences are written into Styles, all Styles are assumed to potentially corresponding to patterns.

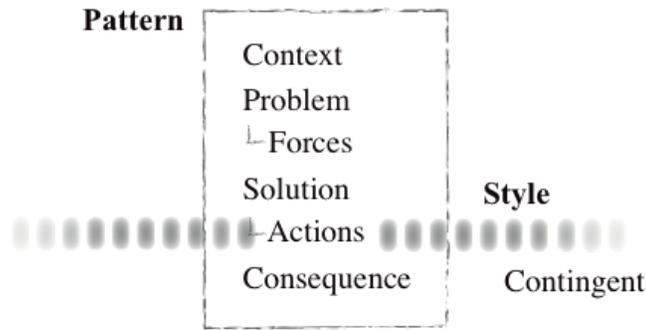


Figure 5: Style Languages Present Various Ways of Approach in “Actions” in Pattern Language 3.0 Format

### 2.3 Style Language as a language within Creative Languages

The Style Language is a language which supports creative acts, which is similar to pattern languages describing practical knowledge for good practice (Alexander, 1977; Iba, 2016a), "Future Language" (Iba, 2015a, 2016b) describing desirable vision of the future and "Concept Language" (Iba, 2016c) summarizing the idea and the way of thinking into language. In this way, considering this current situation that various languages similar to pattern language are being created for creative acts, it seems necessary to have one name that ties up all of these languages. Therefore, we call them "Creative Languages." Creative Languages include various kinds of languages which support creative acts. Specifically, as shown in Figure 6, each of Pattern Language, Style Language, and Future Language, and Concept Language are all one types of Creative Languages.

Note that, reflecting back from today, the "Fun Language" (Iba, Yoshikawa, *et al.*, 2017) would be categorized as a Style Language describing perspectives and actions to enjoy certain activities.

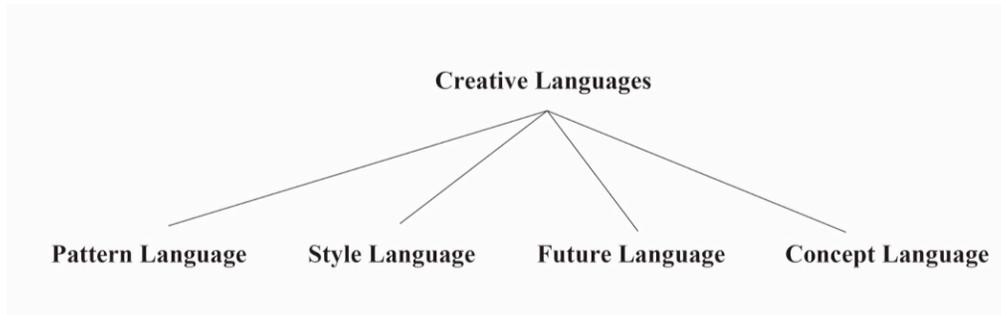


Figure 6: Creative Languages and Languages belong to it

The reason that the name "Creative Languages" seem to be appropriate is that these languages have functions of supporting creative acts as well as generating communication and thinking as a discovery media. Figure 7 shows the function of creative media for creative acts captured by systems theory.

Sociologist Niklas Luhmann defined society as a system in which 'communication' is merely an element, and stated the human thought is an autopoietic system with elements of consciousness (Luhmann, 1984, 1997). Referring to this theory, one of the authors of this paper (Iba) defined creation as an autopoietic system with discovery as an element (Iba, 2010). In other words, it can be understood that creative acts are generated by interacting with all creative system, psychic system and social system (Iba & Yoshikawa, 2017).

At this time, the knowledge included in each Style and pattern elements of Creative Languages, such as the Style Language and the pattern language, have the functions that support creative acts and help the generation of the creative system. In addition, Creative Languages support communication and thinking as a language media. In this sense, the name "Creative Languages" can be seen as a brief representation of its function for the supporting the creative act.

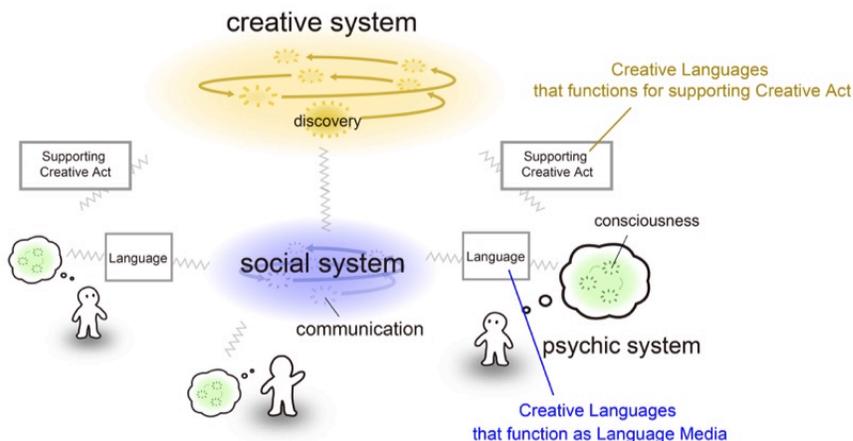


Figure 7: Function of Creative Languages in Creation, Communication and Consciousness

## 2.4 The Utilization of Style Language

First of all, a Style Language can be used to explain ways of doing that otherwise would not be possible for a person to realize. Since the Style Language is created based on the experience of many people who have various ways of doing, so it includes methods and approaches that are not known from the perspective of a single individual. Thus, the Style created based on the experiences of other people becomes a tool for gaining new ideas. Therefore, it is a tool for *peer learning* since practitioners can learn from each other (Iba, 2015b; Iba, 2017). Such utilization has occurred in the "Chatting Workshop using Style Language" introduced in the next section.

Secondly, it will become possible to work with confidence if a person knows that other people also act the same Style as they do themselves. People cannot stop feeling anxious about what they coincidentally started whether it is really a good thing. However, once they know there are other practitioners, they will be more confident about their styles. This is also what happened in the "Chatting Workshop" described later.

In addition, thirdly, it provides people with a way to introduce their own Styles clearly in short words by using Style words. For instance, it becomes easier for people who provide a place of learning, such as a classroom or lesson, to indicate their ways of teaching and their Styles of classroom activities by using Style words. If so, it also makes easier for participants to understand what kind of learning they can achieve from the viewpoint of Styles, and better matching becomes available as choosing their favorite and appropriate Styles as well. In the next section, the indication of characteristics of classes and supporting better matching methods will be described.

## 3. SPECIFIC EXAMPLES OF STYLE LANGUAGE

### 3.1 A Style Language for Family Lifestyle

There are many types of family lifestyle of living. Lifestyle means not only the family structure like a nuclear family or big family, parents are working or only the husband or wife is working, having children or not, but the culture or family custom that this family think is important. Even, if people can design their own family

lifestyle, it can be difficult to make the better family lifestyle for themselves because they lack ideas. They don't know how the other families function, and tend to think that "the family lifestyle that we have grown up with is usual." In order to provide ideas and help to design family lifestyles, we, Iba laboratory at Keio University, created "A Style Language for Family Lifestyle" with Kao Corporation to describe other family's ways of living (Figure 8).

In the past, Russian novelist Leo Tolstoy said that "All happy families are alike; each unhappy family is unhappy in its own way." in the beginning of his book (*Anna Karenina*, 1878). In this context, what is the common point among all the happy families? We guessed that the quality of happiness was the common point and there are some patterns to generate this quality. On the other hand, there are a lot of practical ways and each family has different styles.

A Style Language for Family Lifestyle is the tool that enables us to see other family's lifestyles. Iba laboratory and Kao corporation had created "Ways of Everyday World-Making: Living well with Working and Parenting," in 2016, and it focuses on people who are working and parenting (Ogo, Iba, *et al.*, 2017). This time, we focused on supporting the development of individual ways to design not only the lifestyle of people who are working and parenting, but also of others.

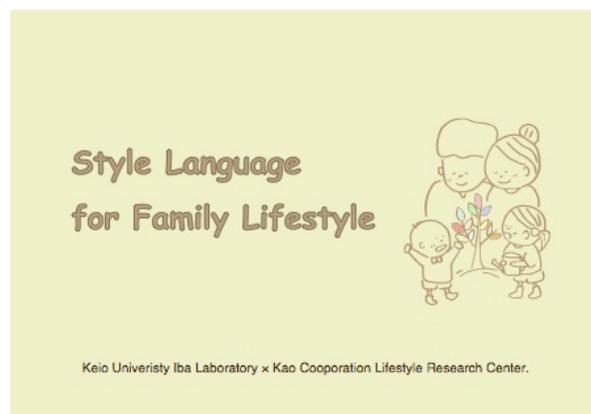


Figure 8: The Title Image of "Style Language for Family Lifestyle"

The creating process for the Style Language is very similar to the process that Iba Laboratory used for creating the Pattern Language (Iba & Isaku, 2016). The process of creating the Style Language for Family Lifestyle had a number of phases. First of all, we had interviewed about 130 people in diversity and gathered a lot of episodes that each family do in their daily life, such as family rules, family customs, habits and holidays. Secondly, some episodes were removed because they might give negative messages, or episodes were too similar. At last, 390 styles remained. Each style was composed with a Style word and its description. We also put these Styles in cards with pictures that enable us to easily imagine its Style (Figure 9). This way, we can gain ideas for various family lifestyle and it will be a hint to design our own "Ways of Everyday World," which is the core pattern of "Ways of Everyday World-Making: Living well with Working and Parenting" (Ogo, Iba, *et al.*, 2017).



Figure 9: Example Style Cards of “Style Language for Family Lifestyle”



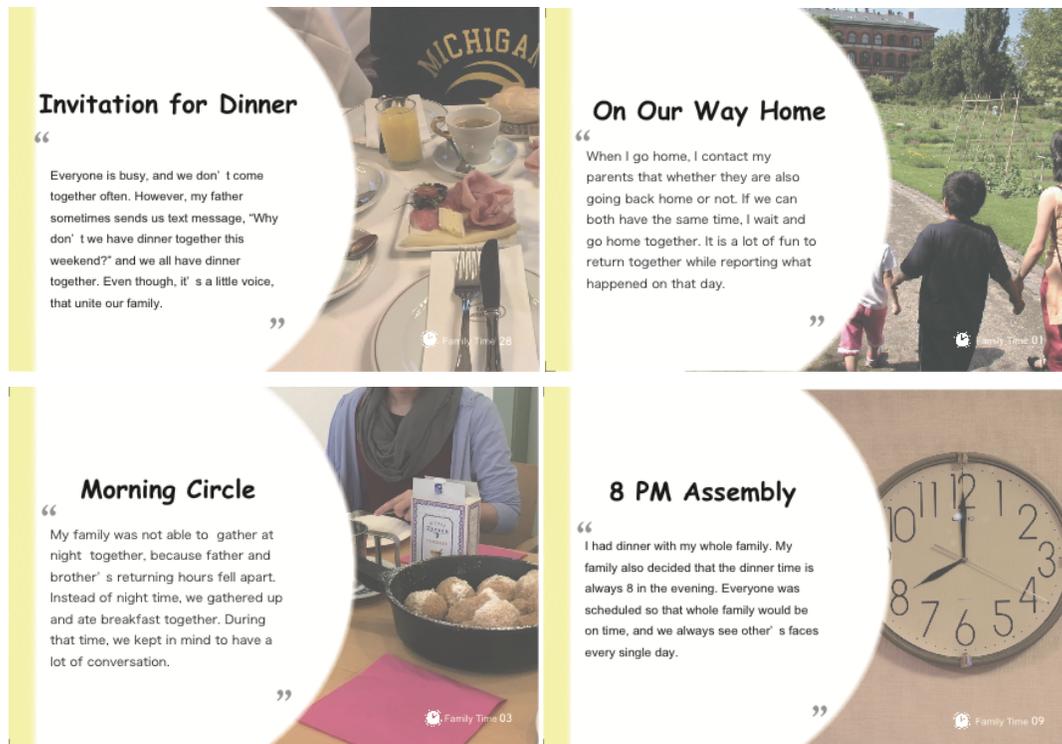


Figure 10: Example Styles of "Family Time" for Spending Time Together.

In A Style Language for Family Lifestyle, cards were categorized into purpose. For instance, there are the group "Family Time" (Figure 10). This category shows many practical ways to spend family time. Here are some examples. The Style word, "Morning Circle" summarizes how it is difficult to make a time to meet in evening because of work and school, so gather in the morning and have fun. Another Style word, "On Our Way Home" summarizes the story when family members are about to go back home. One more Style word, "The Day of Tasting seasons" supports making an event where all family members have seasonal dishes together even if they are busy. We can see that there are a lot of tips to make valuable "family time" during daily life. There are many different ways to make family lifestyle, and no correct choices. It is important to choose a style which fit the family's own lifestyle. In other words, the Style Language describes unique options that have the functional equivalent to supply the function of describing its uniqueness (Suzuki, *et al.*, 2018).

In order to use A Style Language for Family Lifestyle in a daily conversation, we developed and held a "Chatting Workshop with using a Style Language." In the Chatting Workshop, participants can pick up some cards and search for the style that they want to try. While searching for them, they have a chat with other group members and share feelings and episodes. This activity helps recall their own memories and makes it easier to come up with better family lifestyle. One participant of this chatting workshop said, "This experience is the time to remind me why this Style is important to my family."



Figure 11: "Chatting Workshop with using a Style Language"

The term "Chatting Workshop" is named after the "Dialogue Workshop" that we are conducting through using Pattern Languages (Iba, 2015b; Iba, 2017). In dialogue workshops, participants discuss specific experiences for connecting with abstract patterns to generate the quality of actions. Dialogue workshops are also exciting, and its excitement is due to a reaction to the way of activities, such as "Huh, amazing!" or "I see!" Therefore, the dialogue workshop is the excitement of deepening learning about its practice.

On the other hand, in the case of using Style Language, it is a reaction to the specific Style that people have done, and possibilities to have a specific way of practicing, such as "My family does it too!" or "There are families that do such a thing. What a surprise!" A reaction is close to the "chat" of the daily life rather than a "dialogue" for learning. Therefore, a workshop of using Style Language is called a "Chatting Workshop" (Figure 11).

### 3.2 A Style Language for Cooking Class

Every single teacher has original concepts. For instance, some teachers teach as a master. On the other hand, others teach as a friend or a parent. Some teachers also think it is important to welcome the students' desire to learn.

In this project, we focused on "Cookpad Cooking Class." This cooking class has a variety of classes, but with the unique feature that teachers teach dishes in their own houses or private kitchens with their personal techniques and backgrounds, and do not use instructions or a textbook. Everyone can become a teacher and they can choose place, time, teaching style, concept and recipe. However, the website only shows some general information; such as place, time and recipe, and students cannot see the variety of cooking classes' style and it is difficult to imagine its atmosphere.

We collaborated with Cookpad Co., Ltd. to create A Style Language for Cooking Class (Figure 12). The language creation started after experiencing various Cookpad Cooking Classes, interviewing about 30 teachers, and gaining Style Seeds of each cooking class. We collected seeds, improved sentences and named each Style.



Nowadays, we can see the general information like date, place and recipe on websites. However, through a Style Language, students are able to choose styles which they want to learn, by knowing the teachers' teaching style and the classroom's atmosphere. We had a utilization plan of A Style Language for Cooking Class to hold the Chatting Workshop among cooking classes' teachers at a conference where cooking teachers gather (Figure 14). Teachers were talking about their ways of cooking teach style and then they found out it was fun to know other teachers' styles.

In educational sociology, teachers are said to repeat the teaching method that they themselves learned through (Lortie, 1975). However, the concept of the Style Language goes beyond the reproduction of such teaching methods, and suggests the possibility of generating communication through an interaction for introducing experience of teaching and gaining a variety of ideas.



Figure 14: Chatting Scenes through Utilizing A Style Language for Cooking Class

#### 4. DISCUSSION: A BOUNDARY BETWEEN PATTERN AND STYLE

Through this paper, we sometimes discussed the similarities and differences between pattern language and Style Language. Finally, we would like to discuss that a boundary between pattern and Style is not fixed but dependent on the purpose and point of view. The example we will use is about patterns and Styles of creative writing. Novelist Haruki Murakami introduces his creation process and method in essays and interviews (Murakami, 2010a, 2016b, 2016; Kawakami and Murakami, 2017). You can find many variations of the related patterns and Styles by unraveling those books.

For example, Murakami often says, "I need physical strength," in order to go into a deep subconscious when he writes down. In the writing process, it is also important to have stamina to keep writing constantly every day. That is why he continues running every single day. On that point, it can be said, "To put physical strength and maintain with a daily routine in order to do creative activities deeply," is pattern-wise. Then, what about "running?" Is it recommended that all the writers run? Probably not. Because there are other ways to increase physical strength like swimming or cycling. So, "I run in order to increase physical strength to write" is one of the Styles of Haruki Murakami. In the way of writing, it can be argued that "to increase physical strength" is not a Style but a pattern because it is basically recommended to most people even though there are some people who do not fit.

Let us give another example. "I generally concentrate on work for three or four hours every morning. I sit at my desk and focus totally on what I'm writing. I don't see anything else, I don't think about anything else" (Murakami, 2007). Murakami says he writes a long novel in the morning after getting up every day (Murakami, 2010a, 2016). He decides to write 10 manuscripts a day and keeps writing at the same pace every day. Regarding that point, it could be said "write at the same time everyday determined," and this seems to be a pattern as a tip of writing.

So then, is "writing in the morning" a pattern, or a Style? This is a good but difficult question to answer. Considering that there are writers writing in the evening, it can be said to be a Style. However, we do not work on miscellaneous chores in the early morning, and our head is clear, so it can be said that writing in the morning is a valuable routine. In fact, there are many people writing in the morning for that reason. If so, this can also be said to be a pattern.

In this way, it may be difficult to judge whether it is a pattern or a Style. In this case, the authors of this paper, probably say, "write in the morning" is a Style and show this Style as an example of the pattern "write at the determined time every day" in order not to deny alternatives that may be different.

Therefore, there is no correct answer whether the specific practice is a pattern or a Style. It seems that there is no choice, and we need to judge from time to time, depending on who we support and what kind of language we are going to make.

## 5. CONCLUSION

In this paper, we proposed the concept of the Style Language for visualizing the various ways of doing for a specific activity for supporting the creation of personal Style with two specific examples. Style language was developed to focus, to enjoy and to generate diversity.

In fact, the concept of Style Language was developed from an awareness of a certain problem while creating and practicing pattern languages. A Pattern language is a summary of recommended actions for heading towards quality, and it is easy for such support to raise the concern that "It may result in standardization." Actually, the situation is diverse at a specific level, and the practitioners who practice specific methods of action have different backgrounds, so the result cannot easily be standardized.

However, since this result has not proven, it is possible to address that people with such concerns when they arise. In that case, we thought that if we visualize "diversity" itself, and also provide it together with a pattern language, there will be no worry of standardization.

Therefore, we created a substantial number of Styles, 390 for the first style language, "A Style Language for Family Lifestyle." We thought that it is significant to show a large number of cards to show its diversity, and we worked thoroughly to make a large number. Normally, pattern languages we create are often on the order of 30 to 40 patterns, but the impact of having 390 cards was quite large. During the Chatting Workshop introduced earlier in this paper, the style cards filled wide tables and the number of cards increased the enthusiastic atmosphere.

Style Language is not a language for convergence, but a language to expand to various ways of thinking and diversity in the approach. Style Language presents a variety of possibilities, while pattern language generates the quality. We have a dream about such a creative future where these two types of language are created and shared in various fields. We hope this paper will instantiate a start for this future.

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